



A glass act: Avoid the crowds and hold a classy soiree on December 30 instead

Join the NYE rebels this December 30

Helen Croydon is giving New Year's Eve a miss and celebrating the night before

ZERO. That's the number of invites I've had to New Year parties. I do have friends, honest. But they know what my answer would be: Thanks but I'm recovering from New New Year's Eve (NNYE).

NNYE is what cool people do. It's becoming quite a 'thing', but I like to think I started it. For the past four years, I have not been out on December 31, choosing instead to work on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. Being a freelancer in the news business, there's always something, even if it means a lonely night shift.

Last year on New Year's Eve, I went to bed at 9pm ready for a 4am start the following day. I sighed with delight as I sank my head into my pillow and thought of all those poor souls dolling themselves up, forcing their toes into painful shoes, soon to be hobbling around the cold streets desperately looking for a cab as a toxic fume of ethanol emits from the pores of their sticky prosecco-splashed bodies.

Instead, my friends and I have celebrated on December 30 – and the conclusion we have come to is it's much more fun and intimate than joining the

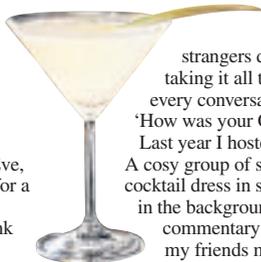
riff-raff on New Year's Eve. Surely the last thing anyone wants is another big knees-up with heaving drunk bodies so soon after Christmas party season?

New New Year's Eve is a more sophisticated affair. The cabs are cheaper, bars less crowded and restaurants priced as they should be. No one slobbers on your cheek at midnight and you don't have to pretend to know the words of Auld Lang Syne. Best of all, there are no

strangers dressed-up to the nines, taking it all too seriously, starting every conversation by squealing 'How was your Christmas?' Last year I hosted a NNYE soiree. A cosy group of six and not a try-hard cocktail dress in sight. There was no TV in the background giving a running commentary of fireworks and my friends managed to bring champagne because the local Tesco hadn't run out. Phew.

The year before, I went for dinner on NNYE, followed by cocktails at a late bar. Far from it being dead, it was filled with like-minded New Year's Eve rebels, too cool to care about saving themselves for 'the big evening'.

Take it from me, the best impression you'll make this New Year's Eve is to stay away and host a secret NNYE.



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