

## Loving Spoonfuls

By Laura Donnelly

(05/04/2007) Wedding caterers of the “the Hamptons” are happy to share disaster stories once the statute of limitations has run out. Tents billowing and blowing away in Montauk, ice deliveries failing to materialize, setting a house on fire, or the couple who insisted their adorable dogs take part in the ceremony, only to have said pooches helping themselves to the wedding cake a little bit earlier than the other guests.

But as Simon Sheridan of Exquisite Food in East Hampton calmly points out, this is one of the most important days of a young couple's life and they are putting their blind trust in you. If you can make it memorable, delicious, and beautiful, handle the inevitable near-disasters, and play amateur therapist along the way, chances are you will be back to cater their children's christenings.

Summer is by far the most popular time for weddings on the East End, but some caterers like the change of seasons, cozy and warm fall menus, or a romantic candlelit winter wedding.

Cynthia Battaglia of Sag Harbor has been catering weddings from 12 to 400 people for 15 years and loves a spring ceremony when fresh vegetables are just coming into season. Stacie Pierce of Beautiful Food is merging with Michelle Florea of Food and Co. in East Hampton. Her favorite season for weddings is fall. She concedes that summer is great, everything is fresh, the corn and tomatoes and herbs are at their peak, but there's something about the smell of a wood fire and the soul-warming foods of autumn that she loves.

Pete Ambrose, event coordinator for the Seafood Shop in Wainscott, is partial to summer weddings so he can grill up a storm and experiment with condiments like chimichuras. goes for family-style service, bone-in rib-eye steaks, grilled striped bass, fresh corn salad, and heirloom tomatoes. He points out (as do a number of other caterers in the area) that if the bride and bridegroom have read about Pike's Produce or Green Thumb, then they must have the produce from these venerable vegetable farms and stands.



Brent Newsom has been catering on the East End since 1986 and has about 30 events already booked for this season. He is best known for his pepper-crusting filet of beef with horseradish cream and mini BLTs, a hollowed out cherry tomato filled with bacon, iceberg lettuce, minced red onion, and homemade mayonnaise.

Bland is a dirty word and debris on the plate is a no-no. The food should be beautiful, easy to handle, and preferably without bones.

One of Anna Pump's (of Loaves and Fishes fame) favorite weddings was a romantic candlelit affair at the Bridgehampton Inn. Dim lights, a fire going in the fireplace, warming foods like duck mousse on apple slices, mushroom profiteroles, and a ravioli en brodo were served to a small group gathered for a second wedding. Although Loaves and Fishes no longer caters weddings, she also recalls fondly some summer weddings with grilled swordfish with romesco sauce and butterflied leg of lamb with a chick pea puree.

For this important day, you can choose your favorite season, pick the caterer that suits your budget, tastes, and style, and then try to relax, enjoy your family, friends, your new beloved, and the food.

### Loaves and Fishes Italian Wedding Soup

Serves six.

1/4 cup olive oil  
4 cups coarsely chopped onions  
1 small fennel bulb, julienned  
1 and 1/2 cups carrots, sliced  
2 qts. chicken stock  
1 and 1/4 tsp. salt  
1 skinless and boneless chicken breast, about 1 lb.  
1 Tbsp. finely minced shallots  
1/4 cup plain dry bread crumbs  
1 egg yolk  
1/8 tsp. dried thyme  
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper  
3 qts. water  
24 cheese or wild mushroom-filled raviolis, fresh or frozen  
1 Tbsp. freshly chopped parsley

In heavy saucepan saute' onions, fennel, and carrots in olive oil over low heat for about 10 minutes. Do not brown. Add chicken stock, 3/4 tsp. of the salt and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer 25 minutes.

Trim fat from chicken. Cut meat into chunks and pulse in food processor until medium fine. Transfer to bowl and add shallots, breadcrumbs, egg yolk, thyme, remaining salt, and the pepper. Blend mixture thoroughly and shape into 24 balls. Add to hot soup and simmer for five minutes or until all the meatballs rise to surface.

In separate pot, cook raviolis in three quarts of water until they float to the top.

Place four raviolis in each bowl, top with soup and parsley.