

# DREAM FEASTS

## TOP CATERERS CHOOSE THEIR IDEAL MENUS

*Chances are, your wedding* reception will be the first time you host a dinner party for 100 or so of your closest friends. The good news, of course, is that the bride and groom are not required to do the cooking. But it's no small matter coming up with just the right combination of fare to make the event memorable for everyone.

So if money were no object, what would some of Baltimore's top caterers propose? We asked four such veterans to serve up their ideal wedding menus and they responded with four very different fantasy feasts.

BY ABIGAIL GREEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICHOLAS MCINTOSH



### BIDDLE STREET CATERING

Planning is the most important ingredient in a wedding feast, says Larry Levy, executive vice president of Biddle Street Catering. You might have a gorgeous outdoor location and fabulous food, but do you have a backup plan if it rains? Other factors also may affect the feast, such as whether the location has a kitchen and how far the kitchen is from the dinner tables.

Levy's ideal feast is a plated meal. "There's a certain elegance to it, with each plate completely presented," he says. After whetting their appetites with artistically displayed appetizers like stuffed sundried tomatoes and saffron crepes, guests are seated for the first course—a salad of salmon cured in kosher salt and herbs, similar to smoked salmon. This is followed by a choice of chicken, beef, or Chilean sea bass. A popular option is to serve what Levy calls a "dual entrée," offering a choice of beef and chicken, or meat and fish on the same plate. "People like that," he says. "It gives them an opportunity to try something different." He also notes that it's wise to have a vegetarian or chicken option available for guests who don't eat red meat.

Like most wedding caterers, Levy's menu considers the aesthetic appeal of the food as well as the taste. He likes to dress up a slice of wedding cake with fresh or dried fruits dipped in white, dark, and milk chocolate. He goes beyond berries with exotic fruits like dried pears, figs, and papaya. The menu presented here ranges from about \$45-55 per person, not including liquor or wait staff.

The presentation of the feast extends to linens and china, something that most caterers offer in dozens of styles. "Navy is currently the hot color for linens, with ivory plates," says Levy. Other options include textured brocades, chiffon overlays, and gold-rimmed or square plates. ❧