

What's new for 1997 weddings?

A bridal fair holds some surprises

BY JENNIFER PLACINTO
STAFF WRITER

Planning a wedding can be time consuming and cliché, but the trends for '97 brides suggest just the opposite!

Putting the fun back into fiancée is what places like the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Southfield, or Laurel Manor in Livonia, can do for brides and grooms-to-be. A one-stop wedding planning facility is a dream come true for couples overwhelmed by the tasks involved in planning their weddings.

With elegance and convenience, Christopher Casinelli, director of catering at Radisson Plaza Hotel, said Radisson can provide the entire wedding package from service to reception and everything in-between including the ceremony, decorations, a reception hall, wedding cake, food, photography, indoor atrium and more at a cost of \$8,000 to \$12,000. The hotel location is also convenient for guests who wish to stay overnight.

"Many people are coordinating events from an out-of-town perspective," Casinelli said. "They're looking for somebody who can coordinate everything."

Casinelli was among the over 100 vendors at Bridal Celebration '97 catering to the thousands of brides-to-be who attended the Jan. 5 event at The

Palace of Auburn Hills.

Bending the rules

Trends also suggest weddings are becoming less traditional. Gender-neutral weddings are on the rise, according to Miriam Jerris of The Wedding Connection, a bridal consulting agency in Huntington Woods. Brides are asking men to stand in their party and grooms are asking women to stand for them, Jerris said.

Couples are also opting for outdoor and historic sites to have their wedding ceremonies and blowing bubbles and releasing butterflies instead of throwing bird seed at newlyweds as they leave the church, according to Jerris. And persons getting re-married are looking for original ways to include their children in the ceremonies.

"I do think people are willing to take more risks," Jerris said.

As couples consider whether they want to have an open bar or cash bar, why not consider a cappuccino bar. With a little help from Cappuccino Man of West Bloomfield that option is a possibility.

After-dinner drinks, featuring espresso, cappuccino, latte, hot chocolate and Italian sodas, serve as alternative to drinking alcohol.

"There are a lot of people out there

who are into coffee," said Sam Reyes, an employee at Cappuccino Man. "It has a certain kind of ambiance." The service and a server are available indoors and outdoors and can be rented for a cost of \$400 to \$700. Inquiries welcome at (810) 360-9454.

Other trend-setters for 1997 brides and grooms include:

Groom attire: Three- to six-button vests and lots of color are growing in popularity, according to Oakland Mall President Tuxedo store manager Milt Neuman.

"Different colored shirts and the button cover look are very popular," however, Neuman said, many brides still prefer bow ties to pick up the color of the bridesmaid's dresses. Costs range from \$50 to \$120 for everything except shoe rental which costs \$18 to \$21.

Bridal attire: Decorative edging on veils and headband style veils with "not as much poofiness," are fashionable, according to Rita Watters of Fine Veils in Rochester Hills.

Photography: Passing your wedding pictures proof book around to friends and family is passé if couples have their pictures taken by Lyn Jolley Photography in Waterford. "The biggest change is that photography is going computerized," said co-owner Joyce Jolley. "You can mail someone a video-

tape," added Lyn.

Pictures are viewed on video and newlyweds can arrange their portraits on computerized wedding book pages.

The average cost of a wedding package is \$2,500.

Honeymoon: Destinations that give couples freedom, adventure and romance are hot for 1997, according to Karen Hardy Hodgson, president of Australia 2000 Travel Ltd. of Birmingham. Among these hot spots are Australia, New Zealand and Fiji where couples can visit rain forests, go on safaris, reef trips, horseback riding, sailing, swimming, snorkeling and relax on the beach. Trips range from \$750-\$2,800 per person.

Flowers: Peaches, lavenders and champagnes are the most popular colors for weddings in 1997 with bridesmaids carrying darker shades of the colors, according to Diane Hester, owner of Petal Perfect Florist in Lake Orion.

Lilies, roses and orchids remain the most popular types of flowers, according to Hester, who said styling with depth is important.

"Flowers should look nice from all sides and the bouquet should enhance your dress not outdo it," she advised.

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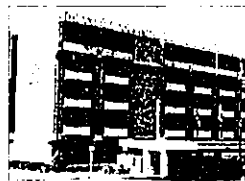
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