

# **Grass is Always Greener**

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**By Stephanie Davila**

Each autumn just before the first frost hits, I head outside to the front yard to plant a spectrum of tulip and daffodil bulbs that I won't actually see for another six months. It always feels odd—like giving a Christmas gift in May or wearing earmuffs to the beach—but when it comes to gardening, you have to plan ahead. Savvy event planners think the same way and begin planning for sultry summer soirees at the same time they are shoveling their walks. To help thaw your wintry minds and get you thinking spring, here are seven metro-area outdoor venues that will put your event on attendees' "best of" list.

## **Crowne Plaza Northstar Hotel**

Open the gilded doors to downtown Minneapolis' Crowne Plaza Northstar Hotel and immediately escape into a VIP paradise. The concierge greets you upon arrival as you head to the elevator and up to the eighth floor. At the sound of the ding the doors slide open to an elegant sky garden that showcases a magnificent view of the downtown skyline. The one-of-a-kind garden has full-grown trees, a jackpot of scrubs, a serene water fountain, teakwood furniture and four-foot copper flowerpots oozing with aromatic

flowers. Each summer the garden typically accommodates at least 25 corporate events (mainly for dinners and social events) and a slew of wedding receptions.

Insider's tip: The garden is open from May through October and requires at least three months' notice if you aren't booking guest rooms. If you have 10 or more guest rooms booked, then you can reserve the sky garden as far out as you want. The garden's rental fee is based on a food and beverage minimum and the date of the event. // Capacity: 150 dinner, 350 reception // Square Feet: approximately 5,500 sq. ft. // Catering: On site

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