

Blueprint Studios Keeps a Ballet Gala on its Toes
Ooh La La! A Wedding With an Elegant French Twist

SPECIAL EVENTS

MARCH/APRIL 2010

SPIRITED CELEBRATION

THE SPECIAL EVENT SOARS
IN NEW ORLEANS

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French Twist

An event team keys on the glories of Versailles to create a wedding that is *magnifique*

Sometimes, we need look no further than the mirror to find what we are looking for—or in the case of Birmingham, Mich.-based event planner Claudia Lutman, *mirrors*—a whole roomful of them, to be exact.

While planning an upscale garden wedding at a private home, Lutman and her team found theme inspiration within the walls of the historic Yorktowne Hotel in York, Pa., the site of the wedding reception. One look at the hotel's Mirror Room and the team recalled the famed Hall of Mirrors at France's Palace of Versailles. One good idea led to another: "In thinking the theme through, we concluded that the beautiful gardens [of the private home] could perfectly represent the outer landscaped garden at Versailles," Lutman says. "The inspiration to pull from both the inner palace elements and the historic garden elements appealed to everyone."

FRENCH FLAIR With Versailles as the key, Lutman and her team set about creating a wedding with exquisite detail. To set the

tone, invitation designer Trish R. Caal of Los Angeles-based Embellishments created a mirrored "Save the Date" magnet embossed with the bridal couple's monogram—its design replicating the gates at Versailles—which was packaged in a pearl brocade box. The mirror theme continued with similarly boxed invitations, which incorporated layers of silk along with mirrored and alabaster cards held together with satin ribbon and an antique rhinestone brooch.

For the garden ceremony, Lutman and her team re-created Versailles' famed L'Orangerie garden. Tree branches were adorned with hanging botanicals, and topiaries were crafted from lilac peonies and spray grass. Roses and hydrangeas overflowed from vases, and potted plants lined the walkways. Ceremony tents designed to resemble Napoleon's bedroom featured a candlelit crystal chandelier, white fabric-draped walls, hardwood flooring and a custom-made wooden riser accented with white wainscoting. Floral in varying shades of white and cream completed the look. ▶



Royal wedding: A hotel ballroom is transformed into a vision of Versailles thanks to a creative event team (top left). The wedding cake features the bridal couple's monogram, developed by Embellishments' designer Trish R. Caal (top right). The dramatic colors and chandeliers of Versailles inspire an American wedding (above).

CONFETTI

The royal treatment continued at the sit-down dinner inside the Yorktowne Hotel's ballroom, re-imagined as the Hall of Mirrors. Pink lighting bathing the walls added a warm, romantic glow. Tables were topped with crystal candelabras festooned with pink and white flowers and 24-inch tapers, a nod to the opulent chandeliers at Versailles. Crystal votives at the base of each centerpiece and pink pin-spots softened the look, while silver chiavari chairs tied with vivid pink chiffon provided a pop of color.

A giant ice sculpture vase brimming with crystal-embellished calla lilies centered the tall, four-foot diameter hors d'oeuvre table. Dessert tables covered in chic, crystal-embroidered black linen offered an array of sweet treats, including the father of the bride's famous homemade ice cream. The ice cream was the ideal accompaniment to the wedding cake: a four-tier confection designed by Lutman's company to resemble the brocade boxes accompanying the invitations. "It was a sweet ending," Lutman says, "to an event full of tradition, elegance and ambiance." —Susan Cuadrado

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ETCH ME IF YOU CAN

PARTY FAVOR



As a kid, everyone had an Etch-a-Sketch toy. While most of us struggled to draw recognizable pictures, Los Angeles-based artist Christoph Brown began creating portraits. Brown launched Etch U Productions in 2003 and has been Etch-a-Sketching ever since. In just minutes, guests can have their portraits drawn on their own personal Etch-a-Sketch, which can be taken home as a party favor. The screen can be hung on the wall and will not erase unless it is actively shaken or turned over, Brown assures. The images also can be blown up into posters or printed on T-shirts, mugs, hats and other merchandise. And if that's not enough, Brown can digitally record the whole process on video for a custom presentation of the drawing's creation. **For more information, visit www.etchu.com.**