



New Jersey **bride**

New Jersey's  
Premier Bridal Magazine

## Dinner and a Show

by Linda DiProperzio

While soft background music and clinking silverware have been the usual sounds heard during dinner, a growing number of brides and grooms are opting to use the time to show their guests something they've never seen before: dinnertime entertainment. "Couples are thinking outside the box for ways to entertain their guests from the beginning to the end of the reception," says wedding planner Laura Bianco, co-owner of My Bellissima in Morristown (973-998-5817; mybellissima.com). "They want their wedding to be something people will talk about for years to come."



Scott Hornak, CEO and co-founder of Craig Scott Entertainment (866-587-1066; craigscott.com), offers the "Ovation" package to his brides and grooms who are looking to provide dinnertime entertainment. "The concept, much like a fine dinner-theater performance, can include anything from cabaret or Broadway singers/revues, as well as opera singers or even professional dancers. There's also an 'unplugged style' ensemble that can play music of contemporary artists like Coldplay or Dave Matthews," Hornak says.

When deciding on the performance, a good rule of thumb is to pick something that interests you. When Meghan and Keith Jacobson got married at the W in Hoboken in November 2009, the couple, who also met and reside in Hoboken, hired a singer to perform a medley of songs by Hoboken native Frank Sinatra. And Hornak arranged a performance from Broadway's *Spamalot*—complete with authentic costumes and performers from the show—for one couple who were super-fans of the musical.

Another idea is to select a cultural theme, says Candice Benson, owner of the Finishing Touch in Millburn (973-525-5884; thefinishingtouchevents.com). "It's a great way to honor your family and background," she says. Hornak agrees: "We've had many clients who really enjoyed incorporating their heritage into a reception by bringing in specialty singers or dancers."

Marni Halasa—who is half-Arabic—featured belly dancers at her 2008 nuptials. "People loved the colors of the costumes. Some guests had never seen a belly-dance performance and were just amazed by it," she recalls. In fact, Halasa has performed as a belly dancer at a number of weddings, and chose it for her big day because of the way it energizes the crowd. "The other half of my family is Filipino, and they're really quiet," she says. "But even they got out of their seats during the show."

Of course, couples can also use their theme as a jumping-off point in choosing dinner entertainment. Bianco planned a winter-wonderland wedding that featured an ice-skating performance (courtesy of a plastic rink set up on the dance floor). A steel-drum band would work well for a beach-themed wedding, while a couple with a whimsical theme might have a comedian on hand.

**CRAIG SCOTT  
ENTERTAINMENT**

866-587-1066

[www.craigscott.com](http://www.craigscott.com)

New Jersey • Manhattan • Westchester

