



Ask the expert
Mark Held

A **Los Angeles** floral designer and event planner gives pointers on throwing a party this season

Three things to have on hand for last-minute parties? A fridge stocked with Champagne. Logs for the fireplace. Candles to line the path to the front door.

Your go-to spots for accessories? The GM Floral Company (gmfloral.com) in the Los Angeles flower market for tabletop supplies. For candles, General Wax & Candle Company (800/929-7867). Pier 1 Imports (pier1.com) and Z Gallerie (zgallerie.com) for affordable selections—I've found containers at Z for the Oscars.

Private rooms for a holiday party? For up to eight guests, Table One at the Restaurant at Hotel Bel-Air (\$1,250; hotelbelair.com). For larger groups, Café Bizou

([contact for details; cafebizou.com](http://contactfor details; cafebizou.com)) in Sherman Oaks.

Decorating ideas for the holiday table? Fragrance, sparkle, and candles set the mood. I also create tabletop topiaries using cranberries and raspberries. Vintage pieces add character. Sur La Table (surlatable.com) and Ikea (ikea.com) have great buys. At Cost Plus World Market (worldmarket.com), pick up gold chargers to pair with colorful wineglasses.

INFO Mark's Garden (marksgarden.net). Mark Held's new book is *Fabulous Parties* (Ryland Peters & Small, 2008; \$35), which he cowrote with Peggy Dark and Richard David. —JENNIE NUNN

 **FOR A HANDY LIST OF HELD'S TIPS, GO TO** sunset.com/weekend

Editor's picks

Arcadia

On our radar: Japanese treats
What we think: Hit Genki Living dessert and coffeehouse for *taiyaki* (fish-shaped waffles) and *okonomiyaki* (crispy, vegetable-filled pizzas). \$; 626/447-5116.

—SUSAN LENDROTH

El Segundo

On our radar: Sunday drives circa 1931
What we think: Low speed but high glamour. The vintage car-obsessed docents at the Automobile Driving Museum will take you out on 5- to 10-minute joyrides in models from their 70-piece fleet. The real showstoppers, like the boatish beauties owned by Howard Hughes and Eleanor Roosevelt, however, stay on the showroom floor. *Rides 10–3:30 Sun; \$5 donation suggested; automobiledrivingmuseum.org*

—MACKENZIE GEIDT

Los Angeles

On our radar: Good-for-you martinis
What we think: This being L.A. and everything, the cocktails at West in Hotel Angeleno are pictures of health. Like the White Lotus martini (\$14), featuring White Lotus vodka (with B vitamins, vitamin C, and ginseng), chamomile syrup, and fresh-squeezed lime juice. Since West is on the 17th floor overlooking Interstate 405 on one side (aren't you glad you're not stuck in that?), and the Pacific on the other, that'll elevate your spirit too. Bonus: Rush Hour Relief, half-price cocktails (4–7 Mon–Fri). \$\$\$; 310/481-7878.

—CHRISTINE RICHARD

San Diego

On our radar: Bali Hai—style spas
What we think: Palm trees, canoes, and ukulele music set the mood at Spa Tiki. Gauzy curtains drape bamboo mani-pedi huts, and even the treatments are tropical: pineapple-papaya body scrubs, coconut-sugar foot scrubs, and Balinese massages. It may be kitschy, but it's a seriously good spa—and the mai tai or Corona with every treatment is a nice touch. *Treatments from \$35; spatiki.com* —MARYANN HAMMERS