

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The good, the bad & the ugly world of catering as told by the experts

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ADVICE: "Determine your budget, it will impact every other decision you make. Find special ways to celebrate your event that reflect your personality, style, customs and taste. If it seems overwhelming, hire a wedding planner!"

MOST UNUSUAL REQUEST: "Pets are a big part of the family. A country artist's bride had her pet dog accompany her down the aisle dressed in a tuxedo, wagging his tale and later sat in his special chair from home draped in ivory satin."

FAVORITE TREND: "Personalized wedding programs, renewal of vows, specialty drinks, brunch provided for overnight guests and an extended weekend celebration."

DETAILS BRIDES OFTEN FORGET: "Have fun and enjoy! Take a few moments alone after the ceremony. Nourishment, we make sure the bride and groom, along with the parents, take ten minutes and refuel before they are introduced."

BEST MOMENT FROM AN EVENT: "I now pronounce you man and wife; it's magical! Now the party begins, celebrate!"

Bethany Boler

CEO/EXECUTIVE CHEF
SOUTHERN GRACES INDULGENT
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ADVICE: "Spend time truly dreaming about the look and feel of your wedding, then find photographs to support that idea. Your guests will absolutely love the fact that your wedding is a complete weekend celebration that coincides with the bridesmaid's luncheon to the rehearsal dinner, and finally, your dream reception!"

MOST UNUSUAL REQUEST: "We catered a wedding in the country when all formalities went out the window! We had a roaring fire for guests to make their own s'mores, square dance lessons and hayrides. The guests had a blast!"

FAVORITE TREND: "My favorite trend is monochromatic design for buffets, flowers and the actual food."

DETAILS BRIDES OFTEN FORGET: "Brides forget the importance of having a planner to assist them in planning their dream wedding. Hiring a company that offers inclusive service helps alleviate stress for the bride."

BEST MOMENT FROM AN EVENT THERE: "When the bride and groom stepped into the gardens for their toast. The best man toasted to their 'sparkling love' and then the customized fireworks show began. The guests had their own sparklers to join in the festivities. It was truly magical!"

Patti Corn

CATERING SALES MANAGER
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ADVICE: "These days a wedding or reception can be anything you imagine! Know that the sky is the limit. The most memorable weddings or receptions are those that best represent the bride and groom's personality and style."

MOST UNUSUAL REQUEST: "At a multi-cultural event that I planned, the groom asked if I could find an elephant for him to ride to the ceremony."

FAVORITE TREND: "More and more brides are choosing to go with more color-table linens, chair covers and florals. Remember, this is not your mother's wedding."

DETAILS BRIDES OFTEN FORGET: "They often forget the little things, like who will be taking all the gifts from the reception and who will be picking up all the beautiful things that they have brought in to make their day very memorable and personal."

BEST MOMENT FROM AN EVENT: "During one ceremony, there was a small child in attendance, and the minute he saw the bride appear at the back of the room he repeated, 'I do; I do; I do,' to the crowd's delight."

Jana Whitten

CATERING DIRECTOR
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ADVICE: "Please bring comfortable shoes—brides and bridal parties are always in brand new shoes. After two or three hours they are in pain—not a happy wedding day feeling!"

MOST UNUSUAL REQUEST: "I haven't had a lot of really unusual requests prior to the event. The odd occurrences usually happen after the alcohol has been flowing for a bit. Those moments I just can't relate."

FAVORITE TREND: "There are no rules! Wedding day etiquette is important, and there are rules that are wonderful and useful. These days, however, many brides want the reception to be a party. I've noticed that the rehearsal dinner is still rather formal, but the reception is more fun. Planning a wedding is a lot of work. Brides deserve to have fun at the end of all the planning."

BEST MOMENT FROM AN EVENT: "The best moments are the dad's toasts or speeches. Even the most macho man gets a little emotional when he is sending his little girl off to a new life."