

# One Hot PARTY

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Ah, summer. Longer days, sandals, vacations and, of course, parties. Transform your summer get-together with a few food and decor staples. The following is a guide to the must-haves of a summer party al fresco.

## The Table

Cheryl Brockmann, owner of A Party Apart, is the go-to woman for all things party-related and according to her, the outdoor table can serve as a conversation piece, as well as a functional piece of furniture. Not sure where to begin? Start with the table cloth.

Brockmann says pastels like soft yellow, light green and raspberry are hot color themes for summer 2009.

"And outdoor décor is not immune from the 'green' trend, literally," she says.

Green is popular because it's "good all-year round" and compliments most colors.

"Choose a frosted vase as a centerpiece to create the effect of a beautiful soft candlelight glow," Brockmann suggests.



## The Drinks

When evening hits, there's nothing better than a fruity wine to accentuate a summer meal. Shameron Bostic, owner of WineStyles & Gifts, recommends a few labels sure to win over even the most persnickety of wine snobs.

Echelon Pinot, a Corsican wine, is a medium red and is "eminently fragrant," with undertones of wood, earth, red berries and flowers. Spice dominates the flavors, which are nicely round and sustained, with an easy finish marked by light tannins and tartness. Because of its light body and flavor, this pinot noir

is perfect for any summer picnic, while still complementary to BBQ dishes.

Try a Muscadet with the Sweet Southern salad, shellfish or any light dining. The flavor is reminiscent of white flowers, anise and citrus. It is also a perfect companion to a summertime meal or a lazy afternoon, Bostic says.

Boutari Domaine Roxanne is a blend of sauvignon blanc and assyriko. The wine's broad texture is filled with ripe pear flavor. Bostic suggests pairing it with grilled tuna, steaks and seafood.

## The Food

The food choices should be equally as light. Club Soda Chef Jesse Arnold says summer is a great time to make healthy alternatives for guests. And there's no better time for finger foods. Appetizers allow guests to sample a few of the restaurant's delicacies sans the guilt. Arnold offers a few twists on popular menu items guaranteed for pre-entrée bliss. Entice friends with Club Soda's famous marinated sashimi skewer coupled with cucumber, pickled ginger and tomato. Or try a twist on a popular English pastry: a trifle. Although traditionally made with dried fruits, Arnold says strawberries and blueberries make great fillings and are seasonal treats.

Bruschetta is a "good, light appetizer

for summer," Arnold says.

This Italian favorite is best topped with chicken, baby shrimp or avocado. Try all three for an extra kick.

Summer is synonymous with a fresh salad. House of Greens, located on Lima Road in Fort Wayne, is an herbivore's paradise. The locally owned restaurant offers a variety of salads. General Manager Jaimee Wilkinson says a summer salad is figure-friendly and is easy on the pocketbook. The Sweet Southern salad is sure to please the vegetarian crowd. Loaded with field greens, Mandarin oranges, dices apples, pecans and feta cheese, the salad is a healthy option for summer picnics. **FWL**

