



# Spotlight On...

**Karen Mason**

**Busting Party-Planning Myths**

When Karen Mason, director of sales and marketing at LaSalle Grill, walks into a room, you immediately sense her presence. She lights up the place. But when you start talking to her, that's when her commitment to quality and service really shines. A longtime associate at LaSalle Grill, Mason is passionate about customers and meeting their needs. "LaSalle Grill has been serving the Michiana community for more than 18 years, and we're proud of the fact that in all that time we have maintained the quality standards for our food and our service."

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This is especially important to her during the holiday season, when people are planning parties and family get-togethers. "During the holidays, actually any time of the year," she says, "your event should be one that people remember, and that's one of our goals."

Many people, however, fall prey to some of the oldest party-planning myths, urban legends that Mason and the crew at LaSalle Grill are dedicated to debunking.

## **Myth #1**

**Catering and private dining costs a lot.**

### **Truth**

"Every myth," says Mason, "contains a nugget of truth. And, certain types of parties or service can cost more than others." For example, a sit-down dinner requires more servers than would a station party or a buffet. That's more money. But it is not true that only the elite can afford caterers. Flexibility is the key to helping you stay within your budget ... whether you're planning a small rehearsal dinner, a company holiday party, or a football tailgater. Working with your caterer, you can almost always find a creative solution that helps you accomplish the atmosphere you want, without skimping on your guests.

## **Myth #2**

**There will be limitations to what I can have.**

### **Truth**

"I like to say that LaSalle Grill makes the impossible, possible," says Mason, "because I know the types of events we have helped people create for their friends, co-workers, and families over the years. At LaSalle Grill, at Club LaSalle, and at multiple locations around the area."

Her best advice? Don't limit yourself. Take the time, talk to several caterers, get to know them and let them get to know you, your needs, and your budget, so that they can offer you options that help you accomplish your goals for the event. It may take a little longer, but it will be worth it.

## **Myth #3**

**I have to plan too far ahead.**

### **Truth**

According to Mason, timing is important and can affect a budget, but it is not a deal breaker. "The further ahead we are able to plan, the more flexible we can be," she says. Planning ahead also gives you more time for tastings and finalizing all the details for the perfect party. Having a shorter time frame is still doable. It simply means you and your caterer need to be more focused.

## **Myth #4**

**Food is food.**

### **Truth**

"All food is fuel for our bodies," says Mason, "but not all food is memorable. Not all food gives your guests something to talk about the next day." One of the best things you can do is to taste the food before your party. Ask your caterer for a tasting! There may be a nominal fee, but caterers often apply this back to your party. It's one small thing you can do to make sure your party is a success.

## **Myth #5**

**One caterer is like any other.**

### **Truth**

Not all food is the same, and not all caterers provide the level of service you should expect for your money. "The reason our events are memorable," says Mason, "is that LaSalle Grill provides value." Every morsel, every place setting ... is carefully planned and perfectly executed. "We pay attention to your needs and your budget. We provide for your guests' needs, and we deliver on our promises." The best way to find out about a caterer is to talk to customers. Ask for a list of references and follow up with each of them. Find out about the quality of the food, their level of service, or if there were any surprises in the final bill. That way you won't have any surprises surrounding your party ... for you or your guests.

## **Myth #6**

**People are the most important ingredient in any party.**

### **Truth**

"This is not a myth," says Mason. From the planning stages — as we're working with you to develop the menu and setting to determine if any of your guests have special needs (vegetarian or organic) or if they have allergies (nuts, fish, or gluten) — to the actual event, the professional staff at LaSalle Grill is committed to providing you the best service and highest quality food available.

**Any questions for Karen?**

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