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# How the Salonnière List of the Best Party Hosts in America Is Put Together

The who's who of shindig-throwers in 2019 is out.

BY STEVEN STOLMAN —◇— MAR 21, 2019



When Carla McDonald, a seasoned public relations exec, traded New York for Austin, TX in order to marry her husband Jack and start a family, she thought that keeping her hand in the marketing game would be a good thing, and initially it was. She aligned with a tech startup, and when it was sold, she leveraged that experience and her significant contacts into her own boutique PR firm, Dynabrand, growing it into one of the top firms in the state. But as the PR industry changed dramatically to feed the beast of the 24/7 news cycle, her passion for the art of buzz

waned. “I just wasn’t enjoying it as much,” she said. “I wanted to start something new.”



Salonnière’s founder Carla McDonald.

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An accomplished host and enthusiastic guest herself, she envisioned an online magazine that would celebrate the art of gracious hospitality. She named it *The Salonnière* after the women of 17th and 18th century France whose influential parties, or *salons*, shaped the world in a way that is still felt today. The website, launched in 2012, remains a fizzy romp through various events and personalities, accented with bits of party lore and retro images. And then there’s “The List.”

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“It was a perfectly lovely party, if you’ve never been to a party before.” –Truman Capote

Like other lists in our “who’s in/who’s out” obsessed society, the list’s publication is a newsworthy event in of itself, as evidenced by the significant amount of media coverage it receives. And while lists of names are always an appetizing read for some, a bit of deeper diving revealed some interesting aspects of today’s social landscape.

1. The South rules: 46 percent of the honorees are from the South; 26 percent are from the West; 25 percent are from the Northeast; and three percent are from the Midwest.
2. Two and a half times as many women are on the list as men.
3. Intimate dinner parties are replacing over-the-top galas as preferred events.

**There are 15 hosts who have made the list every year since its inception. They are:**

**Aspen:** Amy and John Phelan

**Atlanta:** Annette Joseph, Danielle Rollins

**Dallas:** Cindy Rachofsky

**Houston:** Becca Carson Thrash, Lynn Wyatt, Phoebe Tudor

**New York:** Ashley McDermott, Lela Rose

**New Orleans:** Julia Reed

**Newport:** Bettie Bearden Pardee

**Palm Beach:** Annie Falk

**San Francisco:** Ken Fulk

**Washington, DC:** Hilary and Wilbur Ross, Katherine and David Bradley.

Full disclosure: I do appear on this year's list, and for the second time (last year was for Milwaukee, this year is for Palm Beach). In my book, *Confessions of a Serial Entertainer*, I write freely about the irony of being thought of as a host of any note. My husband Rich (a solid Midwestern corporate software wonk and total jock) and I live in an unassuming 1970s condo with a small, nothing special kitchen. We both travel relentlessly for work, so much of our time at home is taken up by laundry and jet lag recovery.

Yet, without fail, a dinner party or a cocktail gathering will manage to work its way into our downtime, far more frequently than our friends with bigger, fancier digs. But ours are always modest affairs—a big bowl of chips and that old onion dip—or pigs in blankets and cucumber sandwiches if I can get my act together. One thing that I can say is that we always have enough booze and ice. If that qualifies me as an accomplished host, I'll take it. So here's to *The Salonniere* 100—it's always nice to be included.



# ***THE SALONNIERE* NAMES** **AMERICA'S 2019 100 BEST PARTY** **HOSTS:**

## **Aspen**

Amy and John Phelan

## **Atlanta**

Annette Joseph

Cathleen Smith Bresciani

Danielle Rollins

James Farmer

Sara Blakely

## **Austin**

Kirstin and Joe Ross

Mary Herr Tally

## **Bergen County, New Jersey**

Herb Karlitz

## **Boston**

Christy Cashman

## **Charleston**

Carolyne Roehm

Patricia Altschul

## **Charlotte**

Chandra Johnson

Laura Vinroot Poole

## **Chicago**

Alessandra Branca

Cynthia Chereskin

Irene Michaels

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## **Corpus Christi**

Ronda Carman

## **Dallas**

Brooke Davenport

Cindy Rachofsky

Nancy Rogers

## **Denver**

Christine Vazquez

Laura Moretz

## **Detroit**

Grace Montero and Jay Rayford

## **Fort Worth**

Cami Goff

Mercedes Bass

## **The Hamptons**

Audrey Gruss

Kelli Delaney Kot

Tony Ingrao and Randy Kemper

## **Houston**

Becca Cason Thrash

Lynn Wyatt

Phoebe TudorSheridan Williams

## **Lexington, Kentucky**

Jon Carloftis and Dale Fisher

## **Little Rock**

Shayla Copas

## **Louisville, Kentucky**

Priscilla Barnstable and Patricia Barnstable-Brown

Tammy York Day and Tonya York Dees

## **Los Angeles**

Cheryl Saban

Crystal Lourd

Frances Schultz

Hutton Wilkinson

Irena Medavoy

Jamie Tisch

Jennifer Aniston

Liane Weintraub

Mike Meldman

Nadine and Fred Rosen

Renvy Pittman

Stephanie Booth Shafran

Suzanne Rheinstein

Timothy Corrigan

## **Miami**

Gabrielle Union and Dwyane Wade

Stephanie Aagaard

Swanee DiMare

Yolanda and Jeff Berkowitz

## **Nashville**



Ellen Martin  
Keith Meacham

## **New Orleans**

Alexa Pulitzer  
Jane Scott Hodges  
Julia Reed  
Martine Chaisson Linares

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## **New York**

Alex Hitz  
Alex Papachristidis  
Allison Sarofim  
Ashley McDermott  
Bunny Williams  
Charlotte Moss  
Derek Blasberg  
Isabelle Bscher  
Jean Shafiroff  
Jill Kargman  
Lela Rose  
Muffie Potter Aston and Dr. Sherrell Aston  
Richard Keith Langham  
Stephanie Nass  
Susan Gutfreund

## **Newport**

Published annually since 2016, The Salonniere 100 is a party in print—indeed, it would make for the ultimate guest list. Organized by city, it names the area’s top hosts as chosen by a judging panel comprised of McDonald at the helm, her staff and significant polling of movers and shakers from coast to coast. The list does not include event planners or other party professionals, only individuals known for their party prowess.

Bettie Bearden Pardee  
Pamela and David Ford

## **Palm Beach**

Annie Falk  
Pauline Pitt  
Steven Stolman  
Terry Allen Kramer

## **Philadelphia**

Eddie Ross

## **Phoenix**

Carolyn Jackson

## **Provincetown**

John Dowd and Dan Minahan

## **San Diego**

Bridget McKenna  
Rebecca and David Vigil

## **San Francisco**

Anne Hearst McInerney and Jay McInerney  
Aubrey Brewster

Ken Fulk

Monelle Totah and Gary McNatton

Sloan Barnett

## **Santa Barbara**

Oprah Winfrey

## **Savannah, GA**

Alexandra Trujillo de Taylor

## **Washington, D.C.**

Ambassador Gerard Araud

Buffy Cafritz

Hilary and Wilbur Ross

Juleanna Glover

Katherine and David Bradley

Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah

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