

What makes a great entertainment house

"This is rather forward of me," came the text from my cultured friend Lisa, who sits on the board of our city's Philharmonic Orchestra. "I'm wondering if you guys would be interested in hosting a 'Connect with the Phil' event in your new home ...?"

My first thought was she meant to text someone else. Lisa knows D.C. and I moved into our home just two months ago, and there are many swankier houses around.

"Usually about 50 to 60 people attend," the text continues. "The next one is a month away." She sounds serious.

"Oh, my," I text back, woozily. "What all would be involved?"

What am I, crazy? I start breathing into a paper bag.

She fills me in. They would cover the costs of all food, drink and catering and handle invitations and RSVPs. "All" we would need to provide is our home.

"I'll ask D.C. tonight," I text.

"You would be loved and esteemed forever!" she adds, which, I confess, carries some weight.

My mind is on fire with all we'd need to do. While part of me is hitting the panic button, the other, more reckless part, which most of you are familiar with, is thinking: Why not? We're perfect for this. D.C. is a big patron of the arts, and I love a good party. But I wasn't so sure D.C. would share my enthusiasm.

That night at dinner, I pour him a glass of wine and broach the subject: "Honey, you know how when we were looking for a house we said we wanted one that would be good for entertaining?"

He nods tentatively, suspecting a catch.

"And remember how when we bought this house, we actually said it would be good for entertaining?"

His look implores me to continue.

"Well, ..." I roll out Lisa's proposition.

A very long pause follows. So long I can hear an entire train go by in the distance and fade into the next town. I half expect him to ask if I am



AT HOME WITH
Marni Jameson

out of my ever-loving mind, which is valid.

Instead, he asks the quintessential question: "What all would we need to do?"

As if I needed any more reasons to love this man!

I have a list, of course, which I whip out.

"Just cuffs and collars," I say. He looks perplexed until I explain how in college my sorority sisters and I would iron only those parts of our blouses before pulling on a sweater. We looked crisp, but underneath, our shirts were as wrinkled as fall leaves. "Only what people will notice."

We survey my list and prioritize. To him, naturally, most important, is to finish the existing built-in entertainment center to accommodate our television. Me, I want drapes.

Also on the list: Recover the armchairs in the living room, reframe some art, get an entryway rug, paint the kitchen chairs, fluff up the landscape. I grab another paper bag and start breathing.

"We can say no," I say.

"I'm fine with hosting an event that would support the arts and our community," D.C. says. "Plus, we'll find out if we really do have an entertainment house."

I text Lisa a thumbs-up sign.

Before the matter is settled, however, someone from the Philharmonic event committee must come by to make sure the venue will work. This someone arrives the next morning with her assistant. "We could host these friend-raisers in a public space," she says, "but having them in a home is so much warmer."



Gene X Hwang

Party house – A great entertainment house doesn't have to be huge, says party guru Susan MacTavish. And you don't have to have a seat for everyone. Many guests stand, lean, roam or even sit on the floor. Photo courtesy of Gene X. Hwang

"We're delighted to host if our house works for you," I say, inviting them to look around. Within a minute, they assure us it will.

The party is on.

Because I'm always curious what exactly those real estate ads that bray, "Great house for entertaining" really mean, I tuned in to find out just what event planners look for: **Location, location, location.** Tops on their list, they said, was a home on a street that is easy to find, and central for guests. Many more remote homes are lovely but not well located for gatherings.

Ample parking. Unless you hire a valet, you want to make sure the surrounding streets can support a good number of cars.

Access. The catering company will need a place to pull up, set up, and access the kitchen, without navigating through guests. At our house, they can pull up in the driveway behind the house and access the kitchen through a laundry room, where they can hide their equipment.

An inviting entry. The planners looked for a place by the front door to set up a table to greet guests. "If we have the door open and a table out front, people know they're at the right place."

Enough space. A big kitchen is a benefit, because that's where guests like to gather. If the kitchen opens onto a spa-

cious family room or great room, even better.

Flow. More important than space is flow. Rooms that open onto one another, without doors, foster mingling.

A powder room. A good entertainment house has a powder room designed for guests, one that is not a personal bathroom.

Outdoor area. Access to an outdoor area, whether a terrace or patio, is a plus. In our case, the planners decided to put the bar on the covered patio to help draw guests out of the house and encourage mixing.

Traffic control. So the guests don't get too dispersed, close doors to rooms you don't want them in. Putting a catering station in front of a room that's off limits is another good way to keep guests where you want them.

Multiple seating and dining areas. Great conversations don't happen in big groups, but in small clusters. Entertainment houses offer a variety of comfortable spaces for guests to eat, drink and talk. Don't worry about having a seat for everyone. Many guests stand, lean and roam.

Syndicated columnist Marni Jameson is the author of two home and lifestyle books, including "Downsizing the Family Home – What to Save, What to Let Go" (Sterling Publishing 2016). You can reach her at www.marnijameson.com.

Property transfers

The following property transfers of \$75,000 or more were recorded in Kanawha County between Jan. 25 and Feb. 1, 2018:

- Richard Daniel Clarkson to Crystal H. Cunningham. Lot, St. Albans, \$100,000.
- Greenview II Limited Partnership to Whitewater Development LLC. Parcels, South Charleston, \$160,000.
- Timothy Young to The Patchwork Pony LLC. Lots, South Charleston, \$124, 628.53
- Charles Wayne Hall, Charles Wayne Hall, Kathy Lynn Hall Skiles, Susan Gail Hall Wedin to Harold Arbaugh. Parcels, South Charleston, \$200,000.
- Linda L. Thomas, David A. Gibson and Lisa A. Taylor to Shawn J. Fisher. Parcels, Dunbar, \$98,000.
- Dan S. Duncan to Brittany Nichole Riggeman and James Clayton Riggeman. Lot, Union District, \$177,000.
- Wesley P. Page to Sharon Reed. Tracts, Charleston, \$215,000.
- Jon Terry Gossard and Margaret R. Gossard to Wesley P. Page and Kate M. Page. Lots, Charleston, \$458,000.
- WV Trustee Services LLC to The Bank of New York Mellon. Lot, Charleston, \$194,062.66
- SRT Properties LLC to Matthew T. and Elizabeth Young Bonar. Lot, Loudon District, \$265,000.
- Rebecca Susan Dillard to Edward McDougal. Lot, Poca District, \$92,000.
- Stricklen Realty Inc to Malik Hamdan, Unmoal R. Hamdan and Humayun Rashid. Lot, Charleston, \$655,000.
- Bailey & Slotnick PLLC to Huntington National Bank. Parcel, Charleston, \$108,800.
- Gerald R. Womack and Linda K. Womack to Richard B. Whitman and Jessica L. Whitman. Lot, Jefferson District, \$360,000.
- John M. Collins and Patra S. Collins to Alan M. Lowdermilk and Melissa J. Lowdermilk. Lot, Charleston, \$105,000.
- Richard B. Whitman and Jessica L. Whitman to Derek A. Hippchen and Elizabeth Hippchen. Lot, Jefferson District, \$216,000.
- David Payne to Michael G. Smith and Brittany N. Smith. Parcel, Charleston, \$145,000.
- Ian McQuinn to Linda Cuciniello and Anthony Cuciniello III. Lots, Union District, \$155,000.
- Stephen Lakin Blankenship and Kimberly Ann Givens to April L. Showalter. Parcels, Charleston, \$138,000.
- Michael Warren Carey and George Alfred Carey to Mountain State Insurance Agency. Tract, Charleston, \$192,000.
- Barry Cameron Blair and Tasha N. Blair to Kelly L. Farris. Lots, Charleston, \$151,500.
- A&M Investments LLC to Jeffrey Fertig. Lot, Charleston, \$155,000.
- Matthew Thomas and Elizabeth Young Bonar to Ashley L. and Lee E. Orr. Lot, Charleston, \$225,000.
- Edwin D. Clarkson and Lorealea A. Clarkson to Matthew S. Wazelle. Lot, Charleston, \$238,000.
- Jean P. Pozega to Mountain State Apartment LLC. Parcels, Charleston, \$1,162,500.
- Timothy Wilburn Jr. to West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways. Tract, South Charleston, \$87,000.
- Kathleen Martin and Scott Maxwell to Ashley Sierra Copen. Lot, Charleston, \$103,000.
- Elizabeth Hilton to Benjamin M. Riggeman. Lot, Charleston, \$83,000.
- Sarah C. Ellis and Tyler A. Carpenter to RHE Ventures Inc. Tracts, St. Albans, \$185,000.