



LEAH SLEPIAN
real bat mitzvah



In 2009, at age 12, Leah Slepian had already visited Israel with her family and completed her bat mitzvah ceremony there. While it was an amazing trip, and she had worked hard to meet the challenges it entailed a year earlier than is customary in the U.S., there was one thing she missed out on: celebrating that accomplishment with all of her friends and relatives.

On May 22, 2010, shortly after her 13th birthday, that situation was rectified as her parents, Michele and Eric, threw their daughter a fantastic "Club Leah" themed bat mitzvah/birthday celebration unlike anything Atlanta had seen before! With the help of planner Sharon Fisher of It's My Party, Inc., the Slepian's moved quickly, planning the 130-guest event in only a few short months. They selected one of the city's newer venues, Ventanas, for a

transformation into Club Leah.

"We knew as soon as we saw Ventanas," Michele said. "It was exactly what we were looking for—very club-like and a fun feel."

Fisher agreed. "It's just such a cool venue. At night, you're looking out over the city and see all the lights." The evening of Leah's bat mitzvah was beautiful, she explained, and guests enjoyed both the indoor and outdoor spaces.

To encourage the club-like feel, Michele and Fisher worked with Jessy's Paper, Inc. to craft invitations designed to look like backstage passes, with a twist. The invitations were made of hard, clear plastic, and arrived in big, bubble envelopes to add to the drama. As guests arrived, they walked up a red carpet before stepping into the elevator that would whisk them up to Ventanas. "It was great," said Michele.

We played it up like the paparazzi were going to be there. It was the grand opening of Club Leah."

As any star knows, the grand entrance at a club opening should be memorable. Leah's certainly was. The guest of honor arrived at Ventanas with her father and brother by helicopter, first circling the building as guests were drawn to the rooftop helipad, and then, in a dramatic surprise to those waiting guests, landing right there! She was excited, and, in a bright tie-dye colored dress, quickly made her entrance to Club Leah to the popular Ke\$ha song "Tik Tok," with the very fun and appropriate line "the party don't start til I walk in."

Club Leah was decorated for the night with lots of bright colors and some tie-dye accents, with undercurrents of recurring purple and black. One of the most eye-catching and memorable elements of the decor was very rare tie-dye roses that Tony Conway and Amy Saltzman of A Legendary Event actually imported from Amsterdam for the bat mitzvah. The gorgeous flowers caused their own behind-the-scenes drama; due to the volcano, air traffic in Europe was severely disrupted, and the flowers didn't arrive until the morning of the party! "The tie-dye roses," Fisher said, "were so spectacular."

Right after her entrance and introduction, Leah did her candle lighting and cut the topsy-turvy six-layer cake that she had helped design. A video of her actual bat mitzvah ceremony the year before, in Israel, played alongside her. Shortly after, she disappeared for a quick outfit change, emerging in a more "club-like" purple dress. From that point on, it was time to eat, drink and have fun! "We wanted everyone to eat all night, and just enjoy themselves," Michele said.

In addition to the decor, A Legendary Event also catered the event, arranging a variety of stations throughout the indoor/outdoor event space that stayed open all night long. Each station represented something or someone important to the Stepien family. "It was really personalized, and every detail was taken care of," said Fisher. Michele's maiden name, Noodleman, served as the name of the Asian noodle station, for example. Guests also enjoyed a Latin station,





sushi bar station, and a build-your-own pasta station they called the "Lamborghini Station." The Schwartz's Deli Station served authentic New York deli-style food, like knishes and matzo ball soup. "We organized the flow to make the event feel intimate," Fisher explained. Casual seating let everyone mix, mingle and enjoy the night without being restricted to any one table. While the adult bars were placed throughout the interior of the venue, there was a juice bar for Leah's guests set up on the rooftop patio. The bartender became a hit with the kids, mixing up a variety of different juice drinks and shots throughout the evening. The teens also kept busy by getting decorated with airbrush tattoos and making flip-books. Michele describes the process guests went through to make their own books: "You stand in front of a green screen and move in exaggerated movements with props. Then, a little two-inch by five-inch book prints out, and you can flip through it and see yourself moving!" The flipbooks all had covers customized with Leah's initial logo.

The flip-books, from local company Flippity-Doo Da, actually ended up being a huge hit with everyone at the party, not just the kids. "To this day," Michele said, "friends still have the books sitting out in their house!" A DJ from Vibe Entertainment also kept the party moving. "From friends with little ones to the kids to the adults, I think every age had a great time. It was lots of fun," said Michele. "It was an amazing night no one will forget," she continued. "Most of our guests hadn't been to an event like that. It was not your typical bat mitzvah! We did the candle lighting and the cake right away and then it was just a fun party." As the night wrapped up, everyone enjoyed a surprise reveal of a candy bar, as well as passed miniature ice cream cones, cheesecake bites on a stick, and other tasty treats.

"All the funky elements that they went above and beyond for made all the difference," Fisher said. "It was very cool, very different and edgy; it was exactly what they wanted.

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Event Planner: It's My Party, Inc.
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Decor and Catering: A Legendary Event, www.legendaryevents.com
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