



How the next big thing in

Celebrity event planner Steve Kemble dishes on what's hot for parties for 2008

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2008

ART OF DESIGN

THAT'S FABULOUS!

By Dawn K. Terk

"America's Saggiest Lifestyle Guru" and event-planner extraordinaire, Steve Kemble, dishes on what's hot for parties for 2008 and how to achieve the "wow factor" at any size soiree.



Steve Kemble

High energy. Dazzlingly creative. Co-scient. These are just a few adjectives that describe Steve Kemble. Within a single moment of speaking with him, I am instantly reminded of how fun life is and how many reasons we have to celebrate. And with Kemble, it's all about the celebration. Considered one of the country's most stylish men, Kemble's passion for fashion (his wardrobe is composed of more than 1,000 couture items), has landed him leading roles on US Weekly's "Fashion Police," the Style Network's "Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?," ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Wedding Edition," and E! Online, among a number of other hit shows and publications. And for the 2007 Academy Awards, Kemble appeared on the red carpet wearing a sparkling Versace tuxedo that he designed, which prompted the most celebrated (and styled) stars to take a second look. It is precisely this love for fashion that translates into all of his work of "wow" events.

With an abundance of awards under his belt, including two most recent inductions into the Event Industry Hall of Fame, Kemble has taken the event industry by storm. From high-profile galas and intimate dinners at the White House to celebrity soirees, Kemble is a natural at creating rooftop glamour that always brings that much-coveted "wow" reaction.

In addition to his Broadway, television, and Hollywood involvement in building a personal rapport with each of his clients has directly affected the final outcome of his guests. "I love getting to know the real person," says Kemble. "People that see me in print and on television see the over-the-top side of me, which is definitely who I am, but there's a real side to me and that's why I can connect better, true now, the crowd. Combining the over-the-top with making guests feel comfortable is what makes for a fabulous event."

Enhancing Kemble's "wow" factor is his philosophy that people should have fun throughout the planning process and at the event. "I believe in giving people ideas that are high in style and creativity, yet low in stress and preparation," Kemble elaborates.

"I was born and blessed with this very wild and wacky talent, but I also pay strict attention to detail. It is this combination that has enabled me to excel over the competition."

Ever the host, with his finger always on the party pulse, Kemble offers up his thoughts on what will be hot for 2008. From sexy lounge settings to specialty bars, major celebrations and at-home entertaining, here are his vision for the year ahead.

WHAT'S HOT FOR PARTIES FOR 2008

THE PALETTE

Monochromatic color schemes will continue to be a very big joy in addition to being a popular trend going monochromatic is an excellent choice. If working on a budget, which most of us are, this approach allows for a bigger bang for the buck. For instance, if you mix it up by having the party being in—think the lighting to the theme, the flowers to the table settings—the impact will be huge versus if you use a variety of colors.

SEDUCTIVE SETTINGS

A favorite among event planners and partygoers alike, the lounge theme will carry on as the next one hit. Through the use of retro-inspired, mid-century modern, lounge vignettes can easily be copied throughout the space. To further liven up a room, a small party will remain a prime focal point. Whether implemented into the mood through the furniture, carpet patterns, or table settings, a small party instantly presents visual interest.

PLAY IT UP

Expanding upon the lounge idea, Kemble predicts the sounds of the 1970s and 80s, such as those by Kool and the Gang, Donna Summer, and KC and The Sunshine Band, will get guests play by this or through live performances by the artists. In addition, custom-made, three-dimensional moves will be added to this year's musical repertoire.



IN THE LIMELIGHT

A crucial component in generating ambiance is lighting, and according to Kemble, "There is nothing more beautiful than having a room lit." Expected to be all the rage is illumination that offers lots of movement, like sweeping patterns, as well as monochromatic palettes and the use of Gobos. These plates, when set over a light projector, can illustrate any surface with shapes, words or messages to offer an unexpected, whimsical touch. Also, the tried and true use of candles is one of the most effective ways to set the mood; you can never have too many.

THE PERFECT TABLE

"A lot of emphasis is being placed on the tabletop," says Kemble. "People love to look, touch, and feel, so it's important that the table settings spark conversation and encourage guests to wander throughout the room." One way to do this is to display a different form arrangement on each table as well as a mix of place settings. Colorful glass and beautiful china are ideal. Remember, the details can differ, yet they must work together beautifully. "There's nothing more fun than to go to a dinner party, sit down and find that everything is different," Kemble emphasizes. Additionally, be on the lookout for textured linen, upholstered seating, and crystal and silver service.

SASSY SPIRITS

Let's face it, whether you're a true-blue denophile or hardcore brew enthusiast, at one moment or another, you'll be tempted to taste those colorful cocktails making their way around a room. The good news: The signature cocktail is here to stay. Incorporating color and named in relevance to the party, it's fun for the guests and helps ease the traffic flow to the bar.

Other thirst-quenchers Kemble anticipates making an impression in 08 are wine. Champagne served in petite bottles with straws, and beer, yes, beer! Imported beers served in the bottle



are making a strong comeback and working big, especially—especially from the men. Rounding out the top drink selections are the ever-popular martini bars, and for a new twist, specialty bars, like those serving tequila and smores.

TEMPTING EATS

"You can't apple all this stuff," Kemble proclaims with laughter. "It's so awkward to have to hold the cocktail, the napkin, and an oversized appetizer, like a skewer! Think goodness for bite-sized hors d'oeuvres. Beautifully seasoned, these little nibbles are tempting plates from the east coast to the west."

Other tasty fun to look forward to include seafood, such as oysters or a chilled soup served in a shooter glass, dollops of hors d'oeuvres on edible spoons, and comfort food, such as mini fried steaks. "Overall, people like food that is identifiable, they really prefer to know what they're eating," Kemble points out. "We don't do the identification process. Always include a label card in front of every item or somehow alert guests as to what is being served."

KEEP IT INTERESTING

Every thirty minutes, infuse new elements into the party, like an ice bucket featuring seafood, a dessert station, or fresh entertainment for an amazing impression. "I love to do this for in-house entertainers to the event," stresses Kemble.

For those craving the acclaimed Kemble "wow" factor for their event, regardless if it's a dinner party, formal gala, or wedding reception, Kemble offers this advice: Make it simple and easy. If you can, stretch every sense of your guests, from right to swirl, congratulations—you've just thrown a fabulous party!