



"Couples today want so much more than the standard hors-d'oeuvres-toast-wine-with-dinner-wedding-cake event of the past. Younger brides want to get creative," says Director of Catering and Conference Management David Hall.

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they want people to enjoy it." That list of alternative foods Hall mentioned is merely a tiny sampling of the full litany of choices he has employed, and further possibilities are limited only by the hosts' imaginations.

While there is no real standard "wedding package," Hall sees the traditional five-hour celebration as the framework of what a host initially wants. He then trains his planners to look at the time surrounding those hours, from guest check-in—usually Friday night—until that guest's

departure on Sunday. Within that much longer time frame, there are many opportunities to enhance the experience for the guest. F&B plays a prominent role among those opportunities, often adding a punctuation mark to otherwise ordinary service moments.

Director of Banquets John Silvestrini is onboard with creating value from perception. Silvestrini oversees the 42,000 square feet of flexible banquet space at the hotel. With the declining numbers of invitees at weddings, Silvestrini and Hall use

cooking stations and bar service stations as interesting filler for less crowded banquet halls. "Most of all, we're trying to keep the fun atmosphere going," Silvestrini says.

He looks at the hall capacity of 300 people as a limiting factor for revenues but sees the add-ons, such as a cotton candy station or ice cream bar, priced per invitee, as the features that can really make the difference in profitability and guest satisfaction. Perception is not a hollow factor when it comes to delivering

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CUSTOM BANQUET CHAIRS

Capital Improvement

With what Jim Walent describes as the best view in Washington, D.C., from the new banquet space at the prestigious Hay-Adams Hotel, it was important that the seating be equally as eye-catching.

"We added a floor to the building and closed a hotel floor for three months during construction, adding a banquet facility with kitchen and banquet rooms, overlooking Lafayette Park, the monuments, and the White House," says Walent, VP, capital asset director, for the B. F. Saul Company, which manages the property.

B. F. Saul called on Tom Pheasant, a high-end residential designer in D.C., for the project, but when it came to chairs, Walent already had something in mind. "We went with Gasser to produce a custom-designed banquet chair for that space," Walent says. "We actually pushed the design firm to use them; a lot of times it works the other way around."

Gasser created the Georgetown Series (pictured) for the new space. Walent says the company was drawn to Gasser for its reputation and from having used Gasser products in the hotel "for years, but more of their standard product line. We wanted something that was out of the ordinary, and we felt that because they are high-quality, they were a great partner for us."

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