

FAVORS FOR THE BRIDE

What makes a wedding, shower or rehearsal dinner memorable? Not just the band and food. Often, it is the little things. A small flower vase with a single tea rose. A flickering tea light.

BY LINDA JARRETT



PHOTO BY SUSAN JACKSON PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO BY ARINA LANIS

The tradition of giving wedding favors goes back to ancient Rome when newlyweds gave little mementos to their wedding guests in gratitude for sharing their special day. In many cultures,

sugarcoated almonds or dragées are the traditional favors symbolizing the bitterness and sweetness of married life.

Thoughtful and creative favors leave a lasting impression and add a personal touch to the wedding reception, bridal shower, and rehearsal dinner. Many couples choose favors that acknowledge their culture and personal style. Favors accenting a wedding theme are also extremely popular.

Gone are the days of tiny bottles of bubbles, bags of rice surrounded with net or personalized matches. Brides now want something useful as well as memorable for their guests to take home and treasure.

Candles beautifully wrapped and tied with a ribbon of the bride's colors are popular, as are silver picture frames personalized with the bride and groom's name and wedding date.

How wonderful to find a split of wine or champagne with a personalized label at the table setting. Vellum bags with the bride and groom's name and containing fine chocolates or teas are also distinctive. Votives and tea lights of all shapes and sizes always please guests. Mini mint julep cups and mini champagne buckets can hold either flowers or candy. And how elegant do place settings look with little crystal flower vases at the top?

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Guests love sweets, so you cannot go wrong with candy or petit fours. Jordan almonds or wedding mints fill a variety of containers like porcelain baskets, boxes with heart handles or pyramid boxes. Petit fours in little baskets make a colorful and delicious favor. Also popular are candy bars in individual personalized boxes.

Who does not like chocolate? Truffles in embossed boxes, chocolate candy bars engraved with the wedding couple's name and date, solid chocolate hearts wrapped in tulle, or mints in embossed gold paper satisfy that "after dinner" sweet tooth.

Containers for these treasures come in all shapes and sizes. Pyramid boxes, embossed boxes, boxes topped with flowers or wrapped with Asian ribbon. Beaded organza bags, tiny tote bags, little drawstring pouches, mini glass bottles or mini mesh tins—many choices for any favor. For a change from the candy, fill containers with bath oil beads, bath salts or potpourri. A lovely and aromatic reminder of a lovely occasion.

Arina Lanis, editor-in-chief of Wedding-Club.com and owner of Arina's Boutique (www.arinasboutique.com), planned a shower using "symbolism" as a theme. "I incorporated citrus fruits because, since the Greek ages, fruit has symbolized prosperity. I did citrus fruit halves with place cards as favors."

Lanis also uses floral eggs, sculpted scented pear candles, apple candles and Asian glass votives in her "symbolism" motif. Other Asian favors include frosted Chinese takeout boxes, incense cone sets and silk brocade sachets, bamboo napkin holders.

Rebecca Boillat, owner and master designer of St. Louis Wedding Design, does "candy tables." "We have all white or all one-color candy like chocolate-covered pretzels, white jelly bellies, white M&M's, then have little organza drawstring bags on the table. People can make their own favors."

She says personalized items in general are very popular. "We do wildflower seeds wrapped in vellum, tied with a satin ribbon, with 'Love Will Grow' and the bride and groom's name inscribed on it."

Personalized notepads are a unique, yet

functional favor. Claudia Hoffman from The Paper Patch, will inscribe the pads with any message, "and they fit right at the top of the dinner plate."

Nancy Young with The Favor Place, excels at making "poufs," little tulle bags filled with Jordan almonds and tied with coordinating ribbon. She tops it with a flower or anything with special meaning to the bride and groom.

"I have little beach chairs with sunglasses, clam shells, tennis rackets, ice skates, anything to go along with their interest or a theme," she says. "It all depends on what theme they want."

One couple held their marriage and reception in a hockey rink. Young made the pouf topped with a hockey puck. She also did a cake top with hockey sticks in the bride and groom's hands. For a country and western theme, Young placed a hay bale on top of a small candy box. She also put a horseshoe on a pouf.

Fortune cookies are assuming great status as favors. No more relegated to the end of a take-out Chinese dinner, these cookies are dipped in white chocolate, sprinkled with the bride's color, then put in a cello bag in a coordinating color.

If desired, the "fortunes" inside the cookie can be as simple as "Thank you for sharing our day" with the couple's names, or trivia questions about the bride and groom, like "Where did they meet?" or "Where did they go on their first date?"

Young says this is not only unusual, "it is guaranteed to start the conversation going."

Many favors double as place card holders, which means less to buy while giving the lunch or dinner a special touch. The Paper Patch features little vinyl see-through purses with handles that hold place cards. "You can fill them with candies or whatever you choose," said Hoffman. Little silver chairs, wine charms, tiny wedding bells and silver luggage tags will add a personal touch and surprise guests when they come to the table.

Glazed And Confused in South County is a "paint your own pottery" studio, and creates some unique favors. Owned by Donna Meitner and her daughters, Liz Schreiber and Gretchen O'Donnell, the studio is known for their wedding signature plate. The bride can pick out a plate and the studio will put a design in the mid-

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dle. She takes it to her reception where guests sign their names and messages, then brings it back where it is fired and glazed.


For favors, O'Donnell says painted personalized tiles with ribbons make wonderful creative place cards. "For my wedding, we used a little flower pot with a votive candle. It had my wedding colors and said 'All things grow with love,' then our names and date."

For her wedding, Schreiber chose a personalized ceramic holiday ornament with a place card attached.

Let the guests get a scent of the wedding with aromatherapy ornaments in a variety of shapes including a heart, a dove, even a sand dollar. Each ornament includes a vial of vanilla or lavender fragrance oil, and a personalized card and comes in a gift box with tissue.

Porcelain butterfly wind chime wedding favors, made of clay and colored to match the theme, are durable enough to hang out doors. Names and dates are pressed into the chime hanger top, and the chime comes in its own gift box.

So, what are the brides buying? Liz Garrett who is holding her nuptials on August 2nd to Jim Sertl has chosen cream ceramic votives from Glazed and Confused for the reception. Inscribed on the rim are tiny dark pink, green and purple hearts with "Elizabeth and Jim, August 2, 2003. Live long, laugh often and love much." According to Mary Sertl, mother of the groom, the men had the final say for this over mints and chocolate.

A wedding day celebrates new beginnings. The little touches mean as much as the big ones. And, remember, the guests can't take home the band! 

FIND THESE FAVORS AND MORE AT THE FOLLOWING:

The Paper Patch, 12095 Manchester Rd., Des Peres, MO, (314) 821-6561

www.arinasboutique.com

The Favor Place, (636) 279-3222

St. Louis Wedding Design,
12460 Olive Blvd., Creve Coeur, MO,
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