



As Lauren and Shay demonstrate at a recent reception at the Hilton Wilmington/Christiana, the use of white boards is a fun, effective way to share your message.

Photo by Krista Patton Photography

All the Rage

Photo booths and chocolate fountains are out. Web sites and fancy new desserts are most definitely in. Here's to planning a party that's right in style. BY LANA MORELLI

None of us wants to throw a passé party. Chocolate fountains and photo booths are so 2010. We live in a technological age, with gadgets and apps for almost anything. So it only makes sense that our parties, weddings and celebrations should also be cutting-edge.

What's in and what's out? We consulted with local experts—planners, photographers, bakers and venues—to learn the trends for 2011. First and foremost is an emphasis on going green.

Any way to preserve the environment and partici-

pate in being eco-friendly is a must. Eco-friendly favors for weddings or parties are a great idea.

“Centerpieces that can be replanted, plants or flowers as favors, or favors made from recycled items,” are all suggestions from Emily Ferris, an event planner at Deerfield in Newark. “I’ve even seen events where the favor is a bird feeder that is made from recycled soda bottles.”

Another great idea is a naked shower. It's not what you think. Gifts show up without wrapping. “I’ve had bridal and baby showers where the host asks for the gifts not to be wrapped,” Ferris says. “It saves paper and time.”

Leanne Silicato of Make My Day Event Planning in Rehoboth Beach offers 100 percent recycled paper invitations and linens. "It's one of the easier ways to go green without sacrificing style," she says. "You can have a beautiful event and remain eco-friendly."

She also suggests buying jewelry made from recycled precious metals and stones, transforming vintage pieces into recycled classics, buying flowers from a local organic farm, and donating to your favorite charity in lieu of a favor.

Lauren Hanna, director of events at The Clubhouse at Baywood Greens in Long Neck, takes the use of recycled paper to another level.

"We suggest using recycled or eco-friendly paper for all paper goods—save-the-dates, invites, programs, cocktail napkins and the guest book," she says. A trend for guests who spend the night in a hotel is a personalized welcome bag from the hosts. "You can go green by using cloth bags instead of paper bags" Hanna says.

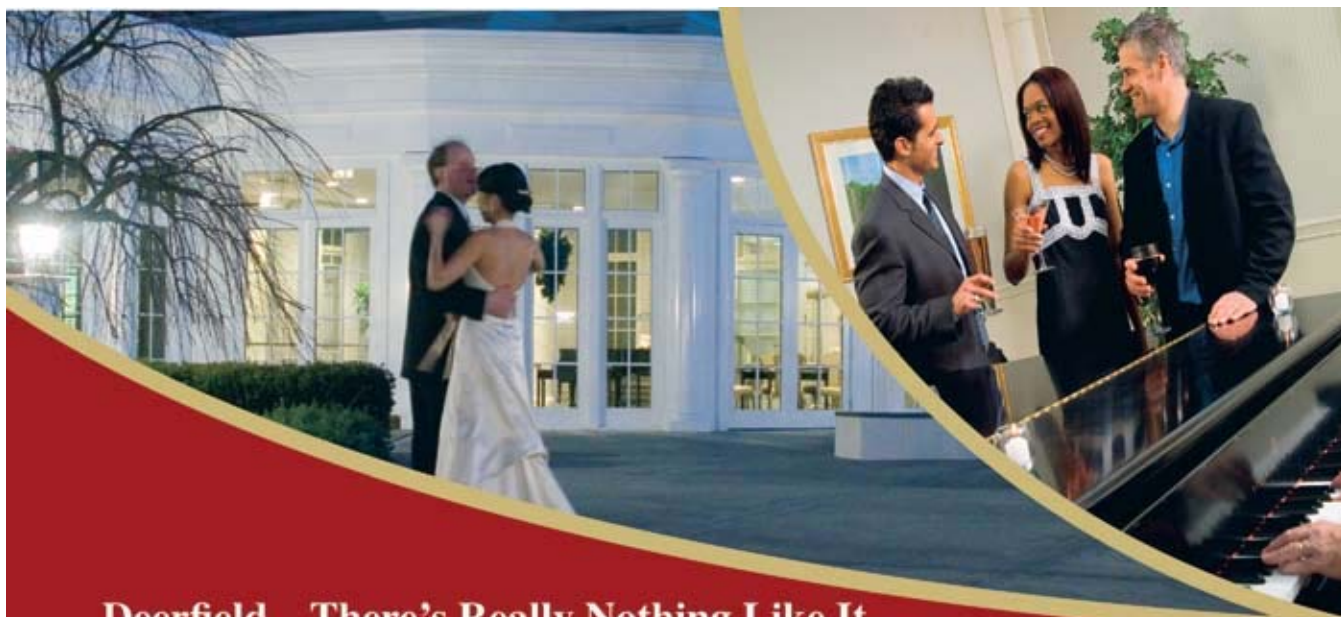


Emily Ferris, an event planner at Deerfield in Newark, says when it comes to 2011, the trend is an emphasis on going green.

Though recycled paper is a great way to go green, brides, grooms and hosts can opt out of paper totally by using virtual save-the-dates and thank you notes. Photographers, videographers and event planners have seen virtual save-the-dates sent by e-mail or posted on a private section of YouTube. It's

going green by going electronic.

Popular Web sites include evite.com, though Make My Day Events uses custom Web site design over generic sites. "We want to enable our clients to track their event and invitations using our custom Web site," she says. This makes inviting and corresponding



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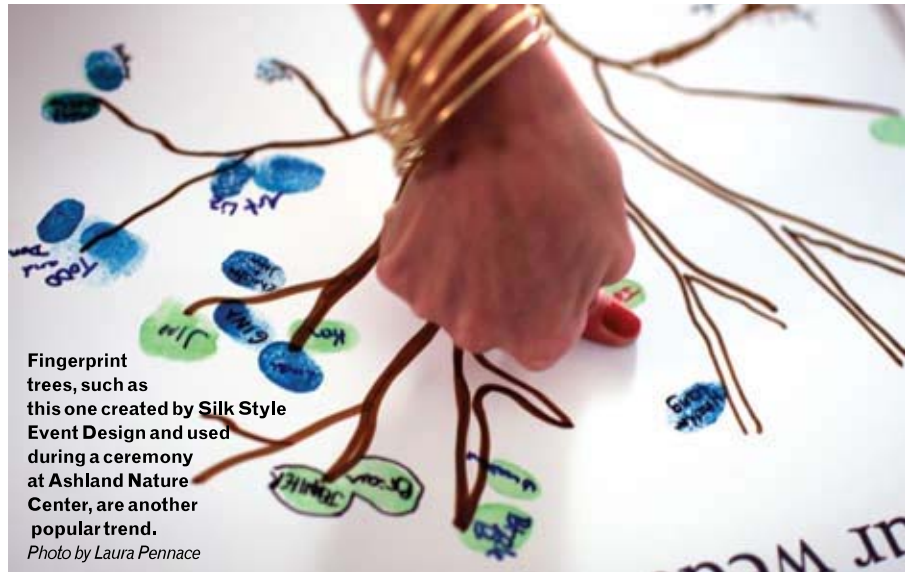
with guests easier while minimizing paper communication.”

Cathleen Shriner of Weddings by Cathleen even offers Skype consultations instead of having clients drive to her location in Rehoboth Beach.

Photo-sharing Web sites are another technological trend. Whether the host has hired a professional photographer or not, many guests are sure to come bearing digital cameras, so hosts are now asking guests to upload digital pictures from the event to a custom Web page on Facebook, blogs, or photo Web sites such as Google Picasa and Photobucket. This allows guests to easily share their personal pictures.

Photographers and videographers are also embracing the new options. Terry Zorich of Timeline Weddings in Dover collaborates with videographer Jason Gleockler on what they call “wedding trailers.”

“These are essentially short movies, mixing video from the event with music to create the most beautiful scenes from the day,” Zorich says. “It’s not just



Fingerprint trees, such as this one created by Silk Style Event Design and used during a ceremony at Ashland Nature Center, are another popular trend.
Photo by Laura Pennace

for weddings. It’s really a great way to document any event and tell the story of the entire day in just a few minutes.” The trailers are short—usually two to five minutes—making them well-suited for Web viewing on event blogs, Facebook pages and e-cards.

Photographers are also capitaliz-

ing on the fading popularity of photo booths. Event coordinator Kate McNiff of The Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington explains that many guests are opting for fauxtooths; a photographer creates a scene or set like a photo booth, but with features that can be customized.

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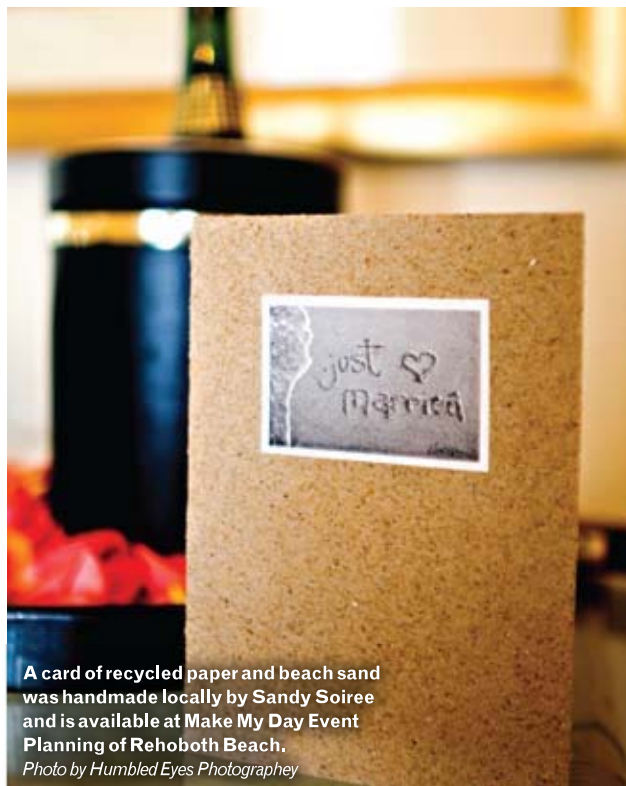
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Photographer Krista Patton of Krista Patton Photography, who has done work in all three counties of Delaware, has her own twist on the idea: chalkboard messages or whiteboard messages. Rather than guests making a well wish into a video camera, Patton creates a stylish backdrop that guests can stand in front of and hold up their personal message for the hosts or bride and groom. "I've seen things like the

thumbprints on a picture, type a note on an old-fashioned typewriter or write a message on a vintage postcard are ways to stay unique and creative. "For a recent event, a bride and groom were going to the Netherlands for their honeymoon," Cylc says. "The guests signed a book of van Gogh's artwork for them because the van Gogh Museum is in Amsterdam and was one of the couple's destinations."



A card of recycled paper and beach sand was handmade locally by Sandy Soiree and is available at Make My Day Event Planning of Rehoboth Beach. Photo by Humbled Eyes Photography

"You can create a book within your iPad application and have guests use the iPad to give their sentiments to the hosts or bride and groom. It's a gift everyone can share," says Cathleen Shriner of Weddings by Cathleen.

traditional congratulations, but also funny inside jokes," she says. "It's a great way to personalize the event and capture the moment."

Customization is what sets an event apart. The guest book is another way for the partygoers and party throwers to put their own stamp on an event.

"Instead of just signing the traditional guest book, there is a new wave of guest book ideas," says Linda Cylc, chief event stylist at Silk Style Event Design in New Castle. Allowing guests to put

and the Chase Center, and planners like Make My Day can help make snack stations a hit.

Wimpy burgers at Deerfield are a favorite, Ferris says. "They are hamburger sliders with caramelized onions, cheese and our own special sauce." No need for fast-food munchies after the event when these venues include stations with cheeseburger sliders, mini-grilled cheeses, pizza, and cookies and milk.

Deerfield even offers butlered snacks at the end of the night. "Shot glasses

Shriner has seen clients use an iPad instead of a guest book. "You can create a book within your iPad application and have guests use the iPad to give their sentiments to the hosts or bride and groom. It makes a long-lasting gift that everyone can share," she says.

It's not all about technology, though. Many people would agree that the most important part of an event is the food. What was served? Is it a buffet or sit-down dinner? How did it taste? Did the guests leave satisfied?

Food stations have been a trend for several years. Now there's a twist: late-night snack stations. The last thing your guests eat will leave the biggest impression, so many venues, including Deerfield



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filled with chocolate milk shakes are a big hit," Ferris says.

With the trend in snack stations, it's no wonder stations of mini-desserts are becoming more popular—so popular, in fact, that many events and weddings have cut the cake out, opting for miniature goodies instead.

These final 2011 trends focus on the aspect of the event that really "takes the cake"—dessert.

"You find all sorts of creative miniature desserts or revved up versions of

A Bling Cake
from Desserts
by Dana. Photo
by Sinta Hite



"Other indulgent upgrades include dessert action stations. They are memorable and provide their own sort of entertainment," says Dana Herbert.

classic desserts that are crowd-pleasers," says Dana Herbert, of Desserts by Dana in New Castle, winner of "Cake Boss: Next Great Baker" on TLC. "Other indulgent upgrades include dessert action stations. They are very memorable and provide their own sort of entertainment." These stations can include cold marble ice cream stations or stations with showy flambés such as crepes Suzettes and bananas Foster.

Maryellen Bowers of Cakes and Candies by Maryellen is a chocolatier and baker who specializes in petite cupcake and petite pie tiers. Bowers was featured at last year's Vendemmia da

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Vinci in Wilmington, where she showcased a variety of her petite cupcakes, including coconut cream, pink champagne, banana-chocolate chip and pumpkin spice.

“Cupcakes were huge in 2010, and they are still going strong, but the newest trend is petite pies,” Bowers says. She defines petite as a bite and a half. “This size is great because it gives guests the option to try a variety of different flavors,” such as apple-cranberry, strawberry-rhubarb, lemon-meringue, pumpkin-cream cheese, French silk and banana streusel.

Bowers also makes a cake pop—a mini-ball of cake on a stick encased in chocolate and icing that resembles a lollipop—in several flavors and colors. “Watermelon and pistachio seem to be the ‘in’ colors for 2011,” she says, “and the pops make for great favors or place card holders.”

If you’re not into mini, and you can’t decide between cake or pie, Bowers has the ideal solution—a “pike,” or two-layer cake with pie inside. “A popular version of the pike is chocolate cake with cherry pie in the middle, on top of another layer of vanilla cake with apple pie in the middle,” she says. “The whole thing is encased in homemade buttercream icing.”

If you can’t quite get rid of the traditional cake, a fancy display will give any cake a modern and trendy appeal, Herbert says. “In 2011 you will see cakes rotating on high-end stands with touches of bling from edible sugar diamonds or rhinestones,” he says.

Desserts are not just about cake, and though chocolate fountains may be on the outs, candy buffets are in, with colors that match the theme of the event and custom homemade candies that double as a favor. Bowers wraps single-serving items with personal photos and poems. “Candy or a truffle as a place card is a way to cut costs, save paper and make the candy multi-purposeful,” she says.

“You can’t have just sweet, though,” says Hanna, “So this year you’ll see more of a combination of sweet-and-salty bars—different flavored popcorns (caramel, white cheddar, butter) alongside fancy decorated pretzels paired with taffies and other sweets.”

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