

damien cousens

Director of Collar and Cuffs (providers of skin-baring butlers for private events).

Describe yourself in full party mode. On the dance floor, limbs going everywhere.

What are the ingredients of a great party? Great company – old friends and new acquaintances. Having a clear schedule the following day (or two) also helps.

Best way to keep a level head when something doesn't go to plan? Take a deep breath, keep smiling and work on a plan to rectify it. There's no point wishing it hadn't happened and getting grumpy or stressed.

How important are invitations? For a good turnout, invitations are a must.

Live music or CDs? CDs! They can't drink your alcohol.

How do you choose the music? With iPods and laptops, there's no need to. I let the guests play DJ as this keeps everyone happy, even if it's only for one song.

Top party CDs? Ministry of Sound compilations.

The secret to being a great host? Constantly mingling and attending to each guest, showing you appreciate their attendance. It's not the night to sit back and put your feet up – you go to their parties to do that!

The secret to being a great guest? Not making a slurring, obnoxious mess of yourself. And no spillages!

Do you prefer huge parties with a cast of thousands or more intimate gatherings? Ooh, tough call. In general, I've enjoyed myself most at smaller ones. Ask people what they did on the biggest night of the last decade, New Year's Eve 2000. Most who

enjoyed it were with a small, close bunch of friends.

What's your party outfit for the season? In summer, jeans, a simple funky T-shirt and thongs.

Best party you've been to? Easy! A friend's bash to bring in 2000 at their beach house. It was a tropical theme attended by longstanding friends from school and the host's parents' friends. My girlfriend at the time was from Vanuatu, so she and her cousin added to the atmosphere with a traditional dance. There was no need to join a cab line as it was a short stumble inside to pass out wherever you could.

The worst? When it feels like a business networking function. I always make an effort not to ask what a newly introduced person does for a living. There are so many more interesting things to talk about other than relying on the default setting of a person's occupation.

Ever seen a chivalrous act at a party? I didn't witness it and am not really sure it qualifies as truly chivalrous, but a friend stumbled across an amorous couple in a stairwell. The male had put down some cardboard for the female. Wow! Must be love.

Strangest thing you've seen at a party? Collar and Cuffs events when it's requested we wear bottom-revealing aprons – still a sight I'm not fully accustomed to, but a good laugh!

If you could have any celebrity at your party, who would it be? Robbie Williams. I'd say good times would follow.



Damien prefers more... Intimate gatherings