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”Here comes the....Bridal Trends”
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**Floral Management Interview with Maria McBride, of Brides magazine
by Mary Westbrook**

What will brides be wearing, carrying and coveting this year? And how will they be celebrating? To find out, Floral Management went to Maria McBride, wedding style director for Brides magazine and the author of multiple wedding planning books. (For more information, visit ww.mariamcbride.com.)

Floral Management: What are the major new wedding trends you’re seeing?

Maria McBride: In the United States, about 46,000 weddings occur each weekend and every couple has chosen to host a personal celebration that meets their needs and desires. So weddings are big or intimate, cocktail parties or elaborate dinners followed by after parties, celebrated on beaches or at city hall and everything in between. That said, some new concepts include:

- **Feasting table seating** for as many as 30 to 50 guests per table. These tables are set with candles and **low tableaux of flowers** that carry the eye down the length of the table so guests can easily chat across the table.
- **Sweetheart tables for brides and grooms**, 45-inch tables set dramatically for two in a central point of the reception room, is a choice more and more couples opt for. They have a special, quiet place to retreat to during the evening, to revel in the evening together before returning to the celebration.
- **Destination weddings** continue to be popular with about 10 percent of couples, especially with the **sunny Caribbean**, which has a wealth of resorts that offer specials with inclusive, full-service programs. Several locations have tapped top designers to create celebration looks they can offer couples, like Preston Bailey for Sandals Resorts and David Tutera for Disney.
- There also is an interest in **less typical locations**, like wineries, galleries, lofts, state parks, **even flower shops**.
- A dramatic new development is an interest in **eco-sensitive events**. Couples are choosing to celebrate as they live, with conscientious decisions that help protect and sustain the earth. **Organic fibers** set tables, **recycled wine bottles** are used as vases, **green plants or grasses for decor**, soy candles for lighting and seasonal, local foods are served for meals with organic wines and spirits for cocktails and finally the couples depart via hybrid limo services.

- **Late-night cocktail parties or after-wedding reception** parties are turning into wonderful opportunities to decorate or design **lounge areas**. Rent ottomans and backless sofas to cluster around low tables or set mirrored surfaces and small vases with **café-style flowers** for an instant glamour statement.

FM: Specifically with flowers, what are brides looking for?

MM: **Monochromatic designs** are popular because they're instantly unifying and dramatic. **Greenery massed out** is extremely popular for its affordability, refreshing simplicity and soothing qualities. Romantic flowers like **roses, hydrangea and lilac** are as popular as ever. New varieties of **variegated carnations and unusual roses** like 'Hocus Pocus' and 'Super Green' are hot.

FM: What about color?

MM: **Green is the hot color** for every season; **lavenders with chocolate accents** are a favorite for spring. Summer goes a bit hotter -- sunny oranges with gold and pink accents (**think Bollywood meets Hollywood**). In the fall, look for rust tones with red notes that establish a **harvest couture** tone. Finally **the black and white table is extremely popular** this year. White flowers and black table notes are smart for glamorous holidays but are even **breaking out to backyard parties**.

FM: What's the major shift you've seen in weddings in the last five to 10 years?

MM: **Personalization is the keynote**, defined from the music selections to the foods served, but **visually the monogram is key**. Initials decorate cakes, aisle runners, wedding programs, dance floors, invitations, even candle votives.

FM: What can florists do to ensure that brides see flowers as a valuable component of their budgets, as opposed to a last-minute stop once the dress, caterer and band have been booked?

MM: Weddings add up to be an expensive proposition for many couples, who are often paying for the celebration themselves. Provide value with imagination. **Resist the temptation to sell every idea or promote the idea to use flowers everywhere**. Instead, discuss that flowers are important keynotes of the decor: mass out an escort table with a profuse arrangement that is the focal point of decor for the cocktail hour and use candles on the tables with low bowls of floating flowers. **Couples appreciate your efforts to help them make ends meet without sacrificing style**. One big tip for couples on a budget, forget decorating the church, most are pretty environments anyway, and use the money saved to invest in flowers for the reception.

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