



Nomita Joshi-Gupta & Cheryl Nix Murphy

Spruce
sprucenola.com

Known for: Their eco-friendly interior décor shop, Spruce, and design services

Years in business: 2

Years in New Orleans: 19 for Cheryl, 15 for Nomita

Biggest party achievement

"We had our grand opening in a new location in September, and instead of a red carpet, we had a green, eco-friendly carpet that guests walked," Nix Murphy says. "It was high class and we didn't spend a lot—people felt like they were entering something special," Joshi-Gupta adds.

Tip: Create Unity

"When planning for a party, a theme helps you focus," Nix Murphy says. "Pick something as your source of inspiration—a color, furniture piece, or vase."

"The theme should be an underlying idea, so when people come to the party they shouldn't immediately identify it," adds Joshi-Gupta.

Go Natural

"I pick up branches and twigs in Audubon Park and use them in glass vases. You can spray paint them, leave them natural, or string them with crystals or flowers to make a nice centerpiece," Joshi-Gupta says.

Use What You Have

"You can take an orange, cut the top off, hollow it out, and stick flowers in it to create a vase for a party. We've used leftover wallpaper as a tabletop decoration, and we've framed it and made it into wall décor. Try filling a low vintage basin with plants or pillar candles for an easy centerpiece," Nix Murphy says.

Plan Ahead

"Give yourself time to plan and have options. You can over accessorize—it's all about editing. Don't be afraid: If you don't like it, change it," Nix Murphy says.

Melissa Weber, a.k.a. DJ Soul Sister

Known for: Her mix of deep funk, old school funk, rare groove, underground disco, and true school hip-hop (before 1984), spun on vinyl only

Years in business: 15

Years in New Orleans: 35
(born and raised)



Tip: Plan Your Playlist

At a New Orleans-style party, the music needs to play nonstop and inspire people to get up and dance. There's an amazing funk and soul history in the area, and you can't go wrong with the eminently danceable rhythmic feel-good grooves of classic acts such as these.

New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian music:

"This keeps things lively, plus the holidays are the prime time for Mardi Gras Indians getting deep into sewing their suits for Mardi Gras Day—the next big holiday in New Orleans after Christmas."

BANDS TO DOWNLOAD:

Wild Tchoupitoulas Mardi Gras Indians, Wild Magnolias

New Orleans Funk:

"This is a no-brainer. You can't have a fun party without a whole lot of dancing."

BANDS TO DOWNLOAD:

The Meters, or any of the multiple rare groove compilations with "New Orleans funk" in the title. There are tons of them.

New Orleans Brass Bands:

"If it's a funky brass band, you'll keep your guests on the dance floor New Orleans-style."

BANDS TO DOWNLOAD:

Rebirth, Soul Rebels, Hot 8, Stooges