

Inviting scandal

Cook up a hot soirée the Michael Musto way **By Cathay Che**

For more than a decade, Village Voice gossip columnist Michael Musto has been penning his witty, opinionated views on the crack-ups and crackpots of popular culture, sharing salacious tidbits from the week's biggest events. When Musto himself throws a party, you can be sure it will be as colorful as the shirts he wears on *El's Gossip Show*. His annual birthday bash always feature tabloid fodder-of-the-moment special guests such as John Wayne Bobbitt, Divine Brown and, one of his personal favorites, Edith Fore (a.k.a. Mrs. Fletcher, of "I've fallen and I can't get up!" fame). Here's his recipe for how to throw a party that's sure to have tongues wagging.

Ingredients

1 scandalous guest of honor

"Pick whoever is the tabloid darling of the moment—don't worry, every scandal star has their price, but personally, I draw the line at attempted murderers. A good choice right now would be Sherry Rowlands, the prostitute who spilled the beans on Dick Morris."

1 beloved but enigmatic host in scandal-theme costume

"For example, at my John Wayne Bobbitt party I wore a custom-tailored ensemble made of his newspaper headlines, accessorized with a necklace of loose hot dogs."

100 frenzied guests

"The guest list should include people from all the A-list press outlets, a smattering of both Hollywood celebs and downtown personalities, your mother and even a few friends. The hanger-on crowd doesn't need to be invited—they'll be there anyway."

Add a dash of appropriately tasteless decor

"For the Edith Fore party, we rented dozens of geriatric walkers, which were then suspended from the ceiling. For Sherry Rowlands, I'd go with plastic feet and toes—Morris is a foot fetishist—and a staff dressed as hookers, propositioning the guests."

Throw in a tasty theme menu

"For John Wayne Bobbitt, the caterers made bread in the shape of a severed penis and a main course of blood-red meat served with two

new potatoes. For Sherry Rowlands, I'd go with a pickled pigs' feet appetizer and a traditional "family values" entrée of meatloaf and mashed potatoes. For dessert—15 minutes of cake."

And mix with a climactic moment of self-conscious entertainment

"For Divine Brown, we had Billie Holiday-channeling drag queen Joey Arias sing "Love For Sale." That would work for Sherry too. Then, of course, you have to quiet the room and drag the guest of honor up to the stage, where you bombard them with obvious, embarrassing questions."

The morning after

"Although it's a good sign when *Entertainment Tonight*, *Hard Copy* and *Extra!* send camera crews to the party, your real glory comes the next day, when you buy all the dailies and bask in your scandalized press."



Party resources

★=Denotes a resource described in "Throw your own" (see page 19)

MUSIC/ENTERTAINMENTS

- ★**DJ Miss Guy** (629-1816).
- Dante, psychic tarot reader** Call noon-8pm (924-3184). Rates start at \$30 per hour. Dante satisfies the psychic needs of Chelsea's Big Cup patrons, and can do the same for your guests. A full tarot reading supplemented by astrology takes about an hour, but Dante also offers shorter readings (20-30 minutes); figure he could do six readings in a single night.
- David Block, one-man band** Call 10am-6pm (914-693-4305). \$100 per hour. With his handy keyboard synthesizer, Block can simulate an entire horn section. On top of that, he'll sing for you in five languages (Yiddish/Polish, French, Italian, Spanish or English). His costumes range from a tuxedo to slightly camp German lederhosen (a leather overall shorts ensemble).
- ★**Kay-Boo Toys** Various locations, including 34th St at Sixth Ave in the Manhattan Mall (629-5386). 10am-8:30pm. Subway: B, D, F, Q, 1, 2, 3, 9 to 34th St.
- Lusana Productions, international talent scouts** Call Mon-Fri 10am-6pm (691-6988). This production company is co-run by Ana Araiz, who for five years has produced S.O.B.'s Monday-night Latin Music Party. Lusana specializes in international entertainment and can book you up with a soca band, a belly dancer, a world-music DJ and more.
- Nyvia Ocasio, salsa teacher** Call 5-10pm (718-252-5743). Rates start at \$15 per person for a 90-minute group lesson and \$30 for private lessons. A salsa lesson can loosen up a crowd. Nyvia,

who has more than 20 years' experience, is the perfect for those who need to learn basic mambo rhythms and steps.

- ★**Paper House** Various locations, including ● 269 Amsterdam Ave between 72nd and 73rd Sts (724-8085). 8:30am-10pm. Subway: 1, 9, 2, 3 to 72nd St.
- 678 Broadway between 3rd and Bond Sts (388-0082). 10am-10:30pm. Subway: B, D, F, Q to Broadway-Lafayette St.
- ★**Screaming Queens** (714-7062).
- ★**Tower Video** 1961 Broadway between 66th and 67th Sts (799-2500). Subway: 1, 9 to 66th St.

FOOD/DRINK

- ★**Astor Wine** 12 Astor Pl at Lafayette St (674-7500). Mon-Sat 9am-9pm. Subway: 6 to Astor Pl.
- Balducci's** Catering office hours are 9am-5pm (673-2600). Balducci's catering has fancy platters of fromage, crudites, antipasto, fruit and patés at \$7-\$10 per person. Platters of focaccia, pani di casa and ciabatta sandwiches are also available (\$8.75 per sandwich). Platter orders are for a minimum of ten guests. Delicious prepared pastas, entrees and salads are also an option (\$12-\$28/lb).
- ★**Burritoville** Various locations, including 264 W 23rd St between Seventh and Eighth Aves (964-1133). 11am-11pm. Subway: 1, 9, C, E to 23rd St.
- Diamond Ice** Mon-Sat 6:30am-6:30pm (473-6784). A no-frills, reliable delivery service for buckets of ice (\$14) and non-alcoholic soft drinks and seltzer (a case of liter bottles is about \$30).
- ★**Florent** 69 Gansevoort between Greenwich and Washington Sts (989-

5779). Sun-Thu 9am-5am; Fri, Sat 24 hours. Subway: A, C, E to 14th St.

Garden of Eden 7am-10pm (675-6300). A good bet for party-platter basics like cold cuts, vegetables, fruit, smoked fish or cheese. Prices are \$25-\$45 for platters that feed eight to ten people, and \$100-\$225 for platters for 50-75.

★**Grill Beverage** Call for deliveries only (463-7171).

Harvest Gourmet Call 8am-8pm (627-2712). Chef Robert Stigman started this small company specializing in high-end parties three years ago. Stigman and staff do soirées starting at \$25-\$50 per person, and thanks to Stigman's association with numerous freelance chefs, they can prepare almost any kind of cuisine (but Italian, Californian and French are specialties). They also do their own floral designs.

★**Krispy Kremo Donuts** 265 West 23rd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues (620-0111). Mon-Thu 6am-midnight; Fri, Sat 6am-2am; Sun 6am-10pm. Subway: C, E to 23rd St.

★**MJ & Company Catering** (929-5848).

New Creole Kitchen 10am-6pm (864-5381). As you might guess, this friendly, five-year-old establishment specializes in tantalizing homemade Creole cuisine. Catering ranges from receptions with catfish mousse or shrimp jambalaya pockets to elegant dinners with tomato-basil corn tartlets and shrimp gumbo. All menus include food and drink. Prices are \$50-\$80 per person and there's no minimum headcount, but these folks prefer to handle events with less than 200 guests.

Robert Swingle, caterer 9am-5pm (353-8848). This company does in-house catering for Christie's and has been heralded by Zagat's for bringing a

"personal touch" to everything it does. Whether it's a big or small event, the staff will tailor their services to meet both clients' needs and budget.

VENUES

- Candy Bar** 131 Eighth Ave between 16th and 17th Sts (229-9702). 5pm-2am, plus brunch hours on weekends. Subway: A, C, E to 14th St. Price negotiable. This candy-colored restaurant-lounge is available for private parties with an in-house DJ set-up and room for performances. Catering is available (American eclectic/pan-Asian cuisine), along with special theme cocktails like the Tina Louise or the Thai Martini, both made with ginger vodka. The place seats 70, capacity 150-200 for cocktails.
- Ciel Rouge** 176 Seventh Ave between 20th and 21st Sts (929-5542). Private parties Tue-Thu or Sat. Subway: 1, 9 to 18th or 23rd St. This posh little red-velvet lounge can accommodate up to 70 people for cocktail parties. You can have either a cash or open bar (price negotiable), but food is limited to offerings from Ciel Rouge's kitchen.
- ★**Hell** 59 Gansevoort between Greenwich and Washington Sts (727-1221). 5pm-4am. Subway: A, C, E to 14th St.
- ★**MBC** 25 West 32nd St between Broadway and Sixth Ave (967-2244). Noon-6am. Subway: B, D, F, Q to 34th St.
- Nancy Whiskey Pub** 1 Lispenard St at West Broadway (226-9943). 9am-4am. Subway: 1, 9 to Franklin St. This charming, unpretentious pub has a small upstairs room that holds 30 sitting or 50-60 standing. For \$25 per person, you get food (three or four basic appetizers) and drinks. (Private parties do not preclude the bar being open to regular patrons.) There's also a jazz jukebox featuring everything from