

Uniquely Yours

Top-notch wedding coordinators give hot tips, cool ideas and sound advice on how to turn an ordinary wedding into one that is uniquely extraordinary.



Grand Reception Ideas

- Photo booth guest books! Rent a photo booth where guests take their picture inside and the strip gets glued into a custom book where each guest signs a personal message to the couple. ~ *Mary Dann*
- Custom invitations! They set the tone for your wedding. ~ *Nicole Hirsty*
- Hire a videographer who can provide same-day editing services and show highlights during the dinner reception of pre-ceremony & ceremony footage edited to your favorite song. ~ *Carolyn Chen*
- A themed event that reflects your passions and interests! For example, a 40's or 50's themed wedding set in a location that fits that era, incorporating the theme all the way from the stationery to an Elvis performer. ~ *Erin Bacon*
- Graduate from one space to another using elements of surprise and décor. ~ *Ava Carroll-Brown*
- Incorporate family traditions, your spirituality, your culture and all the things that are important to you. You should be wined and dined with your favorite cuisine, surrounded in a garden of your favorite floral, and serenaded by your favorite musical entertainment. ~ *Kimberly Bradford*

Overlooked Details

- In today's world, the importance of the actual wedding ceremony gets overlooked. Everyone is so involved in 'getting to the party' that they forget what the wedding day is all about. ~ *Ava Carroll-Brown*
- Sweetheart table! You will be photographed quite a bit here, be sure to have it decorated beautifully. ~ *Nicole Hirsty*
- The comfort of your guests should be a priority. Be sure to provide market umbrellas, tents, parasols or fans and water or punch on a warm day. For cooler outdoor weddings, make sure heaters provided. ~ *Carolyn Chen*
- Providing welcome gift bags for out of town guests...a weekend itinerary, local maps, area attraction and restaurant guides, bottled water, snacks and a scented candle. ~ *Mary Dann*
- Lighting! It can really change the whole look of your wedding. ~ *Nicole Hirsty*



Fabulous Trends

- Small bridal parties! It makes for a more intimate experience for you and your chosen attendants. ~ *Mary Dann*
- Color, living décor, creative dance floors and personalized menus! ~ *Ava Carroll-Brown*
- Midnight snacks! It is great to serve your guests a midnight snack such as warm cookies and shots of cold milk. ~ *Kimberly Bradford*
- Lounges! Many rental companies and event design studios now provide lounge furniture in all shapes, sizes, textures, and colors. Have fun with it! ~ *Carolyn Chen*
- Add color to the tables with specialty linens. Whether they are dark chocolate brown or bright orange or pink linens, it really gives the event some extra flair. ~ *Erin Bacon*
- Donations to a charity in lieu of favors! ~ *Mary Dann*

Loss The Trend

- When couples decide to see one another before the ceremony! The expression on the groom's face is priceless as his beautiful bride makes her way down the aisle. If couples must see one another beforehand, I always suggest a "private moment" for them to see one another privately for the first time. It is not only romantic and a great photo opportunity, but a moment you will treasure forever. ~ *Kimberly Bradford*
- A trend of the past that still lingers - table cameras! Many brides spend a lot of money developing the film only to find that they have fifty pictures of the same couple, pictures of the ceiling and floor, photos that are too dark & only a few that end up being usable. ~ *Erin Bacon*
- Too many sweets at the end of the night...dessert, cake, chocolate fountain, candy bar, etc. Rather than over-loading your guests with sugar, choose one or two sweet options and introduce a late night array of mini comfort foods. ~ *Mary Dann*

In Planning A Budget, Never Skimp On....

- Most coordinators agreed - never skimp on photography! Other popular answers included wedding coordinator, entertainment, catering and videography.

Additional Advice

- Have a complete guest list when you begin orchestrating your event. ~ *Ava Carroll-Brown*
- Don't ask everyone's opinion. It will only make the decisions harder to make since you don't want to offend anyone. If you ask, just let them know you think it's a great idea and you will take it into consideration. ~ *Nicole Hirsty*
- Always have your hair and makeup artists come to you onsite. ~ *Mary Dann*
- Don't forget about the groom, it's his day too! Get the groom involved and allow him to make decisions and have some say in the planning of this day that is for both of you. ~ *Kimberly Bradford*
- Have you and your groom write each other a quick note on the event day and have your coordinator exchange the two...it's a great way to calm your nerves and remember what the day is really all about. ~ *Mary Dann*
- Establish a 'reasonable' budget. ~ *Ava Carroll-Brown*
- Take your time in choosing your vendors. See at least three vendors in each category, starting with your highest priority, so that you can make the best selection for your style and budget. ~ *Erin Bacon.*



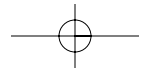
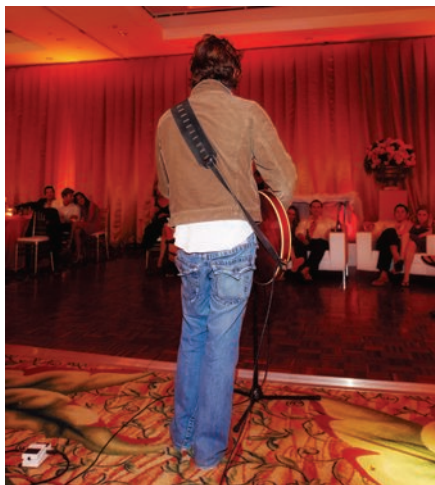
SIDE-BY-SIDE

Lisa Miller & Mark Jackson | Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort & Spa, Dana Point

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOE PHOTO Wedding Consulting by Carolyn Chen, The Special Day

Mark and Lisa have been working side-by-side every day since Lisa interviewed Mark for a position at her office. A year and a half after Mark accepted a job offer from Lisa, Lisa accepted Mark's proposal to spend the rest of their lives together. After a whirlwind courtship, the couple had beautiful custom rings designed. Lisa thought there would be no way the rings would be completed in time for Christmas. To her surprise, on Christmas Eve, Mark presented her with a memory book full of pictures and song lyrics and wrapped it for her to open. As she opened the gift and saw the finished ring, Mark asked Lisa if they could continue making beautiful memories together, and if she'd do him the honor of becoming his wife. Needless to say, it was a very merry Christmas.







SIDE-BY-SIDE

Invitations *Paper Girl Floral & Event Design* *Square Root Designs* coordinated every detail of the couple's Spanish-themed outdoor ceremony that overlooked the ocean. Fresh rose petals filled the aisles with color and complemented the festive atmosphere. Guests left the celebration with specialized place-card wedding favors: their names hand-painted on Spanish tiles designed by a friend of the couple. **Cake** *Heidelberg Pastry* designed the unique three-tier, chocolate butter cream wedding cake accompanied by fresh bananas and banana puree. **Catering** The gourmet feast, catered by *Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort & Spa*, began with a crisp mixed-green salad sprinkled with cashews



SIDE-BY-SIDE

and cranberries and was followed by a choice of three mouth-watering entrée options: juicy filet mignon, pan-seared halibut, or fresh vegetable Wellington. **Entertainment** *Flamenco Guitarist Yussi Wegner* created the festive ceremony music, while *Scott Topper Productions* provided a lively range of tunes at the reception. **Videography** *DV Artistry* **Transportation** *Lake Forest Limousines* **Formalwear** Mark wore *Hugo Boss* and he and his groomsmen were stylish and comfortable in suits and flip-flops. **Wedding Gown** Lisa dazzled guests in a breathtaking ivory antique beaded gown by *Lazaro*. **Hair** *The Dana Point Harbor Salon* **Makeup** *Desa Salon*