



Washington Duke
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Four Trends to Make Your Holiday Party Stand Out

Diane Tighe, director of catering & conference services at father and son AAA Four Diamond properties, shares how to make your holiday celebration stand out

DURHAM, N.C., November 27, 2017 – Parties are often the backbone, and most anticipated part, of the holiday season. In a world blessed with seemingly limitless Pinterest ideas, why have a normal and expected holiday party when you can have the perfect Instagram-worthy extravaganza? Not to confuse extravaganza with extravagant and costly, but whether your event is on a large or small scale, there are several core trends that can be exemplified to make your holiday party a memorable event.

Diane Tighe, who plans events for father and son properties Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club and the new JB Duke Hotel on the campus of Duke University in Durham, NC, details four elements transitioning an expected holiday party to the next level in 2017. With more than 15 years of experience at the property, Diane is a Certified Professional Catering Executive (CPCE) and active member of NACE since 2001.

- 1. Instant photo concept.** From social media filters to photography, hosts are tailoring details both big and small throughout parties to fit their personalities and unique themes. Customized Snapchat filters are among the top trends continuing to stick around, and can serve as party differentiators, bringing the entire party theme together. Speaking of instantly sharing, photo booths are among the most popular party crazes and can be shared on guests' social media pages with one simple click. Holiday props to match the theme make the night even more festive.
- 2. Décor elements – Create a theme.** Before getting in the thick of detailed planning, hosts should start with solidifying a theme first. Think 12 Days of Christmas, Fire and Ice, The Christmas Story and beyond. Once a theme is determined, finding an event space should become a lot easier. As the Pinterest ideas begin to flow, and details to pull off your theme start coming together, always keep your theme and event space in mind. This will be a pivotal point to ensure your leg lamp Christmas tree or Candy Land holiday dreamland – made of different color linens, food, lights and so forth – truly comes together. Lastly, on this front, make sure your event space is on board and will help make your vision come to life. Alternatively, be sure to choose a property with an active event planner if you don't know where to start.
- 3. Incorporate Food & Beverage into the Theme.** Taking things one step further past décor, food and beverages will be the next place guests will focus their attention. These food and beverage selections should reflect elements of the party theme. Always keep in mind what is the most appropriate concept – whether that be non-alcoholic or an open bar. As an example, if Candy Land is your theme, hosts may consider cotton candy martinis or sugar rimmed champagne glasses with floating raspberry. Those looking to create a Fire and Ice or high-class theme may consider using a flaming cordial bar with special box Stenos hidden under rocks, heating up the guests' glass and then pouring cordial into the glass. This creates ambiance, high touch and feel to a bar, providing guests a visual while creating a custom drink right in front of them.



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4. **Interactive.** After guests are full of delicious drinks and treats, get them moving to keep the party alive. Again, these should coincide with your theme but think activities and games in comparison to how many people you will have in attendance. For smaller groups, it is easier to do interactive events, like “Family Feud” or “Lip Sync Battles.” In big groups, there is more team involvement that requires advanced planning. A game element like “Let’s Make a Deal” may work better where not everyone participates. Activities that get everyone involved in giving back are also very popular, such as wrapping gifts for children or decorating cookies for your family or a local charity. Regardless of size, if you make sure you have the right characters, sound effects and incorporate your theme, you will likely pull off this interactive element without a hitch!

“Even though the holiday season is supposed to be a wonderful time of the year, for many it brings a lot of stress,” said Diane Tighe, director of catering & conference services at Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club and JB Duke Hotel. “If planning a smaller, intimate party, remember you are the host and your guests are there because they care about you. When planning a larger event, there are distinctive venues and vendors who are interested in helping hosts plan their unique holiday party. We treat each event like it’s our biggest event and are flexible to unique ideas. For example, while both our Durham hotels elicit southern hospitality, hosts can choose to have a festive holiday event at the new contemporary JB Duke Hotel or the more traditional Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club.”

Request more information about the Durham special events venues and packages at the [Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club](#) or [JB Duke Hotel](#), or contact our event specialists to arrange a site visit at 919.313.9618 or 919.660.6400.

About JB Duke Hotel

The JB Duke Hotel is a AAA Four Diamond contemporary hotel located on the campus of Duke University, conveniently near both athletic and academic facilities, as well as only 20 minutes from Raleigh-Durham International Airport and 10 minutes from Research Triangle Park. It features 198 guestrooms and 25,000 square feet of meeting and event space and is home to a full-service restaurant and two bars.

The hotel is owned by Duke University and is managed by JBD Hospitality, LLC of Durham, North Carolina, which has operated progeny property Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club for decades. For more information or reservations call (919) 660-6400 or (844) 490-7100, or visit jbdukehotel.com. Follow JB Duke Hotel on Facebook at facebook.com/jbdukehotel, Twitter at twitter.com/jbdukehotel, or Instagram at instagram.com/jbdukehotel.

About The Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club

The Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club is located on the campus of Duke University, only twenty minutes from Raleigh-Durham International Airport and ten minutes from Research Triangle Park. The Washington Duke Inn is the original AAA Four Diamond hotel in Durham, North Carolina. Nestled on 300 acres filled with tall pines and hardwoods, the Inn is known for its beautiful facility and grounds, 271 elegantly appointed guest rooms and suites, marvelous cuisine in the Fairview Dining Room — winner of the AAA Four Diamond Award, Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star Award and Wine Spectator Award of



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Excellence — the Bull Durham Bar, the Robert Trent Jones-designed 18-hole championship Duke University golf course, and its convenience to local points of interest. It is set apart from other area hotels and conference centers by unparalleled service, a gracious staff, luxurious interiors and attention to detail. The Inn is owned by Duke University and is managed by WDI Hospitality, LLC of Durham, North Carolina. For more information or reservations call (919) 490-0999 or (800) 443-3853, or by visiting washingtongdukeinn.com, Facebook at facebook.com/WashingtonDukeInn, Twitter at twitter.com/WashingtonDuke and Instagram at instagram.com/WashingtonDukeInn.

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