

# Planning the Perfect Wedding Reception

Coronado Bayside, with its serene surroundings offers a beautiful setting for your special day. We have hosted hundreds of weddings, each special and unique. No matter where you have your reception, we would like to offer the following guide to making your wedding day that of your dreams.

## **Selecting a Location**

- You should select the location for your wedding after you get engaged and right before you set a date. Don't make the mistake, as so many do, of sending out a "save the date" note to guests only to find the ideal locations have been booked already.
- For peace of mind, you may choose to offer a deposit only when you are certain the Coronado Bayside is right for you. If not, as a tentative date approaches, and if we have requests for the same date and time, you will be notified that a deposit should be applied to set your reservation in stone.

## **Sit-down, Buffet, or Appetizers?**

It is important to understand that the formality of a wedding in San Diego or elsewhere is never driven by these three choices, as any service format may be made casual or elegant, depending upon your needs and how the room is dressed and decorated. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, as discussed below.

### **Sit-down Meal**

- In general, sit-down wedding meals cost more per person, and you choose the choice of dishes to be served your guests.
- The entrée choice is often meat or fowl, or meat or fish. There are side dishes plated with the entrées.
- Your guests remain seated as starter salads, main courses and cakes are served.

- The number of each entrée needed is determined by putting the choices on your wedding invitations' RSVP card. As the RSVPs are collected, you keep track of what each guest wants, and place the name of the entrée or symbol on their table card, in addition to informing the chef of your "count" at least one week prior to the wedding.

### **Buffet Meal**

- If you would like to skip the work and expense of a sit-down meal, another option is a buffet format.
- In a classic buffet, tables are set out in a row, and dishes of your choice are lined up along the row. Your guests take a plate at the beginning of the row, and add what they please to their plate as they move along the row.
- Buffets have a fundamental advantage from your guests' standpoint, as they are not so much at the mercy of someone else's food selections. On the buffet line, a guest may choose to have extra of a favorite food, and perhaps none of another. They are always free to come up to the buffet additional times to sample things they missed.
- The downside of buffets is, of course, the line that forms. Even double-sided lines are unsightly at celebrations and cause your guests to wait.
- We mitigate the line problem here at Coronado Baysie by breaking the traditional buffet into multiple and even duplicate stations spread out in a roomy area, such as under our patio trellis. Plates for the buffet are located on a large center table. In this format, guests quickly pick up a plate and move to available stations to make their selections. For some entrées, the Chef or a Sous Chef is on hand to assist the guests. We have timed this buffet format, nicknamed "The Beehive Buffet" by our staff, and it is fast; it is even faster than sit-down service.

## **Appetizers**

- This is a new and increasingly popular format that breaks some traditions in a positive way. Picture your wedding as the dressiest cocktail reception possible. Tall belly tables are placed around the room, with large tables and chairs in other areas. The appetizers are readied as your wedding ceremony concludes.
- Following your wedding ceremony (if it is at a church or other location), your guests are free to proceed directly to Coronado Bayside, leaving you free to work with the photographer.
- As your guests arrive, they are greeted with drinks and passed hors d'oeuvres, carving stations, and appetizer displays.
- Upon your arrival at the Clubhouse, your DJ is cued to interrupt his selection and play a favorite or chosen song and then to announce your entrance. You then join your guests and mingle as a couple at your leisure.
- Appetizers are replenished throughout the event. A champagne toast is performed at some point after servers have passed glasses out to all the guests.
- This delightful straying from the tradition of leaving your guests waiting for you with little or nothing to eat, drink or do is surprisingly economical, costing no more than a buffet dinner would. We count this style reception among the most memorable, and so will your guests.

## **Vegan, Vegetarian and All Points in Between**

At Coronado Bayside our team is skilled at accommodating a variety of culinary styles, preferences and price points. This is your event, and choosing alternative menus is your prerogative.

- We strongly suggest a buffet format so that your guests may navigate your choices.
- When giving a chef your preferences for your menu, make sure to provide the limits of your preferences.

- For example:

I married a vegan, and we enjoyed our wedding at Coronado Bayside. Her version of vegan allows fish but no dairy; eggs OK. This is remarkably flexible from a chef's standpoint. Shrimp trees, salad stations and fantastic pasta in a non-dairy white sauce were part of the appetizer stations. Passed appetizers included lobster on steamed artichoke leaves, vegan rumaki, devilled eggs and vegetarian spring rolls.

Everyone says to this day it was their favorite wedding food ever; but the funny part was that neither my wife, nor I, ate any food at our event—just too busy with relatives! We ate dinner at a local Mexican restaurant later that evening.

So think of your guests in your vegetation selections. You can say "No" to a spectacular beef steamboat round carving (my favorite), but give the chef as much leeway as possible with ingredients.

## **Beverage Service**

In this area there is really only one right way for a wedding in San Diego that is spectacular and fun for you and your guests, and that is your way. This is your San Diego wedding, and you may serve the beer, wine and spirits of your choice. What you serve however, must be free to your guests.

- An open full bar could cost up to and over \$20 per head when tallied after the reception, and you may choose to do just that.
- A perfectly reasonable alternative is to offer wine and beer only. Perhaps pass a red and a white, and have a small but thoughtful beer selection in a self-service ice table.
- Unless you are utilizing the entire Coronado Bayside venue, we will maintain a public cash bar at the far end of our dining room which will be available to your guests who can't live without some special elixir.
- In addition, you may choose to run a tab for friends and family at the bar. There are any number of combinations for beverage service.

## **Additional Comments**

- Shop wisely for decorators, photographers and cake makers. Use the internet to compare prices and check references.
- We have observed too much money going out for items that don't add proportionally to your special wedding day.
- Our staff and management will provide you all the free advice you need to make the most of your San Diego wedding budget.