

## The perfect look



Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

## White wedding cake still cheap, traditional and most popular food

By Mike Reilley  
Senior Editor

Although specialty cakes once posed a serious threat in the wedding-cake market, brides and grooms now prefer traditional white cake, local bakers said.

Alcohol-flavored cakes — like amaretto and rum — and cheesecake were popular last spring, but sales have dropped off "quite a bit" in the last year, said Rich Mettler, owner of Mettler Family Bakery, Inc.

"We'll occasionally get an order for one, but everyone has stuck with the white cake," he said. "Some people still want the alcohol-flavored cakes for the groom's cake."

Mettler said white cake costs less per piece than the other flavors. He said a piece of cheesecake costs about \$1, whereas a portion of white cake is about 50 cents. The alcohol-cake prices vary according to the cost of the liquor.

Gary Smith, owner of Geier's Bakery, said he gets few requests for alcohol-flavored cakes. He said couples prefer white cake, along with the traditional mints and peanuts on the side.

Dawn Bargen, a cake decorator at Super Saver bakery, said white cake always will dominate the market.

"A lot of people want to go with tradition," she said. "White is the most popular this year,

but I've noticed that a lot of people are alternating the tiers (of cake) with white and marble-chocolate."

Mettler said silk flowers and ribbons have become popular decorations on wedding cakes in the last year. He said couples string ribbons to connect a multiple-cake arrangement.

"Besides being a baker, I have to be a florist now, too," Mettler said.

Mettler said extravagance determines the price of a cake. Ribbons, flowers, fountains and bridges all figure into the final cost, he said.

Mettler said he has made cakes for as little as \$23, but recently earned \$600 for a multiple-cake arrangement.

"It was for a general's daughter up at SAC Air Force Base," Mettler said. "It was big. It fed 700 people."

"I took it up there in this big station wagon," Mettler said, "and all you could fit in there was cake and I. That was it."

Mettler warned prospective brides and grooms to put their cake orders in "as early as possible."

"They should order six or seven months ahead of time," he said. "Between April and September, our order book is packed. It's probably about 90 percent full right now. We filled up 60 percent of it at wedding shows alone."

## Balloons, sculptures, even lasers can enliven reception

By Kirstin Swanson  
Staff Reporter

There are musts for every wedding reception: The bride and groom cut the cake, a toast is made, and everyone eats cake and little pastel mints.

But a wedding reception doesn't have to stop there. With imagination as a guide, a wedding reception can be as creative as the bride and groom want it to be.

Lincoln may not be the most exciting place for a wedding reception, but many options do exist for

going that extra step.

Brenda Ryan, manager at Paper Parade, said about once a week the store decorates for a wedding reception. Paper Parade's services use balloons of all colors and shapes. Ryan said they use mini-balloons for individual table decorations and often create balloon arches to put over the serving table, in the archway or on the dance floor. A balloon arch costs about \$75.

Lately, Ryan said, she has been making red and black balloon arches for weddings. Burgundy, sil-

ver and teal have been other popular colors in the past, she said.

At one wedding, helium-filled latex balloons were used instead of throwing rice at the newlyweds. Ryan said when the couple left the church all of the guests released their balloons.

Ice sculptures are another idea for making receptions a little fancier. The Cornhusker Hotel's Renaissance Room will create ice sculptures for anywhere from \$75 to \$150. Sculptures include fish, dolphins, deer, bears, swans and eagles.

Hearts, Chinese boats and Santa Claus are other options.

Marcel Bonetti, executive chef at the Cornhusker, said it takes from 1 1/2 to three hours to create a sculpture.

Outside of Nebraska, more exotic ideas for wedding receptions exist. New York City offers professionally trained mimes who are made up to look like marble statues and hold their poses for several hours. These live statues interact with wedding guests by winking, blowing kisses and falling off their

pedestals. Costs range from \$350 to \$500 a statue plus travel expenses.

If cost is no concern, a laser light show may be the perfect entertainment for wedding guests. Expert technicians can use light, beams of radiation and mirrors to draw colorful three-dimensional images on the banquet-hall walls. Costs for laser entertainment range from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

By letting the imagination run wild, a wedding reception can become more than a cake-and-punch affair.

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