

Love Lights

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By John Woods, Enhanced Lighting & Sound

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When enhanced lighting is used to brighten a special occasion, it also brightens the experience of the event for everyone at the wedding—just as your love lights up your life. In the same way that a photographer accentuates the bride's beauty with lighting, you can beautify your wedding and reception with light.

Lighting is the innovative decorating device that's converting garages into intimate jazz bar scenes and warehouse spaces into sophisticated settings. It acts as "makeup" for your venue, highlighting its strengths and downplaying any flaws, and is the single most important element for mood, atmosphere, and room transformation. Lights make the difference between a nice event and a spectacular one, but many people have yet to learn what the options are and how affordable lighting can be. The use of custom lighting at weddings and parties is on the rise, due in part to its ability to change the look and décor of any kind of room, from a drab recreation hall to the finest, most architecturally pleasing venues. Backyards become Chinese tea rooms, a town meeting room goes from a blah rectangle to a tropical paradise . . . the creative options are endless.

Once reserved for upscale events like the Emmys, the Black and White Ball and celebrity weddings, lighting is now much more accessible for today's bride and should therefore be an important consideration in the planning of her most important day. So what should a couple consider? Think about the flow of your event and what you want highlighted beyond your vows, the ring exchange and the kiss. Do you want a head table, and will special lighting designate it better than just placing a big rectangular table at the head of the room? Do you want your cake to be a showpiece? Spot lighting will draw the guests' eyes. Does your venue include something striking that you'd like noticed—or concealed? What mood do you want to set as guests enter, while they dance, as speeches are given? All these considerations can be addressed with lights. You can really design your entire event with lights, including as many features as your heart and budget will allow.

Lighting is mood-altering. "Starry, Starry Night" need not only be a Van Gogh painting; it can be the star-filled sky projected onto the ceiling of your reception ballroom. If you are having an outdoor reception, light can create the illusion of dancing in the moonlight with elegant lanterns, string lights and beautiful chandeliers. By using the architecture already present in the landscape, magical lighting can be strung above the dance floor or from the branches of trees to illuminate the gardens, and the structural design of the estate can be illuminated to beautify your outdoor setting.

Indoors, a foundation wash across the head table or a beautiful pattern projection on the dance floor lights the reception room as guests enter. Lighting can also transform tent interiors from a stark white canvas to warm and stunning visual impressions.

A simple spotlight on your cake will bring it to life, highlighting it from across a crowded room. You can also create ambience and elegance when your guests sit down to dinner, so that the bride is not the only one who's aglow. Spotlighting your floral centerpieces will bring out their colors and cast a lovely glow around each table, as their beauty warms the hearts of your guests. Coloring the dance floor with lights will welcome everyone to dance the night away, and you can also personalize your event with custom projections such as your monogram shining onto the dance floor.

Use lighting to make your event exciting, sophisticated, and full of all the sparkle you can imagine. If you want the top of the line, consider intelligent or LED lighting. That's right, lights with a brain! LED lighting has color-changing capabilities to let you transition from dinner to dancing with quiet drama. Light up your band to showcase them, and match the lights to their music. Watch your guests fill the floor as lights dance and color them, triggered by their movement and the beat of the band. And when you add the spark of a spotlight to the first dance, you'll create a stunning, shimmering effect for your guests to behold that no one present will ever forget.