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## BRIDAL AISLE STYLE



One-of-a-kind silk gown featuring intricate leaf detailing and a sweetheart neckline. **Nicole Miller** (\$2,900). The Bellevue, 200 S. Broad St., 215-875-8350; [nicolemillerphiladelphia.com](http://nicolemillerphiladelphia.com)

## CHANGE OF A DRESS

MODERN DETAILS TAKE GOWNS FROM CLASSIC TO CONTEMPORARY. **BY JESSICA GREEN**

With to-do lists full of invites, catering, guest lists, and flowers, most brides can agree that finding their dream dress is at the top. Whether it's a beaded bodice or a classic ball gown that tugs at their hearts, this spring, Philadelphia brides are taking their looks up a notch.

"Spring is looking to be a bit more romantic," says Pattie Lamantia, owner of **The Wedding Shoppe** ([wedding-shoppe.com](http://wedding-shoppe.com)), a full-service bridal boutique on the Main Line. Taking a cue from the red carpet, brides are emulating stars like Olivia Wilde and Jaimie Alexander.

"Many brides are seeking out fuller gowns [and] the plunging V necklines are replacing a lot of the low open backs that we have been seeing," she says. To get these looks, Lamantia suggests designers Inbal Dror and Ines Di Santo as go-to labels.

If you're looking to add a more subtle touch to your look, Abigail McGrath, general manager of **The Wedding Pavilion at Van Cleve** ([vanclevecollection.com](http://vanclevecollection.com)), suggests incorporating florals or beading. "[Opt for] floral details in headpieces and sashes and even floral prints in bridal gowns,"

says McGrath, noting designers like Sara Gabriel and Haute Bride. "Several of our designers are also incorporating a lot of clear crystals and opals into their beading—this softens the look."

At **Nicole Miller Philadelphia** ([nicolemillerphiladelphia.com](http://nicolemillerphiladelphia.com)), embellishments like jewels, lace, and netting add interest to Miller's signature bridal aesthetic: modern, simple, and body skimming. "Many of Nicole's bridal gowns are inspired by her collection—she translates that same look into her designs," says Nicole Miller Philadelphia owner Mary K. Dougherty.

"She has definitely taken her design integrity and paired it with a bride's desire to really shine at her wedding."

Kathy Bado, owner of **The Wedding Factor Boutique and Event Studio** ([theweddingfactor.com](http://theweddingfactor.com)) advises wearing a plain dress and layering in trends through accessories. "A simple, classic dress can have several different looks by adding or removing a detachable train or overskirt, a flowing cape, a dramatic bolero, or a stunning belt/sash, in addition to wearing the dress by itself." Among the season's latest trends, Bado names beading as the one to look out for. "That's huge this year, so expect more sparkle." ■



Natural-waist tulle ballgown with V neckline and embroidered illusion sleeves, **Ines Di Santo** (\$9,990). The Wedding Shoppe, Eagle Village Shops, 503 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne, 610-293-1299; [wedding-shoppe.com](http://wedding-shoppe.com)

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## BRIDAL FOOD & DRINK



## BE OUR GUEST

TOAST TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM WITH THE YEAR'S  
 HOTTEST MENU TRENDS.

BY JESSICA GREEN

A wedding is no longer a night filled with traditional fare atop fine white china. Instead, it's cuisines full of personality and a variety of flavors that steal the show and with everything from seated formal dinners to late-night candy bars, Philadelphia brides and grooms are quick to add the newest food crazes to their menus.

The biggest trend this spring is leaving your guests with a taste of the party long after it's over. "Instead of favors, we love offering a breakfast bar as guests leave," says Judy Moore, associate vice president of sales and marketing at **Garces Restaurants** ([garcesgroup.com](http://garcesgroup.com)). "After a great night

of celebrating, waking up the next morning with a to-go bag of muffins or croissants can be a great detail." Emily Hassinger, special events coordinator for **Finley Catering** (215-627-5100; [finleycatering.com](http://finleycatering.com)) agrees that couples shouldn't end the night after dessert. "The afterparty is a fun way to keep the night going," says Hassinger. "[Try] adding in a late-night breakfast buffet, ice cream sundae bars with fresh waffles, or a snack like Philly pretzels."

As for the main event, the most popular option is a seated dinner offering family-style courses. "Family-style dining is the way to go," says Moore. "It encourages communication

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INTERACTING.”—PARIS HAAS

between guests and offers more of a variety.” But for the more adventurous couple, stations deliver a unique way to add character to your day. “Mini-food stations are becoming widely popular for spring weddings,” says Paris Haas, sales manager at **Pen Ryn Estate** (*Bensalem, 215-633-0600; penrynestate.com*). “Brides love putting together a candy station or a

mini donut station for guests. You’re able to add a touch of personality and keep guests interacting.”

But Philadelphia’s catering experts all suggest that less is more. “It’s fun to include trends to excite your guests, but you don’t need to do it all,” says Moore. “Adding one trend for dinner or a wow factor—like a snack at the end—is enough.” ■



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