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GoodLife

# Yes, We Do!

## FURTHER TIPS, HELPFUL HINTS FROM THE EXPERTS IN PLANNING AND EXECUTING AN ARTFUL CALIFORNIA GAY WEDDING

PART II OF III

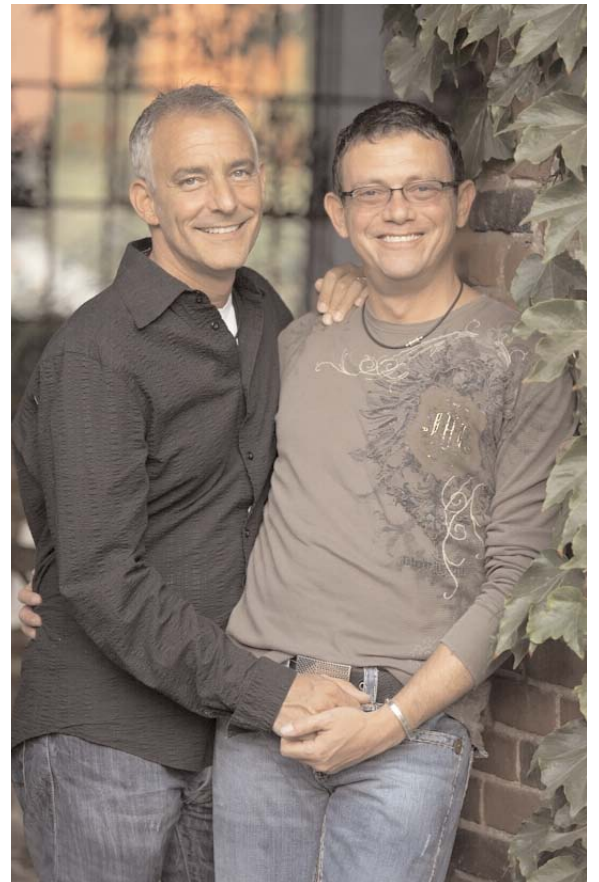
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BY JASON MURAKAWA

### THE COUPLE

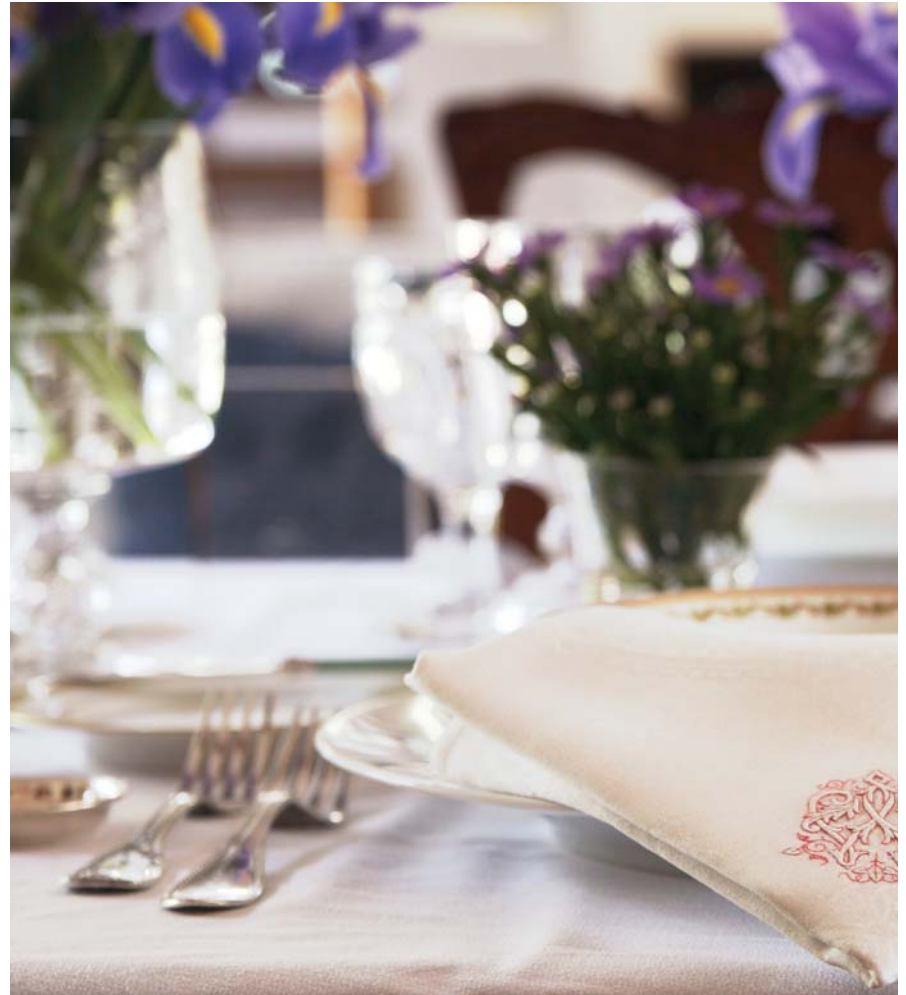
Chuck Ansel and Brian Gordon

**ONE MONTH HAS PASSED SINCE PART II OF "YES, WE DO!"** Since then, we have had introductory meetings interviewing new vendors and establishing solid relations with existing vendors. Craig Kraynick, owner of 4Cforesee and our wedding coordinator, says



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"having Chuck and Brian as clients has been easy. I take my cues from reading their faces to steer my suggestions. They know what they want and that helps save time!" Ideas may evolve but having a good base of likes and dislikes is very important. Watching Craig conduct business as the wedding coordinator is like watching a diplomat carefully balancing the interests of two countries.

Here is an update of the topics we covered in Part I with additional information about new vendors that signed aboard.

## INVITATION

Chuck works in the music industry. Therefore, it was agreed upon to design a CD wedding invitation. The couple came up with a clever component to add to the CD, which will keep some guests guessing (about the meaning) until it is revealed on their wedding day. I (Jason of Murakawa Design) fashioned the invitation and added an additional visual to the CD label to reflect the couple's personality. (Invitation not shown due to timing of this article. Readers will see the invitation with wedding photos after Oct. 4.)

## FLORIST

Blake Bachman from Hoot & Heart helped extend the scope of basic blue, white, and purple into finer detail. Blake says, "The wedding fleur is inspired by a gracious and handsome palette of antique navy, violet, green, and cream. Accented with dark chocolate and French gray." Each table will be uniquely set with a romantic mix of Small Masterpiece





antiques and vintage china along with Hoot & Heart flowers. (This article previews some arrangements for the wedding day.)

## CATERER

Paul McCullough of Paul's Kitchen thought that a variety of six hors d'oeuvres for 75 people presented a well-rounded menu. The main course will be beef tenderloin with a port wine reduction and caramelized pearl onions, with two alternative entrées for nonmeat eaters. We picked the entrée first and worked backwards, repeating no flavors or ingredients (beef) with the hors d'oeuvres. Paul suggested completing the dinner by having a plate of macarons after the entrée but before cake. Not wanting to sacrifice service for labor-intensive food, as guests should be served promptly, Paul agreed to have two food-service lines. With two teams of five waitstaff this will ensure fast service. Paul's additional, included services outside his catering duties are valet, florals, alcohol, and waitstaff! This gives clients the added benefit of dealing with fewer vendors.

## STAFFING

Event Manager Art Leyvas has lined up: two bartenders (one will double as a server for dinner when courses come out of the kitchen); and two shifts of five staff each to serve a table of 10 without having guests wait to start their meal. Art will have "ballet" service or synchronized service. Waitstaff will circle each table and present a dinner course to guests all at once. For Chuck and Brian's wedding, the basic dress for waitstaff is

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black pants, white long-sleeved shirts, and black rubber-sole shoes (these save hardwood floors and create less noise). In the early evening, waitstaff will have colored ties to match the blue flowers. At the start of dinner service, waitstaff will change to black ties with white bistro aprons.

## THE NEW VENDORS

### LIGHTING

Dan Tator of DT Productions was brought in for the outside lighting. Requirements the grooms had were to hide lighting by integrating it into the landscape. Lighting creates intimacy and makes for romantic settings at night; lighting trees can create a wall since your eye will stop at that highlighted tree rather than continuing in the dark.

Consider the electrical power a caterer will require. Coffee makers zap such enormous power that if two are plugged into the same outlet, it will blow circuit breakers. Wise enough to understand the limitations of residential power, Dan will bring an electrician two days before the wedding day to make necessary adjustments. Have a lighting test the night before is wise; no one wants to eat in the dark because of a blackout. (I've seen this!) Also, merely using a party rental company to design lighting doesn't bring the sensitivity of a professional lighting company. Remember, specialists are called specialists for a reason.

### TABLETOP DÉCOR

As the owner of Small Masterpiece, I like to bill myself as "the irreverent Martha Stewart." I try to break the mold and strive for tabletop designs that don't look sterile and perfect. Tabletop designs should seem effortless and evoke personal style and

great warmth. When thinking about tabletop décor it's about party environment and creating an atmosphere guests will enjoy and remember. This entails anything from using 20 tomato sauce cans for vases because red is part of the color scheme; to going to a lumber company and having mill squares cut to different heights as platforms for small vases; to collecting long beautiful eucalyptus leaves from a park for place cards. A tabletop should reflect confidence and deliberate style.

For long tables, repetition is a strong visual statement. I suggest focusing color on either the centerpiece or place setting, not both. The eye needs a place to go and settle. For round tables, centerpieces should be soft and organic. Alternatives for round tables are to provide each person with personal centerpieces above the place setting, forming a ring with simple tall candles in the middle. Guests could take it home as a parting gift. If dinner is outside, the wind can snuff candles and blow place cards off the table. Anchor the place cards in some creative way. Don't decorate tables with things that easily tip over, as tables normally have movement from guests. If presenting family-style dinners, note centerpieces will probably be removed for large serving trays. Your style is unique, so have fun with the designs!

### RENTALS

Delivery charges are less on weekends if delivered Friday and picked up Monday. Always inquire what the caterer will supply so no double ordering occurs. Rentals for sit-down dinners versus buffet can cost significantly less if planned properly. Buffets basically require platters, tables, and warming dishes. No matter what is involved or where the kitchen or chef will cook, protect floors and cement with rented AstroTurf. Food and oil can stain. A large variety of drinks will expand the glassware order. Clearing a patio can create a great dance floor in lieu of having to rent one. Renting space heaters for cool evenings is expensive but make sure there isn't strong wind to blow the heat away from guests. When rental orders arrive, check the order against the

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invoice to make sure everything has arrived. Finding 100 glasses are missing at the last minute is not pleasant. When the rental guys arrive and depart, make sure appliances and lamps are re-plugged where they belong, furniture is placed back, and all plastic tie bands are picked up. They tend to focus on moving things in and out and going to the next location without being aware of these details.

## TRANSPORTATION

Richard Bartholomew and Michael Young bought Onyx Transportation in 2008. They will provide round-trip transportation from hotel to wedding location. Michael emphasizes that potential customers know the difference between a driver and a chauffeur, and it's a point well taken. Their chauffeurs are well versed in etiquette and discretion. This luxury gives guests and wedding parties the freedom to enjoy themselves without the worry of driving. Having issues with police on a wedding day is disastrous!

Oct. 4 is the "big" day ... wish us luck! Expect an update on how it went in Part III.

