



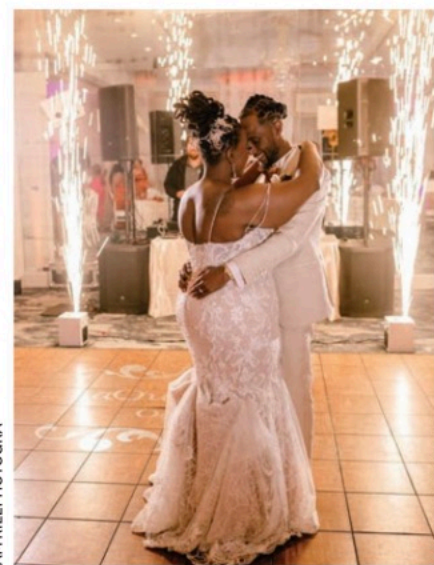
# Take It to the Max

Bigger, bolder, better-than-ever weddings

By Laurie Einstein Koszuta

**M**ove over, minimalism; maximalist weddings are taking center stage. Today's couples are stepping back from understated palettes and subtle touches in favor of dramatic and personalized statements of style that set a mood. Elements such as elaborate and lush florals, immersive lighting, dramatic entertainment, and custom-designed dance floor applications are just the beginning.

"It's about showing who you are and surprising guests with details that dazzle," says Kelly Rhodes, owner and lead planner of Southern Frills Weddings & Events in Pensacola.



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Big, bold florals paired with ornate fabrics make for ceremony centerpieces that wow.



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## Start with Florals

Florals have become the creative foundation and are no longer just for centerpieces. Now, every corner of a venue might be covered with greenery cascading from ceilings, blossoms wrapping around chandeliers, and blooms circling dance floors.

"Florals bring color, especially when linens stay neutral," adds Courtney Morgan, the director of events at SunQuest The Event Company of Santa Rosa Beach. "Flowers are versatile and impactful. We've done everything from soft blush tones with hydrangeas to bright tropicals and high-contrast hues like chartreuse."

Designers focus on layering florals at every level to draw the eye upward and outward.

Oversized flower-adorned ceremony arches, towering entrance displays, multi-tiered centerpieces, and elaborate bar arrangements create dimension and focal points.

## Let There Be Light

Lighting has evolved so that it creates a multi-sensory environment. Custom projections of starry skies or couple-specific motifs transform ceilings and walls into art.

"Lighting sets the entire vibe," Rhodes says. "We use uplighting to set the mood, pin spots on florals, dramatic overhead chandeliers, and candlelight as much as possible for true warmth." >>

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### Entertainment Worth Staying For

Entertainment is no longer simply a DJ and a playlist. String quartets and soloists are often added to accompany electronic music.

“We once built a hidden platform into the floor plan,” Rhodes recalls. “Right in the middle of dinner, a spotlight hit it, and a saxophonist rose up and started playing ‘Baby One More Time’ by Britney Spears. It wowed the head table.”

Personal expression is always on display.

“Coffee lovers may want a barista,” adds Rhodes. “One bride wanted a magician during the cocktail hour. We’ve rented a mechanical bull. The use of CO2 cannons can add energy during key moments, such as the introduction of the bridal party.”

Customized welcome bags for out-of-town guests have become increasingly elaborate, often including champagne, local food items such as pecans, hot sauce, and meat rubs, as well as lottery tickets and monogrammed favors.

“Brides love to weave in playful touches,” Morgan says. “Whether it’s a pasta-themed bash or an ice-breaker at each place setting—it’s all about adding the couple’s personality into the experience.”

Maximalism does require practical planning.

“I always tell my couples: Go big first. We can scale back,” Morgan advises. “But don’t miss out on an incredible idea just because you didn’t know it was possible.”

Maximalist weddings may be more costly, but they’re not about excess; instead, they focus on expression and design choices that create unforgettable memories. ■

Show stoppers and stunners can include live music, fireworks displays, entertainers, and more.



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