

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
CELEBRITY
WEDDING
PLANNER

Worldwide Wedding Planner Extraordinaire

SCOTT CORRIDAN

Creates Celebrity Style Weddings for All

by Kathryn Bechen



Whether you're seeking a multi-million dollar wedding extravaganza for many guests from all around the world, or a \$35,000 intimate family wedding at a luxury resort, Scott Corridan, wedding & event planner extraordinaire, is the go-to guy to pull it off.

In just 12 short years, the Santa Barbara, California based *Corridan & Company Design*, which includes Corridan, a staff of four, one intern, and multiple vendors, has risen to a worldwide pinnacle of wedding and event planner success. Clients include celebrities such as Priscilla Presley, Marcia Cross, Lily Tomlin, Zainab Salbi, and the fashion houses of Stella McGraw, Chloe, and Diane Von Furstenberg.

But whether he's working with a top level celebrity, or an unknown, Corridan said he treats all of his clients the same way: with respect. And what he focuses on most for every bride and groom is capturing the special essence of their own personal story.

"I interview the bride and groom extensively to find out what it is that makes each couple unique and spectacular, and then we build a total experience around their personal story," Corridan said. "And when we've done our job well, that means I have embraced the client's wishes and what they communicated to us from their heart. When we see them respond positively emotionally, we know we've done our job beyond their wildest dreams."

Corridan's wedding and event planning service got its start in Santa Barbara when he transitioned from his background in architectural drafting and site management to designing a satellite flower shop storefront in Montecito, which won him a design award. He had so much fun during the process that he decided to go into floral design. He laughs that the first boutonniere he designed took him about seven hours.

"I think it was good that I had no formal floral design training," he said, "because I had no preconceived notions." Consequently, Corridan later rose above a competitive field of the nation's best floral and event designers to be featured in *Wedding Style* magazine 2004, Grace Ormond's yearly award winning wedding planning resource.

Corridan & Company Design produces between 12 and 16 customized weddings a year and each one takes from approximately 9 to 12 months to plan. With all the details and number of vendors involved, attention to detail and good organization are key, and Corridan himself oversees every nuance because he takes pride in providing stellar customer service.

Both the bride and groom are always involved in the planning process, and Corridan said that, both contractually and legally,

they are the ones that need to be happy with their wedding plans. While he does consider input from parents and others if the bride and groom want their input, he says that no matter what history and tradition tell us, the bride and groom are the clients and, at the end of the day, what they want is what counts. "I do realize my viewpoint about this is controversial," he said, "but I don't veer from that policy."

Even with astute attention to detail, Corridan said having a good sense of humor while planning a wedding is both valuable and necessary. "We tell clients at the beginning that this is a temporary event that is going to last five to seven hours and given the nature of all the details involved there will inevitably be changes that occur along the way," he said. "But unless it's serious, we can handle it behind the scenes and the bride and groom don't even have to be involved."

Corridan said the funniest thing that ever happened was when they created a beautiful natural arch made of curly willow for a park wedding and the groom's Labrador retriever, who was the ring bearer, thought the arch was something from a pond. He raced down the aisle, totally destroying the arches. "The guests were laughing so hard they were rolling in the aisles, and he was running amok with the rings still on his collar," Corridan laughed.

"Another time we lost a guest who had flown over here from the Czech Republic and didn't speak English," Corridan said. "He was stuck in customs at the L.A. airport and, with picking up so many people, we didn't realize he wasn't with us. And he didn't have our contact information so he was missing for about an hour and a half," he said. "But you just deal with things like this, and we didn't tell the bride until later. By then, she thought it was funny."

Corridan also plans foreign and American destination weddings for clients. "Foreign weddings are difficult due to travel expense, because your dollar is often devalued and doing business in a foreign country can be tricky. The wedding almost



turns into a phenomenal dinner party in an amazing overseas location,” he said. “Destination weddings in the U.S. are really fun, and it’s easier to do business here.”

Although Corridan does weddings of every size and budget, he fondly remembers producing and orchestrating the largest event of his career. The three-day holiday extravaganza for around 200 guests with a cost of \$1.7 million dollars. Guests were flown in from all over the world and put up in four and five star hotels. “Everything was custom-made and beautifully presented,” he said. “The invitations alone cost \$40,000 and were delivered in custom-decorated boxes. The bride’s dress was a couture label requiring the dress designer’s permission to add another \$7,000 of embellishments by the mother-of-the-bride to the design,” he said. “And the groom’s wardrobe was a couture label as well.” For entertainment, five different groups performed music, including a 48-boy choir, a six-person female major pop star backup chorus, a modified full orchestra, and strolling musicians.

Corridan also writes and speaks on the subject of wedding and event planning. *Scott’s Garden* is his “Andy Rooney style” wedding magazine column, and he currently has four books in progress: *Santa Barbara Entertaining Wedding Style*, *Santa Barbara Entertaining Celebrity Style*, *Santa Barbara Entertaining Galas*, and *Santa Barbara Entertaining Details*.

“Twenty six couples have given their permission to show their weddings in the books so that readers can get ideas and do it themselves,” Corridan said. He said the books will also help charitable causes. “It’s important to me that the books make money for charity,” he said. “My brother has diabetes, so one of the titles will help establish a fund for kids with diabetes, and another title will be used to create a memorial fund in honor of my godmother, Shelley Mae Withey, who died of cervical and uterine cancer.”

Corridan said that in addition to weddings, special events charities are also close to his heart. He has worked closely

with Priscilla Presley on the *Dream Foundation*, which is the only national non-profit dedicated to adults’ last wishes for those who are dealing with terminal illness. He produces the First Ladies Luncheon pro bono each year, which attracts around 700 women. Last year, the event brought in around \$350,000. Another charity he works with is Canine Companions, which assists the blind, deaf, and disabled.

When asked about the advantage of hiring a wedding planner instead of doing it yourself, Corridan quickly replied, “By hiring a planner, the bride and groom get to be a guest at their own wedding and enjoy it,” he said. “They can simply let go and celebrate!”

And that’s what really makes him happiest about his work. ❁

SCOTT’S TOP TIPS for a Star-Studded Wedding

- ❁ Hire a wedding planner you respect professionally.
- ❁ Allow 9-12 months for planning.
- ❁ Capture your personal story to create a memorable experience.
- ❁ Choose colors that you love, not what’s trendy.
- ❁ Weave your story into the flowers, cake, and décor.
- ❁ Keep a sense of humor throughout the process.
- ❁ Relax and enjoy!