Local Wedding Expert Wins Award

Austin's own wedding guru **Tanya Posavatz**, of [clink] weddings, brought home the gold for "Best Wedding" at the International Special Events Society's 2nd Texas Star Awards in November in Dallas. Posavatz, the president of Austin Wedding and Event Coordinators, organized an event for a prominent couple from Washington, D.C., who hosted guests from around the world. Posavatz was part of a story on older brides in the April 2004 issue of **austinwoman**.

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The wedding at "Spy Kids" location Trois Estate included Austin touches, from the Hill Country view to live music as well as zydeco dance lessons and a cake topper the exact replica of the bride and groom. Posavatz's imaginative work has earned her national recognition in three years. For more, www.clinkweddings.com.

Brides Over 30

They know what they want in a wedding – and they get it

By Laura Doyle

The over-30 bride is no anomaly anymore, and since she has come into her own and knows more about what she wants, both the wedding and honeymoon really reflect her unique personality.

MIKE KANE

Tanya Posavatz, founder and coordinator of [clink] Wedding Consulting, came to Austin two years ago and has targeted the over-30 bride, helping her to personalize her wedding. "Guests remember what's unique about a wedding," says Posavatz, "whether it's a zydeco band, a cake-topper modeled after the actual bride and groom, or a wine-themed reception replete with sommelier and wine stoppers as parting gifts."

Austin wedding planners say the older bride is often more in touch with who she is and what she wants and has the confidence to say "forget it!" to any part of a traditional wedding that doesn't suit her. She's realistic about her budget and more likely to hire a professional to help her. More second-time brides are over 30 and more commitment ceremonies involve women older than 30, and these are events where the rules just don't have to apply.

So what does this over-30 woman want in a wedding? According to planners in town, she cares more about the food, desires excellent wine and tends to be less interested in the music, although she's more likely to have a band than a DJ. Also, having had more years to travel, she is more likely to try an inventive menu or add a modern or non-traditional touch to her event.

Dresses

Today's bride, especially the over-30 bride, is choosing a dress that fits not only her figure and budget but also the style of the wedding and reception.

While the cost of the dress is not always what distinguishes the over-30 bride from her 20-something sister – she might find a dress or suit off the rack or opt for a designer gown – there is a common thread to the over-30 bride's search: simplicity. "Over-30 brides most often come in and say, 'I want something simple'," says a consultant at David's Bridal. Most designers and those in the wedding business agree, she wants something sleek, elegant and – dare it be said? – sexy.

Posavatz says clients sometimes travel to San Antonio for an Amsale Aberra gown or to Houston for a Prescilla design, or as far as New York. The David's consultant tells the older bride to ditch preconceived notions about what a woman her age should wear. "A bride deserves and needs to wear the dress she feels most confident in, no matter what the color or style," she says. "An over-50 bride might have the confidence and sophistication to carry off a strapless gown that an ingénue bride may not be as comfortable in."

St. Thomas manager Jennifer Bailey suggests a long-jacket suit or an Empire-waisted dress for pregnant brides. She says over-50 brides often cover their arms with a jacket in a beautiful fabric.

Other local observations and recommendations:

Camelot Weddings: traditional (including strapless) but tailored; light and flowing fabrics such as organza (perfect for outdoor ceremonies, even the beach; see J. Crew, too)

Trousseau Nicole, Davenport Village: body-framing styles, bateau necklines, fine detailing, less fuss.

Umlauf Sculpture Garden: dresses in colors, especially red and gold; bridesmaid dresses, evening gowns, suits

Top, one of the simple, soft sheaths by Amy Michelson at Ahead of the Curve at the Arboretum; right, an elegant Wearkstatt gown by New York designer Jonas Hegewisch

Honeymoons

Older brides seek more exotic, secluded destinations, say local travel agents and wedding planners. "They don't want an all-inclusive package as often but a more customized trip," says Joanne Smith of Century Travel.

Italy has for years lured brides to its shores, countryside, medieval towns, laid-back culture, passionate living and intoxicating cuisine. Tuscany and Venice are among the favorites most recently cited.

Although some over-30 brides view the Caribbean as a been-there, done-that sort of place, it is still a spectacularly beautiful and romantic getaway. Especially so is Little Dix Bay on Gorda in the British Virgin Islands, says Sonnie Ayers of Four Seasons Travel, with its forested mountains, crystal-clear waters for snorkeling, secluded beaches, rock cathedrals and plush accommodations.

Frégate Island, in the Seychelles of the Indian Ocean, is so secluded that pirates hid there centuries ago. Luxury villas dot this unspoiled slice of paradise accessible only by boat and helicopter. Guided nature walks can be arranged, and there is a colony of giant tortoises for visitors to view.

Maybe it's the revisited Tolkien trilogy that has sparked new interest, but New Zealand is getting noticed. Its scenic wonders, cultures, modern art scene, adventure sports, wine industry and variety of untouched natural beauty make it an exciting place to explore or an easy and quiet refuge.