



EVENT PRODUCTIONS ●

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NEW TWIST ON "TRIED & TRUE" WEDDING TRENDS FOR 2010 BRIDES

Chicago, October 19, 2009 – Next year's bride is already in the throes of planning her wedding. From "the dress" to the reception venue to wedding colors, many trends from this year will continue into 2010. However, if a bride is looking for unique options, here are several "new twists and tips" on current trends from Lori Stephenson, owner and senior event consultant with LOLA Event Productions, which can be easily incorporated to infuse a wedding with a bride's individual style:

Less can be more:

"The trend for smaller wedding size will continue in 2010, with a guest list of 150 being an average size as compared to 200-250," says Stephenson. "We're also experiencing a guest decline rate increase – from an expected decline rate of 10-20 percent to 25% and more." Stephenson says the smaller wedding sizes open the opportunity to look at creative venues like galleries, restaurants and loft spaces, not just traditional hotel ballrooms.

Amenities for guests can also be added to make it more economical for those traveling to attend. For example, secure a range of price points for accommodations and ensure hotels offer additional features such as a complimentary breakfast or a mini-kitchen. For guests traveling as a family, all-suite accommodations are a welcomed option. With less people attending, you can also maximize little touches like hotel amenity gifts or inviting out-of-town guests to a pre-nuptial cocktail party the evening before the wedding. Another nice touch is making the weekend about more than just the wedding with a complimentary site-seeing outing like an architectural cruise or a museum visit the morning of the wedding.

Stephenson also cautions that prior to signing a venue contract, review your guest list in detail, "take into consideration the number of out-of-town guests when negotiating your food and beverage "minimum" with the hotel or other vendor." Nobody wants to pay for upgrades just to reach their food and beverage goals. If it looks like you will be falling under the minimum, ask if you can parlay it into a brunch the following morning.

Location, location, location:

According to Stephenson, hosting a wedding at home was a 2009 trend that offered a surprise for many bridal couples. "Depending on location, having a wedding at a private residence can be just as expensive, if not more, than a ballroom reception," says Stephenson. "For example, in the Midwest states where weather can be tumultuous, the cost of tenting, flooring and other necessities can quickly add up." Stephenson notes that looking at alternative venues that showcase a bride or groom's interest or passions can offer a unique setting, "We recently planned a reception at Café Brauer in Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo for two architects that had been a part of the project to renovate that building and the grounds around the Zoo." Stephenson adds that if a couple in the medical profession are tying the knot, consider Chicago's Museum of Surgical Science; art lovers should consider a gallery; and wine

enthusiasts should investigate a restaurant that specializes in wine and tasting plates, like Chicago's Tasting Room.

Spreading the word:

Email invitations and electronic RSVP's have been gaining popularity with all kinds of events, and it is a trend that continues to create a stir with etiquette sticklers. While a viable and popular option for bridal couples planning a more casual soiree – or as an easy and eco-friendly way to send a save the date, the majority opt to stick with tradition and communicate their intended vows with formal invitations. However, this doesn't hold true when it comes to leveraging technology to keep guests apprised of wedding details. Custom designing a web site that mirrors a couple's wedding motif is the latest twist to an old trend. "Couples are realizing that their wedding web sites offers guests a first glimpse of the big day and are taking time to integrate stylistic elements from their wedding invitations, personal imagery and color palettes into the web design," states Stephenson. They are also easy to update and manage so guests are always apprised of the latest information.

Color commentary:

When it comes to colors for the wedding Stephenson recommends parlaying the monochrome color palette of the past year into something new and different perhaps by introducing a muted plum with the yellow that is trendy right now to give it a layer of depth and subtlety. Stephenson also recommends adding a twist to the use of pattern, "vintage brocades have been really popular in the last few years, but there are many other fabulous patterns with a contemporary edge from the 1960's and 70's that are great mixed with some of the mod elements that are so popular right now with décor like mirrors and Lucite."

Tonal color can also be used as a unifying element for the wedding party. Bridesmaids can choose their dress in different shades of a chosen color, allowing them to look coordinated, not cloned. Brides can add a splash of color to their gown, or ask their guests to wear all white and the bride can be featured as the standout in a striking color.

Being "friendly" to the earth and its inhabitants:

Embracing today's eco-friendly and sustainable trends, many brides/grooms are trying to incorporate positive environmental, social and economic aspects into their wedding day. "While we continue to see a trend towards being more eco-conscious, we encourage bridal couples to choose options that reflect their own personality and interests," states Stephenson. "Guests are increasingly appreciative of these efforts, especially those that give back to the community," she adds.

For example, bridal couples can work with a caterer to create a menu from local sustainable resources including hormone-free dairy and meat products, and pesticide-free produce grown at local farms. A recent LOLA couple took this one step further and donated excess food from their wedding festivities to a local shelter. In addition, the same couple asked wedding guests to make a donation to a local area fund that supports children's education initiatives in lieu of a wedding gift.

"We strive to assist our clients to plan a wedding reflective of their individual style and within their budget, and certainly this can easily include philanthropic and eco-friendly aspects," says Stephenson.

About LOLA Event Productions

LOLA Event Productions, a Chicago-based event and wedding design firm, specializes in creating meaningful and memorable events that reflect the individual personality and style of clients. LOLA's senior-level consultants work with Chicago's top event vendors, and offer in depth experience with design, décor, planning, logistics and budgets. For more information, visit www.LOLAeventproductions.com.