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# WASHINGTONIAN



# 100 best restaurants

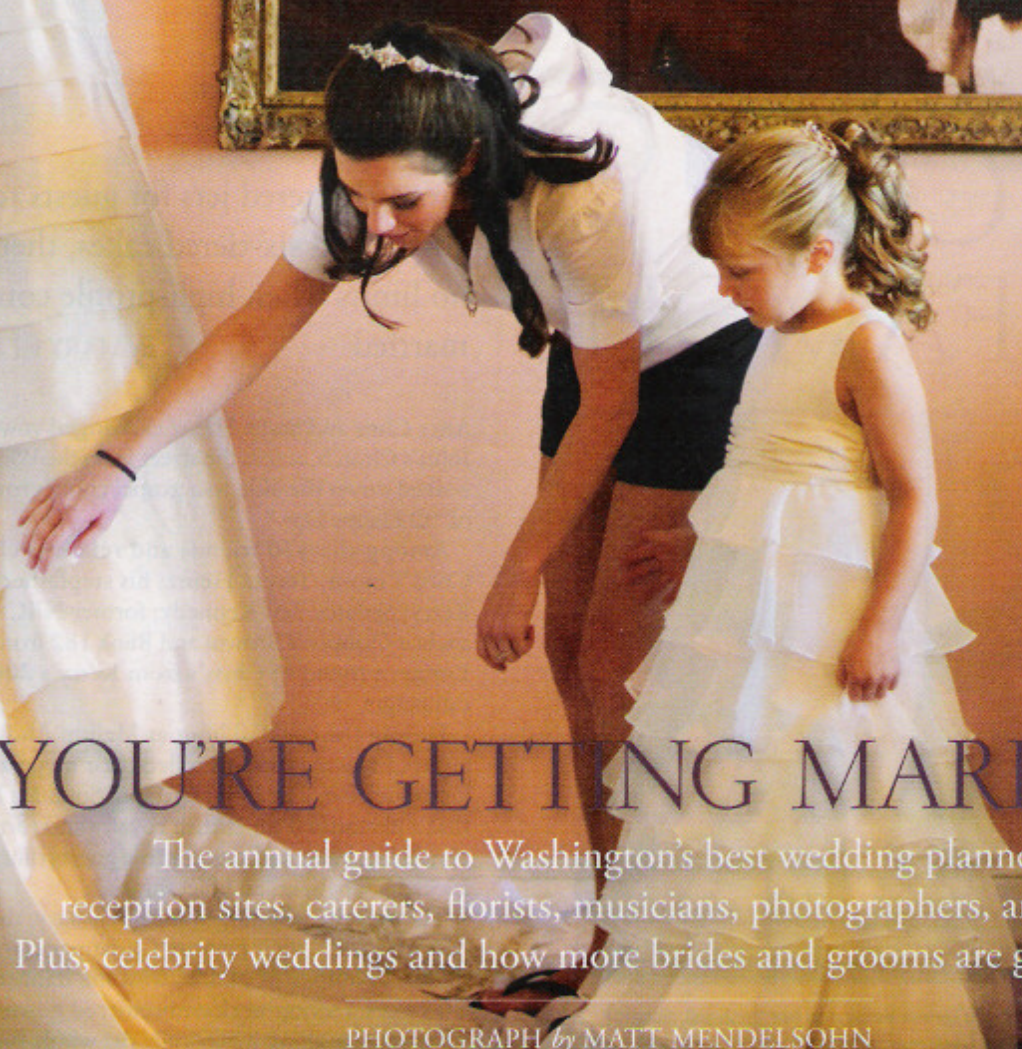
Here's the Very Best Dining in Virginia, Maryland, and the District—  
Ranked From 1 to 100. Who's In? Who's Out? And Guess Who's Number 1.

*Michel Richard* cooks  
with flair and fun at the area's very  
best restaurant—and he also runs  
the restaurant ranked number 10.

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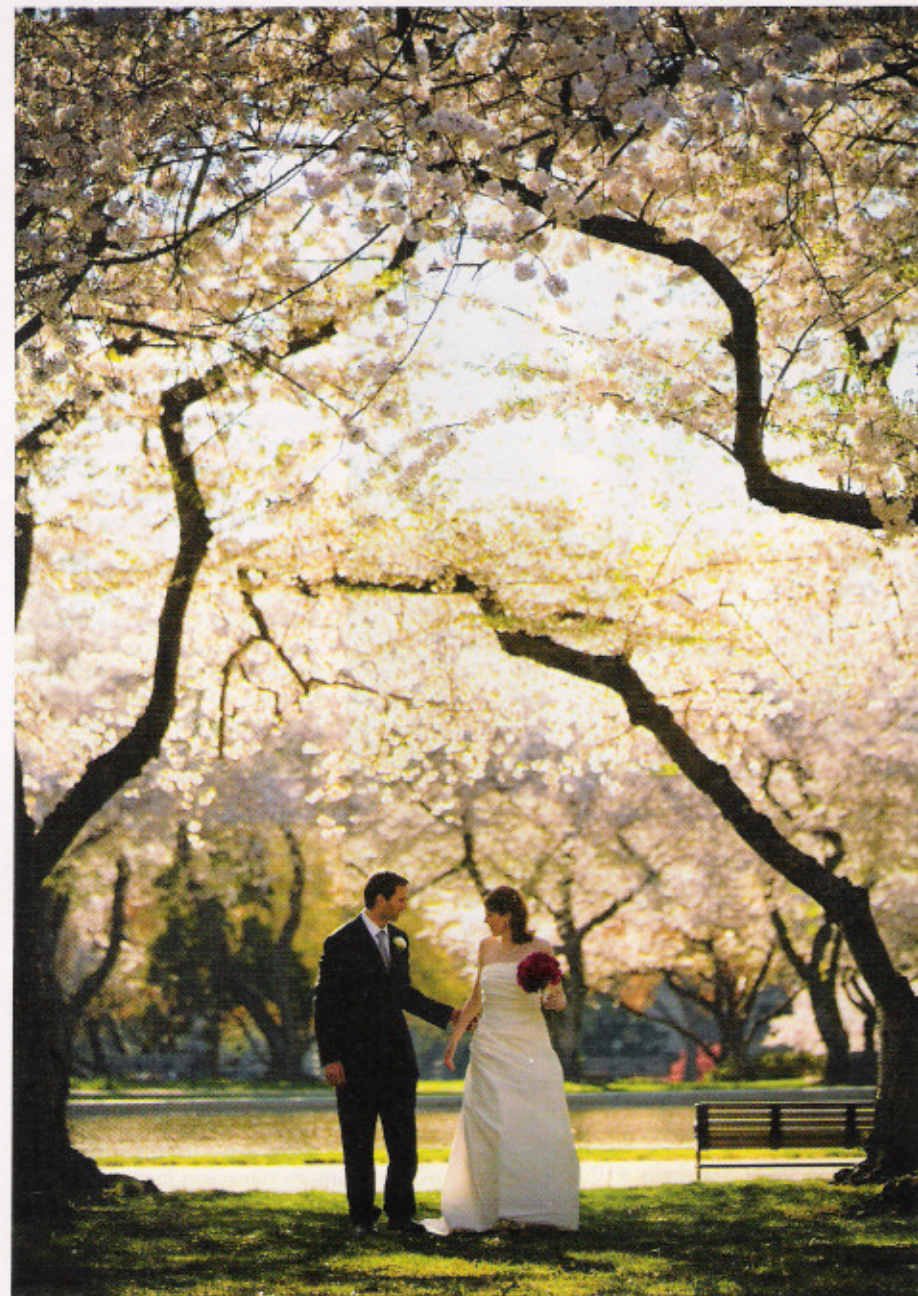


## YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED

The annual guide to Washington's best wedding planners, reception sites, caterers, florists, musicians, photographers, and more. Plus, celebrity weddings and how more brides and grooms are going green.

PHOTOGRAPH by MATT MENDELSON

Samantha Stirling, who married Chris McCormack in Baltimore this past September, prepares her dress with the help of flower girl Emma Miller.



Photograph by Greg Gibson

Elizabeth Mitchell and Matt Mendelsohn, in Senate Park near the US Capitol before their April 2006 wedding, wanted to marry when the cherry blossoms were in bloom.

### PLANNERS

**Bella Notte**, Arlington; 703-979-5887; *bellanottedc.com*. Brides say that Sara Bauleke, a minister's daughter, is friendly and detail-oriented. She offers day-of coordination and full-service planning.

**Bonnie Schwartz & Company**, Bethesda; 301-229-9473; *bonnieschwartz.com*. Schwartz, a top vote-getter in our survey of wedding experts and brides, plans just 12 to 15 weddings a year so she can get to know each couple well.

**Creative Parties**, Bethesda; 301-654-9292; *creativeparties.com*. Rita Bloom and daughter Tracy Bloom Schwartz have expanded their 40-year-old company to include four planners and a custom invitation store with calligraphers.

**Distinctive Events by Susan B. Katz**, Rockville; 301-984-0884; *susanbkatz.com*. In the business for 30 years, Katz focuses on decor. She and her team have also planned destination weddings, from Deep Creek Lake to California.

**Elegance & Simplicity**, Bethesda; 800-768-8814; *eleganceandsimplicity.com*. Katie Martin and her staff of 35 offer an in-house floral boutique and invitation shop in addition to wedding consulting.

**Engaging Affairs**, Alexandria; 888-481-5156; *engagingaffairs.com*. Laura Weatherly's company is a top vote-getter. She writes a column for *America's Bride* magazine and wrote *Stop! Don't Plan a Wedding Without This Book*.

**Events by André Wells**, Northwest DC; 202-518-6908; *eventsbyandrewells.com*. Wells and his team have planned destination events in the Dominican Republic, Charleston, and Jamaica as well as high-profile Washington weddings.

**Eventscapes**, Northwest DC; 202-364-2444; *event-scapes.com*. Ayran Kanter has planned everything from a Greek wedding at DC's Fairmont Hotel to a destination affair in a manor outside of London.

**Exquisite Expressions & Events**, Mitchellville; 301-306-0842; *anexquisiteevent.com*. Shelby Tuck-Horton's company specializes in interfaith and culturally diverse weddings. She teaches wedding-planning courses at community colleges.

**Finishing Touches Events**, Bethesda; 301-718-6465; *finishingtouchesevents.com*. Martha Bindeman, who has 30 years of experience, has planned everything from green weddings to Jewish nuptials.

**Gala Events**, Rockville; 301-718-2900; *galaevents.com*. Linda Garner's team, which includes scenery designers and artists, has a design center with centerpieces, linens, props, and more.

**Joan New**, Super Soirées, Potomac; 301-983-1910; *joannew.net*. New, a 25-year veteran, has an interior-design background and aims to create understated elegance. Brides say she is easy to work with.

**Joan W. Sacarob**, Annandale; 703-256-

## THEY KNOW WEDDINGS

By SARA LEVINE, LYNNE SHALLCROSS, EMILY HALONEN, MARISSA CONRAD & SEAN LISHANSKY

To find the best wedding vendors, we asked experts and couples for their votes. From planners and photographers to gown shops and bakeries, here are people who can help make your day perfect.