



Parties with a *twist*

Looking for inspiration for a party with a difference? *Kate Farr* shares her top 10 picks for an out-of-the-ordinary celebration.

We've all attended (and probably thrown) a kids' party or two, and it's fair to say that the average junior shindig can be a bit formulaic. Party games, blow out the candles, pass the parcel, some kind of entertainer then home with a slice of cake and a bag of toys in time for bed. Of course, there's nothing at all wrong with a traditional birthday party, but if your little one is after something a bit different this year, here are 10 suggestions for great gatherings with a twist or two.

1 Hit the decks
Junior bassline junkies should take a trip to Sol Passion Music's Wan Chai studio where they – and up to seven friends – will learn how to drop a big beat with the best of them. While Sol's team of instructors offer ongoing DJ and production courses, their two-hour private workshop offers a taster of life behind the lasers and aims to get kids of eight and over hooked on the technical aspects of DJ-ing, using club-grade equipment. And they'll be in good company – Sol's team of pro DJ instructors includes clubland favourites Ed Rollo, Mike Wolf and Jeanette Slack, while their young graduates have gone on to play sets at Clockenflap, The Affordable Art Fair and Volar.

Two-hour private workshop prices vary according to number of participants. More information available from www.solpassionmusic.com.

2 Animal magic
Kids of all ages love animals, and while many of us have a family pet at home, how many of us can say we've stroked a snake, hugged a hedgehog or fed a frog? Let them live out their wildlife fantasies with a party by Jurassic Garage, where animal handler Goatee Toni will drop by to say hi with his wild and wonderful menagerie in tow. And while the parties are entertaining, they focus first and foremost on animal welfare. Toni is a known conservationist who works on breeding programmes to increase the number of particular endangered species, and he ensures that all the creatures in his "Garage" are well treated during their guest appearances.

Jurassic Garage party prices vary. For more information see www.jurassicgarage.hk.

3 Director's cut
Film enthusiasts can get comfy with a select group of just 16 discerning cinemagoers at the Director's Club at UA Cityplaza in Tai Koo. This super-plush VIP screening room allows kids to select

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any film they fancy for the big screen, so if they absolutely must watch *Frozen* for the eightieth time, this is definitely the place to do it. Little ones can cosy up in the oversized leather recliners and get busy with the snacks as the credits roll – rental includes a hot dog plus free-flowing popcorn and soft drinks, delivered right to their seat. **Director's Club whole-cinema rental costs HK\$3,200 for 2D screenings and HK\$3,600 for 3D screenings. Optional children's party add-on is HK\$1,800. For all options see www.uacinemas.com.hk.**

4 Jump around Guaranteed to burn off every last calorie and then some, a trampoline party at Bounce Inc. will have even the shyest kids donning grippy socks and bounding onto the springs. In addition to free reign on the trampolines, giant air bag and dodgeball courts, they'll also get their own private party room and a gift bag with voucher for the birthday boy or girl. Parents will approve of the nibbles on offer here – as well as the standard party fare, including salted popcorn, sandwiches and crisps, you can also opt for healthier snacks, such as fruit cups and sweet potato chips. **Party packages range from HK\$300 – HK\$400 per child. For more information see www.bounceinc.com.hk.**

5 Battle Royale Perfect for older kids and teens, a trip to CAGE in Tseun Wan will fulfil all their most riotous fantasies in a safe space. Choose from Slackline Battles, Pool Soccer and Dodgeball challenges. The aim of the game is to work as a team, sweat it out and have fun! Party packages include the use of a bouncy castle and decorations, making this a one-stop entertainment-packed activity day to remember. **Prices vary according to games selected and number of participants. For more information contact www.cage.hk.**

6 Lost in the city Another great option for older kids, Lost Hong Kong offers escape-themed fun with a logical slant as teams crack codes, decipher clues and undertake physical challenges in order to escape a locked room within a specific time limit. There are various fantasy, war and adventure-themed options at the Causeway Bay location, and you'll need to be quick thinking to complete the challenges that lie within.

From HK\$150-HK\$220 per person, depending on game selected. For more information contact www.losthk.com.

7 What's cooking? If your little one has a flair for cooking then a party at Spark Studios might just be to their taste. This 2,400 square foot space in Tai Koo Shing comes with the sort of kitchen that most adults would envy and also boasts a 600-foot terrace for little ones to enjoy their culinary creations alfresco. The friendly folks at Spark regularly run classes for kids aged from 5-16 years, ranging from creative cooking to art history through food, and a private session can easily be added on to venue rental. Why not get them baking their own birthday cake this year?

Venue hire and cooking class prices on application. Details available from www.sparkstudioshk.com.

8 Reach for the lasers Laser Mads is a laser tag venue



right in the heart of Causeway Bay. Offering energetic kids ample space to roam free, the game encourages teamwork and agility while the spaceship-themed layout offers participating dads the opportunity to finally act out their *Star Wars* fantasies. **Whole-venue hire from HK\$3,188-HK\$8,370, depending on duration and number of players. For more information see www.lasermads.com.**

9 Bubble trouble For sheer comedy value, Bubble Football wins the day. Encase your kids in a huge inflatable ball and attempt the most ridiculous soccer game you've ever seen! Head to the dedicated indoor pitch in Kwun Tong or have the Bubble Football team come to your chosen venue. Rental includes bubble suits, goals, a coach and referee, and they'll even lay on photography and motivating tunes to get things going. Small bubbles are available for kids and full safety briefings are given before the games can begin.

Rental fees vary according to party size and venue. For more information see www.bubblefootball.com.hk.

10 Get crafty Creative kids will adore a Seedling Party where each three-hour session includes a full hour of arts and crafts activities using Seedling's fabulous craft materials. There are a choice of eight different décor and craft themes to choose from, including dinosaur, pom-poms, animals and fashionista, and party packages also include photos with fun props and a themed invitation e-card. Add-ons include balloons and party bags, and you're welcome to bring your own food or else make use of Seedling's catering service.

Basic party package starts at HK\$3,800 for up to 10 kids; various add-ons available. For more information see www.seedling.com.hk. 