



ILLUSTRATION JESS GOLDEN

Something Old Something New Something Borrowed Something Green

By Lauren Kramer and Angie Ishak

Going Green has taken centre stage, blurring the lines between fashion and politics, conscience and foresight. The bridal industry has embraced this move towards environmental consciousness, offering couples an assortment of ways to conserve resources without limiting creativity, design or freedom of expression. From invitations to favours to the last morsel of food at your wedding, you can say “I Do” —both to your beloved and to your commitment to save the environment.

Eye On Invites

Re-thinking the use of printed materials is one of the easiest ways to conserve resources. Consider using a website to announce the wedding details. One company offering this service is Vancouver-based A Sweet Beginning. When owner Elana Lancit noticed brides trying to make eco-conscious decisions, her company developed software so that couples could create their own web site. “Guests can read about the couple, get maps and updated information and RSVP online,” says Lancit. “This way, the brides only have to get an invitation printed, and not the RSVP card or envelope or postage. It saves them money as well as being eco-friendly.”

Even for invitations, some brides are opting to forego printed stationery altogether and select customized digital invites such as those available at 321ForKeeps.com. Owner Doris Blanchet creates custom digital cards that can include photographic images of the couple and music, and can be downloaded in an email, or burned onto a CD or DVD.

“These cards are sustainable, sophisticated and much more economical than paper-based cards,” she says. “Our story and video cards in particular really portray the couples and allow guests to fully connect with the card because they evoke an emotion that paper cards can’t.” What’s more, they are super-fast to assemble, with production taking as little as two days from start to finish.

But if you do want traditional, printed invitations, consider the natural, biodegradable stationery manufactured by the Greenfield Paper Company (www.greenfieldpaper.com). The California-based company’s wedding invitations and thank you cards are embedded with wild flower seeds, so when you no longer need them, you simply tear up the paper and plant it in moist, loose soil until the wildflowers grow.

Planning Green

An environmentally conscious outlook can reach all aspects of your wedding planning, including your selection of a venue and time. It makes sense, for example, to choose a venue that is close to the majority of your guests, reducing gas emissions involved in getting there. Choose the same venue for your ceremony and reception and once again, you reduce gas emissions.

Encourage your guests to carpool to the wedding, and for those traveling, suggest the rental of a hybrid or fuel efficient car. And opt for a day-time, outdoor wedding, which will utilize less electricity and more natural light.

Selecting a hotel that promotes environmental awareness can also make a difference. Take the Vancouver-based Pacific Palisades Hotel, for example, part of the Kimpton Hotel Group. The company has adopted a variety of environmentally friendly practices that includes organic food and beverages, recycling, using recycled paper and soy based ink for all corporate collateral, conserving energy and water and even opting for green, non-toxic cleaning supplies.

Food For Thought

Creating a green menu can mean a tastier, fresher and emphatically local plate for your guests. “An organic menu can be triple the cost of a regular menu, which is why it is not done more often,” says Carla Felicella, special projects manager at Vancouver-based Culinary Capers. Instead, the catering company tries to create menus that use local and regional ingredients at the height of their season, and using organic, wild or free range items where possible.

One example is the BC Artisan Food Station that Culinary Capers offers. “BC is rich with farmers who produce high quality organic meats, cheese, breads, produce and specialty items,” says Felicella. “We showcase in-season items by local artisans, and as new producers come onto the food scene and the seasons change, our small plates constantly evolve and stay fresh.”

Ensure that seafood options selected for your menu are not deplet-

ed, over-fished or on the endangered list. And consider choosing a Greentable-certified caterer such as Edible Planet, which has been audited to ensure that it is following green practices.

Floral Greens

Local and seasonal are the buzz-words not just in reception catering but in floral décor as well. “We have our own forager of local greens, who harvests salal, peris japonica, seeded ivy, madrona and local berries and blossoms in season,” says Gloria Cheung, co-owner at The Flower Factory. “Using local seasonal products can be cost effective, as can the use of glass and reusable containers for centrepieces.”

At Sooke Harbour House, owner Frederique Philip provides bouquets made from locally and organically grown flowers such as Nodding Onion and Huckleberry. “These plants are drought tolerant, and by using them you help your florist to minimize water waste in one quick and easy step,” she says. Philip offers brides another use of native plants by customizing a seed packet for each guest, which can be used as a place card.

There is an abundance of ways you can promote sustainability through the wedding choices you make. Small or large, they all count in helping to make the world a greener place. But more importantly, through the environmentally friendly decisions you make, you are counting yourself among those who care about the future and are willing to think through the implications of your decisions and actions. ■

BOUQUET AND CARD PHOTOS: KYOKO FIERRO



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7 Ideas for Going Green

By Angie Ishak



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1 Bridal Bouquet: These flowers are green in every way. Made entirely of locally grown flora, this bridal bouquet features dark purple calla lilies, lime green hydrangeas, white roses, and lush hosta leaves. *Flower Factory, 3604 Main St., Vancouver, 604 871-1008.*

2 Stationery: From your invites to your thank-you cards, consider biodegradable and plantable seed paper. Greenfield Paper Company offers customized wedding invites and pre-designed cards for all occasions, all printed with soy-based inks. After use, recipients can simply tear up the paper and scatter over topsoil for a blooming of wildflowers. Personalized invites by order through www.greenfieldpaper.com. Preprinted cards available through *Agnes Jean Boutique, 38018 Cleveland Ave., Squamish, 604 892-9181.*

3 Catering: Enjoy BC's bounty with Culinary Capers' BC Artisan Food Station. Seasonal, locally grown and produced delights are showcased and paired with local wines for a truly West Coast culinary experience. The fall menu often includes such treats as JN and Z smoked beef tenderloin with Chilliwack corn relish and watermelon radish, Agassiz Farmhouse Camembert with organic honeycrisp apples, Chilliwack thistle honey and toasted hazelnuts, and, pictured here, Oyama Sausage Co. wine-cured prosciutto with Similkameen bosc pear, hazelnut and fennel salad. *Culinary Capers, 1545 W. 3rd Ave., Vancouver, 604 875-0123.*

4 Venue: Even your venue can provide green alternatives. For example, Vancouver's Pacific Palisades Hotel was recently awarded 4 Green Keys under the Hotel Association of Canada's GreenKey Eco-Rating Program for showing national industry leadership through their eco-conscious policies and practices. Recycling—in all areas of operation, composting, energy efficiency, water conservation, and exclusive use of biodegradable and organic cleaning products are just some of the earth-friendly practices supporting the hotel's commitment to sustainability. *Pacific Palisades Hotel, 1277 Robson Street, Vancouver, 604 688-0461.*

5 Favours: What is more sustainable than planting trees? Consider giving your guests saplings from local nurseries. Not only are saplings environmentally helpful, they serve as a memento for guests to enjoy for years to come.

6 Transportation: Out-of-town guests can travel in eco-friendly style by choosing hybrid transportation. Discount Car & Truck Rental offers hybrid Toyota Corollas and Priuses. If you're just traveling a short distance, call Yellow Cab Company and ask for a “green” yellow cab – their current Vancouver fleet has 40 Priuses on the road and counting.

7 Registry: Many household appliances, large and small, are now energy-efficient. Ask about appliances that meet Canada's Energuide standards. You would be surprised how many household items are earth-friendly.



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