

WED DOSSIER

· now! ·

Organically grown buds from Larkspur make for smart centerpieces.



Petal Pusher

Much to the delight of bees, butterflies and brides, Larkspur, the Bucktown studio for pretty petals, is always in full bloom. We particularly love owner Beth Barnett's organically grown blossoms from her 20-acre farm in Buchanan, Michigan. She and her husband planted 50 types of flowers last season! Translation? Their act of greenness incurs no shipping fees, so there's less damage to the environment and your big-day budget. 2123 N. Damen Ave., 773.489.2898, larkspurchicago.com. —Margaret Mathis



Vwidon's new River North showroom.

It Takes Two

You have the ring, now you need the dress. And not just any dress... *the* dress. If you're more urbane than a Disney princess, look no further than Vwidon by Carla Hwang and Kenneth Park. The husband-and-wife team launched its first bridal collection in 2001. Now with a new appointment-only showroom in River North—3,500 square feet of clean, white space that's as modern as the gowns that line the wall—they are at the top of their game. So what's on the design horizon for 2010? Hwang says, "more sheer materials and handcrafted details worked into super-slender silhouettes." Sleek and chic—we like. 360 W. Superior St., 312.654.9078, vwidon.com. —Vicki Crain



Left: Bill Brennan (right) and *American Idol* season one star Jim Verraros jumping for joy on their big day in Oak Brook. Below: The couple's cool bar by Nadeau's Ice Sculptures.



Holy Matrimony!

Fresh off their two-week honeymoon to Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora—with a quick pit stop in L.A. for a No H8 Campaign photo shoot—Jim Verraros and Bill Brennan were still giddy with excitement from their September wedding at the Oak Brook Hills Resort. We're not surprised considering the happy couple: Verraros is a season one *American Idol* contestant and Brennan is the president/owner of Bridal Expo Chicago. Although same-sex marriage isn't legal in Illinois, that didn't stop these two from going all out to show their love with a 175-person fête (think towering flower arrangements, a unity sand ceremony and a six-tier vanilla and passion fruit cake).

The way the pair first met was quite modern—Brennan, 42, reached out to Verraros, 26, a Crystal Lake native, through MySpace ("I had 50 friends and he had about 10,000," says Brennan). But in a nod to Verraros' showbiz background, their wedding was traditional in terms of the décor, incorporating lots of Old Hollywood elements like a 10-foot Art Deco ice sculpture bar and gilded chandeliers. So after it was all said and done, was there anything they would have changed? Not a thing, says Brennan, adding it was the most perfect wedding they could have imagined. Verraros had only one complaint: "I wish it had lasted longer! But for two gay men throwing a little bash, it wasn't half bad. We continued the celebration when we went to Iowa to make our marriage official." —Lisa Shames

WEDDING PLANNER:
Just Say Yes Events

CATERER: Oak Brook Hills Resorts

INVITATIONS:
Designed By You

FLOWERS:
Anthony Gowder Designs

LIGHTING:
Spinnin' Discs Entertainment

MUSIC:
Stu Hirsh Orchestra

CAKE:
Oak Mill Bakery

TUXEDOS:
Ermenegildo Zegna

BOW TIES:
Tom Ford

SHOES:
Christian Dior



AISLE FILE

► **BLING BUZZ:** David Yurman's new Bridal collection, the jewelry designer's first foray into wedding-specific pieces, boasts exclusive engagement rings, diamond eternity bands and wedding rings in platinum and 18K gold. Mikimoto has launched its new Classic Blue collection. The sapphire, diamond and pearl drop earrings are the ultimate "something blue." The Be My Bride collection from Northbrook's newest bijoux hotspot, TZEN Jewelry Boutique, features free-flowing stunners playful brides will love. ► **IN FASHION NEWS:** Bella Bridal in St. Charles is celebrating its five-year

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