

Not Your Mother's

wedding

When it came time to say "I do," these three couples did it their way. By Dayna Dunteman



To say that the traditional wedding went out with June Cleaver's pearls is only partly accurate. Sure, we're no longer seeing as many pastel bridesmaids' dresses with dyed-to-match satin pumps. Pachelbel's "Canon in D" is just as likely these days to be ousted by rap or rock 'n' roll. Even the traditional bouquet toss is on the endangered-species list.

Yet much of what makes a wedding a wedding is still intact.

"All the elements of what goes into a traditional wedding I believe are still there," says longtime wedding planner **LORA WARD**, owner of A Day to Remember in Sacramento. "You marry in front of an assembly of people, you feed your guests, and you celebrate and dance."

How couples execute those steps is what separates them from the pack.

"The idea of creating a theme and bringing out the perspectives of the bride and groom is much more pronounced these days," says Ward. "There's so much more color, more bells and whistles, more interaction. It's not your mother's wedding anymore."

El Dorado Hills-based wedding and event designer **DEBRA HIEBERT**, owner of Très Fabu, agrees. "The modern tradition is to make the wedding completely representative and reflective of that couple, making it more *them*," she says.

Here, meet three Sacramento-area newly wedded couples who did just that.

Aloha From Napa

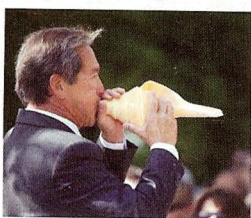
The Napa Valley evokes images of Tuscany, the Mediterranean and, of course, wine. That didn't deter **KYLE SONG** and **SARA SOLOMON** from transforming the Harvest Inn in St. Helena into a tropical paradise when they tied the knot on May 15, 2009.

"Kyle and I both have a deep-rooted love for the beach and for Hawaii, where we both lived at some point in our lives. We thought about getting married in Hawaii, but this way more relatives would be able to come," says Sara, 30, a registered nurse at UC Davis Medical Center. (Kyle, also 30, is in the surgical residency program at the same hospital.)

The couple did their best to convey their passion without going overboard.

"We tried to make the event as tropical as we could without being too touristy," Sara says. "We didn't want it to feel like a luau."

Their solution? Pull in elements of another favorite locale: Thailand, the site of their first vacation together. Guests were greeted with pre-ceremony tropical drinks. The couple had leis flown in from Hawaii to present to their parents and other key people. To begin the ceremony, the groom's father and the bride's father "called"



each other on conch shells, a South Pacific tradition that signals the approach of a VIP—in this case, the bride walking down the aisle. And the ring bearer? None other than the couple's beloved English bulldog, Moose, who was outfitted with a tuxedo coat and his own special lei of ti leaves.

After the exchange of vows and rings, Kyle's father, playing the ukulele, and Kyle's brother, playing the guitar, sang the version of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" made famous by Hawaiian singer Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. Sara's parents, who live in Hawaii, contributed at the reception with a Hawaiian duet and a hula performance by Sara's father, a former halau dancer.

As they retired for the night, Sara and Kyle were greeted by one last burst of the tropics in Napa: a room decorated with fragrant plumeria blossoms. Finally, it was off to the honeymoon—where else but in Hawaii?





Hot August Nights

SEAN FINDERS, 28, and **ASHLEY ORSABA**, 26, threw a lot of sizzle into their Aug. 22, 2009, wedding at the Granite Bay Golf Club.

And that's as it should've been. There's no keeping it cool when the groom battles flames for a living.

Sean's job as a Rocklin firefighter inspired the couple's choice of colors. "Instead of neutrals, pinks and purples, we decided to go for hot summer colors: reds, yellows, oranges and golds," says Ashley. Katie Edwards of Ambience Floral Design in Roseville used luxurious red and orange fabrics to create vivid

backdrops for the garden ceremony and the cake table.

The couple entered their reception to fanfare by a bagpiper and drummer from the Sacramento Firefighters Pipes and Drums band. "Anybody who's part of the firefighter family—and there were a lot of firefighters there—is moved by bagpipes," says Lora Ward, who planned the wedding. "People were standing, screaming, clapping and crying."

But the wedding wasn't all about heroes in yellow helmets. A different glimpse into the couple's life together emerged during dinner, when guests were served vegetables from their garden.

"We had eggplant, cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini, peppers. There must've been 10 or 15 bags of produce that we brought in," says Ashley, who works as a civil engineer in Roseville.

For the wedding cake, Sean had a surprise up his sleeve. "I was getting ready to cut the cake with a lovely Waterford cake-cutting set that my mom had bought," Ashley recalls, "but then he pulled out the ax that he uses at work. He ended up cutting the cake with the fire ax!"

Sean requested a special song with which to end the evening: "For Those About to Rock (We Salute You)" by AC/DC, complete with four confetti cannon launches.

The couple's exit from the reception was as dramatic as their entrance. While Ashley originally wanted to bid adieu down a sparkler-lined path, Sean nixed that idea for safety reasons, opting instead for candlelight.

For the pair's getaway wheels, only one type of vehicle seemed fitting. Ashley and Sean waved goodbye from the back of a vintage 1930s fire truck—the perfect ending to one of the hottest August nights on record.

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