

LOCAL HEROES + HOMES OF THE POLS + HANGING WITH PLÁCIDO
THEIR FINEST HOUR: HOW LBJ AND MLK CHANGED AMERICA

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100 VERY BEST RESTAURANTS



Chocolate-mousse cake from Argia's restaurant in Falls Church

PLUS
20
RESTAURANTS
TO WATCH

THE FINEST DINING IN MARYLAND,
VIRGINIA & THE DISTRICT

w e d d i n g s

Terrace Room hosts smaller affairs. Capacity: 250. Cost per person: \$125 to \$175.

Westin Grand, 2350 M St., NW; 202-955-4461 (Jennifer Monti); westin.com. A wall of windows in the ballroom allows for natural light and views of the courtyard. Capacity: 220. Cost per person: \$118 to \$175.

Willard InterContinental, 1401 Pennsylvania Ave., NW; 202-637-7322 (Harrison Rohr); washington.intercontinental.com. The top pick for large weddings, the Willard's main ballroom and smaller Crystal Room have early-20th-century decor. The multilevel courtyard has three ornate fountains. Capacity: 350. Cost per person: \$225 to \$285.

Invitations and Calligraphy

Calligraphy Graphic Design, Silver Spring; 301-236-4459; calligraphygraphicdesign.com. Full-service calligraphy studio that also offers monogramming.

Caren Milman Calligraphy, Rockville; 301-871-6716. Our top vote-getter, Milman also does menus, place cards, and mounted seating charts.

Copenhaver, Dupont Circle; 202-232-1200. Copenhaver has been doing engraved invitations for more than 100 years.

Creative Parties, Bethesda; 301-654-9292; creativeparties.com. Invitations, programs, place cards, and more. In-house printing available.

Invitations by Brenda, Bethesda; 301-493-9339; invitationsbybrenda.invitations.com. Brides praise Brenda Cohen's discounts. She's been in business for 30 years.

Invitations by Estelle, Rockville; 301-460-1981. Invitations to meet any budget. Past clients include US senators.

Lettering by Lynne, Alexandria; 703-548-5427; letteringbylynnne.com. Lynne Sandler can create invitations in foreign languages, including Chinese and Arabic, and offers letterpress and engraving.

Sammy Little, Silver Spring and Bethesda; 301-589-9545; sammylittle.com. Little has done the calligraphy, from invitations to place cards, for three presidential inaugural lunches.



Regina Lawrence and Chad Savage made a sentimental stop at Ben's Chili Bowl, their favorite restaurant, on the way to their reception last July. They sat at the counter and ate chili dogs.

Wrap It Up, Vienna; 703-281-4329;

wrapitup.invitations.com. In business nearly 20 years, Wrap It Up has won awards at the National Stationery Show.

The Write Image, North Bethesda; 301-896-0975; thewriteimage.com. Clients can view proofs online as well as in Toni Footer's home studio.

Write-On!, Rockville; 301-251-0404. Sue Gould has been in the business for 27 years. She gets all brands of paper at a discount.

The Written Word, Dupont Circle, 202-223-1400; Georgetown, 202-342-1033; writtenword.invitations.com. Specializes in antique letterpress printing.

Special Lighting

Atmosphere, Silver Spring; 301-585-2100; atmospherelighting.com. Past clients include everyone from the Village People to the Gore family.

Digital Lightning, Gaithersburg; 301-987-0511; digitallightning.org. Indoor pyrotechnics

and fireworks displays.

Frost Lighting, Newington; 703-866-5153; frostlighting.com. Fred Elting and his team specialize in decorative lighting.

John Farr Lighting, Bowie; 301-390-2728; johnfarrlighting.com. Farr's lighting is used at high-profile events including DC's Helen Hayes awards.

Videographers

Craig Gormus Video, Hanover, Md.; 410-796-0848; pdsvideoproductions.com. In business for 20 years, Gormus uses natural lighting and multiple cameras. Rates start at \$3,000.

Dolce Video, Herndon; 703-481-0201; dolcevideo.com. Owner Haynal Papp meets with clients before the wedding to go over a shot list. Prices range from \$750 for four hours of raw footage to \$2,200 for an eight-hour, two-camera package that includes three DVDs and one VHS of raw footage.

Jenny Lehman Film & Video, Fort Washington; 301-567-9622; videojournalist.com. Our top vote-getter, Lehman can use Super-8 movie film for higher-quality videos. She does the shooting and editing herself. Rates start at \$5,000.

Martin Andrews Motion Picture Essays, 800-350-3308; martinandrews.com. Andrews and associates create cinematic movies that are presented on DVD and through online streaming. Rates for Andrews start at \$4,000, for associates at \$2,200.

On Line Suburban Video, Rockville; 301-315-6300; suburbanvideo.com. Actor Chris O'Donnell chose On Line Suburban Video for his nuptials in Washington. The 20-year-old company offers "crystal reel highlights"—a 15- to 20-minute version of your wedding—and photo montages. Rates start at \$2,995.

Spero's Video, Riverdale; 301-277-3357; sperosvideo.com. Since 1987, Spero's has created quality custom productions, which include baby-photo montages and high-end graphics.

Girls' Night Out

Too Busy to Plan the Bachelorette Party? They'll Do It for You.

When Edward Williams was 24, he noticed several of his soon-to-be-married friends having a hard time planning bachelorette parties. The women couldn't think of fun ideas—or, if they did, how to make them work.

Williams, then a University of Maryland student, was looking to start a business. In October, he cofounded Knot Just Yet, a Washington-based event-planning company that specializes in bachelorette parties. "Weddings are recession-proof," he says.

Activities for the bride and her friends range from theater outings to a day at the spa. The company handles all the details, from invitations to transportation. A professional usher is on hand to open doors, stop party crashers, even organize games—from the conservative to the risqué.

Knot Just Yet offers 11 packages. The Maiden, about \$200 a person, is an all-inclusive guided bar crawl to DC hot spots including Lucky Bar, MCCXXIII, Dream, and Pearl. The Nefertiti, up to \$3,000 a person, includes a \$1,000 shopping trip, a Broadway show, and a limo ride to and from New York. Customized packages—one bride recently requested a trip to Atlantic City—are also available. For more information, call 877-KNOT-YET or visit knotjustyet.com. —ARIANA PHILLIPS