

# FRANKLY SPEAKING ...

## What's hot and what's not: Wedding trends for 2016

BY FRANK J. ANDONOPLAS, MBC

As a wedding consultant, every wedding that I design and coordinate is totally inspired by that couple's style, so the details are completely unique to each wedding.

Here are the latest trends that I see in weddings for this year. Remember that these are trends, not the rules. So the first thing I do with every couple is ask a lot of questions about their style, likes and—even more importantly—dislikes. I strongly feel your wedding should reflect your style. That's where I come in and make it unique to both of you, "marrying" your style to what is trending. For me, it is all about creating a unique event experience for the couple and their family and friends.

—**Food:** I'm seeing a return to a sit-down plated meal. This can be a lavish 12-course tasting menu that is also complete with wine pairings to a Downton Abbey-inspired European-style meal complete with French service.

For those on a budget and who don't want to spend a lot of their reception time eating, keep it simple with a salad or appetizer course (I love doing a duet of soup and salad at the same time) and then an entree course followed by wedding cake for dessert. This way, you have the seated meal experience with minimal cost. Keep in mind that when doing a lavish dinner, keep your cocktail hour food to just passed hors d'oeuvres so that they can enjoy the meal they are not expecting.

—**Wedding cake:** Couples are opting for smaller cakes for the traditional cake cut. Fun desserts are on trend. From make-your-own doughnuts to pie bars, dessert, in itself, is an event of the evening. Coffee stations, complete with baristas, are still very popular.

—**Libations:** Signature cocktails are still the rage. Instead of the usual martini or Manhattan, I love to have my clients meet with a mixologist and create cocktails all their own. Also, a dedicated bar for tasting of different varieties of

scotch, sparkling wines or craft beers can be fun and great source of conversation.

—**Floral:** You can spend a little, or you can spend a lot. I'm finding that in my centerpieces are becoming more unique. Instead of just one large one, multiple smaller arrangements can make real statements on the tables.

—**Lighting:** Pin-spotting tables, textured dance floors, walls, ceilings and perimeter LED lighting (that can change color—great for dancing) are all great options. Video mapping—where changing 3D images can light a wedding cake, dance floor or a whole building—is the new trend.

—**Seating for guests:** If you're doing a sit-down meal, you must have seating for everyone. But think outside the box. Using rented couches, ottomans and banquettes make it much more interesting than just chairs. Also, think beyond the round banquet table: Rectangles, squares and even serpentine shapes can mix up things.

—**Entertainment:** In addition to your orchestra or DJ, think of other things to keep the guests entertained. Photo ops, live oil paintings of the weddings, tarot card readers and butt (yes, as in your rear end) sketch and Etch-a-Sketch portrait artists can add that extra pizzazz to your reception.

—**Invitations and stationery:** Much more simple designs are being used. Layered papers are still popular but are very fussy, with ribbons and bows not being used much anymore. Use of your custom wedding brand still adorns save-the-date cards, invitations, programs and menus.

—**Late-night fun:** Whether it be sweet or savory, it's great to surprise guests with something being passed on the dance floor. Root-beer floats, milkshakes or miniature gyros as well as traditional Chicago sliders, hot dogs or pizza—guests love all of these. You can also do this where they are getting the items as they are exiting, as a final good night. A food truck



LGBT

Wedding Guide

# SNAPSHOTS OF LOVE



The Blossom Boys, Steve English (left in photo to the left) and Ryan Steinbach, tied the knot recently at This Wayside Chapel in Palos Park.

*Photos by Maplewood Photography*



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parked outside as guests leave is another great way of ending the night.

I also found providing some sort of a breakfast item is a big hit. A cereal bar—as guests wait for the valet to get their cars—is an unexpected surprise.

**Last word of advice:** Don't be pressured by trends. Your wedding should be what you want it to be, and what you can afford. From simple to spectacular, it's your day—and it's your way. Long may you love!

**Frank J Andonoplas has designed social and corporate events all over the country since 1992. Frank is an active member of the Association of Bridal Consultants and is one of only 73 Master Wedding Consultants worldwide. Frank was named Event planner of the year in 2012. His expertise has been featured in wedding magazines on as well as local television segments in addition to the Early Show, and 20/20. For more information [www.frankeventdesign.com](http://www.frankeventdesign.com)**