
the Jewish Voice

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Ohel David and Shlomo

—BY JV STAFF



As the Manhattan Beach community grew and flourished throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, 1997 brought the most exciting development yet- the establishment and presentation of Ohel David and Shlomo, the first Sephardic synagogue of the area. Like a welcomed guest, the community embraced the shul and everything it offered, building it into the center of activity that it has now become. Undeniably, the highlight of the building is its beautiful social hall and the celebrations enjoyed there. Fast forward about a decade and a half to today...

Beachside
Sophistication . . . with
neighborhood
simplicity

The Sephardic residents of Manhattan Beach are a tight knit bunch, and Ohel David and Shlomo would not exist without the hard work and dedication of a few families that truly put their hearts and souls into the day-to-day running of it. After fifty, eighty, maybe a hundred parties a year for almost fifteen years it was clear to all involved that the carpet was well worn and the original décor was amortized reasonably enough. It was time for an update, and a new look. Stephen and Gregory Dweck, Albert Laboz, and Maureen and Solomon Cohen formed the committee to revamp and re-energize a space that had lost some “oomph” over the years. For guidance, who better to turn to than the premier event planner, Norma Cohen of NCP Productions...

Norma explains, “I imagined a cleaner and more modernized room that could easily be transformed to whatever look the client is imagining. Eliminating the carpet and adding illumination were the first steps.” The Dwecks were in full agreement, “Norma has an eagle eye. She sees things we don’t see,” Gregory explains. “We put in new lighting, new electricity and new flooring; only the mahogany doors remain. This was a full renovation.”



Ohel David and Shlomo provides an elegant backdrop for a variety of events

This fall, Ohel David and Shlomo has become the sassiest space in the neighborhood. The sleek, contemporary waterfront room just two to ten minutes away from most every guest is an unquestionable draw. Little decoration is needed to entice visitors as the new modular walls and chestnut floor coverings are both immaculate and refreshing. The specialized lighting is comparable to the systems offered by top disc jockeys, and is included at no expense to the hosts. Brand new Lucite chairs as well, are part of the fantastic new look, and are again, included in the price that has not been raised in six years, and will not go up now, either. Edmond Dweck explains, “We were always a go-to venue for barmitzvahs and brisses, but now we are seeing so many more engagement parties and weddings too, even from non-community neighborhood people. There’s a lot of buzz, and we are welcoming all of it. We are very excited!”

Making an event at the shul is simple. Choose a date, and make your list. The specialized lighting, which could cost thousands of dollars, is included. The chairs, which would be at least ten dollars apiece, are included. Standard sized tables are also part of the deal, so you can avoid rentals altogether- it's just the price of the room, which is quite reasonable and very fair, especially when compared to the other options out there. Pick your favorite caterer and florist, (they are all welcome), and you're good to go.

Frieda Yedid made an engagement party for her daughter on October 27, 2011. She was one of the first hosts to enjoy all the new amenities. She gushed, "We loved the room! It was warm and cozy- we barely had to decorate! It was also brand new, so that night everyone thought I had done something so amazing, but it was easy!"

Of all the different venues throughout Brooklyn, Ohel David and Shlomo is the one of the only choices where the hall is on the main floor. Many are located either upstairs or in a basement, and are dark and confining. Some have difficult parking situations and surly looking people out front, and others still are guaranteed to break the bank. None offer the ease and simplicity or the "day at the beach" feeling of this little bayside gem, and certainly none offer the spectacular waterfront views.

"We decided to make a melava malka on November 12th in Manhattan Beach in honor of the birth of our granddaughter," Rozie Mathews explains, "But it quickly morphed into a magnificent dinner and cocktail party. The room looked lovely and everything worked out perfectly for us. The coordinating was easy and everyone was flexible about set-up and preparation. I would make another party there in a minute." Michelle Meltzer echoed Rozie's thoughts when talking about her son's bris on December 11th, "Oh my G-d; we were incredibly happy with everything!" Esther Yedid, as well, enjoyed making a bris there so much that her brother, Elie Mizrahi, decided to do a repeat performance for his grandson a couple of weeks later. "Its fresh, up to date and convenient," Esther recalls, "everything was beautiful!"

Manhattan Beach Synagogue holds about 4-500 guests. If you use the outside areas (with tenting), you can fit up to six hundred people comfortably and enjoy the spectacular gardens as well. In addition to the social hall, the synagogue itself holds exceptional beauty for any type of ceremony. When the sunlight comes streaming in, there is nothing else like it. Valet parking in and around the area is also a unique pleasure. With one phone call you can have it all arranged. You can do more than you need to, or less- that's up to you; there are no limitations.

Bunny and David Ben-Hooren held their daughter's meeting of the family in the wonderfully renovated hall on December 17th. Bunny smiles as she recalls, " I met Anatole the caretaker first- he is the cutest guy on the planet- he knows everything! The place was fabulous and the party came out stunning. Manhattan Beach is a pleasure- you are able to fit many more people than you could in a home, and you don't ruin your floors! The price is fair and they are very accommodating. Other halls are not so much so. Everyone involved made it so easy. I can't say enough- we could not have been happier."

Norma Cohen has planned extraordinary events all over New York City and the world. Right here in the neighborhood, she was equally pleased with the quaint beauty of Manhattan Beach Synagogue for Marilyn and Eli Tawil's daughter Elizabeth's wedding. She explains, "Its cozy and comfortable, the palette is easy to embellish and the layout flows nicely. The atmosphere can be transformed into anything you want it to be and the caterers and florists enjoy working here. I'm thrilled that we laid out a blueprint for many affairs to come. Its simple, and it just works."

The folks at Kessler's Catering agree wholeheartedly. David explains, "Caterers should be thrilled to work in the Manhattan Beach Synagogue- do you know what its like to get all your gear into a midtown Manhattan venue? You could wait double-parked for hours until you get everything inside and up the service elevator to the banquet hall- here you just back your truck up to the rear entrance and you're in! It's a pleasure! Everyone involved is also so easy to work with and pleasant to be around- and Anatole's English has gotten much better over the years!"

Louis from Avenue J Florist is of the same mind, "It is a breath of fresh air to come to a place that has an ambiance that does not have to be created, just accented. The temple needs very little décor, and the ballroom looks twice the size with the new renovations. You just have to add a little individuality and it looks amazing. The clean design also allows a client to do anything they want at a reasonable cost. For once I can utilize my passion- flowers- and I don't have to be an interior decorator. There are lots of plusses, the main one being the serene feeling you get when you cross over that bay. It's the same sensation you get going into Manhattan, just in the other direction- you feel like you're entering another world."

Ohel David and Shlomo has been around for almost twenty years, but today it shines brighter than ever. Our little "jewel by the bay" is a happy place. Its simplicity is its secret, and its convenience is its strength. Now prettier than ever and still ten minutes away from most every guest, Manhattan Beach Synagogue is truly a place to rejoice without all the heartache that can sometimes bog you down. Come celebrate with us; we'll give something to dance about, I'm sure.