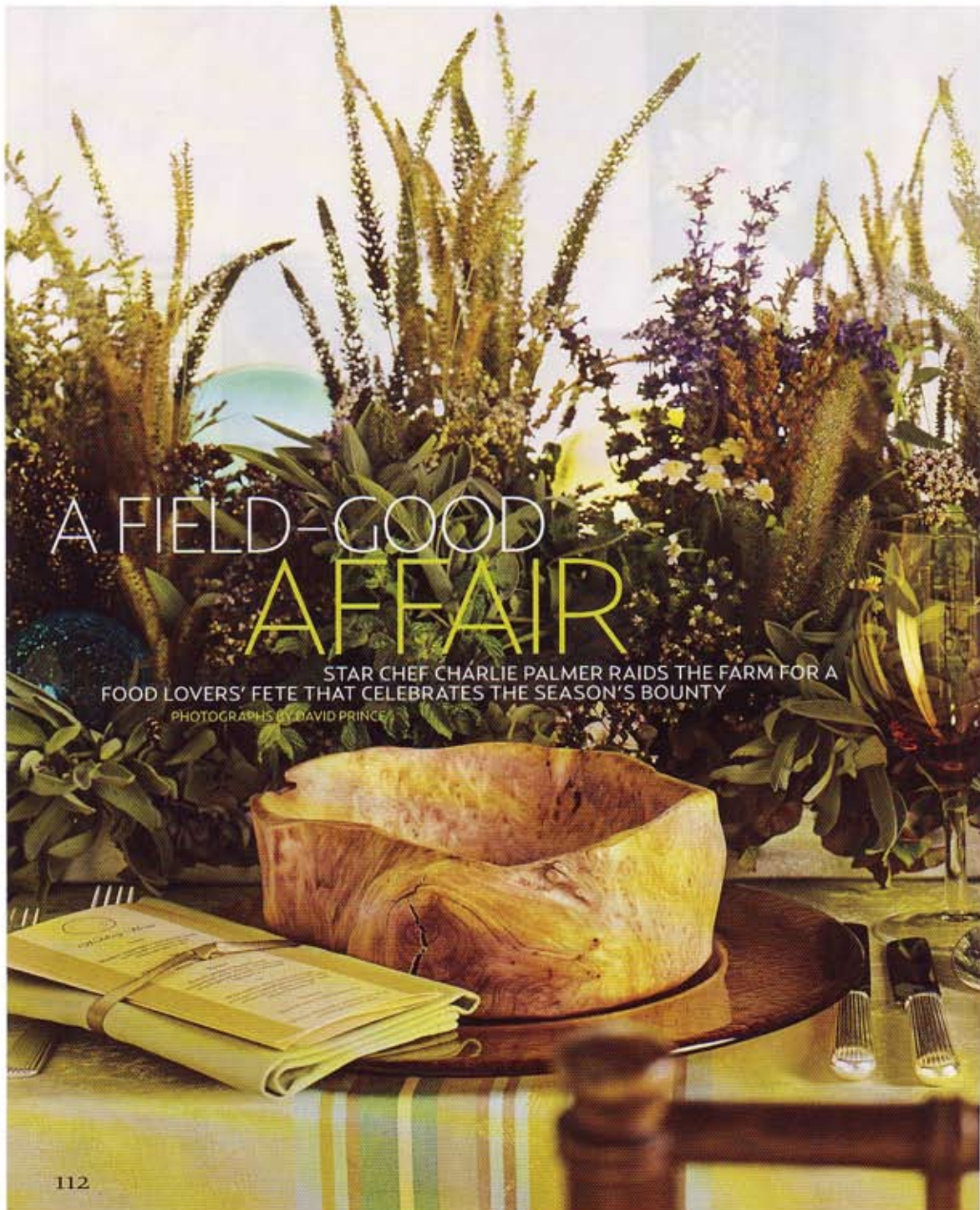


# BRIDES Receptions

SPECIAL ISSUE



## A FIELD-GOOD AFFAIR

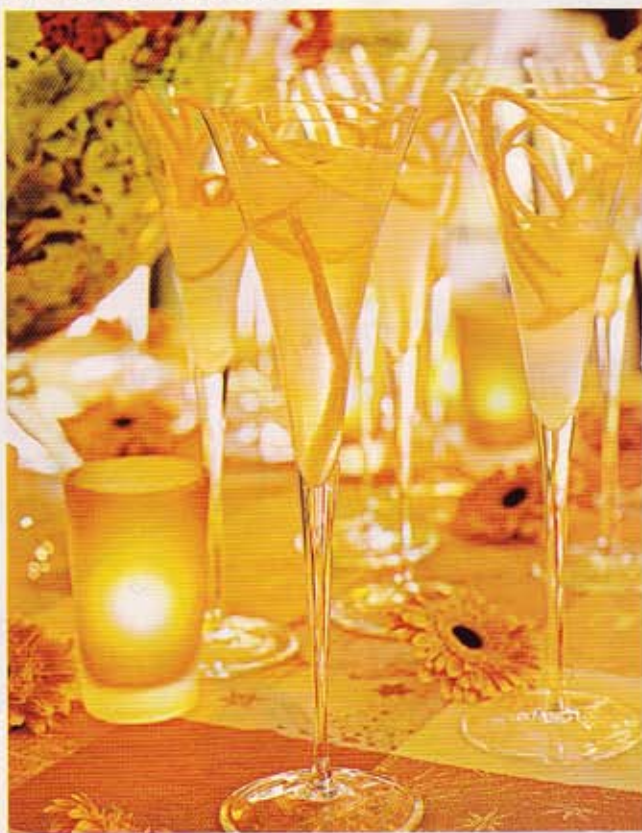
STAR CHEF CHARLIE PALMER RAIDS THE FARM FOR A  
FOOD LOVERS' FETE THAT CELEBRATES THE SEASON'S BOUNTY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID PRINCE

A photograph of a table setting. In the foreground, a silver tray with a decorative, wavy handle holds five small appetizers. Each appetizer is a square piece of bread or cracker topped with a yellow-orange spread, a small pile of diced red and orange vegetables, and a garnish of fresh green herbs. The tray is placed on a white tablecloth. In the background, a glass of beer is visible, and the overall lighting is warm and golden. The text is located in the upper right corner of the image.

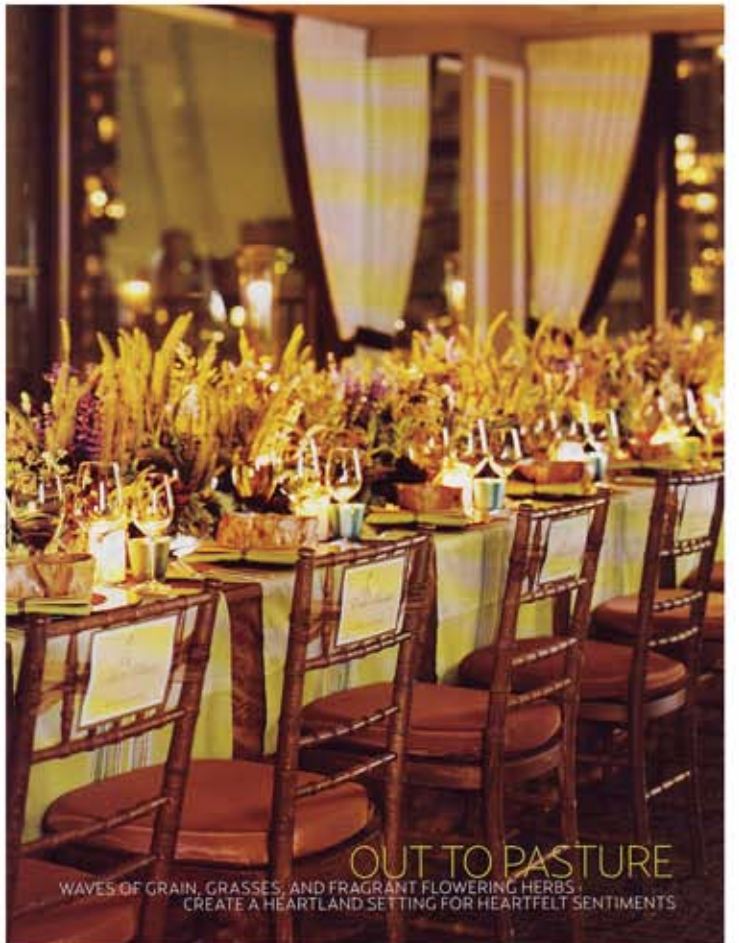
**ALPHATUREL** Gingered carrot  
flan starts the party. **OPPOSITE:**  
Herbs and grasses create the  
look of a meal in a meadow.  
Centerpiece and table decor,  
David Beahm Design. Herbs  
and grasses, The River Garden,  
Union Square Market. Menu,  
place cards, and all stationery  
throughout, Lion in the Sun.  
Runner, napkins, and all linens  
throughout, Garnier Thiebaud.

CHILEAN SEA BASS, SUSHI STATIONS, CHOCOLATE FOUNTAINS—we've come a long way from the days of dry poultry, overcooked vegetables, and wedding meals best forgotten. But for affianced foodies who would rather create gastronomic fashions than follow them, today's culinary clichés are not an option. Whatever their taste, couples who are fervent about food want the reception's spotlight to be on the meal, a succulent showcase for local ingredients raised with the utmost care. To do it right, we enlisted chef Charlie Palmer, the genius behind New York's Aureole as well as other renowned restaurants around the country—and a champion of all things fresh and artisanal—to design a farmers market-style wedding menu. Palmer, who grew up on a farm in upstate New York, obliged with deeply flavorful yet light fare that's heavy on organic and heirloom ingredients. In keeping with the theme, David Beahm, of David Beahm Design in New York, shunned traditional floral arrangements in favor of seemingly random meadow mixtures. The ceremony aisle becomes a country lane of delphinium, sunflowers, and bells of Ireland, with sheaves of wheat—a symbol of prosperity and good fortune—acting as an altar. The staff of life even graces the dinner plates. Wedding stationery is printed in butter yellow and sage. >>



#### PREPRANDIAL PERFECT

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A cool program, designed as a fan. A winning shell game: crisp oyster tacos with chile cream. Raise your glass with The Nuptial, a celebratory bubbly spiked with caraway liqueur; created by Ektoros Binikos, Aureole, NY; Enoteca flutes, Schott Zwiesel. Leafy blossoms hide the ice-cold facts beneath the Iron Horse Wedding Cuvée 2002 sparkling wine. OPPOSITE: Country comes to town for the garden ceremony.

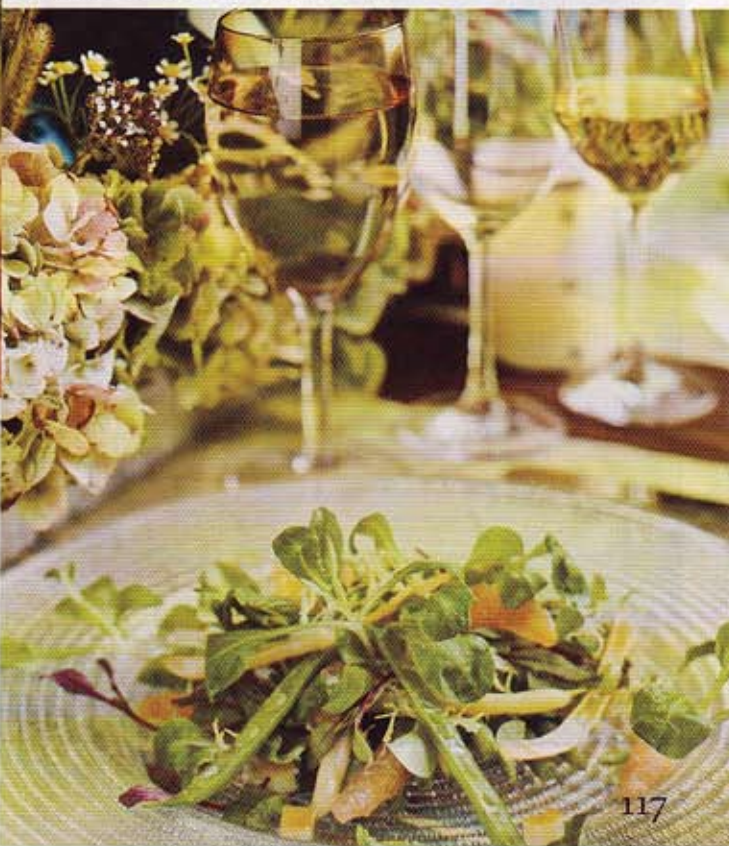


## OUT TO PASTURE

WAVES OF GRAIN, GRASSES, AND FRAGRANT FLOWERING HERBS  
CREATE A HEARTLAND SETTING FOR HEARTFELT SENTIMENTS



the colors of wheat, an apt tribute to sustenance in a celebration focusing on food. After sipping sparkling wine spiked with Grand Marnier and caraway liqueur, guests move on to a long communal table with a “runner” of grasses and flowering herbs, catching glimpses of glass orbs down the center. Market asparagus and sorrel soup with Chesapeake crab is paired with a white Viognier. After a refreshing organic mâche mint salad is paired with blue lake beans and citrus vinaigrette, Palmer offers his spin on surf and turf. The sea is represented by wild arctic char over cabbage-wrapped vegetables, drizzled with ice-wine vinegar and Meyer lemon oil. “It accents the char’s flavor—it doesn’t cover it up,” he says. The wine: a Chardonnay with just the right acidity, from Palmer’s private label, International Sommelier Conspiracy. And the meat of the meal? Pepper-seared beef tenderloin, from Painted Hills Natural Beef, a consortium of ranchers in Oregon and Montana. Underneath lies a bed of jewel potatoes—“no bigger than a quarter”—with rosemary-infused jus. “There’s no cream or butter,” says Palmer. “Very gardenlike.” The entree, partnered with Arietta Variation One, a blend of merlot and syrah, is followed by dessert, small strawberry-swirl cheesecakes in white chocolate cups arranged in wedding-cake tiers. As an encore, Palmer sends guests home with a sweet rosemary bread, along with its recipe. “They can have it with their coffee the next morning. It’s a reminder of how nice the night was.” Nice indeed.



**EASY BEING GREEN** CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A trifold menu in farm-fresh hues includes a recipe for the edible favor. Mâche and mint salad has a just-picked-from-the-garden appeal; glass charger, Fortessa. Artisanal allure: A hand-carved bowlful of asparagus soup. OPPOSITE: Fruitwood reception chairs with bengaline cushions in a color called “honey bear” tie in the earthy theme; Party Rental Ltd. Striped runners anchor each place setting, illuminated by frosted blue and green votives.

## HOW TO SCORE THIS STYLE

>> We're not leading you down the garden path when we tell you that you can create ceremony decor like ours by shopping at a farmers market. That's what designer David Beahm did. Herbal arrangements are trickier. "Herbs are so delicate," he says. "You have to know how to keep them alive." He also warns against using medicinal herbs that, while beautiful, can be anathema to the allergy prone. Beahm's advice: Ask your florist to work with local herb farmers to capture that wild, sprouting-by-the-roadside look.

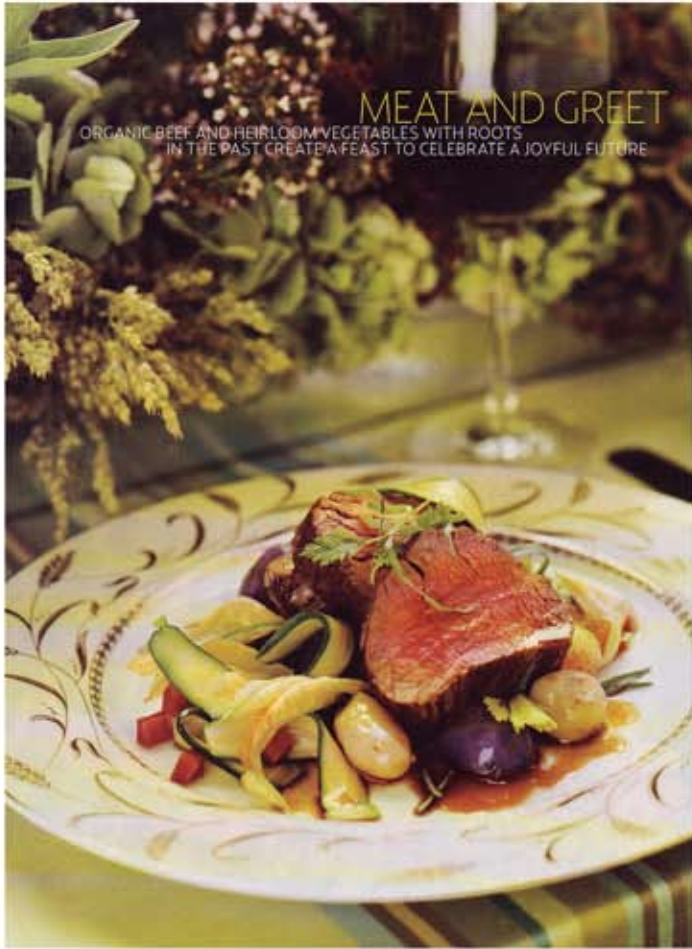
>> Add prosaic touches by supplementing rentals with handmade, even one-of-a-kind, serving pieces and ornamentation. Such specialty items will become a lasting memory of the day.

>> Choose a decorative icon from nature—like wheat—to embody your theme, then work it. Besides appearing on all your stationery, it can lend its color, texture, even flavor to other elements of your wedding.



### EARTH DAY

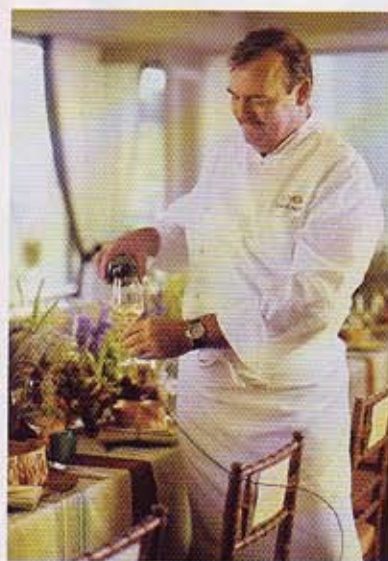
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Place cards attached to chairs sprout the clever wedding motif, a stalk of wheat. Toast the couple and encourage a kiss with a basil-peach Smoochie; guests stir diced fruit into the drink, then use the spoon for traditional clinking. Rosemary, a symbol of fidelity and love, infuses simple dinner rolls. OPPOSITE: Jewel potatoes and garden vegetables accompany pepper-seared beef tenderloin in rosemary red-wine sauce; Harvest Gold dinner plate, Party Rental Ltd.





#### SWEET ENDINGS CLOCKWISE

**FROM LEFT:** A glass urn turned wish jar, a stylish alternative to the guest books. Chef Charlie Palmer, creator of high-profile restaurants around the country, pours the wine at Astra, in New York. Rosemary tea bread, a take-home treat for guests to have with tomorrow's breakfast. **OPPOSITE:** Tiers of white chocolate strawberry-swirl cheesecake, decorated with a cascade of hydrangeas, cymbidium orchids, oregano florets, and bear grass, replace the traditional wedding cake tower. For all details and recipes, turn to Resource Guide.



#### CATERING TO THE PALATE

>> If you're passionate about food, don't be afraid to approach your favorite chef about preparing your wedding meal. Even if he doesn't typically take on work outside the restaurant, he might oblige. "I know chefs who don't have catering companies but have done weddings because a relationship has been established," says Charlie Palmer. That means becoming a restaurant regular, then asking to meet the chef. Chances are he'll say yes when you pop the question.

>> Still feeling intimidated? "Food is the great equalizer," Palmer says. Convey what you love to eat and what you envision for the wedding and "you'll find most chefs will open up right away."

>> When it comes to choosing wines, Palmer urges couples to tap the pairing skills of the chef and his sommeliers. "And don't assume that the wines they provide carry astronomical price tags. Sommeliers can suggest great 'food wines' at reasonable prices," he says.

>> To spare yourself disappointment, ask the chef up-front who will be cooking at the wedding. Even if he can't be there, says Palmer, the results will be duplicated by anyone else he appoints. "With any high-profile chef, it's all about the people who work for him. The team will be great." And so will your reception!

