

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Love Lamorinda Style!

By Cathy Tyson



Can you really put a price tag on the most important day of your life? Actually yes, you can, and you must. Engaged Lamorinda couples, and in most instances their parents, need to work within a nuptial budget while planning the Big Day.

The average cost of a wedding is reported to be \$30,000, according to The Wedding Report and The Knot. What would happen if local brides and grooms spent that money locally, thinking Shop Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda First? Imagine if some of those dollars went via the sales tax to fix area roads. True love and fewer potholes – mazel tov!

Lucky for us, Lamorinda has a number of wonderful sites, at a variety of price points, which would satisfy the most discriminating couple. Food and drink are usually the biggest expenses with any type of event. A modest bash may feature a lunch buffet with limited alcohol in the bride's backyard, on the other end of the spectrum, a sit down dinner for 200 close friends and family, live music, a full bar, ice sculptures, and a horse drawn carriage comes with a premium price tag.

Many local venues offer one-stop shopping, for example The Lafayette Park Hotel, Postino, Wildwood Acres, Moraga and Orinda Country Clubs make it easy. Other facilities like The Hacienda De Las Flores, and the Veteran's Memorial Building require a separate caterer, and finally the Soda Center at Saint Mary's college has a contract with the school food service provider Sodexo that couples must use when renting the facility. See chart for specific rental information.

"Let me tell ya, the Hacienda is the most reasonable place," said Vickie Bowhay, a teacher at CP, whose daughter Melissa is getting married this summer. In organizing the wedding, "Picking the caterer was the hardest part, it's where you really spend your money."

Where to save and where to splurge? The food will be long gone, the rice thrown, the dress will be packed away, but the photos will remain forever. There are a number of area photographers able to capture the moment. Jamie Westdal Photography even puts together a DVD of wedding pictures accompanied by music the couple chooses. Most photogra-

phers have unique individual pricing, so it's best to do some homework.

From Safeway to Patisserie Lafayette to Toot Sweets, there's no shortage of places to purchase a delicious wedding cake locally. All Safeway stores offer surprisingly good-looking cakes at quite reasonable prices. Patisserie Lafayette's award winning cakes come in a variety of flavor combinations and can be designed in a myriad of styles. In addition, the bakery also has a feminine tearoom, Maison de Thé, perfect for bridal showers.

"We met in Petar's and three months later happened to be in Hawaii at the same time," said summer bride Maren Haag of the start of her romance with John Kelly. Referring to her dreams of the perfect wedding, "All the images I've had since I was a little girl, it's great seeing them come to life. I'm really excited."

For better or worse, richer or poorer, Lamorinda couples will be tying the knot this summer; wouldn't it be nice if they fixed a pothole or two on the road to wedded bliss?

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Wedding Venues	Capacity	Price per person	What it includes	Extra charges	Notes
Lafayette Park Hotel 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette 299-4388 www.woodsidehotels.com/lafayette	10 - 200	Depends, from \$88 to \$125 per person	For 125 – hot and cold hors d'oeuvres champagne, buffet dinner, linens, organza overlays, chair covers, premium room for the B & G with breakfast	20% taxable service charge, 8.25% sales tax	If booking 5 or more rooms, receive a discount. Three hour bar service with champagne included.
Postino 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette 299-8700 www.postinorestaurant.com	For the entire building, 250 guests, but the 5 separate rooms can be used individually or combined as needed	For evening events from \$42 for a three course meal to \$68 for a reception buffet, daytime events from \$19 to \$62	Antipasti, secondi, dolci, coffee or tea – for 3 course meal, 4 courses includes a pasta course, or reception buffet	Drinks Corkage, if you bring your own wine. Food minimums apply. 8.25% sales tax	Their lawn area may be used for the actually wedding ceremony; Audio/Visual is available.
Wildwood Acres Resort 1055 Hunsaker Canyon Road, Lafayette 283-2600 www.wildwoodacres.com	Outdoors 300 seated, 400 standing Indoors 160 seated, 250 standing	Wedding Vegetarian Buffet starts at \$59 to "Simply Exquisite" banquet meal at \$105 per person Saturday Matinee Reception starting from \$24	3 appetizers, choice of 3 entrees, choice of starch, choice of vegetables, salad and bread, chocolate fondue dessert or strawberries and cream platter after dinner and wine for the Simply Exquisite meal.	15% service fee Beverage service \$8- \$19 per person Facility fee from \$1500 for Sat + Sunday. Saturday night \$3000. 8.25% sales tax	Parking limited to 100 cars. Bartender and fully stocked cocktail bar available.
Moraga Country Club 1600 St. Andrews Drive, Moraga 376-2200 Front Desk 631-1903 Catering www.moragacc.com	Dining room: 125, Pool area 400 - 500	Dinner from \$25 – 50 per person, lunch \$15 - 30	Wait staff, linens, utensils etc.	\$500 dining room rental for 4 hours, \$1500 for the pool area 20% gratuity, and 8.25% sales tax	Need not be a member to host a function at MCC.
Orinda Country Club 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda 254-4313 www.orindacc.org	Up to 300	Because OCC is a private club, those interested in the facility, should call for more information			
Hacienda de las Flores Pavillion 2100 Donald Drive Moraga 376-2520 www.moraga.ca.us	Outdoors 200, Indoors room for 110 for sit down dinner		Facility rental non-residents \$2250, Residents \$1500		Must reserve facility 1 year in advance in person.
Veteran's Memorial Building 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette 283-1153 www.lafayetteveterans.org	1 large room 256 with tables, 1 small room 250, 200 with a dance floor	Large room \$440/hour Smaller room \$250/hour	Room set up, take down of chairs + tables and cleaning	Bartenders that are Veterans are available for \$25/hr.	No sales tax, 11:00 p.m. curfew
St. Mary's College Soda Center 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga 631-4030 Soda Events 631-8013 Catering Director www.stmarys-ca.edu	300 for sit down reception in main 3 rooms– Can break up the facility into smaller spaces	Full Bar \$8.50 per person, hosts to provide alcohol, Dinners around \$50 per person	Salad, entrée, starch, fresh vegetables, breads, coffee and poured wine service Chairs, tables, linens	\$3450 facility fee for entire Center, \$2475 for main three rooms 22% Service charge 8.25% sales tax	Sodexo does not have a liquor license to sell alcohol, but can serve alcohol. Only alumni can get married in the chapel, but anyone can have their reception at the Soda Center.

Local Caterers
SpringLoaf Catering 3326 Beechwood Drive Lafayette 962-9363 www.springloaf.com
Susan Foord Catering & Chow Ciao 965 Mountain View Drive Lafayette 299-7616 www.susanfoordcatering.com
Toast Catering and Private Chefs Lafayette (415) 606-7537 toastjb@comcast.net
Wild Thyme Catering & Event Management 2770 Camino Diablo Walnut Creek – the edge of Lafayette 945-7939 www.wildthymecatering.com