

LONG ISLAND

Here's what we learned from attending 25 LI proms

By Jill Ryan, Michael Cusanelli, Jennifer A. Uihlein, Marlo Jappen

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This year, Newsday's intrepid proms team went to a whopping 25 school events across Long Island to document how teens celebrate the end of high school. From castles to catering halls, and even Neverland, we saw lots of different things at each event -- but some traditions never change. Here are some of the things we learned about your kids during our time at the prom.

Celebrating close to home



Photo Credit: Jennifer A. Uihlein

Forget fancy catering halls and waterfront views -- sometimes the perfect send-off for students embarking on their next chapter takes place right where it all began. Several Long Island high schools annually hold their proms on campus, including Ward Melville High School and Earl L. Vandermeulen High School. These schools magically transformed into jaw-dropping scenes from a movie set, making for a whimsical, interactive, highly unforgettable event. With months of preparation, long hours of planning and lots of construction, the community support and commitment reminds students of their roots and serves as a reminder that they are always welcomed home.

We heard a lot of new songs for the first time



Photo Credit: Marlo Jappen

From artists we've never heard of, like Migos and Camila Cabello.

...But sometimes the DJ will throw in a “classic” as a crowd pleaser



Photo Credit: Marlo Jappen

Nothing makes you feel more old than when the DJ puts on a "retro" song like "No One" by Alicia Keyes that we can clearly remember from our own proms.

A nod to the 90s

Photo Credit: Jill Ryan



Nothing goes with your suit and tux like the round, white sunglasses made famous by Kurt Cobain and famously brought back by Pharrell at his 2017 Coachella appearance.

The slang is always changing. Want an update? He's my dad!



Photo Credit: Jill Ryan

Guy friends are not afraid to get personal! Because of a viral online meme, he's not your homie, he's not your bro, he's your dad.

Proms add a bit of sparkle

Photo Credit: Jennifer A. Uihlein

Limo after car after party bus dropped off some pretty suave and glamorous outfits. A prom favorite: Sparkling dresses.

Hip-hop takeover

Photo Credit: Jill Ryan

Prom attendees hit the dance floor and in no time they circle around one or two people who lead the dancing vibe as the others sing along to artists such as Cardi B, Fetty Wap and Post Malone.

Teachers get in on the fun

Photo Credit: Marlo Jappen

While prom marks a major milestone for teens, the night is also an opportunity for faculty members to let loose and create memories. Whether it's hitting the dance floor, snapping photos with students or donning tongue-in-cheek attire, like Kara Keenan, an English teacher at Amityville Memorial High School who wore

a plain black T-shirt decorated with the words "This is my prom dress," teachers seem to be enjoying themselves as much as their students.

Limos never die

Photo Credit: Jennifer A. Uihlein

A timeless tradition of prom season is showing up in a limo, and Long Island teens were sure to honor this sacred custom -- even when the prom was held at their own school.

Shirley Temples are the drink of choice

Photo Credit: Jill Ryan

The bar may be open, but they're only serving one thing: a mixture of sprite and red food dye. Also known as the perfect prom cocktail.

Small Details Go a Long Way

Photo Credit: Marlo Jappen

At Long Island proms, it's the little touches that pack a big punch. Case-in-point: A man on sky-high stilts at Patchogue-Medford High School's circus-themed prom and a make-your-own fajita station at Lawrence Woodmere Academy's prom, which was set at a Mexican restaurant.

Heels are cute, but not on the dance floor

Photo Credit: Jill Ryan

Heels are not a girl's best friend by the end of prom night. Most ladies try to reduce their chance of injury and irritation as soon as the music starts by ditching their shoes entirely.

Do you really need a photographer?

Photo Credit: Jill Ryan

At every prom we attended, every student had the same favorite accessory -- their phones. With the advancement of technology, what may look like a photo shot by a professional could actually be a picture taken by a fellow student for Instagram.

Green is the new black

Photo Credit: Marlo Jappen

One thing that was definitely a noticeable staple at the prom were ladies wearing emerald green dresses. Who knows, green may be the next in-fashion color!

It's a rainbow...of vests!

Photo Credit: Jennifer A. Uihlein

The days of wearing just grey and black vests under jackets are over at these Long Island proms. Every color - from pink to yellow to blue - were on display, either as a way to color-coordinate outfits with a date or to just have fun.

Floral skirts for everyone

Photo Credit: Barbara Pesce

A trendy style seen at multiple proms was the floral skirt and plain, black top. Whether it was attached or a two piece number, this look was a great way to draw the eye to the big flowers cascading around the skirt.

The last dance always matters!

Photo Credit: Jill Ryan

As the night comes to a close, so does the last song symbolizing the last time they have together before the graduates part ways.

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