

FOOD DRINK PARTY!

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BRING IT ON *Make a splash at your next summer bash.*

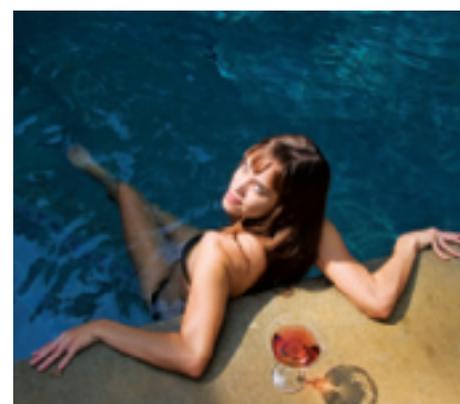
COLD COMFORT

Sure, you can serve guests an ice-cold martini or shot of tequila, but what about vegetable gazpacho in a martini glass or watermelon gazpacho in a shot glass? "It's a very sexy way to serve gazpacho, and glasses take up less room on the table than bowls," says Tony Conway of A Legendary Event. He makes his veggie gazpacho with red, yellow and green peppers, celery, red onion, garlic and fresh limejuice. "I love adding cilantro, too, but some people don't like it so serve it on the side," he says. Finally, he dips the rim of the glass in a limejuice-sugar mixture, then celery salt. The watermelon gazpacho includes pineapple, watermelon and orange juice, and sometimes a splash of vodka. For a stunning presentation, Conway fills a scooped-out watermelon with shaved ice and sets the shot glasses on top. "Whichever one you make, it should be ice cold," he says. "I chill the glass, spoons and plate, so that guests feel cooler as soon as they touch it."



SEA-ING RED

Just because Atlanta's far from the ocean doesn't mean you can't have an authentic New England lobster party in your backyard. Conway orders his from **Maine Lobster Company** (207.828.6226 or www.maine lobsterco.com), which ships them live from their docks in Portland to your doorstep, and charges anywhere from \$80 for two lobsters to \$230 for 12, 1 1/2-pound lobsters. "I fill a 10-quart pot about halfway with water and add peppercorns, lemon, lime, salt and garlic," he says. "I throw in four to six lobsters for about two to three minutes, then I crack the tail off and throw the meat on the grill." To top it off, he adds a spritz of lemon-limejuice, melted butter and capers. Or a scoop of slaw (shown left) made with peeled jicama (Mexican turnip), lemon zest, julienne cabbage and apple, and freshly squeezed orange.



DIVE IN

If you're looking to stage an outdoor party around a pool, take our advice: Pools for rent are not easy to come by in Atlanta. We called more than a dozen top condo buildings, country clubs and hotels, and were surprised to discover so few available to non-members. Here are some of your best bets:

INTERCONTINENTAL BUCKHEAD HOTEL For \$1,750, you can invite up to 250 to gather around the hotel's beautiful outdoor pool (and yes, you can swim!) in the heart of Buckhead. Outside catering isn't allowed, so plan to spend an additional minimum of \$50 per guest for food. 3315 Peachtree Road, 404.946.9000, www.ichotelsgroup.com.

ATLANTA PUBLIC PARKS The City of Atlanta Aquatics Office tells us that all 13 of its public pools, including those in Piedmont and Grant Parks, are available to rent. You pay \$55 per hour for the pool, \$22 an hour for the manager and \$12 an hour for each lifeguard—and you can bring your own caterer. 404.817.7904.

ATHLETIC CLUB NORTHEAST For an intimate party of 24 to 30 guests, there are two choices at this tony club: A 25-meter, six-lane indoor pool and a round, 15-meter outdoor pool. After the \$200 deposit, you just pay \$200 per hour for either. 404.325.2700 ext. 361 or www.acnortheast.com.

ELEVEN 50 The new outdoor Cabana has a 30-foot-long, 5-foot-deep reflecting pool, a refreshing backdrop for up to 350 revelers. It includes fountains, cabanas with day beds, sofas, footstools and rolling bars. Rental costs start at \$2,000 if you use on-site catering, plus additional guaranteed minimums upwards of \$10,000. Most parties have to end at 9 p.m., unless you dish out more cash. 1150b Peachtree Road, 404.874.3006 or www.eleven50.com.

COMPOUND Choose from a list of approved caterers and invite up to 800 guests to gather around the large pond, reflecting pools (no swimming) and fountain in the 4,800-square-foot Tenshi Garden. Call for rental prices, as they vary. 1008 Brady Ave., 404.872.4621, www.compoundevents.com.