

Wedding Guide

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They Know Weddings

To find the best reception sites, photographers, florists, gown shops, and other vendors, we asked bridal experts—and brides—for their votes. From consultants to caterers, these businesses will help make your day perfect.

By Kimberly Forrest, Cristina Abello, and Aparna Nancherla

WEDDING PLANNERS

- **Bonnie Schwartz & Company**, Bethesda; 301-229-9473; bonnieschwartz.com. With 13 years of experience, Schwartz is one of our top vote getters.
- **Creative Parties**, Bethesda; 301-654-9292; creativeparties.com. Rita Bloom, Tracy Bloom Schwartz, and their team like to create a lounge area where guests can relax at receptions. They also plan after-parties.
- **Distinctive Events by Susan B. Katz**, Rockville; 301-984-0884; susanbkatz.com. In business since 1977, Katz focuses on unique decor.
- **Elegance & Simplicity**, Georgetown and Bethesda; 800-768-8814; eleganceandsimplicity.com. Katie Martin and her staff, who specialize in ethnic weddings, also win raves for their floral services.
- **Engaging Affairs**, Alexandria; 888-481-5156; engagingaffairs.com. Our top vote getter, Laura Weatherly and her team enjoy adding personal touches, such as monogrammed chopsticks as favors for a bride of Chinese descent.
- **Events by Andre Wells**, Northwest DC; 202-518-6908; eventsbyandrewells.com. Wells plans upscale, couture-style weddings. He's done destination weddings from the Hamptons to the Bahamas.

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- **Eventscapes**, Northwest DC; 202-364-2444; event-scapes.com. Ayran Kanter was named best social event planner by the DC chapter of the International Special Events Society.
- **Exquisite Expressions & Events**, Mitchellville; 301-306-0842; anexquisiteevent.com. Shelby Tuck-Horton plans destination, interfaith, and culturally diverse weddings.
- **Finishing Touches Events**, Bethesda; 301-718-6465; finishingtouchesevents.com. Martha K. Bindeman and Jeffrey Fox end weddings with "sweet dreams," clear vases filled with candy for guests to take home. Brides say Bindeman and Fox are detail-oriented and flexible.
- **Gala Events**, Bethesda; 301-718-2900; galaevents.com. Linda Garner's company has its own art-and-production shop and in-house florist.
- **Joan New, Super Soirées**, Potomac; 301-983-1910; www.joannew.net. Brides say New, who has more than 25 years of experience, is low-key and easy to work with.
- **Joan W. Sacarob**, Annandale; 703-256-4166. A top pick for Jewish weddings, veteran Joan Sacarob is praised for her expertise and kind manner.
- **Jodi Moraru & Associates**, Northwest DC; 202-237-8244; jodimoraru.com. Jodi Moraru and her associates, who've planned commitment ceremonies, win raves for creativity and organization.
- **Marylin Cave Bradley, Events & Lifetime Celebrations**, Rockville; 301-816-9048. Bradley, who has more than 20 years of experience, offers hourly consultations, full planning, and day-of coordination. She enjoys planning ethnic weddings.
- **Northern Virginia Bridal Services**, Arlington; 703-516-4732; novabridal.com. Tracey Miller-Dougherty is our top vote getter for brides on a budget.
- **Party Portfolio**, McLean; 703-356-3050; partyportfolio.com. Lois Schiff, who has an art background, once transformed a vacant farm into a wedding wonderland.
- **A Perfect Wedding**, Fairfax; 703-691-0133; aperfectwed.com. One of our top vote getters, Carol Marino has planned weddings for Hollywood stars.

CATERERS

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TUXEDOS

INVITATIONS AND
CALLIGRAPHY

CAKES AND
OTHER DESSERTS

HAIR

MAKEUP

REHEARSAL
DINNERS

VIDEOGRAPHERS

LIMOS AND
TRANSPORTATION

TENTS AND OTHER
RENTALS

SPECIAL LIGHTING

- **Pineapple Productions**, Northwest DC, 202-243-3160; pineapplepro.com. Allison Jackson and Elizabeth Duncan specialize in weddings at private homes as well as culturally diverse weddings.
- **Rave Reviews**, Kensington; 301-933-7989; 4ravereviews.com. Wendy Raab won the 2005 award for best wedding planner from the DC chapter of the International Special Events Society. She and Sidni Greenblat also design invitations and programs.
- **Signature Events**, Bethesda; 301-320-5433; signature-events.com. Herlene Nagler, who has a degree in interior design, wins praise for creating unique settings for weddings.

GARDENS, HISTORIC SITES, AND BALLROOMS

- **Arts Club of Washington**, 2017 I St., NW; 202-331-7282 ext.20; artsclubofwashington.org. These two adjoining early-1800s townhouses have period-style furniture, two Steinway pianos, and a beautiful courtyard for ceremonies. The on-site caterer must be used. Capacity: 300. Rates: \$800 to \$2,700.
- **Atrium at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens**, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Ct., Vienna; 703-255-3631 ext. 105; nvrpa.org. Our top-ranked garden site, the glass-walled Atrium offers discounted rates from January through March. The Visitors Center, which has changing exhibits on plants and conservation, is available for ceremonies, small receptions, and cocktail hours. Capacity: 170 seated, 300 standing. Saturday rentals for \$6,900.
- **Black Horse Inn**, 8393 Meetze Rd., Warrenton; 540-349-4020; blackhorseinn.com. This historic estate has horse pastures, bridges, a gazebo, a garden terrace, and a grand ballroom. Capacity: 200 seated. Rates: \$2,100 to \$10,460.
- **Brookside Gardens**, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton; 301-962-1404; mc-mncppc.org/parks/brookside. Victorian gazebos provide a setting for outdoor weddings. The reception hall has floor-to-ceiling windows with panoramic garden views. Capacity: 125 indoors, 200 outdoors. Rates start at \$1,600.
- **Corcoran Gallery of Art**, 500 17th St., NW;

202-639-1781; corcoran.org. The two-level atrium, which has a grand staircase and columns, can hold small or large weddings. Capacity: 400 seated, 1,000 standing. Rental fee: \$15,000; most of the fee is tax-deductible. Operations, cleanup, and security cost extra.

- **DAR, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution**, 1776 D St., NW; 202-879-3318; dar.org. This historic building's covered portico, which offers views of the Washington Monument, has served as a location for ABC's Commander in Chief. The cozy library is popular for winter weddings. Capacity: 135 seated. Rates start at \$6,800.
- **Dumbarton House**, 2715 Q St., NW; 202-337-2288 ext. 230; dumbartonhouse.org. This historic house has English-style gardens for cocktails or ceremonies. The Belle Vue Room has large windows and French doors that look out onto a courtyard. Capacity: 150 to 175. Rate: \$6,000.
- **Evermay**, 1623 28th St., NW; 202-338-1118; evermay.org. This federal-style mansion has a rose garden for ceremonies and a terrace with views of the Washington Monument. Capacity: 250 seated, 350 standing. Rates: \$10,000 and up.
- **Foxchase Manor**, 8310 Chatsworth Dr., Manassas; 703-369-3638; foxchasemanor.com. Specializing in ethnic and theme weddings, Foxchase has multiple ballrooms, a balcony, and a private salon for the bride. Capacity: 1,500. Rates start at \$5,000.
- **George Washington's River Farm**, 7931 E. Boulevard Dr., Alexandria; 703-768-5700 ext. 114; ahs.org. This house, which overlooks the Potomac River, includes gardens and a set of gates that stood at the White House in the 19th century. Capacity: 160. Rates start at \$5,000.
- **Halcyon House**, 3400 Prospect St., NW; 202-338-3295. This 18th-century Georgetown mansion has a three-tiered garden for ceremonies and a large sculpture studio for receptions. Capacity: 200 seated. Rental fees from \$3,000 to \$10,000.
- **Lee-Fendall House Museum**, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria; 703-548-1789; leefendallhouse.org. Small ceremonies can be held in the front entrance hall of this Victorian

house. Receptions are held in the garden or formal dining room. Capacity: 20 seated, 50 standing (indoors), 140 seated (in garden). Rental: \$250 an hour.

- **Mansion and Music Center at Strathmore**, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda; 301-581-5255; strathmore.org. Both the Georgian-style mansion and the new Music Center are available for weddings. The center's lobby has a 65-foot glass curtain wall that looks out onto green wetlands. Capacity: mansion 150 seated, 225 standing; arts center 325 seated, 700 standing. Rates: \$2,400 to \$4,200. Discounts for Montgomery County residents.
- **Meridian House**, 1630 Crescent Pl., NW; 202-939-5592; meridian.org. Our top-ranked historic site, this French-style mansion is on three acres of gardens. Brides enjoy taking pictures on the grand staircase. Capacity: 200 seated with dancing. Rates start at \$10,000.
- **Mount Vernon Inn**, George Washington Memorial Pkwy., Mount Vernon; 703-780-0011; mountvernon.org. This country-inn restaurant has rooms with fireplaces and hand-painted murals along with 18th-century menus and servers who wear period costume. The entire inn is available for dinner and dancing. Capacity: 210. Rates: \$2,100 plus \$30 a person and up.
- **National Museum of Women in the Arts**, 1250 New York Ave., NW; 202-783-7988; nmwa.org. This museum is one of our top vote getters. The Great Hall and Mezzanine has a grand marble staircase and chandeliers; the Elisabeth Kasser Room offers a cozy setting for brides to dress. Capacity: 500 seated, 1,000 standing. Rates start at \$8,000.
- **Oatlands Plantation**, 20850 Oatlands Plantation La., Leesburg; 703-777-3174 ext. 13; oatlands.org. This 19th-century mansion hosts ceremonies in the garden. Receptions are held in tents on the front lawn or in the small Carriage House. Capacity: 300 for grounds; 80 for Carriage House. Rates: \$4,000 to \$5,500.
- **Raspberry Plain**, 16500 Agape La., Leesburg; 703-777-1888; raspberrypain.com. This historic mansion will open its carriage house in late spring for small receptions. The grand conservatory and formal gardens are available for larger affairs. Capacity: 200. Rates: carriage house \$2,500 to \$3,500; mansion

\$5,500 to \$8,000.

- **Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center**, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW; 202-312-1300; itcdc.org. The terrace in the Rotunda room overlooks a cobblestone plaza; the Pavilion room has balconies of its own. The on-site catering operation is headed by a French chef who came from DC's Equinox restaurant. Capacity: 500. Rates start at \$124 a person.
- **Stephen Decatur House Museum**, 1610 H St., NW; 202-842-0917; decaurhouse.org. The Carriage House, ideal for smaller weddings, has vaulted ceilings and French doors that open onto a courtyard and 19th-century gardens. Capacity: 150 or 220 seated, 250 or 400 standing. Rates: \$5,500 to \$6,500.
- **Thomas Birkby House**, 109 Loudoun St., Leesburg; 703-777-2700; birkbyhouse.com. The terraces and porches of this 18th-century house overlook the garden. A tent is included in the reception fee. Capacity: 175 seated, 200 standing. Rates: \$1,900 to \$6,000.
- **Torpedo Factory Art Center**, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria; 703-838-4565 ext. 2; torpedofactory.org. Located on the waterfront in Old Town, this three-story art space has a terrace for outdoor receptions. Glass walls allow guests to look into the studios. Capacity: 300 seated, 700 standing. Rates: \$3,500 to \$4,000.
- **Whitehall Manor**, 18301 Whitehall Estate La., Bluemont; 703-948-2999; whitehallevnts.com. This 19th-century manor recently completed an addition that includes three walls of windows and garden views. Ceremonies can take place under a canopy of trees; receptions are in the mansion or on the grounds. Capacity: 250. Rates: \$1,600 to \$8,000.
- **Woodend Sanctuary**, 8940 Jones Mill Rd., Chevy Chase; 301-652-9188 ext. 38; audubonnaturalist.org. The headquarters of the Audobon Naturalist Society, this estate features wildflower meadows, ponds, and a tented stone terrace. Indoor receptions are held in the Great Hall; a Greek-style portico overlooks the gardens. Capacity: 150. Rates: \$2,300 to \$8,400.
- **Woodlawn**, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Mount Vernon; 703-780-4000 ext. 33; woodlawn1805.org. This recently renovated

Georgian-style mansion has lush gardens for tented receptions. A separate building, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, can be opened for part of a wedding. Capacity: 600. Rates: \$2,450 to \$4,400.

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HOTELS

- **Fairmont Hotel**, 2401 M St., NW; 202-429-5599 (Robert Mikolitch); fairmont.com. This hotel's Grand Ballroom has crystal chandeliers, palladian-style mirrors, and a huge foyer. The Courtyard Garden, with its fountain and lush flowers and trees, is available for outdoor receptions. Capacity: 350. Cost per person: \$160 and up.
- **Four Seasons Hotel**, 2800 Pennsylvania Ave., NW; 202-944-2014 (Julie Barrow); fourseasons.com. Our top-ranked hotel for cuisine, the Four Seasons recently underwent a \$25-million renovation, making it the first five-star hotel in Washington. Capacity: 320. Cost per person: \$125 and up.
- **Grand Hyatt Washington**, 1000 H St., NW; 202-637-4719; hyatt.com. Located near Chinatown, this hotel has two ballrooms for large weddings, smaller rooms for more intimate gatherings. Capacity: 2,450. Cost per person: \$165 and up.
- **Hay-Adams**, 800 16th St., NW; 202-638-6600 (Daniel Fitzgerald); hayadams.com. This hotel is popular for intimate weddings. The Lafayette Room overlooks Lafayette Park and the White House. The roof terrace is popular for rehearsal dinners, ceremonies, and cocktails. Capacity: 175. Cost per person: \$165 to \$250.
- **Hilton Washington**, 1919 Connecticut Ave., NW; 202-483-3000 (Sinead Fitzpatrick); hilton.com. The International ballroom, a circular room with a large stage and gold walls, hosts inaugural balls. Capacity: 3,000. Cost per person: \$100 to \$125.
- **Hotel Monaco**, 700 F St., NW; 202-449-7014 (Buddee Clinton); monaco-dc.com. Brides like the great food, knowledgeable staff, and unique look of this former post office. The Paris Ballroom has a giant dome skylight. Capacity: 220. Cost per person: \$140 and up.
- **The Jefferson**, 1200 16th St., NW; 202-833-

6207 (Pegah Ghoushbeigui); loewshotels.com. This boutique hotel, four blocks from the White House, has six spaces for smaller weddings. Capacity: 125. Cost per person: \$130 and up.

- **Lansdowne Resort**, 44050 Woodridge Pkwy., Lansdowne; 703-729-4090 (Sharon Meyers); lansdowneresort.com. In Virginia's Hunt Country, this resort has an outdoor terrace with views of Sugarloaf Mountain. For golf lovers, the newly renovated manor-style clubhouse is available for weddings. Capacity: 400. Cost per person: \$150 to \$190.
- **Mandarin Oriental**, 1330 Maryland Ave., SW; 202-787-6125 (Robin Strickland); mandarinoriental.com. This stylish hotel is on the Washington Marina; newlyweds can arrive at their reception by yacht and walk on a footbridge that leads to the ballroom. The Grand Ballroom and Oriental Ballroom have Asian-inspired decor. Capacity: 675. Cost per person: \$165 to \$275.
- **Marriott Fairview Park**, 3111 Fairview Park Dr., Falls Church; 703-849-9400 (Janet Morris); marriott.com. This hotel has several wedding packages to choose from, including one designed for Indian weddings. A patio is available for cocktails. Capacity: 600. Cost per person: \$115 and up.
- **Marriott Wardman Park**, 2660 Woodley Rd., NW; 202-328-2908 (Beverly Houston); marriott.com. The Wardman Park specializes in ethnic catering and has two ballrooms for larger weddings. The Cotillion Ballroom, full of ornate chandeliers, has an upstairs foyer for cocktails. Capacity: 500. Cost per person: \$150 and up
- **Morrison House**, 116 S. Alfred St., Alexandria; 703-838-8000 (Jill Cox); morrisonhouse.com. The Louis XIV room, which has chandeliers and muraled walls, is ideal for intimate receptions; the library and parlor are good for cocktails. Capacity: 40. Cost per person: \$150 to \$200.
- **Omni Shoreham**, 2500 Calvert St., NW; 202-756-5164 (Jennifer Cohen); omnihotels.com. On 11 acres of Rock Creek Park, this hotel is popular for outdoor ceremonies. There are seven ballrooms that can hold large weddings. Capacity: 1,500. Cost per person: \$130 and up..
- **Park Hyatt Washington**, 1201 24th St., NW;

202-419-6635 (Steele Stevenson); parkhyattwashington.com. This hotel will reopen in April, after a \$24-million renovation, with a contemporary-style ballroom. Chef Brian McBride's cuisine wins raves. Capacity: 220 seated. Cost per person: \$145 and up.

- **Renaissance Mayflower**, 1127 Connecticut Ave., NW; 202-776-9193 (Lisa Collyer); renaissancehotels.com. This downtown hotel is a historic landmark. Three ballrooms plus the smaller Chinese Room, which has an ornate mural on the ceiling. Capacity: 500. Cost per person: \$150 and up.
- **Ritz-Carlton**, Pentagon City, 1250 S. Hayes St., Arlington; 703-412-2732 (Bryn Schmitt); ritzcarlton.com. The Plaza Ballroom, the hotel's midsize space, has columns and gold chandeliers. The Grand Ballroom has gold silk wall coverings and crystal chandeliers. Capacity: 500. Cost per person: \$150 and up
- **Ritz-Carlton**, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean; 703-748-4068 (Helen Tayiel); ritzcarlton.com. This hotel has two ballrooms as well as a showroom of elaborate linens, china, and other items to rent. Capacity: 1,200. Cost per person: \$150 and up.
- **Ritz-Carlton**, Washington DC, 1150 22nd St., NW; 202-835-0500 (Debrajean Overholt); ritzcarlton.com. The Ritz-Carlton Ballroom has high ceilings and chandeliers, with a large foyer for cocktails. The smaller Plaza Ballroom is popular for rehearsal dinners and brunches. Capacity: 600. Cost per person: \$150 and up.
- **St. Regis**, 923 16th St., NW; 202-879-6934; stregis.com/washington. Our top-ranked hotel for smaller weddings, the St. Regis's ballroom is decorated like an Italian Renaissance palace. For ceremonies, the outdoor garden has an antique fountain and magnolia trees. Capacity: 175. Cost per person: \$160 and up.
- **Westfields Marriott**, 14750 Conference Center Dr., Chantilly; 703-818-3504 (Robin Ruiz); marriott.com. This hotel, which provides couples with a wedding Web site, has a list of preapproved outside caterers. Capacity: 550. Cost per person: \$135 to \$160.
- **Westin Embassy Row**, 2100 Massachusetts Ave., NW; 202-835-2168 (Scott Button); westin.com. The ballroom at this historic hotel has high ceilings, Waterford chandeliers, and a two-story grand-foyer entryway. Capacity: 250. Cost per person: \$125 to \$250.

- **Westin Grand**, 2350 M St., NW; 202-955-4461 (Natalie Lyons); westin.com. The wall of windows in the modern Promenade Ballroom allows for views of the European-style courtyard, where ceremonies and cocktail receptions are hosted. Capacity: 220. Cost per person: \$125 to \$175.
- **Willard InterContinental**, 1401 Pennsylvania Ave., NW; 202-637-7322 (Harrison Rohr); washington.intercontinental.com. The Willard, our top-rated hotel for large weddings, also wins praise for its spa and cuisine. There are two large ballrooms, a multilevel courtyard, and smaller rooms for intimate events. Capacity 350. Cost per person: \$225 to \$285.

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FLORISTS

- **Amaryllis**, 1625 Eckington Pl., NE; 202-529-2230; amaryllisflowers.com. Our top vote getter, Amaryllis won the local award for best table design.
- **Art With Flowers**, Tysons Galleria; 703-903-6837. José Coffey and his staff have a contemporary style and provide flowers for embassies.
- **Blooms**, 11515 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston; 703-620-5557; blooms.com. Blooms can do traditional weddings or get creative for theme affairs.
- **Distinctive Floral Designs**, 10805 Sycamore Springs La., Great Falls; 703-430-0312; distinctivefloral.com. Alison deWitt and her team, who do only weddings, work mainly in an English-garden style. Brides like deWitt's creativity and ability to work within a budget.
- **Dragonfly**, 30 S. Quaker La., Suite 100, Alexandria; 703-370-2525. Owners Thom and Marcy Green like to use textures, such as beading and feathers, in arrangements.
- **Dunham Designs**, Bethesda; 301-896-0167; by appointment only. Cynthia Osburn wins raves from brides for her flexibility and lush designs.
- **The Enchanted Florist**, 139 S. Fairfax St., Alexandria; 703-836-7777. Designers enjoy using floral accessories, such as crystals, feathers, and silk dragonflies and butterflies.
- **Exquisite Design Studio**, 5518 Dorsey La., Bethesda; 301-951-8109. Brides say Exquisite

is budget-friendly and offers tasteful and elegant designs.

- **Flower Gallery of Chantilly**, 13619 Lee-Jackson Memorial Hwy., Chantilly; 703-378-4007. In business for 19 years, Flower Gallery creates a romantic look with lots of candles.
- **The Flower Market**, 5302 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria; 703-751-0322; theflowermarketalexandria.com. This company does creative arrangements, including golf-course centerpieces for a theme wedding.
- **Greenworks**, Spring Valley; 202-265-3335; greenworksflorist.com. Greenworks's abundant designs have been featured in InStyle magazine.
- **Jack H. Lucky Floral Design**, 750 Sundance Mountain, New Market, Va.; 703-533-1515; jackluckyfloraldesign.com. Lucky and his team have provided flowers for the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington Ballet, and Washington National Opera.
- **Janet Flowers Wedding & Event Designs**, 12288-A Wilkins Ave., Rockville; 301-230-0820; weddingandevent.com. Flowers, who specializes in props and vases, just opened a spacious showroom.
- **JLB Floral**, 4932-A Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria; 703-751-4031; jlbfloral.com. JLB can import flowers from Europe and South America, creating unique, high-end arrangements.
- **Mayflower Floral Decorators**, 1127 Connecticut Ave., NW; 202-776-9113. This 15-year-old company incorporates fashion trends, fabrics, and seasonal colors into its designs.
- **Multiflor**, 8300-F Merrifield Ave., Fairfax; 703-645-0090; nicksflowers.com. One of our top vote getters, Nick Perez is praised for his chic designs.
- **Ociana Group**, 1621 Eckington Pl., NE; 202-269-5634. Lush English garden-style bouquets. This company has done destination weddings from Cape Cod to Prague.
- **Petal's Edge Floral Design**, Arlington, 703-338-9778; Takoma Park, 301-785-0781. Gerry Rogers and Rebecca Morris can fill vases with unique ingredients, such as coffee beans and orange slices, to compliment flowers.
- **Philippa Tarrant Custom Floral Design**, Northwest DC; 202-413-8562; philippatarrant.com. Tarrant, who has provided flowers for inaugural balls, creates

arrangements with a European influence.

- **Ritz-Carlton Floral Boutique**, 1250 S. Hayes St., Arlington; 703-412-3794. Jean Vasconcellos and her team specialize in centerpieces and ethnic weddings.
- **Suzann Stotlemeyer**, Chevy Chase; 301-718-0280. Stotlemeyer offers natural bouquets using herbs, fruit, and berries and pays special attention to the resulting fragrance.
- **Ultra Violet Flowers**, 1218 31st St., NW; 202-333-3002; ultravioletflowersdc.com. The designers at Ultra Violet include painters, dancers, and sculptors. They create dramatic arrangements.
- **Wisteria**, 8808 Danewood Dr., Alexandria; 703-360-1042. Stephanie Melvin creates European-style bouquets, focusing on fresh colors and textures.
- **Yellow Door Floral Designs**, 1705 Baldwin Dr., McLean; 703-734-1137; yellowdoor.com. John Duffy's company, praised for its professionalism and unique designs, creates modern arrangements.

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PHOTOGRAPHERS

- **Amy Deputy Photography**, Sparks, Md.; 410-472-9945; amydeputyphotography.com. Deputy, who has won national awards for her work, spent 13 years as a newspaper photographer before doing weddings. Rates start at \$5,400 for Deputy and \$3,900 for associate Mike Morgan and include eight hours of coverage, online posting, and 500 four-by-six prints in a silk box.
- **Amy Raab**, Annapolis; 410-990-0520; amyraab.com. Formerly a newspaper photographer, Raab blends photojournalism, portraiture, and fine art. Rates start at \$3,650, which includes six hours of coverage, 350 proofs in a book, and online posting.
- **Amy Snyder Photographer**, Bethesda; 301-469-4915; amysnyder.com. Snyder captures relaxed moments in her photojournalistic images. Rates start at \$4,500, which includes an album of 50 prints, all proofs, and online posting. Associates available for less.
- **Animage Photography**, Greenbelt; 301-441-3287; btyroler.com. Barbara Tyroler, who teaches photography at the University of

Maryland, has been in business for 25 years. Rates start at \$2,700, which includes five hours of coverage, prints, negatives; optional documentary-style video shot by Tyroler's husband, David Cooper. Tyroler also offers digital options.

- **Berkemeyer-Hine Photography**, Silver Spring; 301-588-8353; bcphoto.net. Veterans Don Berkemeyer and Susan Hine capture romantic and expressive moments in their candid images. Rates start at \$4,200 for full-day coverage with both photographers, an engagement portrait, proof book, and high-resolution digital files.
- **Bonfigli Photography**, Northwest DC; 202-234-1551; michaelbonfigli.com. Bonfigli, who has done work for the Washington Post, captures natural images with an artistic touch. Rates start at \$3,600 for eight hours of coverage, prints, and negatives.
- **Carl Bower Photographs**, Northwest DC; 202-248-6565; carlbower.com. Bower is a Pulitzer Prize finalist who specializes in black-and-white. His photos focus on emotions and relationships. Packages start at \$3,600 for eight hours of coverage, proofs, and online posting.
- **Clay & Company Photography**, Rockville; 301-670-3232; clayblackmore.com. Clay Blackmore has photographed Larry King and actress Jenna Elfman. He is one of 60 Canon Explorers of Light, a title given to influential photographers worldwide. Rates start at \$8,000 for all-day coverage, with an album of 50 photos.
- **Creation Waits**, Arlington; 703-243-0536; creationwaits.com. With five photographers on staff, this budget-friendly company uses cutting-edge technology, such as instant retouching. Rates start at \$1,995, which includes five hours of coverage, digital images, and a CD.
- **DCPhotojournalist.com**, Alexandria; 703-548-6760; dcphotojournalist.com. Jay Clendenin, a photojournalist who freelances for national newsmagazines, takes energetic and fun photos. Rate: \$3,900, which includes seven hours of coverage, a proof book, and a CD.
- **Elaine Studley Photography**, Potomac; 301-670-1762; elainestudley.com. Brides like the artistic style in Studley's photojournalistic

images and say she's prompt at developing photos. Packages start at \$3,450 for six hours of coverage; associates start at \$2,500.

- **Freed Photography**, Bethesda; 301-652-5452; freedphoto.com. Our top vote getter for traditional photography, Freed's 12 photographers specialize in photojournalism and portraiture. Rates start at \$3,250 for six hours of coverage and a custom album.
- **Greenhouse Photography**, Rockville; 301-530-0002. Richard Greenhouse, who shoots in black-and-white and color, can create journalistic images and traditional portraits. He offers unlimited coverage and a leather-bound album for \$5,800.
- **Greg Gibson Photography**, Centreville; 703-608-0155; greggibson.com. Gibson, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, has done work for Vanity Fair and People. His standard package is \$4,900 (associates start at \$2,750), which includes eight hours of coverage, a leather-bound proof catalog, an album of 30 custom enlargements, online proofing, and CDs with high-resolution images.
- **Isacson Studios**, Potomac; 301-299-0800; isacsonstudios.com. Robert Isacson won the award for best wedding photography from DC's chapter of the International Special Events Society in 2005. Rates start at \$5,000 for full coverage with all prints, \$6,500 with an album and six eight-by-tens and all retouching.
- **Jana Curcio Photography**, Alexandria; 877-618-3561; janaphoto.com. Members of this team of seven photojournalists have photographed Michael Jordan, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and other celebrities. Packages start at \$2,795 for eight hours of coverage, an album of five-by-sevens, 300 five-by-seven prints, and all negatives.
Jennifer Domenick Photography, Savage; 410-206-0992; weddingsbyjennifer.com. Brides love Domenick's enthusiasm. She'll set up a digital "photo booth" at receptions for unique and candid portraits of guests. Rates start at \$3,600 for eight hours of coverage, proofs, and online posting.
- **Kathy Blanchard Photography**, Bowie; 301-526-7282; kathyweddings.com. Kathy and her sister, Missy, work as a team to provide photojournalistic images while remaining unobtrusive. Packages start at \$3,400, which

includes eight hours of coverage, two shooters, negatives, and 800 proofs in a box.

- **Ken Graham Photography**, Darnestown; 301-869-8584; kengraham.com. Graham takes well-composed photojournalistic images. Packages, with albums and all proofs, start at \$4,000 for seven hours of coverage and 40 prints.
- **L.H. Lindberg Photography**, Leesburg; 703-443-0736; lhindbergphotography.com. This husband-and-wife team captures the emotion of a wedding day without getting in the way. Rates start at \$4,200 for eight hours of coverage, a coffee-table album, proof books, and online viewing.
- **Matt Mendelsohn Photography**, Alexandria; 703-241-2020; mattmendelsohn.com. Mendelsohn, who has worked for USA Today and covered the Gulf War, wins raves from brides for his creativity, journalistic style, and sense of fun. Rates start at \$5,500, which includes full-day coverage and 50 eight-by-tens and negatives.
- **Michael Bennett Kress & Associates**, Bethesda; 301-654-0909; mbkphoto.com. This company has seven photographers, some of whom specialize in black-and-white. Kress has 25 years of experience. Rates for Kress, including all-day coverage and an album, start at \$6,000; rates for associates start at \$4,000. Smaller packages are available.
- **Michelle Frankfurter**, Takoma Park; 301-589-5235; mfphotos.com. Frankfurter, who has won two World Press Photo Awards, wins praise from brides for her emotional candid shots. Rates start at \$4,900, which includes up to eight hours of coverage, online proofing and ordering, four-by-six proofs, and a leather album of 50 photos.
- **Paul Feters Photography**, Falls Church; 703-641-5859; paulfeters.com. Brides say Feters is easy to work with and creates beautifully lit portraits. Rates start at \$4,450, which includes eight hours of coverage, a proof book, 25 eight-by-ten prints, 300 four-by-six prints, and a CD of negatives.
- **Photographer's Gallery**, Northwest DC; 202-362-8111; thephotographersgallery.net. This family-run company is 15 years old. Cofounder Len De Pas, who started out photographing fashion and architecture, is praised for his creative and romantic photos. Rates start at

\$3,500 for Jacqui De Pas; \$5,500 for Davide De Pas; and \$6,500 for Len De Pas. Packages include at least eight hours of coverage and a finished album, designed in-house.

- **Ralph Alswang Photography**, Northwest DC; 202-487-5025; ralphphoto.com. Alswang was President Clinton's documentary photographer. Brides love his relaxed personality and emotional photographs. Rates start at \$3,400 for six hours of coverage, proofs, a book of 100 images, a CD, and online posting.
- **Reneé Michele Photography**, Bethesda; 703-408-8683; reneemichelephoto.com. Michele, a photojournalist, also does portraiture. Brides praise her enthusiasm and unobtrusiveness. An average package costs \$3,400, which includes eight hours of coverage, online posting, proof book with all images, and 24-page album.
- **Robert Bowen Photography**, Olney; 301-598-2740; robertbowen.com. A lifestyle photojournalist, Bowen has been featured in Town & Country and the Washington Post. Rates start at \$3,650 for five hours of coverage and an album.
- **Studio Diana**, Fairfax; 703-691-1661; studiodiana.com. Justine Ungaro won an international award for best event photography in 2005. She photographs about 20 weddings a year to get to know each couple well. Rates start at \$5,200.
- **Susan Hornyak Photography**, Bethesda; 301-263-0349; susanhornyak.com. Hornyak's photos are natural and romantic. Associate Randy Wood uses his background in fine art to shoot emotional black-and-whites. Rates start at \$4,000 for six hours of dual coverage, a 30-page album, proofs, and negatives.
- **Taisie Berkeley Photography**, Georgetown; 202-338-3033; berkeleyphoto.com. Berkeley, who has won two awards from the Society of Professional Journalists, captures candid moments in her images. Packages start at \$2,800 for four hours of coverage, negatives, and a 300-proof album. She's away until April.
- **Tisara Photography**, Alexandria; 703-838-8098; tisaraphoto.com. This brother-and-sister team have more than 30 years combined experience. They specialize in black-and-white images. Rates start at \$2,650, which includes five hours of coverage and all proofs and

negatives.

- **Wedding Bureau**, 800-214-7548; weddingbureau.com. This Web site shows the work of six local photographers, including Alan Lessig, who's won national awards. Click "View Our Work" and then "Washington DC/VA/MD."
- **Wedding Photojournalism by Rodney Bailey**, Springfield; 703-440-4086; rodneybailey.com. Our top vote getter for photojournalism, Bailey and his associates string together photos that tell the story of a wedding day. Rates start at \$5,000 for five hours with Bailey; associates start at \$3,000.

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CATERERS

- **Avalon Caterers**, Alexandria; 202-337-2000; www.avaloncaterers.com. Avalon invites parents and grandparents to tastings to ensure authenticity when serving ethnic cuisine. Glatt kosher available.
- **Catering by Windows**, Alexandria; 703-519-3500; catering.com. Serving everything from Glatt kosher to Asian-inspired dishes, this company gets high marks for service and cuisine.
- **The Catering Company of Washington**, Northwest DC; 202-347-8040; thecateringco.com. Specializing in classical cuisine with an American influence, this firm uses local foods such as Maryland crabs and rockfish.
- **Dahan Caterers**, Rockville; 301-294-8445. Dahan, which has provided food for senatorial events, offers Glatt kosher cuisine, including its popular Moroccan fare.
- **Design Cuisine**, Arlington; 703-979-9400; designcuisine.com. One of our top vote getters, this firm will personalize a wedding by preparing dishes from family recipes.
- **Federal City Caterers**, Northwest DC; 202-408-9700; federalcity.com. Everything from Jamaican to Italian to Indian cuisine.
- **Festive Foods**, North Bethesda; 301-230-2700; festivefoods.com. Chefs use imported foods including fish flown in daily from Norway and Alaska.
- **Knife & Fork**, Rockville; 301-670-4744; theknifeandfork.com. Brides say Knife & Fork, which has a kosher division, offers good

service and tasty food.

- **Occasions Caterers**, Brookland; 202-546-7400; occasionscaterers.com. Our top vote getter, Occasions can do everything from a clambake with steamers and corn on the cob to baby lamb chops and tuna tartare.
- **Ridgewells**, Bethesda; 301-652-1515; ridgewells.com. This 77-year-old company won the 2005 award for best cuisine from the DC chapter of the International Special Events Society.
- **Sara McGregor's Capitol Catering**, Alexandria; 703-739-1030; capitolcatering.com. Sara McGregor offers a "tasting entrée" for weddings, which is five small portions of a variety of dishes on a rectangular plate.
- **Susan Gage Caterers**, Oxon Hill; 301-839-6900; susangage.com. Praised for professionalism, Susan Gage offers seasonal dishes, including risotto with morels in spring, pheasant with poached pear in the fall.
- **3Citron**, Georgetown; 202-342-3400; 3citron.com. Signature dishes include roasted halibut and a trio of gazpachos served in shot glasses and topped with salsa.
- **Well Dunn Catering**, Southeast DC; 202-543-7878; welldunn.com. Couples praise Well Dunn for its accommodating service. "Not your usual steak and salmon," one bride said of the contemporary cuisine.

Music

- **Bialek's Music**, Rockville; 301-340-6206; bialeksmusic.com. Our top vote getter for music agencies, Bialek's can provide a cappella groups, magicians, string ensembles, belly dancers, and bands that play Greek, Italian, or Brazilian music. Bands include local favorite Escapade.
- **Celebrated String Quartet**, Annandale; 703-256-0755; string4.com. This chamber ensemble—two violinists, a violist, and a cellist—has performed at thousands of weddings. They can also play tango, salsa, jazz, or rock 'n' roll.
- **Chris Laich**, Silver Spring; 240-418-6207; elegantweddingsdc.com. Modern Bride magazine named Laich, who has 15 years of experience, one of the best wedding DJs in the country in 2005.

- **Crystal Strings**, Bowie; 301-464-2828; crystalstrings.com. This agency, which represents more than 400 musicians, can provide string-and-flute quartets, harpists, brass quintets, and more.
- **Entertainment Exchange**, Bethesda; 301-986-4640; entertainmentexchange.com. One of our top vote getters, Entertainment Exchange represents popular bands Free Spirit and Sound Connection and can provide jazz groups, DJs, string ensembles, and variety acts.
- **Gene Donati Presentations**, Rockville; 301-294-1600; genedonati.com. Founded by the late Gene Donati, who performed at White House events beginning in the 1960s, this company provides flute-guitar duos, brass quintets, bagpipers, bands, and more.
- **The Grandsons**, Arlington; 703-243-9378; grandsons.com. This roots-rock quartet just released its fifth recording, Party With the Rich. The band specializes in music featuring elements of New Orleans rhythm-and-blues and swing.
- **Jan Davis Entertainment and Events**, Alexandria; 703-461-7253; jandavis.com. Popular bands include Onyx, Full Circle, and Amaretto. Can also book national acts including Beyoncé.
- **Johnny Artis Band**, Alexandria; 703-583-9894; johnnyartis.com. This R&B and Southern-rock band includes a guitarist, bassist, and saxophonist. Their song list covers everything from Frank Sinatra to Al Green.
- **Kirkabee Deejays**, Vienna; 703-281-4290; kirkabee.com. In the DJ business for more than 25 years, Kirkabee also books harpists and string ensembles.
- **MSE Productions**, Reston; 703-620-5554; mseproductions.com. Classical ensembles that can include strings, flute, cello, oboe, brass, guitar, harp, and piano. Also jazz, dance, and swing bands.
- **MyDeejay.com**, Columbia; 888-438-6935; mydeejay.com. Founder Evan Reitmeyer and associate Anthony Simpson have performed at 1,200 weddings combined. Brides say Reitmeyer is fun and
- reliable.
- **NYX Entertainment**, Rockville; 301-984-0500; nyxentertainment.com. NYX can book

DJs and dancers and offers 60-inch plasma screens.

- **Olivera Music Entertainment**, Ashburn; 703-589-1588; oliveramusic.com. This agency provided music for 2005 presidential inaugural events. Some of the 70 bands offer DJ services while the band takes breaks.
- **Potomac Talent**, Silver Spring; 301-587-6267; potomactalent.com. This agency, which also books DJs, represents more than 700 bands and makes customized DVDs for clients to preview talent.
- **Retrospect**, Ellicott City; 301-438-2400; retrospectband.com. This band includes three vocalists, a three-piece rhythm section, and a three-piece horn section. It'll play disco, Motown, '80s hits, Top 40, and more.
- **Washington Talent**, Photo and Video, Rockville; 301-762-1800; washingtontalent.com. Works with a variety of bands including orchestras and jazz ensembles. Can contract with a band and DJ to provide combination entertainment.
- **Wright Music & Productions**, Fort Washington; 301-292-0584; wrightmusicproductions.com. The Wright Touch band has been performing a variety of styles, including Latin and classic rock, since the early 1980s. Also provides solo musicians, strolling string quintets, and an 18-piece jazz band.

Bridal Attire

- **Betsy Robinson's Bridal Collection**, 1848 Reisterstown Rd., Baltimore; 410-484-4600; robinsonsbridal.com. This salon carries hundreds of dresses from designers such as Reem Acra, Badgley Mischka, Carolina Herrera, and Monique Lhuillier. Dresses from \$1,000 to \$7,500.
- **Claire Dratch**, 7615 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda; 301-656-8000. Designers include Lazaro, Jim Hjelm, Christos, and Marisa. Dresses from \$900 to \$5,000.
- **David's Bridal**, Rockville, 301-811-1112; Bowie, 301-464-8690; Glen Burnie, 410-789-7308; Springfield, 703-912-7701; Woodbridge, 703-490-8940; davidsbridal.com. Gowns from Oleg Cassini, Monique Luo, and more plus invitations, gifts, and favors. Gowns: \$299 to \$1,200.

- **Distinctive Designs Bridal**, 15709 Crabbs Branch Way, Rockville; 301-948-1833; ddbridal.com. Co-owned by Apprentice finalist Sandy Ferreira, Distinctive Designs carries gowns, accessories, bridesmaid dresses, and more. Brides like the attentive service and large dressing rooms. Dresses: \$500 to \$2,500.
- **I Do—I Do Wedding Gowns**, 15932 Luanne Dr., Gaithersburg; 240-243-0050; idoioweddinggowns.com. Off-the-rack and cleaned consignment gowns plus special-order dresses by Anjolie, Mon Cheri, San Patrick, and Joli. Dresses range from \$150 to \$6,000.
- **Jeanette’s Bride ‘N Tux Boutique**, 10386 Festival La., Manassas; 703-369-1998; jeanettesbride.com. Jeanette’s collection includes dresses from Lazaro, Jasmine, Alvina Valenta, and Rivini plus shoes, jewelry, and tuxedos. Gowns: \$500 to \$8,000.
- **Lady Hamilton**, 3100 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington; 703-521-0990; ladyhamiltonbridal.com. This 54-year-old boutique carries gowns by Justin Alexander, Bellissima, and Ada Athanassiou plus its own line. Prices: \$900 to \$4,000.
- **My Glass Slipper**, 128 N. Pitt St., Alexandria; 703-838-8583; myglasslipper.com. This specialty shop sells bridal shoes by Vera Wang, Kate Spade, Ann Klein, and Stuart Weitzman as well as purses, hosiery, and more.
- **P. Lawrence Bridals & Formals**, 336 Main St., Gaithersburg; 301-977-9729; plawrence.com. This two-year-old boutique wins raves for its customer service. Designers include Lazaro, Lila Couture, and Maggie Sottero. Also dresses for bridesmaids and mothers of the bride and groom. Prices: \$700 to \$5,000.
- **Priscilla of Boston**, 8065 Leesburg Pike, McLean; 703-821-0167; priscillaofboston.com. This 60-year-old salon chain sells handmade gowns, focusing on lace and bead work. Gown preservation also available. Dresses: \$1,000 to \$4,500.
- **Promise . . . for the Savvy Bride**, 8301 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda; 301-215-9232; promisedc.com. This friendly salon carries Carolina Herrera, Carmela Sutura, L’ezu Atelier, and more plus tiaras, veils, and jewelry. Gowns: \$2,500 to \$5,000.

- **Rizik Brothers**, 1100 Connecticut Ave., NW; 202-223-4050; riziks.com. In business since 1908, Rizik's carries gowns, bridesmaids' attire, and dresses for mothers of the bride and groom. Gowns range from \$2,500 to \$6,000.
- **Saks Fifth Avenue Bridal Salon**, Tysons Galleria; 703-269-1293. Saks is a carrier of Kenneth Pool, Carolina Herrera, and Angel Sanchez designs; custom gowns and accessories also available. Prices: \$2,500 to \$25,000.
- **Trousseau**, 306 Maple Ave W., Vienna; 703-255-3300; trousseaultd.com. This bridal accessory store sells custom veils, purses, lingerie, and dyeable shoes.
- **Vera Wang Bridal Boutique at Saks Jandel**, 2522 Virginia Ave., NW; 202-337-4200. Brides praise this Vera Wang boutique—one of eight in the country—for its service. It also carries bridesmaid dresses, gloves, headpieces, and shoes. Dresses range from \$2,800 to \$24,000.

Bridesmaids Attire and Tuxedos

Along with department stores and the shops listed above, try these:

- **Ann Taylor**, 800-342-5266; anntaylor.com. The Celebrations collection, available at the Connecticut Avenue and Tysons Galleria locations, works well for bridesmaids. Styles range from boatneck to strapless. Dresses start at \$168.
- **Aria Bridesmaids**, 2029 P St., NW; 202-293-2742; ariadress.com. Aria recently opened this appointment-only showroom in Dupont Circle. Most dresses are available in full or knee length. Prices start at \$195.
- **BCBG Max Azria**, Tysons Galleria, 703-734-0080; Pentagon City, 703-415-3690; 3210 M St., NW, 202-333-2224; bcbg.com. Stylish dresses, available in knee and traditional lengths, ranging from \$248 to \$560.
- **Bridal Visions**, Forestville, 301-568-6120; Falls Church, 703-237-0010; foreverybride.com. This salon carries more than ten styles, including lines by Alfred Sung, After Six, and Dessy, plus accessories. Dresses start at \$108.
- **J.Crew**, 800-205-3877; jcrew.com. With a new wedding shop and hotline, J.Crew now

sells bridal gowns and bridesmaids dresses, suits and tuxes, and accessories. Prices start at \$195.

- **Jessica McClintock**, Tysons Corner Center; 703-790-0016; jessicamcclintock.com. Popular styles include the stretch charmeuse strapless Genevieve and Tiffany dresses with long skirts; bridesmaids dresses have a one- to two-week turnaround if in stock. Prices start at \$152.
- **Masters Tuxedo**, 12 area locations; yourtuxedo.com. A top pick for tuxedos, Masters carries designers such as Fumagalli and Jean Yves.
- **Nicole Miller**, Tysons Galleria; 703-821-1630; nicolemiller.com. With 15 styles, Nicole Miller offers chocolate, daffodil, aquamarine, and other new colors. Also wraps and shawls. Dresses: \$300 to \$600.
- **Syms**, Rockville, 301-984-3335; Towson, 410-825-7445; Falls Church, 703-241-8500; syms.com. Syms's tuxedo selection includes designer labels such as Givenchy and Ralph Lauren. Tuxes available to buy only. Prices: \$119 to \$499.

Invitations and Calligraphy

- **Calligraphy Graphic Design**, Silver Spring; 301-236-4459; calligraphygraphicdesign.com. Jonathan Lane provides custom invitations, place cards, and monogramming.
- **Caren Milman Calligraphy**, Rockville; 301-871-6716. Our top vote getter, Milman does all invitations, addresses, menus, and place cards by hand.
- **Copenhaver**, Dupont Circle; 202-232-1200. In business for 109 years, Copenhaver uses an old-fashioned printing press for its engraved invitations.
- **Creative Parties**, Bethesda; 301-654-9292; www.creativeparties.com. Menus, place cards, favor tags, and invitations, including new lines from Vera Wang and Kate Spade.
- **Discount Invitations by Estelle**, Rockville; 301-460-1981. Estelle Chaikin Salen can complete invitation orders in one to two days. She has done work for Joe Theismann and the Ambassadors Ball.
- **Invitations by Brenda**, Bethesda; 301-493-9339; invitationsbybrenda.com. Brenda Cohen, who has 31 years of experience, offers a

discount on exclusive invitation lines.

- **Lettering by Lynne**, Alexandria; 703-548-5427; letteringbylynne.com. Lynne Sandler offers invitations in foreign languages, including Chinese and Hebrew. For summer weddings, she'll design programs that work as fans.
- **Sammy Little**, Silver Spring and Bethesda; 301-589-9545; sammylittle.com. Little has done invitations and place cards for events at the White House.
- **Wrap It Up**, Vienna; 703-281-4329. wrapitup.invitations.com. Offering printed and manual calligraphy on envelopes, menus, and place cards, owner Cornelia Hall can also answer questions on etiquette and protocol.
- **The Write Image**, North Bethesda; 301-896-0975; www.twio.com. Toni Footer offers thermography, letterpress, engraving, and mailing services. Orders can be placed and previewed online.
- **Write-On!**, Rockville; 301-251-0404. Brides praise Sue Gould for her attention to detail. She's been in the business for nearly 30 years.
- **The Written Word**, Dupont Circle, 202-223-1400; Georgetown, 202-342-1033; www.writtenwordstudio.com. Specializing in letterpress printing, the Written Word won a design award from How, a graphic-arts magazine, in 2005.

Cakes and Other Desserts

- **Alexandria Pastry Shop & Catering Company**, 703-578-4144; alexandriapastry.com. Brides often request the "black & white" mousse cake topped with white-chocolate shavings. Slices start at \$5.25 a person.
- **Ann Amernick**, Bethesda; 301-718-0434; palenarestaurant.com. Amernick specializes in European-style wedding cakes that feature elegant sugar flowers. "That Baltimore Cake," a buttery lemon cake with raspberry jam that Amernick created for her mother, is a popular choice. Prices start at \$6 a person.
- **CakeLove**, Northwest DC; 202-588-7100; cakelove.com. CakeLove's popular flavors include Neil's Hat Trick, a chocolate ganache-iced cake with white and dark chocolate and raspberries. It also makes cupcake trees.

Prices start at \$4.50 a person.

- **Cakelore**, Centreville; 703-830-8163; cakelore.com. Loretta Nicholas offers about 20 flavors and fillings, such as Champagne mousse and white-chocolate cappuccino. Slices start at \$5 a person.
- **Cakes Unique**, Falls Church; 703-533-0649; cakes-unique.com. One bride mistook Narcisa Vieira-Castillo's sugar flowers for real ones on her wedding day; others call her flavors "delicious." Prices range from \$6.50 to \$13 a person.
- **Creative Cakes**, Silver Spring; 301-587-1599; creativecakes.com. The popular mandarin-orange and lemon cakes are made with real fruit. Prices start at \$4 a person.
- **Especially for You**, Alexandria; 703-660-9592; chefesp4u.com. JoAnn Kottkamp, who made her first tiered cake at age 15, will create anything from elegant to whimsical. She enjoys decorating with molded chocolate. Slices start at \$4.50.
- **Fancy Cakes by Leslie**, Gaithersburg; 301-548-9390; fancycakesbyleslie.com. Our top vote getter, Leslie Goldman-Poyourow, created the winning cake—four tiers of chocolate fondant with pink accents—for the Today show's "hometown wedding" in the fall. Prices start at \$5.75 a person.
- **Heidelberg Pastry Shoppe**, Arlington; 703-527-8394; heidelbergbakery.com. This German-style bakery often uses marzipan to decorate and flavor cakes. Brides like the carrot cake. Prices start at \$3.75 a guest.
- **Hollin Hall Pastry Shop**, Alexandria; 703-768-9643; hollinhallpastry.com. Specializing in mousse cakes, this shop also makes vanilla-and-chocolate Bavarian cakes. Prices start at \$6.50 a person.
- **Pastries by Randolph**, 4500 Lee Hwy., Arlington; 703-243-0070. Popular flavors include chocolate mousse; cakes can accommodate fresh flowers. Cakes start at \$3.50 a person.
- **Pâtisserie Poupon**, Georgetown, 202-342-3248; Baltimore, 410-332-0390. One popular cake, the Royale, has layers of chocolate mousse and meringue, white chocolate, and crunchy hazelnut. Prices start at \$4.25 a person.
- **Patty Collette's Patty Cakes**, Annandale; 571-338-2469. Patty Collette never repeats a

design, so every cake is custom made. If the design includes flowers, she'll meet with your florist to make sure they match. Servings start at \$10 each.

- **Rae Bakes**, Northwest DC; 202-333-4967; raebakes.com. Raeanne Hytone can design her hand-decorated buttery sugar cookies to match wedding attire and decor. Most cookies start at \$6.
- **The Sweet Life**, Annandale; 703-750-3266; thesweetlife.com. Owned by pastry chef Norman Davis, this bakery's most popular cakes include double chocolate with Kahlúa filling and white Grand Marnier filled with chocolate ganache. Prices start at \$3.25 a guest.
- **Tivoli Gourmet & Pastry Shop**, Arlington; 703-524-8902; tivoligourmet.net. This shop has been making mousse wedding cakes—including strawberry-dark chocolate and lemon-white chocolate—for more than 30 years. Prices start at \$3.25 a guest.

Hair

- **Beautiful Hair by Beverly**, Act II Haircutters, 10621-G Braddock Rd., Fairfax; 703-300-2055. Beverly Leuterio, with 20 years of experience, is praised for her skills and calming demeanor. Rates: \$150 in salon, \$275 on site; \$75 each additional person; \$35 to \$55 for flower girls and junior bridesmaids; trials \$75.
- **David's Beautiful People**, 12121 Rockville Pike, Rockville, 301-881-2540; 7829 Woodmont Ave., Bethesda, 301-986-6996; www.davidsbeautifulpeople.com. David's traveling "wedding team" is stylists Janita Pereira, Victor Roa, and Lisa Kasmer, who do everything from updos to extensions. Rates: \$85 consultation; \$100 bride in salon, others \$75 and up. Wedding party, \$700 to \$1,300 on site.
- **Elegant Hair by Giselle**, 6803 Breezewood Ter., North Bethesda; 301-984-9007; hairbygiselle.com. Specializing in classic updos and on-site styling, Giselle has worked for E: True Hollywood Story and the 2004 Mrs. America pageant. Rates: \$295 on site, \$225 in her studio; \$75 each additional person; trial run \$60 to \$95.
- **Erika James**, McLean; 703-587-4116. James

has worked with model Niki Taylor and Carmen Electra. She is commended for giving brides an elegant look. Rates: \$200 in salon, \$250 on site (\$200 with a four-person minimum); \$150 each additional person; trial run, including makeup, \$85.

- **Gwen Fields**, Halcyon, 729 Second St., NE; 202-544-5800. Brides like Fields's attentiveness and patience. She's happy to experiment with any look and hair type. Rates: \$57 and up in salon, \$500 on site includes all-day makeup; \$30 to \$60 each additional person. Consultations are free; trial runs \$57 and up.
- **Maria Melba de la Torre**, Bubbles, 205 Pennsylvania Ave., SE; 202-543-1245; 703-486-8112; melbahairdesign.com. Known for looks that are classy and natural, de la Torre has styled high-profile clients and has done destination weddings in Los Angeles and Miami. Updos: \$85 and up, \$100 and up on site.
- **Monte Durham**, Elizabeth Arden Red Door Salon & Spa, 8075 Leesburg Pike, Vienna; 703-660-1248. Durham advises brides on everything from gowns to shoes. Brides like his sensibility and wit. Rates start at \$400, including makeup.
- **Susie Ruckstuhl**, Elite for Hair, 2315 Wisconsin Ave., NW; 202-337-8048. Ruckstuhl enjoys on-location work and has styled Annette Bening. Rates: \$200 on site, \$85 in salon; \$85 each additional person (four-person minimum); trial run \$85.

Makeup

- **Beauty Mark**, Lorton; 703-550-9329; beautymark.biz. In business for more than 20 years, Kim Giammaria specializes in a natural look. She'll help the bride get ready on the wedding day. Rate: \$295 for the bride on site, \$75 each additional person; lesson \$125.
- **Carl Ray**, George Spa Salon at the Four Seasons, 2828 Pennsylvania Ave., NW; 202-342-1942. Brides say Ray, whose clients have included Alanis Morissette, is kind and professional. He can give brides a natural look. Rates: In the salon, \$100 for the bride; \$100 each additional person; trial run \$80 to \$100. On site, \$500 (for two hours) for the bride and two others plus \$250 an hour for

additional faces.

- **Carola Myers**, Fairfax; 571-214-5558; carolamyers.com. Myers has worked with movie stars, diplomats, and royalty. Rates: \$220 for the bride; \$85 each additional person; \$85 for trial run.
- **Erwin Gomez**, Erwin Gomez Salon & Spa, 1519 Wisconsin Ave., NW; 202-333-7290; erwingomezsalon.com. Gomez, who just opened a Georgetown salon, has worked with the Clintons and the Bush twins. Rates: \$120 in the salon (anyone); \$400 on site for a bride, including a trial run; \$135 each additional person on site.
- **Gustavo Mottola**, Arlington; 703-908-9620; gustavocosmetics.com. Mottola, who has a cosmetics and skincare line, has done work for Jennifer Garner and ER's Maura Tierney. He does about 200 weddings a year. On-site rates: \$95 a person (including bride) with a four-person minimum; \$200 bride only. Studio rate: \$95 a person.
- **Janice Kinigopoulos**, Ellicott City; 410-531-2199; bridalbabe.com. Modern Bride magazine named Kinigopoulos one of the top 25 trendsetters in the country in 2004. She's done work for Ashley Judd and Geena Davis. Rates start at \$600.
- **Jenny Dickson**, North Potomac; 301-762-1268. Dickson has done work for Access Hollywood and Fox News. Rates: \$500 on site, which includes the bride and two to three other women; bride's trial run \$100.
- **John Kuri**, New Wave Salon, 11828 Rockville Pike, Rockville; 301-928-2879. Kuri's speciality is accenting eyes. He now does hairstyling, too. Rates for makeup: \$200 for the bride in salon, \$300 on site; \$85 each additional person in the salon, \$100 on location; trial run \$75 and up.
- **Kimberly Steele**, Springfield; 703-597-9955; kimberlysteele.com. Steele, a 20-year veteran, has worked with Keira Knightley, singer Mya, and Matt Damon. Rate: \$100 in salon; \$150 on site; \$80 each additional person; trial run \$100.
- **Leah McKay**, Falls Church; 703-241-8402; leahmckay.com. McKay provides makeup lessons for brides (\$175 and up). Rates: \$200 for brides, with \$75 trial run; \$80 each additional person.

Rehearsal Dinners

- **Clyde's of Tysons Corner**, 8332 Leesburg Pike, Vienna; 703-734-1901; clydes.com. In its art-deco rooms, Clyde's can host 150 seated guests or 200 standing for luncheons, cocktail receptions, or dinner. Average cost per person, food only: \$30 to \$46.
- **Maggiano's Little Italy**, Chevy Chase, 202-966-3108; McLean, 703-893-5810; maggianos.com. Voted top spot for a rehearsal dinner, Maggiano's has private rooms for up to 240. Price of a family-style meal: \$33 or \$34.95 a person, including coffee and tea.
- **Mie N Yu**, 3125 M St., NW; 202-333-6122; mienyu.com. Serving food with Middle Eastern, North African, and Asian influences, Mie N Yu has four private rooms. Capacity: 54. Average cost per person: \$65 to \$85.
- **Morton's**, six area locations; mortons.com. Private rooms at most of these steakhouses feature mahogany wood, etched glass, and brick. Three-course dinners cost \$50 to \$69 a person. Capacity: 128.
- **The Occidental**, 1475 Pennsylvania Ave., NW; 202-737-4147; occidentaldc.com. The Occidental has three elegant private rooms. In warmer months, guests can dine in the Willard hotel's courtyard. Capacity: 130. Price per person, food only: \$55 to \$65 for dinner.
- **Old Ebbitt Grill**, 675 15th St., NW; 202-347-4800; ebbitt.com. Guests can dine in the 13-story atrium, which has a fountain, palm trees, and glass ceiling. Capacity: 250. Average cost per person, food only: \$35 to \$65.
- **Sea Catch Restaurant**, 1054 31st St., NW; 202-337-4807; seacatchrestaurant.com. All three private rooms have hardwood floors and antique accents. Capacity: 250. Cost per person, food only: \$45 to \$70.
- **Sequoia**, 3000 K St., NW; 202-333-3011; www.arkrestaurants.com. A top vote getter, Sequoia offers private and semiprivate rooms and views of the Potomac. Capacity: 120. Average cost per person: \$34 to \$75.
- **That's Amore**, Rockville, 240-268-0682; Columbia, 410-772-5900; Vienna, 703-281-7777; Sterling, 703-406-4900; thatsamore.com. This family-style Italian restaurant offers small private rooms; the Rockville location has a banquet hall that holds

200. Average cost per person, for food and nonalcoholic drinks: \$32.

Videographers

- **Absolute Video**, Centreville; 703-530-7528; avpweddings.com. In business since 1988, this company uses broadcast-quality cameras for its documentary-style videos and is known for its attentive service. Rates: \$1,875 to \$2,675.
- **Classic Moments Video Productions**, Severna Park; 410-729-1898; classicmomentsvp.com. Brides like Lisa Fisher's style of matching the video to the bride's and groom's personalities. Rates start at \$3,500 for six-hour, three-camera coverage.
- **Craig Gormus Video**, Potomac; 301-775-3955; gormusvideo.com. Praised for his unobtrusiveness and use of natural lighting, Gormus provides couples with a digital download of wedding highlights. Rates start at \$3,000.
- **Dolce Video**, Arlington; 703-300-9033; dolcevideo.com. Owner Haynal Papp offers a "signature series" package, a multiple-day shoot—for example, the rehearsal dinner and the wedding—starting at \$4,500. Other packages range from \$750 for four hours of raw footage to \$2,400 for an eight-hour, two-camera package that includes three edited DVDs and one VHS of raw footage.
- **Jenny Lehman Film & Video**, Fort Washington; 301-567-9622; videojournalist.com. One of our top vote getters, Jenny Lehman recently used remote-controlled cameras for billionaire Sheila Johnson's wedding. She can use Super-8 movie film and does the shooting and editing herself. Rates start at \$5,000.
- **Martin Andrews Motion Picture Essays**, Silver Spring; 800-350-3308; martinandrews.com. Andrews and his associates use both movie film and video to create silver-screen-style productions. Rates for Andrews start at \$7,500, for associates at \$2,500.
- **On Line Suburban Video**, Rockville, 301-315-6300; suburbanvideo.com. In business for more than 25 years, On Line offers video and photo montages and large-screen projection. Rates start at \$1,895.

- **Thomas Bowen Video**, Potomac, 301-294-5300; bowenvideo.com. A top vote getter, Bowen offers clients the option of putting their documentary-style video on iPod for convenient viewing. Rates range from \$2,500 to \$6,500.
- **Video Express Productions**, Silver Spring, 301-598-6096; Alexandria, 703-836-7626; videoexpresspro.com. Praised for its excellent sound quality, Video Express focuses on making a family-memoir-style production. Rates start at \$1,195.
- **Washington Video Productions**, Rockville; 301-762-1800; washingtontalent.com. This 39-year-old company is known for its affordability and use of quality lighting. Brides say the videographers don't get in the way. Rates start at \$750.

Limos and Transportation

- **Atlantic Services Group**, 2131 K St., Suite 200, NW; 202-466-5050; atlanticservicesgroup.com. This 20-year-old company provides limousines, minibuses, motor coaches, and Town Cars.
- **Carey Worldwide Chauffeured Services**, Northwest DC; 800-336-4646; www.ecarey.com. Limousines, Navigators, sedans, minibuses, and motor coaches.
- **Harmon's Hayrides & Carriages**, Brandy Station, Va.; 540-825-6707; cadcol.com/harmons. Horses are braided and decorated to match the carriage; drivers wear a black coat, top hat, and boots. Six-person carriages rent for \$500 to \$600 for two hours.
- **Limousines, Inc.**, Upper Marlboro; 800-652-8224; limos-inc.com. Limousines, Navigators, Hummers, Escalades, Excursions, and limo buses. Chauffeurs provide a red carpet, just-married sign, and Champagne toast.
- **Old Town Trolley Tours**, Northeast DC; 202-832-9800; historictours.com. A 40-person trolley costs \$720 for three hours; \$130 for each additional hour. \$50 fee if you leave DC.
- **Prime Transportation Services**, 301-449-7007 (Maryland); 202-296-0000 (DC); 703-841-5466 (Virginia); primetransportation.com. Limousines, vans, limo lounges, minibuses, and sedans, plus antique classics such as a 1941 Cadillac.
- **Regal Limousine Service**, Springfield; 703-

440-3651; regallimousine.com. For \$95 an hour and up, chauffeurs in classic Bentleys or Rolls-Royces take couples to picturesque locations near the monuments.

- **Reston Limousine**, Sterling and Capitol Heights; 800-546-6141; restonlimo.com. Sedans, vans, minibuses, and limousines, plus a 57-passenger coach.

Tents and Other Rentals

- **Capital Party Rentals**, Rockville, 301-231-9600; Dulles, 703-661-8290; capitalrentals.com. Everything from dishes to dance floors. The biggest tent holds more than 1,000 people.
- **Classic Tents**, Silver Spring; 301-588-3181; classictentsinc.com. In business for 22 years, Classic Tents offers tents, staging, generators, dance floors, chairs, and lighting. It's done work for the Washington Nationals.
- **DC Rental**, Arlington; 703-671-7300; dcrental.com. Flatware, glassware, linens, chairs, cushions, antique china, and more.
- **Event Rentals**, Chantilly; 703-378-2255; www.eventrentals.com. Tents, lighting, staging, glassware, linens, china, and tiki torches.
- **HDO Productions**, Rockville; 301-881-8700; hdotents.com. This 40-year-old company, which rents tents, lighting, heating, air conditioning, and staging, has done work for the White House and the Kennedy Center.
- **L&A Tent Rentals**, Stafford; 703-451-3390; latentrentals.com. Brides praise L&A, which also provides lighting and tables, for its beautiful tents.
- **Party Cloths**, Silver Spring; 301-608-3600; partycloths.com. Everything from tablecloths to chair covers. Handmade silk-and-beaded linens from India are popular.
- **Party Rental**, Northwest DC, Beltsville; 866-634-4776; partyrentalltd.com. Candles, barware, coat racks, linens, and more.
- **Perfect Settings**, Northwest DC; 202-722-2900; www.perfectsettings.com. Custom linens, tables, flatware, more. This company has worked for museums.
- **Select Event Rentals**, Beltsville; 301-937-7600; weparty.com. Tents, chairs, umbrellas, flatware, china, serving pieces.

- **Signature Special Event Services**, Frederick; 800-522-8368; eventservices.com. Tents, generators, air conditioning, catering equipment, lighting, and more.
- **Sugarplum Tent Company**, Boyds, Md.; 301-869-2054; sugarplumtents.com. Our top vote getter, Sugarplum has provided tents for presidential inaugurations. Its most popular tent has a clear top; it also offer tables, chairs, dance floors, and stages.

Special Lighting

- **Atmosphere**, Silver Spring; 301-585-2100; atmospherelighting.com. Atmosphere has provided concert lighting for Ray Charles and Tony Bennett.
- **Digital Lightning**, Gaithersburg; 301-987-0511; digitallightning.org. This award-winning company offers fireworks, including heart-shaped pyrotechnics.
- **Frost Lighting**, Newington; 703-866-5153; www.frostlighting.com. Frost's special effects include spotlighting, custom-dyed paper lanterns, mirrored disco balls, and lighted dance floors.
- **John Farr Lighting Design**, Bowie; 301-390-2728; johnfarrlighting.com. Brides say Farr has creative lighting ideas and works well within a budget.

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