

# Mitzvah-making and Party Planning Simchas Resource Guide

BY BRIE STIMSON

“Anything people need they can find there,” Lydia Krasner, co-owner of BESA San Diego says of their annual Bar and Bat Mitzvah expo this month.

And Krasner isn't lying. There's everything you could want or need for your party, and some things you didn't even know you needed – like a digital caricaturist.

“Caricatures have become more popular now because they added digital technology,” Krasner says. For example, Digital Event Caricature, who will be at this year's expo, draws and colors a person's image on an iPad. The photo can either be printed out or emailed to the party goer.

The BESA Expo will have everything from caterers and decorators to photographers, DJs, invitation ideas and bands.

“It's a one-stop shop,” Krasner says.

Although synagogues often provide approved lists of people and companies, by going to the expo “people ... save a lot of time instead of making individual appointments,” Krasner explains.

“There's a great energy in the room because you have all these pre-Bar and Bat Mitzvah kids and their parents and it's so exciting to be in the room, and there's music and there's dancing and they get their hair sprayed funny and there's free food and it's just a party going on but it gives them so many ideas.”

Krasner says she sometimes has people come up to her whose

parties were several years ago, and sometimes she talks to people whose parties are several years away.

For those who've been to the Expo before and think they've seen it all, she explains that there's always something new to see each year.

Krasner, who's been in the event business for more than 20 years, thinks she's seen just about everything too, when it comes to Bar and Bat Mitzvahs (from mechanical bull rides to a “Hamilton”-themed party) but she never gets tired of it.

“[The Expo] is so much fun every year. Of course I walk away and I can barely talk because I've talked all day, but it's just so much fun to see all these excited kids and parents hungry for information walking through the room, and everybody gets a bag when they come in and they get the BESA brochure, and they're all just excited to go try everything.”

For those looking to get a jump start on their celebrations, this Simchas supplement will also help you prepare. Here, the Jewish Journal has compiled and updated its annual list of venues and vendors who will make any gathering a memorable one. We also check back in with Lydia Krasner for some tips on what's trending this year, plus feature a modern ketubah artist, and a few personal stories of mitzvah-making. ✧

## Venues

### **B** Hilton Garden Inn San Diego/Del Mar

3939 Ocean Bluff Ave.

[hiltongardeninndelmar.com](http://hiltongardeninndelmar.com)

(858) 720-9500

Capacity: up to 150

Room cost: food and beverage minimum of \$2,500 gets free room rental

Advance booking recommended:

anytime, but book by June 15, and the hotel will offer a complimentary chocolate fountain with two dipping items, enough for 35

Outside catering allowed: Only for ethnic requirements, but per-person fee is applied

### **B** Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines

10950 North Torrey Pines Rd.

[hiltonlajollatorreypines.com](http://hiltonlajollatorreypines.com)

(858) 558-1500

Capacity:

Room cost:

Advance booking recommended:

Outside catering allowed:

Hilton San Diego Bayfront

1 Park Blvd.

[hiltonsandiegobayfront.com](http://hiltonsandiegobayfront.com)

(619) 321-4211

Capacity: up to 2,400

Room cost: varies, call for quote

Advance booking recommended:

one year

Outside catering allowed: No,

Kosher catering available in-house

Hilton San Diego/Del Mar

15575 Jimmy Durante Blvd.

[sandiegodelmar.hilton.com](http://sandiegodelmar.hilton.com)

(858) 764-6044

Capacity: up to 400

Room cost: call for quote

Advance booking recommended:

6 months

Outside catering allowed: Only if dietary restrictions are required

Homewood Suites by Hilton

San Diego-Del Mar

11025 Vista Sorrento Parkway

(858) 523-0500

Capacity: up to 90

Room cost: varies by event date and requirements

Advance booking recommended:

book early to save up to 15%

Outside catering allowed: No,

except for kosher events

Hornblower Cruises

1800 N. Harbor Dr.

[hornblower.com](http://hornblower.com)

(619) 686-8700

Capacity: 10-1,000

Room cost: price varies with custom options

Advance booking recommended:

as soon as possible

Outside catering allowed: No

Hotel Del Coronado

1500 Orange Ave.

[hoteldel.com](http://hoteldel.com)

(619) 435-6611

Capacity: up to 1,100

Room cost: food and beverage minimums on top of room rental charges

Advance booking recommended:

at least one year

Outside catering allowed: No

### **B** Hyatt Regency La Jolla at Aventine

3777 La Jolla Village Drive

[lajolla.hyatt.com](http://lajolla.hyatt.com)

(858) 552-6025

Capacity: up to 650

Room cost: \$50-200 per person

Advance booking recommended:

one year

Outside catering allowed: Yes

Maderas Golf Club

17750 Old Coach Rd.

[maderasgolf.com](http://maderasgolf.com)

(858) 451-8100

Call for quote and details

## Photography

**B** Aaron Huniu Photography  
*aaronhuniuphotography.com*  
(949) 307-8499  
Services: photography

**B** Bob Hoffman  
*hoffmanmitzvahs.com*  
(858) 576-0046  
Services: photography and videography

Alon David  
*photographybyalon.com*  
(858) 699-5376  
Services: photography

Daisy Varley  
*daisyvarley.com*  
(619) 405-4780  
Services: photography and videography

**B** Del Rio Studios  
*delriostudios.com*  
(760) 480-7553  
Services: photography and videography

Leetal Elmaleh  
*leetalphoto.com*  
(858) 692-3418  
Services: photography

Vito di Stefano  
*vitophotography.com*  
(619) 822-0456  
Services: photography

## Caterers

Approximate price ranges when indicated; otherwise, call the vendor

\$ - up to \$20 pp  
\$\$ - \$ 20-30 pp  
\$\$\$ - more than \$30 pp

**Balboa International Market**  
5907 Balboa Ave  
*balboamarket.com*  
(858) 277-3600  
Food cost/person: \$  
Food style: Mediterranean

**K** Café Chabad Catering by Yakov  
16934 Chabad Way  
(858) 451-0455  
Food cost/person: call for quote  
Food style: Glatt Kosher

**B K** Catering by Charles Rubín of Shmoozers  
10785 Pomerado Road  
*shmoozers.com*  
(619) 583-1636

or (619) 261-8856  
Food cost/person: call for quote  
Food style: ethnic variety

**Calibanzo Hummus & Grill**  
9880 Hibert St.  
*calibanzo.com*  
Food cost/person: \$\$  
Food style: Mediterranean, kosher-style options, Middle Eastern  
**D.Z. Akin's**  
6930 Alvarado Road  
*dzakinsdelli.com*  
(619) 265-0218  
Food cost/person: \$\$  
Food style: New York Jewish deli

**Gourmet India**  
810 4th Ave.  
(610) 394-2084  
Food cost/person: \$\$  
Food style: Indian

**Eco Caters, 4934 Voltaire St.**  
*ecocaters.com*  
(858) 246-6129  
Food cost/person: \$\$\$  
Food style: seasonal farm-to-table

**Embargo Grill**  
3960 West Point Loma Blvd  
*embargogrill.com*

(619) 786-7522  
or (619) 994-4834  
Food cost/per person: \$-\$\$  
Food style: Top-rated Cuban, Caribbean and Latin American

**Elijah's Delicatessen**  
7061 Clairemont Mesa Blvd  
*elijahsrestaurant.com*  
(858) 455-1461  
Food cost/person: \$\$  
Food style: Jewish deli, Russian

**Festivities Catering**  
9558 Camino Ruiz  
*festivitiescatering.com*  
(858) 586-2121  
Food cost/person: \$\$\$  
Food style: California coastal/fusion

**Hanna's Gourmet**  
2864 Adams Ave.  
*hannasgourmetcatering.com*  
(619) 280-5600  
Food cost/person: \$\$-\$\$\$  
Food style: international eclectic

**New York on Rye Food Truck**  
*newyorkonrye.com*  
(858) 689-2600  
Food cost/person: \$  
Food style: New York style deli, food truck

# Trending Topics for Bar / Bat Mitzvahs

BY BRIE STIMSON

## ECOFRIENDLY

"A lot of people are doing eco-friendly – like making their party green," BESA co-chair Lydia Krasner says. She adds that natural fibers like burlap and jute have become very popular. "I think people are looking for authenticity," she says. People no longer want plastic or silk flowers, she explains.

## LOUNGE FURNITURE

"Lounge furniture is always a hit," Krasner says. "I feel like the lounge furniture is always a great way to go because you put it around the dance floor and it keeps the kids engaged with the DJ." She says, unlike 10 years ago, they rarely do big tables because it hinders flow. Wherever the kids are sitting they can move around and always have access to the dance floor.

## SOPHISTICATION

Krasner says she's seen more cultured themes in the last few years, things like Broadway, modern Judaic. Whereas 10 years ago she would do more parties along the lines of sports or Disney themes, kids now are looking for something that feels a bit older.

"The internet has opened a lot of doors to kids," she says. "The themes have gotten more mature."

## FOOD TRUCKS

Trucks that serve everything from coffee to brownies to food on a stick are trending right now.

"That trickled down from Hollywood and a lot of the L.A. parties," she explains.

## TIFFANY BLUE FOR GIRLS

"You don't have to have a theme," Krasner says. "It could be about a color."

In the last year, Tiffany Blue has been the most popular color for Bat Mitzvahs, according to Krasner.

