



FESTIVE FEASTS

Buffets, once thought of as merely a budget-friendly option for weddings, have come into vogue. New York City–based caterer Mary Giuliani, whose clients include Carolina Herrera, attributes the trend of buffets-gone-chic to couples' desire to "eliminate the formality of a seated dinner and the predictability of a four-course meal." Giuliani's clients opt for beautiful and creative stations, rather than a staid buffet line. She recommends that they include some traditional elements (perhaps salad, filet, vegetable, starch) and some fun food, too (like a gumbo buffet for a groom from New Orleans and a crepe table for a bride who spent time in France). Most stations should be manned by two servers, one to maintain the look of the buffet and another to bring in more food as needed. An interactive station, like a make-your-own mac-and-cheese buffet with different cheeses, truffle oil and the like, also requires a chef to prepare the food. Buffets ensure that guests engage with the menu as well as with one another, says Giuliani: "They turn a wedding into a party."

CHIC SNOW CONE

The mojito snow cones at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows in Santa Monica, CA, were inspired by California's vibrant Santa Monica Pier, just down the road from the hotel. "The pier is an emblem of the city, and many of the couples who have their weddings at the hotel take their photos there," says chef Ray Garcia. "I wanted to tie it into the menu." The shaved-ice mojitos started as poolside libations, but Garcia and general manager Ellis

O'Connor soon realized that the concoctions of mint, sugar and light rum, served in a whimsical way, were perfect for weddings. "It can be butler-passed, a dessert, or an intermezzo, in a variety of colors, flavors and sizes," Garcia says. And there are more pier-inspired items on the way, timed for the historic attraction's 100th anniversary next year, including playfully elegant treats like truffled popcorn and homemade barbecue chips.

GREEN POWER

ECO-MINDED COUPLES CONTINUE TO seek out ways to make their weddings greener. Event producer Aaron Levinthal had the same goal and, having taken advantage of carbon offsets and biodegradable materials, realized that the biggest offender of the environment remained: power. Finding no earth-friendly options, Levinthal started to develop his own, converting generators, lights and other equipment to run on biodiesel, instead of diesel fuel. GreeNow, the company he created with Chris Wangro and Michael O'Brien, can now provide green power for weddings that otherwise would have required diesel generators; the substitute decreases an event's carbon emissions by a whopping 78 percent. (Impressively, even the trucks they use to transport the generators run on biodiesel.) In addition, GreeNow offers recycling service, which includes discreet recycling bins, a sorting crew and Dumpsters in which the recyclables are carted away. GreeNow is currently operating in the Northeast and already has a formidable client roster: It recently powered the Pope's visit to New York City.

