

A Perfect wedding reception

The real celebration of the wedding follows the ceremony.

It's time for friends and relatives to congratulate the newly married couple and share in wishing them well in the future. Food, drink and music help make everyone relaxed and happy.

The key to planning for a successful reception is to consider each other's wishes for the special social occasion and compromise as necessary to decide on number of guests, budget, food, atmosphere and choice of music.

Once you agree on the size and type of reception and if you can find yourself a competent, caring caterer or banquet manager, then half your battle is over.

Ethel Burns, catering manager for 30 years at the Mayflower Hotel in Plymouth, is quick to take much of the reception planning work from the bride and groom.

"They walk in and there are no decisions to make," she says. "We'll plan everything right down to the fresh flowers, table decorations and room setup."

"Our head banquet chef Dennis Samonds is very creative. He'll help with the planning of the meal," she explained. "We feature five-course sit-down dinners at the Mayflower."

Burns notes that reception facilities are available to parties of 150 to 300 persons and that the bride and groom receive a complimentary room in the hotel for the wedding night and a full breakfast the next morning.

At the Holiday Inn West in Livonia, sales and catering coordinator Kim Hickey helps couples with receptions for up to 400 persons.

"We have a traditional decor with an elegant ballroom setting and portable dance floor," she commented.

Chef Alex Buffone, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of New York, offers continental cuisine in buffet or sit-down style and decorates with food sculptures and butter carvings.

"We have several packages available to help the couple plan their reception and a professionally uniformed staff is in attendance to help the special day run smoothly," she added.

Roma's offers several different locations in suburban Detroit for wedding receptions: Bloomfield, Livonia, Garden City and East Detroit.

Jaro Kolisnyk, vice president and director of marketing, emphasizes the full-service catering aspect of Roma's.

"We offer wedding packages with wedding cake and fruit table and there are a variety of menus to choose from for either a buffet or sit-down dinner. There are options of appetizer tables, salad bars and hors d'oeuvres," he noted.

"We can also cater at your own location."

To help the couple chose entertainment for the reception, Roma's holds monthly showcases at various locations. Six or seven bands play several songs, enabling the bride and groom to select the most suitable entertainment. It's also a good way for the couple to see the facility and sample the foods available for the reception.

Depending on which location is selected, receptions at Roma's are available for parties from 100 to 2,500.

At the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn Chef David Bidwell prepares reception banquets that catering director Lori Metz terms as intimate gourmet meals.

"The couple can can select meals with two entrees," she noted. "There is medallion of beef and veal medallion, poached salmon with dill sauce and swordfish. Instead of just one entree, the guests receive half-portion of each."

Facilities at the Hyatt Regency range from a room for 10 persons to a ballroom for 1,200.

"The rooms have a contemporary style and all have dance floors. We can also provide the wedding cake and work with the couple on a consulting basis for entertainment."

Valet parking and guestrooms are also available.

Kosher catering is a new feature at the Ramada Hotel in Southfield.

The hotel, which recently underwent a complete renovation of the banquet, sleeping and public rooms, can accommodate receptions of up to 250 people.

"With kosher catering we are able to offer hors d'oeuvres or full dinners that meet with the approval of our consultant rabbi," commented catering manager Susan Kelly.

Entree choices include chicken Kiev, cornish hen stuffed with wild rice, Long Island duckling, Chateaubriand, baked white fish, and pasta dishes. The kosher hors d'oeuvres offered include smoked fish, meat blintzes, barbequed baby lamb ribs, whole

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