



Carolina Bride®

Stunning Detail

Inside a lavish two-day affair

p. 33

Plus:

PLANS THAT POP! 100 WAYS TO
PERSONALIZE YOUR DAY

OLD WORLD GLAMOUR
AT THE DUNHILL

KEYS TO PARADISE: FABULOUS
HONEYMOON ESCAPES

100 WAYS to Personalize Your Day

Everyone wants a wedding that's one-of-a-kind, but where to start? How do you infuse your personality into the thousands of decisions made during the planning process? From reception songs to centerpieces, from choosing the dress to making your grand exit, Charlotte's finest wedding vendors (and even a few brides and grooms!) have shared their ideas to make your event an unforgettable one. —CW



INES ARANGUREN, Sky's the Limit Bridal Sweets

"We love **bridal gown inspiration** on a wedding cake. Not a literal copy, but pulling elements from the gown can make for a lovely cake. Recently, we had a bride with gorgeous ruffle rosettes on the bottom of the gown with sequins, pearls, and lace on the bodice. We replicated that on the cake along with handmade edible sequins."

KRISTI KOSATSCHENKO BRATTON, Charlotte bride

"We incorporated my **favorite movie**, 'The Sound of Music,' many different ways. On the tables at the reception there were 'brown paper packages tied up with string,' and they had little yellow stamps on them that said 'these are a few of our favorite things.' ... And last, but not least, my dad and I danced to 'Edelweiss' (which made both of us and everyone at the reception cry like babies!)."

HEIDI CROWDER, Carolina Weddings & Events

"I had a bride that loved Chihuly art. When designing her wedding at the Mint Museum, which had an amazing piece in the museum as well, **we made each 'table number' different pieces of art.** She also had an amazing cake that had blown sugar that was Chihuly inspired. I love it when a bride can incorporate her favorite things, and her guests totally got it!"

CHRISTI FALLS, Christi Falls Photography

"For our wedding, since we both have Irish and Scottish roots, we had a bagpiper on the hill as our guests came around the bend to the reception site. For our favors, we gave out **tartan-lined baskets filled with local mountain honey and jam.**"



DOMINICA CLEMENTI, Nona's Sweets Bakery Café

"This is your day, so the cake is what speaks to you and represents your love story. Did he propose on the beach? Are you pop art or country music lovers? Are you both football fanatics? All of these can be starting points for cake design."

Pro Tip

BRANDY CHILDS, The Arbors Events

"When deciding on a venue, choose one that best reflects your relationship. Are you a laid-back, no fuss couple? Try a rustic venue with a casual feel. Classic and contemporary? Uptown ballroom. Adventurous hikers? A countryside location under the stars might be key."

GAIL ALLEN, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

"If you are getting married in a museum or outdoor venue, find out what exhibits or flowers are going to be on display during your wedding month. You might come up with some fun, creative ways to incorporate that into your wedding design."



BETHE ROGERS, Poffie Girls

"Brides should incorporate their heritage in the menu of the day. If the bride is from New Mexico and the groom is from Carolina they could have, for example, Tex-Mex and Carolina barbecue at two different stations."

HEIDI CROWDER, Carolina Weddings & Events

"I had a couple that really wanted a formal looking wedding with a fun, easygoing reception. They had the caterer **keep the food out all night** so that the guests could come and go as they pleased. Everyone had a seat but didn't have to do the traditional Southern, sit and eat at one time."

LISA WALSH, The Magnolia Room

"Food should be a reflection of the bride and groom's personality. We had one bride who gave her guests a tiny shot glass of tomato soup with a grilled cheese crostini. We also had a couple do a **s'mores station** outside with a vintage chalkboard sign showing how to make different varieties. Ultimate s'mores with a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup was the favorite."



DONALD SHIVES, Best Impressions Caterers

"A couple of ideas that we have done to personalize a bride and groom's special day is to put together **'his and hers' stations**. For instance, if the bride and groom had a first date that was memorable because of the meal they had eaten, we will try to incorporate that into their menu and potentially put together signage to explain the significance of the food stations."

LORIE DEATHERAGE, Party Blooms

"Food does not have to be a gourmet meal. I have friend planning a wedding that is serving Chicago-style pizza and craft beer for the meal."

WENDY MURRAY, The Sanderling

"Get creative with reception stations by using a couple's favorite foods, with amusing and resourceful props and delectable food. This I {Heart} Bacon station uses unique props like wine barrels, a farm door, country curtains, and a Sanderling famous pig portrait, with assortments of everyone's favorite food: bacon!"



TODD MURPHY, Todd Murphy Events

"Everyone expects a specialty drink during the cocktail hour, but why not present a **dessert cocktail** as a surprise during dancing? Favorite liquors, ice cream drinks, coffee cocktails would all be remembered!"



INES ARANGUREN, Sky's the Limit Bridal Sweets

"Flavors are a great way to personalize a wedding cake. A German chocolate lover can have a traditional German chocolate frosting with the caramel, coconut, and pecans as a filling rather than a frosting. Another one got the filling mixed into our signature frosting to make a creamy German chocolate filling—they loved it!"

DREW PARHAM, Audio To Go

"We had a wedding on New Year's Eve in Asheville, and everybody gets a little hungry after midnight. Furthermore, the father of the bride was a huge fan of Bojangles' biscuits. So, we played a siren sound effect and said, **'In honor of the father of the bride, it's Bo Time!'** Then boxes and boxes of Bojangles' biscuits were brought into the room and the crowd loved it!"

Pro Tip

Morgan Martyn, NorthStone Country Club

"For plated dinners, consider a duet plate with two, smaller portioned protein options. This will save you the trouble of taking and organizing orders on your RSVP cards and will ensure that all of your guests have the correct meal."

MISTY MCGUIRE CASE, Pixels on Paper

"A groom whose passion and profession is landscape design collected and **bagged wildflower seeds** for each wedding guest to plant at their own home to 'spread the love.'"

LISA WALSH, The Magnolia Room

"Putting your own personal touches on the big day can make all the difference in your guests' experience. We had a bride who gave her guests personal size mini wedding cakes to take home with them! Amazing idea!"

ERICA STAWICK, Ashley Baber Weddings

"Think of ways to incorporate your hobbies or your job: is your groom a big football fan? Instead of a traditional garter toss, have him toss a football with a garter around it to the 'next man up' to get married. Are you a dentist? Consider giving custom toothbrushes away as a favor to your guests with your name/ wedding date on them."

GAIL ALLEN, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

"It's fun when couples who work in the same field include it in their wedding theme. For one wedding, the bride and groom were pharmacists and they both love M&Ms. So for the favors they had M&Ms in little prescription bottles."

If you incorporate a favorite family dish into the meal (many caterers can accommodate this request), you can provide the recipe as a favor. **CB**

ANNA PRICE, Charlotte bride

"We made a wishing tree (or advice tree) to act as a guest book for guests to write advice on the wooden birds for us as newlyweds and then hang it on the tree. Our theme was peacock/birds, so it had a frame that read '**Chirps of advice to make our marriage fly!**' It was so neat and personal for Zach and I to read the messages on the birds after the wedding. They were filled with everything from funny, to sweet, to serious messages. We kept the birds and have them in a big vase in our house—we pull them out and read them periodically if we need a good laugh."



MISTY MCGUIRE CASE, Pixels on Paper

"A bride who is an artist used her own talent and painted her own tree which was used at the wedding. Guests imprinted their finger prints as the leaves of the tree and then signed the art piece as the couple's guest register."

KATRINA HUTCHINS, Come+Together Events

"Try finding something in-theme with the location [for favors]. For example, Mac's Speedshop barbecue sauce can be a big hit for a Charlotte wedding."



ERIN WALTERS, Peninsula Yacht Club

"Have your guest book be something you love."

We had a couple that was really into music and they had all of their guests sign a guitar."



HEIDI CROWDER, Carolina Weddings & Events

"I love it when a groom is able to show his style as well. I have seen some great Southern gentleman ideas for the grooms such as shotgun shell **cufflinks and boutonnières.**

That is something guests will remember and make your wedding stand out. Or personalized to the groomsmen: one was a huge cyclist and had bike cufflinks and the other one was a builder and had levels as cufflinks. Those will for sure be a conversation-starter amongst the guests."

PETRI LINDBERG, Charlotte groom

"I wanted to give my groomsmen something that was unique to them and the moment, but also something they would use on a daily basis. The NikeID **custom running shoes** were something they could wear casually or go running in so they were a perfect fit for all three of my groomsmen, customized with their favorite colors, their initials, and the wedding date. Everyone really liked them—if they weren't going barefoot on the beach, I think they would have tried to wear them during the ceremony."

CHRISTI FALLS, Christi Falls Photography

"A great way to make a personal statement is with your cakes. You don't have to go traditional with a wedding cake, but even if you do, you can **go totally crazy with your groom's cake.** My husband works for Sun Drop, so we had Sun Drop pound cake baked in the shape of the letters and set on a drop shaped moss board. I've also seen groom's cakes with the groom's favorite beer bottles made of sugar, tons of favorite sports teams represented, and even favorite video games."



Groom Service

DOMINICA CLEMENTI, Nona's Sweets Bakery Café

"We made a groom's cake that reflected the groom's strong dislike for vegetables as a child—especially homegrown green beans from his mom's garden. His parents wanted a vegetable cake complete with cutting board and knife; the groom really loved his vegetables that day!"