

Check out these helpful tools for brides to use online



Tuna tartare is an elegant selection for a refined reception menu.

Many event companies, like Duvall Catering & Event Design, showcase sample pictures of food, menus, décor and venues for the bride to be, making it simple and accessible for couples who want to view from the comfort of their homes. The Web site is www.events-byduvall.com.

The Knot Web site (www.the-knot.com) is the ultimate tool for the bridal community. Here you can research vendors, hear testimonials, and create a checklist leading up to the wedding.

Blogging is gaining tremendous presence on the Web and can serve as a great tool to read what others are saying about venues in a particular area.

Check for calendars on potential venue Web sites. Many have calendars available that will allow you to see what dates are open for booking.

Chef Bar

Duvall devised a way to please wedding guests looking for upscale cuisine without the fuss and expense of a sit-down dinner. The 'Chef Bar' allows 24 people at a three-sided bar, to order from a menu with smaller portions of delectable dishes such as tuna tartare

with a balsamic soy glaze and mini osso bucco.

Cigar Bar

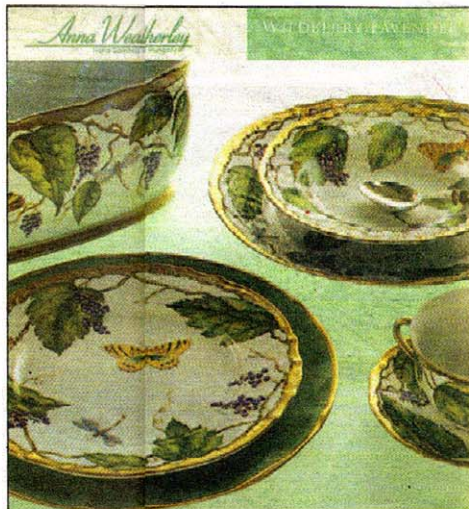
Don't forget the men at your wedding. Include a cigar bar by Coastal Cigars. It comes complete with hand-rolled cigars created on premises. You can hearken the speakeasy days and have Cigar Girls hand them out to guests.

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PHOTOS PROVIDED

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Signature Cocktails

Greet guests at the door with a drink that parallels the evening's theme.

Signature cocktails have been on the scene for quite sometime but are still the ultimate opportunity to showcase your colors, add a personal touch, and even cut down on bar costs.

Try Charleston's own Firefly Sweet Tea Vodka. Check out their Web site for an innovative list of recipes www.fireflyvodka.com, such as the spiked Arnold Palmer.

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Décor

For most weddings, the day is all about the bride, and what better way to put her on a pedestal than customized décor. Duvall Catering & Event Design Director, Jacqueline Lawrence, suggests the event be designed specifically to the bride's theme and color palette through tailored upholstery, monogramming and draping.

Top Five Unique Venues for Wedding Events

•Yacht: With Charleston's charming waterways surrounding the city, there is no better location for a wedding fête than on a boat.

Charleston's newest luxury event yacht, the Carolina Girl, provides a perfect backdrop for any wedding event whether it be the wedding, bridal shower, reception or bachelorette and bachelor party. With surrounding views of downtown's historic district, the Ashley River Bridge and James Island Connector close at hand, guests are sure to enjoy themselves as they relax on any of the yacht's three distinctively different decks. Take a tour of the boat at (www.carolinagirlevents.com).

•Warehouses: To the naked eye a warehouse may seem to be a less than elegant venue, but large open spaces can easily be transformed from a blank canvas to a marital oasis with the right décor at hand. Look around for empty office space that is up for lease and contact them to see if you can have your event before the new tenant arrives.

•Airplane Hangar: For wedding planners or brides craving a truly unique venue, get creative and channel your inner pilot.

Owner of Duvall, Steve Wenger, held his company's 30-year anniversary party at the Mount Pleasant Regional Airport. Guests were greeted by "sky caps" and boarding passes served as invitations. Combining a theme with an interesting space proves for a memorable event.

•Art Galleries: With over 50 art galleries spread throughout the city of Charleston, there is no shortage of space available for any chic event. Many art galleries offer the use of their studio space to rent for any type of event.

•Parks: Marion Square, Waterfront Park, Charles Towne Landing and White Point Gardens are only a handful of parks that surround the Charleston area. Don't overlook the city's parks or open spaces, transform them into outdoor rooms.