



Creating a Chic Outdoor Wedding

Outdoor weddings offer the freedom to break free from typical wedding constraints. Consider these five event design elements to create a chic outdoor wedding.

Music

Outdoor weddings commonly feature a violinist, harpist or string quartet. Innovative alternatives include steel drums, a bagpiper or piano. Think outside the box to set your wedding apart as a fun and unforgettable experience for your guests.

Furniture

Outdoor venues offer natural beauty. What most outdoor weddings do not have is a custom seating area or other indoor-like design features. Set up a cozy lounge area with several high-top cocktail tables, leather couches with plush pillows and a stone fire pit. A cigar roller or martini bar in special lounge areas adds a wow factor.

Columns, a curvy mahogany settee or chaise lounge can also be great for photo opportunities. Antiques soften the décor and heighten romantic appeal.

Action Stations

Outdoor weddings lend themselves to relaxed, elegant dining options more so than a plated dinner. Add different action stations or specialty bars for more interaction, mingling and personality.

- A Cheese & Wine Tasting Bar offers great range and personality in a wine growing area like Virginia and plays on the local food trend.
- Martini, Vodka or Bourbon Tasting Bars are very popular.
- Have an Asian Station with rice and noodle dishes, spring rolls and pan fried dumplings. Thai dishes like satay chicken, pad Thai and a dim sum station are additional options.
- Set-up a Raw Bar with oysters, sushi rolls, shrimp cocktail, crab salad and smoked salmon. Add a local touch with fresh Chesapeake Bay crab cakes, Maryland blue crabs and soft shell crabs.

Lighting

Amber or pink up-lights create an inviting warm glow and make even the simplest space stylish. Use smaller lights to highlight a few spots within your reception such as shining a gobo light with your monogram. For a bolder statement, consider dramatic, sculptural lights like large orbs, chandeliers or rows of vertical poles of light hanging from the ceiling or trees. Centerpieces filled with clear glass marbles and small battery-powered lights provide a fun, interesting glow. Votive candles and luminaries scattered throughout the wedding site especially along the top and in crevices of the stone walls and hanging with wire from trees are classic and chic.

Flowers

When outdoors among beautiful natural surroundings, I favor unexpected floral arrangements that pop and make a statement. Consider grapevines snaking through the tent, intertwined with twinkly white lights and tall green centerpieces. Bring in small trees to break up the dinner tables and wrap a trellis with vines and greenery to make your head table stand out. Several beautiful tall and slender vases with a one stem rose or a few stalks of wheat or other grasses are quite dramatic as well and easy on the budget!

Large and beautiful outdoor settings *require* less creative thought, but an innovative bride will see the bigger canvas as an opportunity for personal style and expression.

Aisle Dish is written by Meredith Thomas, Stoneleigh's in-house Event Consultant. If you would like assistance planning your special day, Meredith offers a complimentary one-hour consultation to all brides hosting their wedding at the Club and is available for further planning services at an additional fee. Contact Meredith at mthomas@stoneleighgolf.com or 540.338.4653 ext. 303.