

COLUMNS

How to pick the perfect event venue

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New York Public Library all lit up

By AN AMERICAN MARKETER COLUMNIST

By **Thomas Serrano**

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Planning any event, whether it is small or large, can be stressful. Our reputation is not something we take lightly.

When working with luxury brands, we take painstaking measures to ensure that we come up with a strategy and a theme, to hire entertainment for each fete, and to delight and inspire with the greatest libations on the planet.

But the real secret is our starting point finding that perfect venue. That place, that once you have entered it, just makes you go: "ahhhhhh "

To find that perfect venue for any event requires a lot of thought, and plenty of research.

From finding a space that fits a brand's needs, to ensuring that the venue fits the theme or tone of the evening, venue selection will determine the success of the evening. Below are our top five tips to help you narrow down that search:

1. Do your research

We scout constantly. We follow any lead, any Instagram sensation, and the news from our clients' partners to make sure we always hit the venue that is new or next.

It is also worth noting that we scout venues months in advance. With any event it is crucial to leave a lot of planning time, as it is very rare for an event to be a success if has been rushed and left to the last minute.

The venue is the first thing your guests will see when they arrive at the event. Therefore, it needs to set the mood and create the perfect atmosphere.

Have an arsenal of event spaces in mind, and know how each one of these looks and feels. Yes, this means scouting constantly, taking notes, filing venues.

This practice will come in handy when you assign a spot to a special night you have in mind.

An important note is to also always be on the look out for empty commercial spaces, because shorter lead or pop-up opportunities do come up, too. Keep at it, and file away the good ones.

And here are a few extra tips under "do your research:"

Mind event seasons in each city. After all, you may not want your client's Miami luxury launch event to coincide with Miami's music festival

Go beyond hotels, museums and restaurants, and such other known commercial spaces. Warehouse buildings, aircraft hangers, piers these are the venues that set people's hearts aflame.

To do this, go big: scour real estate listings, check in with film scouting teams, and watch the local convention bureau. You will stay way ahead of the game.

Ask your network to connect you. Leveraging relationships and word of mouth is many times how you hear of the Next Big Thing

Our bottom line recommendation here is to keep a live list of special venues, and always be adding to it. And, when you come across anything new, do a site visit. Inperson is always very different from online.



Guests mingling at an event hosted at the grand New York Public Library building in midtown Manhattan

2. Stay on theme

Before booking a venue, you will know what you want to celebrate at this event. A fragrance launch? A fashion show? A corporate get-together? This, and the campaign theme, should be the focus in making a decision.

To this end, take mainly into consideration any decor. After all, to your guests, surroundings are everything.

Additionally, consider your event format. A cocktail reception is not dinner, and a luncheon is not the same as a costume party.

For accuracy also check the calendar is there a holiday, fair, occasion to celebrate? Doing this you will then be able to decide what you can do at this event- and ensure that you select just the right setting.



Labels lit up: Dom Perignon adds some class

3. Mind the logistics

This means being aware of whether or where the nearest parking may be found, what sound system the venue has, if the venue has projection capabilities, if it is the right size for an augmented reality or installation scope, and whether or not there is kitchen and bar on site.

During any type of event, some type of food or beverage is expected, so always find out if the venue provides food or drink facilities.

If the venues do not, then be sure to ask them if they know of any catering companies you could use, unless you have a preference.

And here is an extra: note how many people are going to attend your event. Logistics also mean gauging venue size and capacity.



Table setting for an event

4. Go for the wow factor

When selecting your venue, keep this in mind above all, you are seeking ambience.

Setting the tone properly can go a long way and set the mood for the rest of the evening.

Any luxury brand will naturally be aligned only with the most beautiful venues. Any luxury fan will only be dazzled by the new, the next, the bold, or the timeless.

House Style: Five Centuries of Fashion at Chatsworth: Curated by American Vogue's international editor-at-large, Hamish Bowles, the residence of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire in England opens the doors to "House Style," an exhibition exploring five centuries of fashion and adornment worn by the aristocratic residents of Chatsworth

5. Negotiate

Here is the thing: If it were just about finding the best venue, many could enter the events realm. But a team that is truly professional minds the details and makes the project work with any scope. This means three things:

1. Watching event timing, and setting the date in the best possible window
2. Collecting multiple bids and truly evaluating each offer
3. Considering and working longer-term partnerships with any venue for better rates and greater possibilities

OVERALL, WHILE IT can be challenging to find your perfect venue for events, your planning will ensure a hit by using these simple guidelines.



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