



HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT VENUE FOR YOUR GUEST COUNT, BUDGET, AND VISION

À LA MODON EVENTS

Welcome



TURNING RICH STORIES INTO THOUGHTFUL EXPERIENCES

I'm Alexandra, founder of à la Modon Events — and if you've just gotten engaged, started planning a milestone celebration, or been handed the reins of a corporate event, first of all: congratulations, and *take a breath*.

Venue selection is one of the most consequential decisions you'll make in this process. Get it right, and everything else has a foundation to build on. Get it wrong, and you'll spend months trying to work around limitations that were hiding in plain sight when you toured.

At à la Modon Events, we handle every detail so you can fully immerse yourself in the moment. This guide distills what we've learned from planning events of all shapes and sizes across Los Angeles, so you know exactly what to look for, what to ask, and what to *never assume*.

*Inside, you'll find the questions most people never think to ask —
until they've already signed the contract.*



à la Modon Events

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Real Numbers, Not Wishes

Here's the truth most people don't want to hear: your guest count is probably larger than you think. We all start with the best intentions – just close family and a few friends – and somewhere between the first draft and the final RSVP, the list has a way of growing.

Before you tour a single venue, get honest about your numbers by building three lists:

- **Must-invite:** Immediate family and closest friends – the people whose absence would genuinely change the feel of the day.
- **Would-like-to-invite:** Extended family, colleagues, and friends you'd love to include if the space and budget allow.
- **If-space-allows:** Acquaintances, plus-ones, and courtesy invitations that are nice to extend but not essential.

Once you have those three lists, add them up – then add 10 to 15 percent. Guest counts almost always creep upward between your initial estimate and final RSVPs, and a venue that fits your "ideal" count may feel uncomfortably tight by the time the actual headcount lands.

The goal here isn't to overwhelm you – it's to make sure the first major decision you make is built on a realistic foundation, not a wishful one. The right venue for 80 guests is a very different space than the right venue for 110, and knowing that before you start touring will save you significant time, energy, and heartache down the road.





How Space Affects the Mood

Venue capacity numbers are a starting point, not the whole story. A beautiful, airy ballroom that takes your breath away on a Tuesday afternoon walkthrough will feel entirely different once you've added 120 seated guests, a dance floor, a DJ setup, a bar, and a sweetheart table. Always ask to see the room configured for an event of your size before you fall in love with it empty.

Room shape matters more than most people realize. Long and narrow creates distance. L-shaped creates sightline problems. Square and slightly rectangular tends to feel the most connected and social. When you're touring, walk to the farthest corner and ask yourself: does this still feel like the same event?

Think about your anchor points. Every event has a few key elements that define where energy lives – the bar, the dance floor, the stage, the focal table. Where those land shapes how guests move and gather all night. Ask whether the venue's natural layout supports the anchor placement your event needs, or quietly works against it. A room that's too large feels sparse. Too small feels chaotic. The sweet spot is a space where your guest count, your layout, and your vision can all breathe comfortably together.





03

Match the Vibe

Every venue has a personality – and no amount of florals or drapery can fully override it. Before you tour, get clear on what you want the space to feel like, not just look like. Moody and intimate? Light and airy? Sleek and modern?

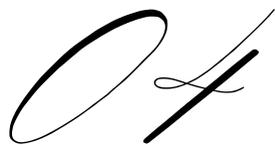
The feeling is the filter. [Browse our Pinterest boards for inspiration.](#)

Start with the bones. A venue's permanent features – architecture, ceiling height, flooring, natural light – are the foundation everything else is built on. A space with exposed brick will always whisper rustic no matter what you bring in. Fall in love with the bones first, then figure out the décor.

Know the difference between a blank canvas and a character venue. Blank canvas spaces offer flexibility. Character venues – a vineyard, a historic estate, a rooftop with a view – bring built-in atmosphere that can significantly reduce your décor budget.

Write down your non-negotiables before you tour. It's easy to get swept up in a beautiful space that checks nine out of ten boxes and talk yourself into the missing one. That tenth box has a way of mattering more than you expected.





The Flow and Layout

The best events are ones guests never have to think about – where everything feels effortless and the energy stays alive from the first toast to the last song. That doesn't happen by accident. It happens because the layout was intentional.

Think in zones. A well-designed event has distinct areas for each phase of the evening – arrival, cocktails, dining, dancing – and those zones should flow into each other naturally. When guests have to hunt for the bar or squeeze past tables to reach the dance floor, the energy fragments. Ask the venue how they typically configure the space for your event type and guest count.

The entry experience sets the tone. How guests arrive – what they see first, where they're naturally directed – establishes the emotional register of the entire evening. A venue with a strong, intentional entry point is worth noting. One that drops guests into a side door next to a catering station is worth questioning.

Transition moments are where events get complicated. The shift from ceremony to cocktail hour is one of the most logistically vulnerable points of any event. Ask how the venue handles it, how vendors reset the room, and how long that transition realistically takes.





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Budget Reality Check

Venue pricing is rarely what it appears to be, and the gap between the quoted price and the final invoice is where most event budgets get derailed.

The per-person math adds up faster than you expect. A venue that charges \$150 per person sounds reasonable until you multiply it by 200 guests. Then add a service charge and taxes – which can run an additional 25-35% on top – and you're looking at a number that bears little resemblance to what was on the brochure. Always ask for an all-in estimate before you fall in love with a space.

Minimum spends are non-negotiable. Many venues require a food and beverage minimum regardless of your actual guest count. If your event runs smaller than anticipated, you're still on the hook for the difference.

Understand what the rental fee actually includes. Some venues provide tables, chairs, and linens as part of their fee. Others hand you four walls and a floor. Knowing which one you're dealing with early changes your vendor budget significantly.

Most venues have a preferred vendor list, not a required one. Outside vendors are rarely prohibited outright, but your chosen vendor may need to produce a Certificate of Insurance (COI) with higher-than-usual coverage, and the venue may require a reimbursable deposit from you as a safeguard against property damage. Factor both into your budget early.





Season and Timing

The venue you tour on a mild October morning will feel like a completely different space at a July midday event. Season and time of day shape the entire sensory experience – and they're worth thinking through carefully before you commit to a date.

Outdoor spaces require extra scrutiny. Southern California's weather is enviable, but summer heat can be genuinely uncomfortable for midday events, particularly for guests in formal attire. Think carefully about your start time and whether the space has adequate shade, airflow, or a weather contingency plan.

Golden hour is a real planning consideration. For any event with an outdoor component, look up the sunset time on your actual event date. That window of light affects your photos, your lighting transitions, and the overall mood of the evening. The best events are built around it intentionally.

Shoulder season is worth serious consideration. Early spring and late autumn in LA often offer the best combination of favorable weather, pricing flexibility, and venue availability. Peak season dates can book 12-18 months out and carry premium pricing to match.

Time of day transforms a space. If possible, visit shortlisted venues at the same time of day you're planning to host – what you see is much closer to what your guests will actually experience.



07

Sound and Acoustics

Acoustics is the detail most people never think about — until they're watching their best man deliver a heartfelt toast that no one in the back half of the room can hear.

Hard surfaces are the enemy of good sound. Marble floors, glass walls, vaulted ceilings, and bare concrete all create reverberation that makes music sound muddy and speech difficult to follow. Soft surfaces — drapery, carpet, upholstered seating, even a full room of people — absorb sound and improve clarity dramatically. When you tour a venue, note what surfaces dominate and ask how they've handled acoustics for events of your size.

There's a difference between a venue that has sound equipment and one that has good sound equipment. Ask specifically what's included, where speakers are positioned, and whether the system can be zoned — meaning cocktail hour music in one area while the dining room stays quieter. A single speaker setup in a large room is rarely sufficient.

Noise ordinances are a real planning factor in LA. Many venues — particularly those in residential-adjacent areas — have hard sound cutoffs, sometimes as early as 10pm. This isn't just about volume; it can affect whether you're able to have a live band at all. Ask about decibel limits and what happens if they're exceeded before you fall in love with a space.



Venue COMPARISON

Tour your top venues, then fill this in side-by-side.
Facts only – save the conversation for the checklist.

<i>Venue Name</i>			
Seated guest capacity (with dance floor, stage, and DJ/band)			
F&B minimum spend			
In-house catering and bartending required?			
Rental fee & what's included (tables, chairs, linens, etc.)			
Outside vendor policy – COI details & deposit amounts			
ADA accessibility throughout			
Ceremony backup plan?			
Load-in / load-out windows			
Noise ordinance / sound cutoff time			
Parking situation (valet, self-park, street – and cost)			
Sunset time on event date			

Quick CHECKLIST

Before you sign anything, make sure you've had these conversations.
Some answers will surprise you.

- What is the exact seated capacity with a dance floor, stage, and full vendor setup included?
- Who has final approval over the floor plan — and how far in advance does it need to be locked?
- If any spaces are being transitioned between event phases, what does that look like — who handles it, how long does it realistically take, and where are guests during that window?
- Are there overtime penalties, and what specifically triggers them?
- What time must music end — is there a soft versus hard cutoff?
- What are the bar package minimums?
- Are there power limitations for a band or DJ?
- What is the weather backup plan, and who makes that call — and when?
- What does your cancellation and rescheduling policy look like?
- Are there any fees, restrictions, or requirements not listed in the contract that past clients have been surprised by?

READY *to* BEGIN?



Whether you're planning a wedding, milestone celebration, or corporate event, we are ready to handle every detail so you can focus on making memories. We look forward to working with you to bring your vision to life.

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