



# Outdoor Reception in the Swan House Gardens

This document outlines essential Event Guidelines for outdoor receptions and highlights additional considerations for your event. Please review all Event Guidelines in the brochure for a comprehensive understanding.

## **Reception Definition**

A reception refers to the dinner portion of an event, typically following the cocktail hour, and often extending into the evening.

## **Overview**

Outdoor receptions in the Swan House Gardens are breathtaking, but they require more extensive planning and higher costs. Alternatively, our Grand Overlook Ballroom in the History Museum offers a similarly enchanting atmosphere with floor-to-ceiling windows. The barrel-vaulted ceiling can create a celestial feel with blue-violet lighting and projected stars, brought in by one of our approved lighting companies. Unless an alfresco dinner has been your dream, we suggest considering an indoor reception. Regardless, we are happy to bring your vision to life in either setting.

## **Noise Ordinance**

Due to local noise regulations, all outdoor events must conclude by 10:30 p.m. Additionally, any horns used by a band must cease by 10:00 p.m. These restrictions do not apply to indoor events, which may continue until midnight.

## **Location & Capacity**

Outdoor receptions are permitted only on the column side of the Swan House, with a maximum capacity of 200 guests. The fountain side is reserved exclusively for ceremonies.

## **Temperature Guidelines**

Outdoor receptions are permitted from March through June 15th and from September 15th through November. Receptions where the temperature index ("feels like" temperature) is expected to be 50°F or lower, or 88°F or higher, during any point between setup and breakdown must be moved indoors. This ensures a comfortable and safe experience for your guests, vendors, and event staff.

## **Weather Contingency Plan**

While we always hope for ideal weather, an indoor backup plan is required for all outdoor events. For receptions, the decision to move indoors may need to be made up

to 2 days in advance, depending on vendor setups (especially lighting and décor). Lighting companies often finalize their plans a day before, and if the event is moved indoors, they will adjust to a more appropriate plan for the ballroom. The latest you can decide to move the outdoor reception indoors is 24 hours before the event, usually during the rehearsal.

### **Load-In & Load-Out**

Given the extensive rentals for outdoor receptions, you will need a minimum of 6 hours for load-in and 3 hours for load-out. Load-in may begin as early as 6:00 a.m., depending on vendor needs. Your event salesperson will provide an estimate of these times, which can be adjusted up to one month before the event.

### **Power Distribution**

A \$500 power fee applies to outdoor receptions, which covers the cost of our power distribution unit. This ensures adequate power for lighting and entertainment.

### **Lighting Requirements**

For outdoor receptions that extend beyond sunset, additional lighting is required to ensure safety and ambiance. All lighting around the Swan House must be provided by one of our approved vendors, listed in the brochure. This ensures compliance with preservation standards and guarantees high-quality results.

Lighting on the Swan House can range from \$5,000 for the basic setup to \$20,000 or more for more elaborate arrangements. Uplighting around the house, walls, and trees can enhance the visual appeal, but keep in mind that uplights are purely decorative. Adequate functional lighting must be installed for all guest areas, including walkways, bars, food stations, and tables. Lighting for guest tables will only light that area. It is very important to be sure you have included lighting for your bars, buffet, food stations, cake, coffee station, dessert table, etc. A good rule of thumb is to assume a space is dark unless you have lights on it.

### **Catering Area**

Approved caterers will manage the setup of a tent, lighting, and tables on the north side of the Swan House, next to the kitchen entrance, where food preparation will take place. A single power outlet is available to supply power to the catering tent. Any hotboxes or ovens must be fueled by propane or sterno, as electric units are not permitted.

### **Dance Floor**

Rented dance floors are allowed but cannot be installed on grass between May and September until after 3:00 p.m. to prevent damage to the lawn.

### **Restroom Trailer**

There are no restrooms available within the Swan House Gardens. For any outdoor event, a restroom trailer (self-contained with its own generator and water supply) is required. These trailers generally cost around \$2,200 for two stalls and must be removed the same night. A two-stall trailer is suitable for up to 100 guests, while a larger trailer is needed for more guests.

### **Tented Outdoor Reception**

We discourage using a tent for outdoor receptions, as it obstructs the full beauty of the Swan House and the night sky. Tents also do not serve as rain plans. With electrical cords and support staff working outside the tent, if it is raining and/or lightening, for the safety of guests and staff, everyone will need to move into the ballroom.

However, some couples still prefer the aesthetic of a classic white or clear tent.

### Tenting Guidelines

- A \$6,500 fee is required for tent setup on the column side of the Swan House or the adjacent parking lot. This fee covers up to 24 hours of setup and breakdown (on the day before and the day after the event). Additional setup hours can be added at \$300 each. This does not include any additional hours of setup on the day of the event (billed separately). This also includes the black Model T being removed.
- Tents must be rented from Atlanta Party Rentals, with costs ranging from \$35,000 to \$45,000. All furniture must also be rented from the same company, and lighting must come from one of our approved AV vendors.
- Tents must be fully dismantled and cleared by 1:00 p.m. the day after the event. Overnight tent breakdowns are not allowed.
- If the tent fee is not included in the original contract, the events department must approve setup and breakdown schedules 30 days prior to your event. We do not guarantee the day before or after for setup and breakdown, until the reservation is confirmed, and this fee is paid.

### **Wedding Planner**

While we recommend a planner from our preferred list for any wedding, if you're planning an outdoor reception at the Swan House Gardens, it is essential to select a planner experienced with outdoor events at this venue. It is significantly more work than an indoor reception and having someone who has successfully executed it before will give you peace of mind and be to everyone's advantage.

### **Minimum Cost for Outdoor Receptions**

Due to the increased costs for furniture, lighting, catering, restroom trailers, and other rentals, couples can expect to pay at least \$10,000 more for an outdoor reception compared to an indoor event.

**No matter your choice - indoors, outdoors, under a tent, or beneath the stars - we are committed to making your wedding day a dream come true. We will work closely with you and your vendor team to ensure every detail is perfect.**