

Special Events

M A G A Z I N E
The international publication for special event professionals

April 2002



NOW, MORE THAN EVER, is the time to celebrate. That's the word from several of the special event industry's major associations. A post-Sept. 11 survey by the American Rental Association shows that 41 percent of party rental companies experienced growth in the second half of 2001, with the organization's CEO attributing the increase in business to wedding rentals. A January survey from the Association of Bridal Consultants reports that a healthy 63 percent of members expect business to increase in 2002. Meanwhile, social event professionals say that bar and bat mitzvahs also are booming, while birthday parties and just-for-joy fêtes are flourishing everywhere. But, they add, expansion in the social market doesn't mean excess in the look and feel of social events.

PLACE FIRST

Topping planners' lists of social

No detail too small (clockwise from top left): A tisket, a tasket, a twist on the flower girl's basket at an Yifat Oren wedding; Kay Davis uses champagne bucket stands to turn her gift-box cakes into stunning centerpieces; Party Artistry blends grapes and artichokes with luscious lilies for an exotic tabletop display; white linen looks fresh and elegant at a Nancy Chase wedding; Yifat Oren dresses up a picnic with unfussy floral, earth-tone pottery and rough-hewn baskets; Ceremonies by Marcy Blum, a new line created for fabric supplier Dazian, includes coordinating backdrops, chuppahs and tablecloths.

event trends is the changing value clients place on venue.

"People are looking for more intimate settings—settings that really reflect who they are and allow them to create the type of ceremony they really want," says Mary Litzinger, president and owner of Simi Valley, Calif.-based Vintage Productions. Transporting small groups of family and friends to multiple-day celebrations in pic-

turesque destinations such as Santa Barbara, Calif., is becoming a more popular choice, she adds.

Wedding planner Marcy Blum of New York-based Marcy Blum Associates says clients are hiring her to create highly personalized occasions. "There are a lot more requests for home weddings," she says, and adds that clients "don't want their wedding to feel large and amorphous and anonymous."

Yifat Oren of Los Angeles-based Yifat Oren & Associates agrees that clients are looking for unique venues that reflect their personalities. Popular with her young, well-heeled clientele are "libraries, museums, historical venues—places you wouldn't think of for a wedding."

TRUE TO TRADITION

As clients turn their focus to family, ritual and tradition are replacing glitz and glamour at social events. ➤

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PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ELIZABETH MESSINA; ALAN SELVAGGI; FRED MARCUS; TORY READ; KIMBERLEE MILLER; COURTESY DAZIAN



No detail too small (clockwise from top left): A fisket, a tasket, a twist on the flower girl's basket at an Yifat Oren wedding; Kay Davis uses champagne bucket stands to turn her gift-box cakes into stunning centerpieces; Party Artistry blends grapes and artichokes with luscious lilies for an exotic tabletop display; white linens look fresh and elegant at a Nancy Chase wedding; Yifat Oren dresses up a picnic with unfussy floral, earth-tone pottery and rough-hewn baskets; Ceremonies by Marcy Blum, a new line created for fabric supplier Dazian, includes coordinating backdrops, chuppahs and tablecloths.

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Nancy Chase, owner of Denver-based Nancy Chase Weddings and self-professed fan of family lore—"We're not the big gala designers...we really get into Grandmother's hankie and the music and the programs and the Scriptures"—notes the popularity of heirlooms in today's events. Fourth- or fifth-generation veils, inherited gowns, even nostalgic bouquet re-creations are helping clients connect with family history, she says.

Tom Kehoe of Chicago-based Kehoe

Trust in tradition (left to right): *Special Events Magazine* publisher Lisa Vested-Perrin awaits her December wedding at the Bellagio Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas; the bride joins her groom and her daughter beneath a bountiful canopy by Cheryl Fish of MGM Mirage Events, Las Vegas, who designed the elegant affair; bagpipes echo family pride at an event by Vintage Productions.

Designs agrees that the trend is toward tradition. He cites a recent Orthodox Jewish wedding where he incorporated

a grandmother's bridal veil into the ceremonial chuppah.

Among Blum's clientele, "people are definitely becoming more interested in their ancestry," she says. Ethnic dances, music and party favors that reflect the groom's family and culture are especially popular at weddings where the bride's family is hosting, she says.

ONLY NATURAL

While elegance is still in demand, design is leaning toward understated

PHOTOS LEFT AND CENTER BY ROBERT EVANS; RIGHT BY ALAN SELVAGGI

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