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china, candles and functional items like table numbers and butter.

Hefner likes to use favors that are some form of monogrammed crystal. The crystal adds to the glitter of the place setting and presents a nice keepsake. Copus once used an antique lace bedspread as a tablecloth. Elements such as these turn a traditional wedding into a beautiful fantasy.

Most reception facilities will work with the couple to plan personalized table settings. At Laurel Manor in Livonia, a number of items are available with which to adorn tables, said Maria Davison, sales representative. Among them are hurricane lamps, votive candles, bud vases, fish bowls, and floating candles.

"It's pretty traditional," she said of what is available, adding the family owned business would "absolutely" work with couples in making their own fantasy tables for their big day.

The element of surprise that brings us back to our childhood imaginings is an important component in a successful

event, says Hefner. Her goal at the Ritz wedding was to have guest faces shining with wonder as they gazed at the snowy path leading to the bride and groom's table prominently lit and displayed above the rest of the tables.

Table with a view

The view from the table can also be a fantasy. Infinity Yacht Charters of St. Clair Shores offers on-board receptions that include a sightseeing tour. The 100-foot luxury yacht can handle a party of up to 150 persons and lives up to its slogan, "The possibilities are endless." The captain can also perform the marriage ceremony while the vessel is underway, according to event director Jackie Carden.

Imagine gently cruising downriver toward the Ambassador Bridge with your guests enjoying the entertainment, view and dining all in one fabulous place. Jackie and the decorations tend to be simple and elegant because the shiny table surfaces and the view provide a wonderful setting.

Trends

A current trend is to have a separate bride and groom table instead of traditional wedding party tables. This allows the wedding party to be seated with their family or friends.

Lighting has expanded to several levels including uplighting, twinkling lights, chandeliers, candle and floor accents. Candles are placed in glass holders, and votive cups. Mechanical candles are used to reduce the chance of fire or candle wax ruining linens and flower arrangements.

The glitter of silver is more popular right now than the heavier gold. Silver is also more available and usually less expensive.

Balloons are losing favor, especially for high-end weddings according to Jerry Litwin, of State Flowers in Southfield. They are difficult to keep inflated and guests invariably like to "pop" them.

Purple hues are very popular along with traditional blue, which remains a long-time favorite. Litwin cautions there are very few true blue flowers

except maybe hydrangeas. Colors close to blue like periwinkle can be used along with white and silver as an accent.

Colors also depend on the season, according to Copus. Jewel tones such as deep purple, teal and wine are popular for the colder months with white, creams and pastels for summer. Jewel tones also complement a Moroccan or gypsy look that is becoming popular.

Carden said tropical colors and flowers are sought for the yacht charters as a bright contrast to the elegant surroundings.

Copus also believes that anything with a reflective quality — she favors antique cut glass containers, vintage silver, water, ice, candles, mirrors — add elegance to table arrangements. She claims there can never be too much sparkle for a wedding.

Some advice for planning tablescapes from wedding and event planners: Start planning early, try to use items that you already have, plan everything so you have time to be with your guests. Details are important and most of all, have fun!

IF YOU ARE PLANNING A WEDDING:

Wedding and Event Planners
Carolyn Hefner, The Chime Closet, Birmingham
at
www.thechimecloset.com or (248)258-6480
Karen Copus, Lathrup Village and Ode/Flows Antique Shop at (248)559-0087
Jackie Carden of Infinity Yacht Charters at (734)899-4100
Laurel Manor, Livonia at (734)462-0770

Photography
S. Kay Young, Photography in Motion Heights at (313)664-7657
D. and L. Photography at (248)624-9483

Florists
Tiffany Florist, Tim Robinson and Bob Kupper in Birmingham at (248)646-0333
Jerry Litwin of State Flowers in Southfield at (248)559-5424

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Contractor from page C1

could be difficult to recover. Be certain to get everything in writing and keep a copy.

Reserve final payment

Limit down payments. Don't make the final payment until you are completely satisfied, and reasonably certain the subcontractors and suppliers have been paid.

Your first step to resolve a problem is with the contractor and before final payment is made. Local building departments may be able to help settle workmanship or code questions.

Remember, a large project usually means there will be strangers in and out of your home, disrupting your life for some time. Do your best to be as cooperative with the

workers as you expect them to be to you. The more positive attitude you keep during this stressful time the better everyone's life will be.

Harry Jachym, a licensed builder, teaches construction trades to high school students and is the general contractor for Habitat for Humanity, Western Wayne County. Since we all seem to ask our fathers for repair or remodeling advice, Jachym writes "Ask Dad," a column on home issues ranging from repairs and maintenance to building and remodeling projects. He is a Plymouth resident. Send any questions or comments to Harry at askdad@comcast.net or in care of Susan Steinmueller, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, 48009.

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