



LOS ANGELES

## A LABOR OF LOVE

Celebrity event planner Stefanie Cove—Gwyneth Paltrow and Molly Sims, to name a couple, have relied on her expertise—offers advice on the hot places and trends for 2017 and the one thing you shouldn't overlook.

BY ABIGAIL STONE

If L.A.-based wedding planner Stefanie Cove ([stefaniecove.com](http://stefaniecove.com)) hadn't ended up in hospitality, she would have been an undercover FBI agent. It makes sense. Both jobs demand attention to detail, meticulous follow-through and an understanding of human psychology. Three months into heading out on her own, Cove has already captained events in Italy; Anguilla; Aspen, Colo.; and the Bahamas, as well as up and down the coast of California. Here, she shares some thoughts, trendspotting and memories with us.

**What are some design and party trends for 2017?** Farm is out. Keeping it simple and letting the details naturally reflect the people involved is in. Monochromatic arrangements using different species to add texture and layers is also in, although people are staying away from all-white. People really want their weddings to feel like a chic dinner party, very effortless and personal with ambient lighting. Napkin rings in colors such as mauve are making a comeback in lieu of napkin 'treatments.'



From top: A beach wedding in Harbour Island, Bahamas; a Boston ballroom reception oozes elegance.

**What are some places to consider if you're planning a destination party or a wedding?** Harbour Island in the Bahamas. In Mexico, there's Costa Careyes, Hotel Esencia in Tulum, and the Imanta in Punta de Mita. The newly renovated Four Seasons [Resort] Lanai [in] Hawaii and the Malliouhana in Anguilla. I love Italy—Tuscany, Lake Como. And I'm dying to do a wedding in Zanzibar.

**What's some advice for couples planning their own party?** Set your budget first. It's your roadmap. Then book your band and photographer. The good ones tend to book up early. Depending on the couple, the venue, the food and the entertainment are the most important. And definitely hire someone to help you the day of.

**What is something people forget about when they're planning a wedding?** Rentals. I think couples forget how much they can cost.

**What's the secret for keeping everyone calm on the big day?** The most important thing is that my clients not have to do anything. You don't want to think about the details. You should only worry about the family stuff that I can't take care of.

**Any recommendations for a wedding song?** I like when people do something personal, but not mainstream—like Leon Bridges.

**Do you have a favorite wedding moment you can share?** There was a wedding where I synchronized a special song to the fireworks, and the timing worked out and the display was insane! The energy it created was perfect for buildup. From that moment on, the dancing never stopped until the very early hours the next morning.

**How much is your job like a movie?** It's not at all as glamorous. Except for the earpieces. We do use those.

**What would your wedding be like?** It would probably be a big party on an island somewhere, very untraditional, no big white dress, just really fun with everyone I love together—shoes off. And my rescue dogs, Wilbur and Walter, would definitely be there.

**What do you like best about wedding planning?** Every wedding is different, so my life is always an adventure.



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