



Five of the area's top wedding consultants answer YOUR questions, in *Ask the Experts*. See *Consultants* in the *Bridal Resource Guide* on page 94 for contact information.

Q What are the best ways to transition a reception from a dignified first hour to, well....more fun?

Lighting, entertainment, and food and beverage can take your guests on an exciting journey. Your food service will dictate quite a bit; for example, if you are having a seated meal, you may want to have background music and soft, romantic lighting that complements the table arrangements. Once the meal is over, let the cake cutting and dancing begin! Have your DJ or live music entertainer help you select appropriate music to complement these reception events, from the cake cutting, to the first dance, to the parents' dances. Lighting can also draw your guests' attention to the dance floor, whether it's through the use of colored gels in uplighting or with a soft spotlight highlighting your special dances. After the ceremonial dances, you can have your band or DJ cut loose with party music. (Always remember to keep the volume at a fun level for everyone, as some people will want to remain at the tables or in the bar area and have conversations to catch up with friends and relatives.) Lighting can change as well, using fun colors, gobos and shapes thrown on the walls, or even confetti cannons, "cold" pyrotechnics, or disco balls. Don't stop at just music for entertainment; interactive fun specialists such as dance instructors or ethnic dance troupes can literally pull people onto the dance floor and create a memorable event.

- EJP Events

Q I'm just not crazy about wedding cakes whether frilly or simple. Any ideas?

There are a lot of different ways to have a dessert at your wedding, without having a wedding cake. One idea I have done is to have creme brulee ramekins stacked in a cake like display. The bride and groom took spoons and took a bite out of one of the ramekins to feed each other instead of cutting the cake. Other couples have just had their caterer supply a dessert or have done a dessert buffet and just didn't worry about doing the cake cutting tradition.

- Soiree Special Event Planning

Q What is your opinion about wedding dresses, cleavage or not?

It is a question of class, elegance, taste and ladylike behavior. The wedding gown suggests purity and conveys a picture of the innocence of the bride. Save the cleavage for the wedding night and the groom... Most of my brides are very concerned that guests cannot see down the dress. Size also matters. If my bride is well-endowed I suggest she not reveal too much as it all gets out of control and too wiggly...this isn't a pretty site as the day wears on. If the bride is not well-endowed then she is trying to pad herself and she is also concerned her groom and the guests will know it isn't really her. Brides, opt for good taste and being a lady.

- Another You

Q Is it crazy to think we can go straight to the airport from our reception? It seems so romantic and straight out of the movies.

Most brides and grooms find that the actual wedding day, albeit exciting and thoroughly enjoyable, is extremely exhausting. I always recommend at least one recovery day before flying off to a honeymoon. It's a smart idea to recharge a bit to get the most of your honeymoon plans.

- An Affair to Remember

Q Is it appropriate to serve alcohol before the wedding to the bridal party and, if so, how does one control the consumption?

It is perfectly acceptable to serve small glasses of celebratory champagne or white wine to the bridal party pre-ceremony. No red wine as that would be inviting stains! The preferred way of serving would be to have the caterer serve small glasses and not provide a bottle for refills. Keep in mind that some churches and venues do not allow alcohol.

- Class Act, Event Coordinators, Inc.

