

Choir

“There’s nothing like a choir to elevate a scene to an ethereal level. Whether it’s gospel, children, or amateurs, it just touches the soul.”

ANN KLINE, MUSIC SUPERVISOR FOR FILM AND TV

As well as adding atmosphere, if you’re getting married in a church, a choir will make hymns sound great, says Joanna Stephens, founder of Canti d’Amore wedding choir. “People feel free to sing if there is a good strong choir leading the way.”

DO make sure the choir can fill the space and they’re comfortable with the music. You need at least eight people in a huge church, says Stephens.

DO check sound systems. In a small space, overmiked singers are painful.

DO YOU WANT . . .

- A canopy that shelters just you and the rabbi, or your family, too?
- A handheld chuppah or the presence of a freestanding one?

Chuppah The chuppah is a canopy that a Jewish wedding is performed under. “It represents the home you’ll build together. In its simplest and most traditional form, it’s a tallith, a prayer shawl, attached at corners to four branches,” says Andrea Cohen, owner of Chuppah Studio.

ARE THERE ANY RULES? “It must have four vertical poles, be open on all four sides, and covered on the top,” says Cohen. Beyond that, the design is open to a modern interpretation.

Cocktails Cocktails are the perfect wedding drink, says Tony Abou-Gamin, author of *The Modern Mixologist*.

“Cocktails make experiences, bond friendships, establish traditions, and celebrate memories.”

PROBLEM You think your guests will be blitzed before they even get to the meal. They’re not good at moderation.

SOLUTION “Serve lower-proof spirits. Don’t only serve spirit-only drinks like martinis and Manhattans. Punch can be softened so the alcohol is present but fresh citrus juices, tea, water, and carbonated soda make up the majority of the drink.”

KEEPING EVERYONE HAPPY “Look for drinks that can be made in batches and finished to order; that are easy, not overly alcoholic, memorable, and lots of fun.”

French 75: Gin, fresh lemon juice, simple syrup, and Champagne. It’s refreshing, and easy to make in bulk.

Punch: There’s nothing more festive than a punch bowl. I’m not talking about an Everclear, Kool-Aid, and lime sherbet punch, but a well thought-out and balanced classic punch.

Sangria: Use white or rosé in the spring and summer, red or sparkling in the fall and winter. Also, celebrate the fresh fruits and juices of the season.

And remember, don’t leave out the nondrinkers; give as much thought to a nonalcoholic cocktail or two as you do to the heavy-hitters. And kids always love them.

Q Can you do cocktails on a budget?

A “Absolutely. Focus on doing less and doing it the best you can. You can find good value, especially vodka, rum, and American whiskey. Find three or four cocktails that can be easily fashioned from each spirit.”

—Tony Abou-Ganim