

The Official  
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of the IADWP

# ÉPICA

WEDDINGS & EVENTS

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## Argentine Design

Luis Guerra

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## Editor's Note

September 2025 | By Adrián Pavía

Director of ÉPICA | Director of IADWP Latin America  
& Spanish-Speaking Caribbean Chapter

September has arrived, and with it, one of the most anticipated moments of the year. In a matter of days, Querétaro will transform into the epicenter of the wedding and event industry with the celebration of the **LAT Wedding Congress**, a gathering that will mark a milestone not only for its magnitude but also for the spirit that envelops it: learning, inspiration, celebration, and community.

The congress will be a space where ideas, experiences, and visions converge. During the sessions, we will have the privilege of hearing from **world-class speakers**, true industry leaders who invite us to reflect on the present

and future of our field. This year, we will feature inspiring voices such as **Diana Sandoval, Fallon Carter, Teddy Manuel, Lucero Álvarez, Andrew Leavitt, Fernanda Díaz, Eddie Zaratsian, Sandra Alas, Jeffrey Cervantes, Ytzell Delgado, Mariana Guerrero, Lu Botello, Laini Reeves, Pablo Galván, Yaniris Pérez, DJ Alan Jaziel, Ilse Diamant, Paula Abreu, Luchy Ramírez, Romana Pereira, Vanessa Mayorga, Mario Ayala y Claudia Saldaña**. Each will bring a unique vision that will make this congress a true melting pot of knowledge and creativity.

And when the sun sets over Querétaro, the time for magic will arrive: **the themed parties**. Authentic celebrations that will honor the creativity of our community. Because if there is one thing we know how to do well, it is to bring to life experiences that transcend the ordinary. These nights will be an explosion of color, music, and energy, designed to surprise, to entertain, and to forge friendships built beyond business.

The culminating point will undoubtedly be the **ÉPICA Awards gala**. A night where the lights turn on to recognize the best of the best, where the effort and dedication of so many colleagues shine with their own names. Because these awards are not mere statuettes; they are



symbols of a journey taken, of sleepless nights, of passionate teams, of creativity that breaks molds, and of hearts that beat for the same cause.

In this edition, the categories that fill us with pride are:

- ⊗ *Épica Wedding Planner of the Year*
- ⊗ *Épica Lifetime Achievement in Weddings*
- ⊗ *Épica Destination Ambassador*
- ⊗ *Épica Innovation in Event Technology*
- ⊗ *Épica Newcomer of the Year*
- ⊗ *Épica Diversity and Love Without Borders*
- ⊗ *Épica Ambiance and Styling*
- ⊗ *Épica Sustainability in Events*
- ⊗ *Épica Multicultural Experience*
- ⊗ *Épica Content Inspiration*
- ⊗ *Épica Videographer of the Year*
- ⊗ *Épica Photographer of the Year*

This year, we also reinforce our commitment to sustainability through unique initiatives that remind us that great changes begin with small gestures. One of these is the Literary Exchange, a space to trade books, share inspiring stories, and connect with others through sensitivity and knowledge.

Another novelty that fills us with pride is the **IADWP Vintage Concept Store**, a proposal that promotes circular fashion within our industry. For its inauguration, we will have a symbolic gesture: **Kitzia Morales**, president of IADWP, will donate the **Benito Santos-designed dress she wore at the opening of the LAT Congress in Guadalajara in 2019**. An iconic garment that paves the way for all of us to contribute to this virtuous circle of sharing, reusing, and giving new life.



None of this would be possible without the commitment of each member of the association, whose effort, creativity, and collaborative spirit have enabled our community to experience exponential growth.

Querétaro will be the stage where paths cross, where hugs are shared, and where achievements are celebrated, but it will also be the starting point for what is to come. Because every congress, every party, every award is not an end but a beginning: the beginning of more collaborations, more learning, and more dreams that come true.

In these pages of ÉPICA, we celebrate all of that: the passion, the effort, the excellence, and above all, the community. Because what truly makes us great is not what we achieve individually, but what we are capable of building together.

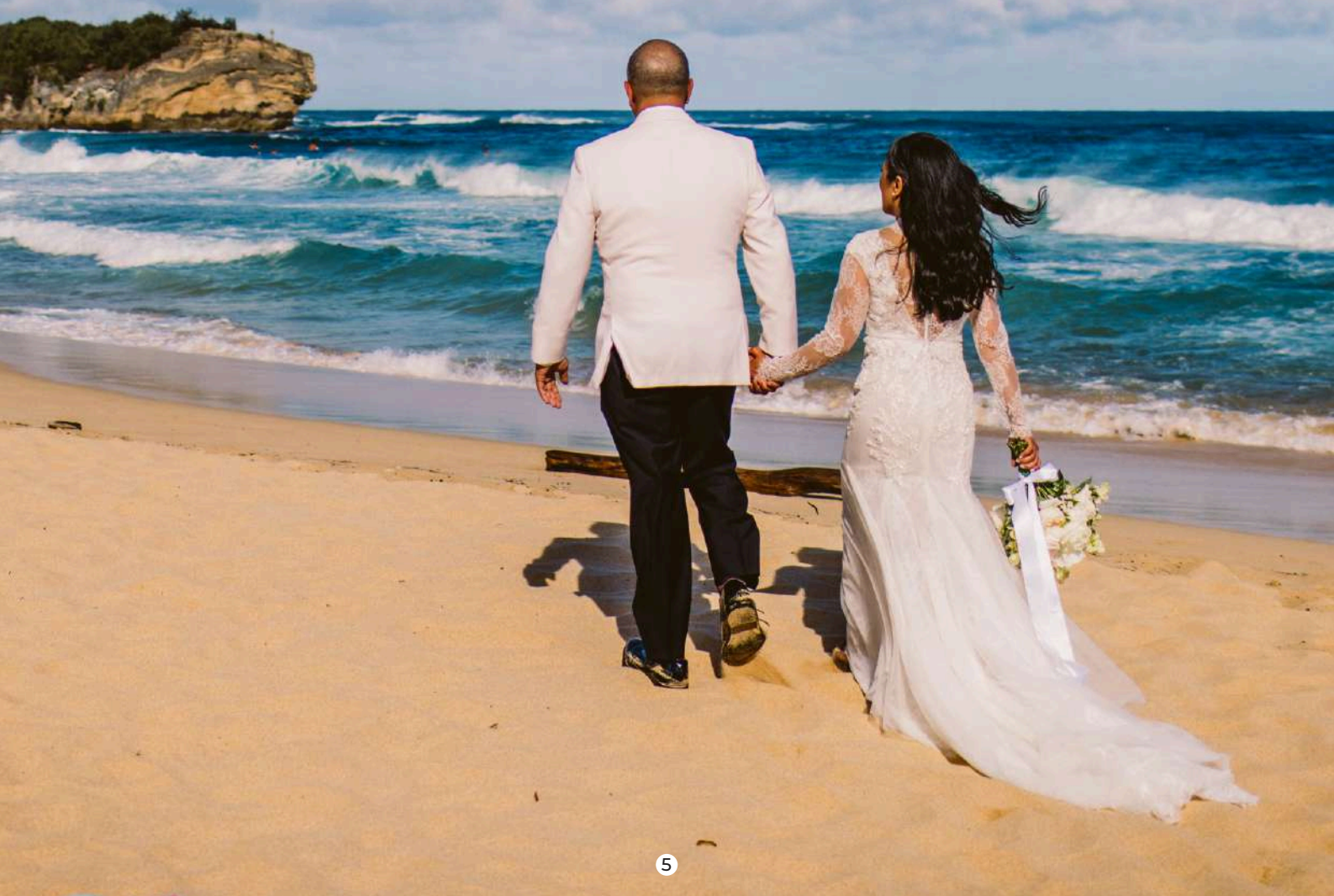
Today, we look to the future with the certainty that the best is yet to come. And we will do so, as always, by writing this story in capital letters: an ÉPICA story.

  
Adrián Pavía

Director of ÉPICA | Director of IADWP Latin America  
& Spanish-Speaking Caribbean Chapter

# Hawaiian Romance

A Wedding and Travel Guide  
from a Destination Specialist





Whether you are traveling from the mainland United States or from Latin America for the first time, Hawai'i is as exotic as it is accessible. It is a place where your wedding can seamlessly blend into your honeymoon, and where your guests take home not just photographs, but memories steeped in culture, gastronomy, and the true meaning of ohana—family.

## Why Hawai'i Captures the Heart

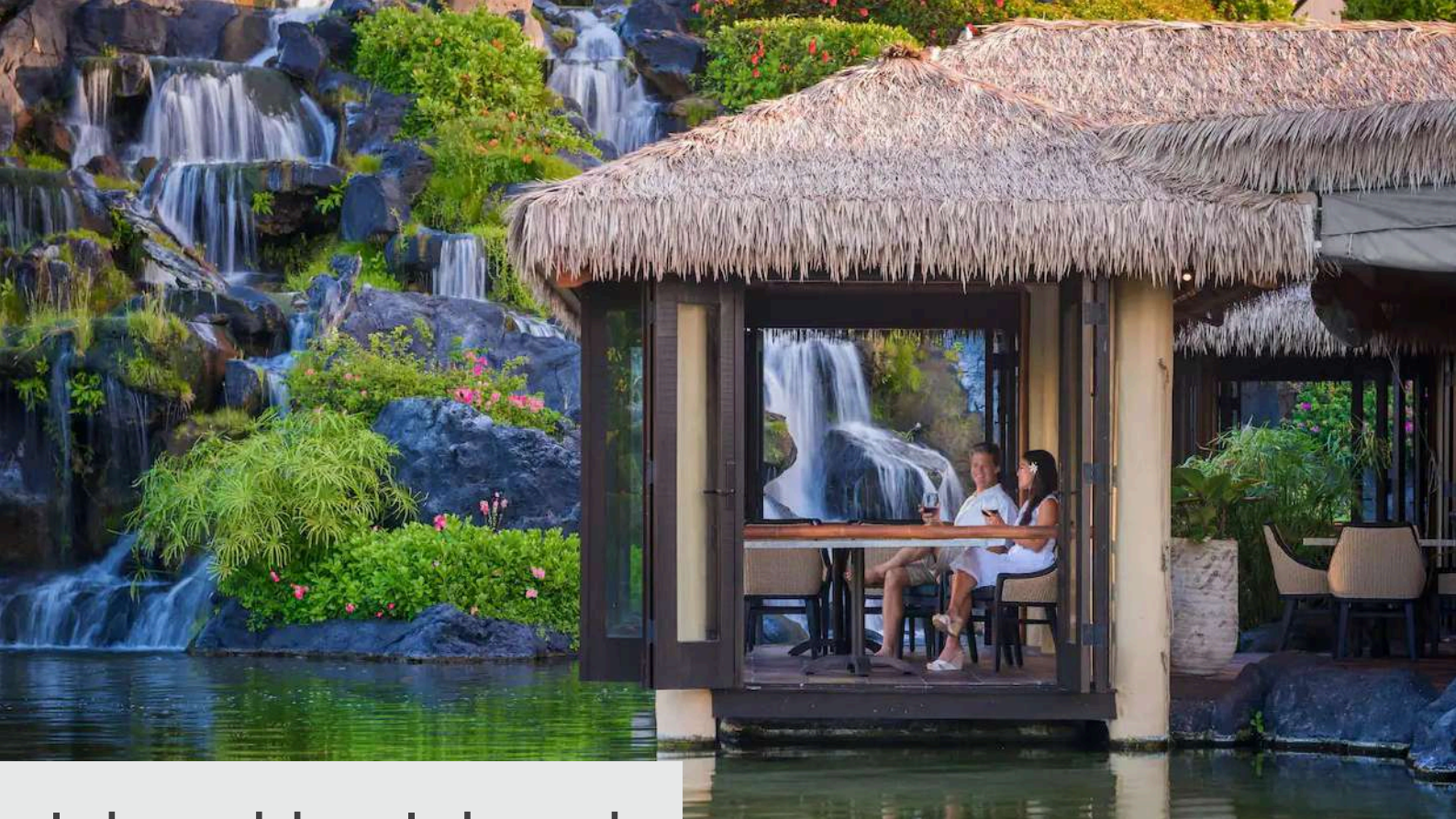
Hawai'i is the only U.S. state made up entirely of islands, and each one has its own personality. It's easy to fall in love with its beaches, but what makes you return is the connection: the way locals greet you with aloha (love, compassion, peace), say mahalo (thank you) with sincerity, and invite you to experience their home with respect and joy.

For the Latin American traveler, Hawai'i combines the warmth of familiar hospitality with the thrill of discovering new landscapes, traditions, and flavors. With direct flights from several major cities, getting there is simpler than you might imagine, and once you arrive, everything feels like a tropical dream.

There is a moment in Hawai'i, just before sunset, when the ocean turns golden like molten metal and the air fills with the scent of plumeria. The breeze is warm, the waves are gentle, and you understand why so many couples cross oceans to say "I do" here.

For me, Hawai'i is more than a destination; it is a living love story. As a wedding planner and travel advisor who has designed unforgettable celebrations on several islands, especially O'ahu and Kaua'i, I have witnessed how Hawai'i transforms a wedding into something cinematic. The setting is not just beautiful; it is alive with culture, flavor, and the spirit of aloha.





# Island by Island: The Perfect Setting for Your Wedding

## O'ahu – The Gathering Place

O'ahu is where sophistication meets surf culture. Honolulu is home to world-class resorts, terraces with spectacular views, and high-level gastronomy that rivals any international city. To the north, the North Shore offers a more relaxed atmosphere, ideal for ceremonies on exclusive beachfront properties. I have planned weddings that began with vows on Waikiki beach and ended with a traditional luau under the stars.

**Must-do:** Hike Diamond Head at sunrise, visit Pearl Harbor, and snorkel in the turquoise waters of Hanauma Bay.

## Kaua'i – The Garden Isle

If your love story deserves a romantic novel setting, Kaua'i is your island. Green, wild, with imposing waterfalls, dramatic cliffs, and tranquil beaches perfect for intimate celebrations. One of my favorite weddings





here was at the Grand Hyatt Kaua'i, where the couple married with the Nā Pali coast as a backdrop—pure cinematic magic.

**Must-do:** Wailua Falls, Hanalei Bay, and a boat tour along the Nā Pali coast.

## Maui – The Valley Isle

Maui combines luxury and adventure like no other. From golden beaches to the volcanic summit of Haleakalā, it is perfect for couples seeking variety. One day you can enjoy a spa, and the next, you can drive the iconic Road to Hana.

## Island of Hawai'i - The Big Island

Here, contrasts reign: black sand beaches, active volcanoes, coffee plantations, and even snow-capped mountains. For something truly unique, imagine a ceremony on a lava field at sunset.

## Lāna'i and Moloka'i – The Hidden Jewels

For maximum privacy, Lāna'i offers only a few resorts, all exclusive and serene. Moloka'i, on the other hand, seems frozen in time—authentic and deeply connected to Hawaiian traditions.





# A Taste of Hawai'i

Hawaiian gastronomy is a reflection of its history: a blend of Polynesian roots with Japanese, Filipino, Portuguese, and American influences. Encourage your guests to try:

**Poke:** Fresh marinated fish—usually ahi tuna—seasoned to perfection.

**Ube:** A vibrant purple sweet potato, used in ice creams, cakes, and desserts.

**Loco Moco:** Rice with a hamburger patty, fried egg, and gravy.

**Shave Ice:** Finely shaved ice bathed in tropical syrups—ideal for a hot afternoon.

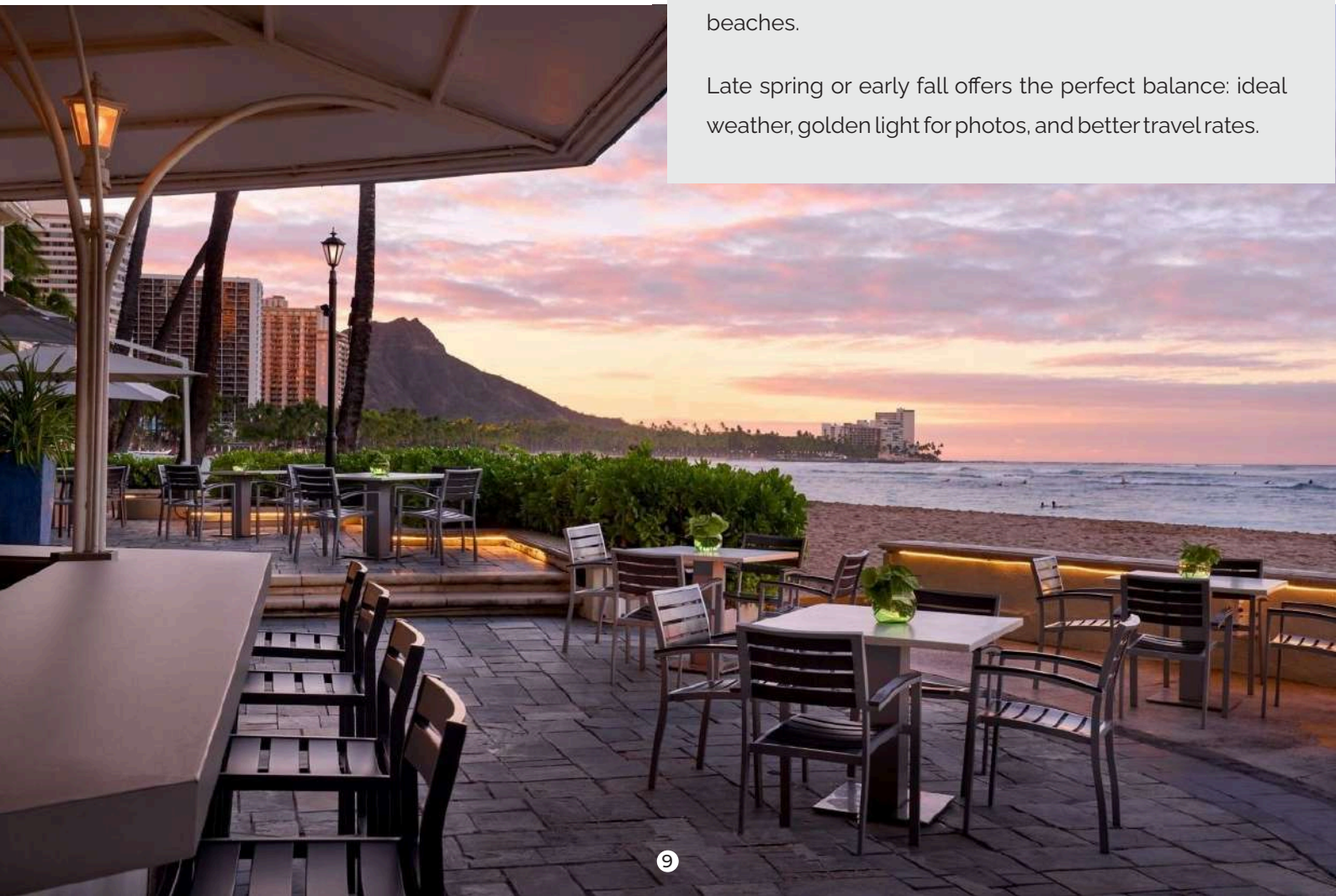
## When to Go

Hawai'i enjoys good weather year-round, but the season can influence your budget and your guests' experience.

**Low Season:** From April to May and from September to mid-December, with fewer crowds, better hotel prices, and greater venue availability.

**High Season:** From mid-December to March and from June to August, with higher prices and more crowded beaches.

Late spring or early fall offers the perfect balance: ideal weather, golden light for photos, and better travel rates.



# Beyond the Ceremony: Experiences for Your Wedding Week



**Luau Welcome Party:** Traditional music and dances, fire jugglers, and island gastronomy.

**Catamaran Cruise:** Toast at sunset while sailing along the coast.

**Island Hopping:** Get married on one island and enjoy your honeymoon on another.

**Adventures:** Hikes to waterfalls, snorkeling with sea turtles, or helicopter flights over volcanic landscapes.

danced with the trade winds as they exchanged vows on the resort's lush lawn. Behind them, the rhythm of the ocean resonated softly against the volcanic cliffs.

These moments are not just captured in photographs; they are living memories, fragments of the islands you carry with you long after saying "aloha."

## From My Perspective

On O'ahu, I have planned weddings at the iconic Royal Hawaiian and the historic Westin Moana Surfrider, where the aisle was lined with fragrant tropical flowers and the Pacific served as the ceremony's soundtrack. On Kaua'i, at the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa—located on the sunny shores of Po'ipū, with sprawling gardens, saltwater lagoons, and panoramic ocean views—the veil of a bride



# Five Things Every Mainland Wedding Planner Should Know Before Producing a Wedding in Hawai'i

After producing dozens of weddings on O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i—and even helping reopen the islands for weddings during the Covid era—I have learned that there is a rhythm, a culture, and a logistical framework you cannot fully grasp until you are here. If you are a planner arriving in Hawai'i for the first time, here is what you should know:

**1. Visit Before Committing:** Plan at least 1-2 trips to the island before the wedding. Tour the venues, walk the grounds, understand the light and weather patterns, and meet vendors in person.

**2. Create Local Alliances:** Hawai'i's vendor network is very close-knit. Collaborating with trusted local professionals ensures you have insight into cultural traditions, permit requirements, and the best contingency plans for island weather.

**3. Understand "Island Time":** Timelines may move at a different pace than on the mainland. Communication is cordial and professional, but the rhythm is rooted in the island lifestyle—plan accordingly.

**4. Respect Cultural Protocol:** A Hawaiian blessing, a lei ceremony, or a hula performance are more than entertainment; they are tradition. Treat these customs with respect and integrate them authentically.

**5. Consider Logistics and Costs:** Shipping decor, furniture, or personalized items to the islands can be costly and time-consuming. Work with vendors who can source locally to avoid unnecessary stress and delays.



That is why every Hawaiian wedding I plan is rooted in respect for the islands, in true collaboration with local creatives, and in the understanding that aloha is more than a word: it is the heart of the celebration.

I had the honor of helping reopen Hawai'i for weddings during the pandemic, navigating restrictions, collaborating with local vendors, and creating celebrations that honored both safety and the spirit of aloha. Since then, I have continued to design weddings here with the same commitment and passion.

## Mahalo for the Memories

Hawai'i is more than a wedding destination; it is a place where love, culture, and nature intertwine seamlessly. Whether you choose the vibrant energy of O'ahu, the lush tranquility of Kaua'i, or the luxury of Maui, your celebration will be enveloped in the warmth of aloha.



As we say here, mahalo nui loa—thank you very much—for allowing me to share my paradise. When you are ready to write your own Hawaiian love story, I will be here to help you plan it, wave after wave, sunset after sunset.

**About Dee Lee Dee:** Lee is a renowned luxury wedding planner, event producer, and international travel advisor. As the founder of Dee Lee Designs, she creates extraordinary celebrations that honor culture, tell meaningful stories, and offer an unparalleled guest experience. With a career spanning over a decade and a portfolio of weddings and events in Hawai'i, Mexico, the Caribbean, and beyond, Dee is known for her meticulous attention to detail, refined design aesthetic, and her ability to transform a vision into an unforgettable reality.

### Dee Lee

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**A toast to  
your love story**  
*in paradise*



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A man with a shaved head, wearing a light-colored poncho over a white shirt and dark trousers, stands at a black podium. He is smiling and holding a microphone in his right hand. Behind him are two large red digital screens. The left screen displays the 'SANTIAGO WEDDING SUMMIT' logo, a portrait of the speaker, and a Chilean flag. The right screen shows text in Spanish about wedding events and includes two small photographs of scenic Chilean locations. The scene is set outdoors at night, with greenery and flowers visible in the foreground and background.

# Chile, a country of vineyards

The Santiago Wedding Summit 2024 opens the doors to the world of weddings in Chile.



Between August 18 and 20, 2025, the Metropolitan Santiago became the epicenter of the Latin American bridal industry. In its third edition, the Santiago Wedding Summit brought together more than 120 national and international attendees under the theme "Chile, land of vineyards," with the goal of positioning the country as a world-class wedding destination where winemaking tradition, hospitality, and creativity intertwine in unique experiences.

The congress, academically endorsed by the IADWP (International Association of Destination Wedding Professionals) and supported by Sernatur and INACAP, marked a new milestone in romance and celebration tourism, showcasing Chile as a hospitable stage open to the world.

"Our goal is clear: we want Chile to be recognized as a unique place to get married, where wine, hospitality, and creativity merge to bring unforgettable celebrations to life," said Carla Valdebenito, founder of Rhonda Eventos and director of IADWP Chile, who, along with Valentina Vera, winner of the LAWA Destination Wedding Planner 2025 awards, and Mauricio Muñoz, an event organizer and caterer leading the Ñuble region, led the organization of this congress.

From the beginning, the energy of an international gathering was palpable. Professionals from Puerto Rico, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Brazil, and various Chilean regions filled the venue with enthusiasm, creating a committed, curious, and participative audience.

## Day 1: Inauguration and First Inspirations

The opening day was marked by speeches that placed Chile on the map of romance and celebration tourism. Mónica Zalaquett, executive president of FEDETUR, highlighted the role of tourism in the country's international projection: "Chile has everything to become a world-class destination. Wedding tourism not only boosts the economy but also shows our identity to the world."

Professor Jaime Magallanes (INACAP) led attendees on a heritage reflection with his presentation "Wine, a Chilean heritage that is drunk, celebrated, and told," reminding everyone that each glass of wine is a living story of our culture. Next, Alonso Rejas introduced the conversation on technology with "Artificial Intelligence Agents in the Social Events Industry," inviting everyone to see AI as a creative ally in designing celebrations.

The representative of Metropolitan Santiago, Vanessa Bravo, reaffirmed the alliance with the congress by announcing the 2025 venue: "The Metropolitan is not just a physical space; it is a home for those who make events a transformative experience."

The international focus came with Puerto Rican Eddie Sosa, who spoke on "Destination Branding and Experience." His message was direct: "When we produce an event, we are not only telling the couple's story, but also the story of our country."



One of the most anticipated moments was the panel discussion on vineyard weddings, featuring Paula Zawoioski (Viña Santa Carolina), Génesis Ruiz (Viña Casas del Bosque), Mauricio Muñoz (Viña Santa Berta), and Coco Bazán (Eventos Ambrosia). Their contributions reinforced the idea that Chilean vineyards are unparalleled settings for weddings that blend landscape, wine, and celebration.

The afternoon concluded with the creativity of Lucía Bernal (Peru), who presented how wedding branding gives identity to each celebration; the talent of David Vega and Cristopher Sepúlveda (Seve Studio), who shared their creative process in floral design and ambiance; and finally, the leadership of Lorena Gallardo, CEO of Fundadoras, who motivated the audience with her talk on unstoppable teams. "An unstoppable team is not formed by hierarchies, but by trust, purpose, and passion," she affirmed, closing the day with a message of community.





## Day 2: Diversity, Well-being, and Territories with Identity

The second day began with introspection guided by Pía Saint-Jean, who invited a rethinking of marriage as a transformative rite. "A marriage is not just a social contract; it is a journey of transformation. Our mission as professionals is to honor that rite with creativity and consciousness," she noted.

From Mexico, Dayi Rivera addressed inclusion in LGBTQ+ weddings: "Inclusion is not a trend; it is a necessity. An inclusive wedding celebrates the freedom to be," she emphasized. Diversity was added to the agenda as an inescapable axis in today's industry.

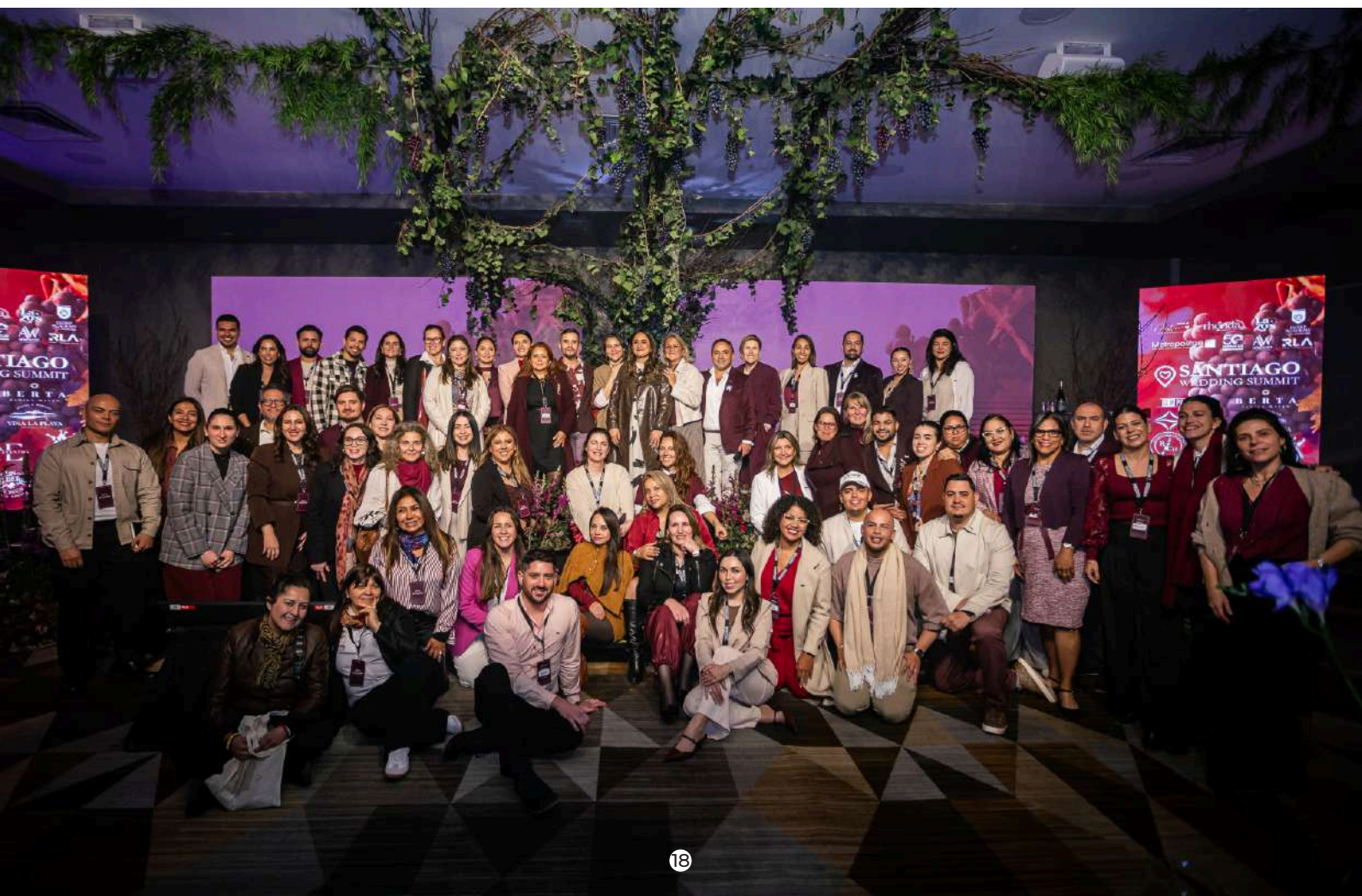
The territorial focus was provided by Víctor Cordero, from the Colchagua Chamber of Tourism, who highlighted the value of wine as a cultural heritage and a driver for romance tourism. Simultaneously, Hover Meleán provided keys to achieving profitable events without sacrificing creativity, while event organizer and gastronomic specialist Antonia García de Vicente inspired with her proposal of sensory design: "An unforgettable wedding is one that manages to activate all the senses."



A multicultural panel with Tamara Giannini (Argentina), Juan José García Huidobro (Chile), and María Luisa Samayoa (El Salvador) allowed for contrasting realities and enriching perspectives. The day closed with the presentation by Susana Villegas Silva, an enologist from the Itata Valley, who moved the audience with her talk "Reasons to Say Yes to the Itata Valley." "Itata is not just wine; it is history and community. It is where roots meet the future," she expressed, drawing ovations.

## Day 3: Wine as the Protagonist

The third day transported the experience to the heart of the vineyards. At Viña Casas del Bosque, attendees participated in a Specialization Workshop that included a Romance Tourism master class led by Dayi Rivera and a mobile photography workshop with Christian Puello, providing practical tools to enrich the wedding tourism offering.





The closing was a fam trip through the Colchagua Valley, touring vineyards such as Casa Silva, Maquis, La Playa, and Santa Cruz. Amid toasts and dreamlike landscapes, attendees experienced firsthand the promise that Chile wants to offer the world: vineyard weddings that combine tradition, landscape, and hospitality. "Wine is part of our identity, and when we unite it with love, we create an experience that is never forgotten," commented an emotional Valentina Vera as she raised her glass in Santa Cruz.

## A Milestone with International Projection

The Santiago Wedding Summit 2025 made it clear that Chile has everything to establish itself as a world-class wedding and event destination. With three days of learning, inspiration, and connection, the event showed that the local industry is prepared to design



transformative experiences. "We lived three days where we learned, were inspired, and strengthened our community. The path is set: Chile will open its vineyards and its hospitality to the world of weddings," concluded Carla Valdebenito.

The next date is already set: August 24, 25, and 26, 2026. Chile will once again open its doors to the world with its most magical product: destination weddings at the end of the world.

**Carla Valdebenito Jalaf**

Destination Wedding Planner and National Chapter Chile  
@carlavaldebenitoweddingplanner  
@rhonda\_eventos

A woman with long, wavy brown hair is standing in a dark, modern interior. She is wearing a strapless, light-colored (possibly cream or pale yellow) dress with a fitted bodice and a very full, pleated skirt that is flowing around her. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark, with a textured wall on the left and a smooth wall on the right. A thin, glowing light source is visible in the upper left corner.

# The Intangible is Also Part of a Dress

An Interview with Luis Guerra

**Passionate, a perfectionist, and profoundly sensitive to the feminine universe, Luis Guerra has made haute couture his language and wedding dresses his greatest art. With absolute dedication, he designs unique pieces that reflect the soul of each woman, masterfully interpreting the gestures, silences, and essence of his clients. From Santiago del Estero, his name resonates throughout the region as a synonym for elegance, authenticity, and timeless beauty.**

It all began with a magazine. An Elle that he still keeps as a small paper treasure, a witness to the moment when fashion ceased to be a distant image and became a destiny.

"It was my first love affair with fashion and trends," he confesses. From that moment on, nothing was ever the same. He knew, without hesitation, that he had found his calling.

**How long have you been in this business?**

Professionally, for over ten years. I don't know exactly how many... and frankly, I don't want to know. It scares me. Whenever someone asks, I say "ten years." But I've been doing it for much longer. In fact, I don't even know when I officially started working.

**What does it mean to you to design wedding dresses, such a symbolic garment in a woman's life?**

It's an emotion. That's the first feeling I get from a bride's call or message. Then comes gratitude, for entrusting me with their most important day.

**What is your creative process from the moment a bride contacts you until she tries on her dress?**

It always starts with a message, either on social media or my personal cell phone.

My first question is: how do you want to be on that day? Brides are very eclectic. Each one has her style, and my job is to bring my signature touch to her dress.







**How does Santiago del Estero influence your creative identity?**

My province is my place in the world. It influences me a lot. The women here are trusting and dare to embrace trends.

They are open to my advice, they listen, and they let themselves be surprised. That allows me to be propositional.

**How has your style evolved from your first collections to today?**

I feel the evolution has been more personal than aesthetic. I look at earlier collections and see that my essence is always present.

I follow trends, yes, but within them, I try to show who I am.



**What techniques or details define you as a designer?**

I am obsessed with clean, neat finishes. I love artisanal embroidery, handmade appliqués.

And I have a weakness for pleats: they are always present in my collections.

# On His New Collection: Prisma

**What inspired you to create this new collection?**

With Prisma, I want to propose a clean bride, in lines and textures. Its launch will be very soon.

**Why that name? What does it represent or communicate?**

Prisma has multiple facets and many lights. It represents a luminous, simple, minimalist bride, but with transformations. It's a proposal of purity with identity.



**What materials, textures, or silhouettes predominate in this collection?**

I worked with fabrics that are soft to the touch and to the eye.

Clean lines, but with many facets in the pattern-making and construction. Each dress has something special.

**What trends do you see coming in the bridal world, and how do you adapt them to your language?**

I see something coming that has already inspired Prisma: minimalism in bridal wear.

Soft, pure fabrics, with a small touch of satin shine. Those are the keys.

# The Intangible

**What are your moments of inspiration?**

Luis Guerra works all day (laughs). But inspiration can strike at any moment. Once, I was with a bride I just couldn't get right... I don't remember if it was the neckline or the back... And in the middle of the night, I woke up with the solution. I couldn't wait for morning to get to work. That's how I solved it.

Those things aren't planned. They find you.

**Every professional needs a support network. Who is in yours?**

My family, always. They have been with me from the beginning. Pedro, my partner, is a fundamental pillar. He has been by my side in everything for ten years. Many things—moves, projects, important decisions—came about thanks to him. And my dogs, who are my children. My grounding force.

**A long-term dream or project?**

My dream is to do an international runway show. For years, I've had Barcelona Bridal Week in my head. And I believe I will do it at some point in my life. That is for sure.



Luis Guerra doesn't just design dresses; he builds narratives in fabric. Between transparencies, pleats, and soft lights, he captures the soul of real women who dream of shining on their most important day. And if his destination is Barcelona or any other runway in the world, it will be merely a natural consequence of a talent that never rests.

**Luis Guerra**  
Fashion Designer



# The Power of Details

The Micro-Moments  
That Make a Wedding



In the world of weddings, we often envision the grand scenes: the bride's dress, the ceremony, the banquet, the music—in short, countless elements that make a wedding unique. However, it is the small details, those micro-moments filled with emotion, that transform a celebration into an unforgettable memory.

Couples today often wonder what they will offer their guests, but above all, what they will remember from their wedding! Many think of the "crazy hour" or entertainment segments, but what truly resonates are the moments where we touch the feelings of those who accompanied us in that special moment. The emotional words from both sets of parents, or that special dance between the bride and her father—such poignant moments that are right at the surface.

And it is precisely in these beautiful moments that we connect with each of our guests. A brief but highly significant instant that connects with every heart present; that special feeling we often cannot explain with words, which requires no investment or protocol, only that unique sensitivity and authenticity. This is where the wedding organizer makes a difference.

We must consider those personal details that can connect with the loved ones present, and especially with those who are no longer in our world—memories of our childhood, the tears of our mother or our parents.

It is not about a simple decoration, not about marking time, not about it being luxurious or the months of preparation it takes to organize the wedding. It is about years of dreams, of intimate moments, and that is where we make our mark.



To see the reaction of parents or grandparents upon seeing the couple. Beyond the formality of a grand entrance, it is those gazes filled with pride and tenderness that are images that will remain etched in the memory of our guests, but especially of the couple.

Most of the time, we are asked, "What wedding packages do you have?" And we always answer, "We don't work with packages." This is 100% true, as each of the weddings we create is not a package. For us, a wedding is not a package; it is years of feelings and dreams that we wish to understand in order to connect and create a personalized wedding. Each of us is different, each wedding is different, and that is why every detail counts. And when we speak of details, we are not referring to the type of decoration, setup, or wedding venue.

Caring for these micro-moments also means thinking about the experience not only of the couple but also of the guests, family, and friends—those friends who are like siblings. For example, a personalized message at their seat, a corner with photos of shared memories. Highlighting any detail we consider for that special night that obviously has nothing to do with the material.



Inspiring ourselves in each couple, getting to know their feelings, is what makes a wedding unique and different. Music plays a fundamental role in creating these magical micro-moments. It's not just about the bride's waltz or the entrance song, but about those unexpected melodies that accompany hugs, feelings, laughter, and complicity amidst the celebration—emotions running high.

Photography and video are essential allies that undoubtedly help us capture these beautiful micro-moments, and it is precisely this ally, our star photographer, who will be our accomplice in capturing that unique moment. Therefore, we must choose an expert photographer wisely, one who knows that greatness lies not only in poses but in capturing the tear that slides down a cheek, the improvised burst of laughter, or the child dancing without fear. These are images that speak of authenticity, not perfection. Anyone can take a good photo, but not everyone captures these beautiful micro-moments.

These small details are also what often alleviate tensions. When a wedding flows naturally between pleasant surprises and genuine gestures, the couple can relax and live in the present, enjoying that moment. Thus, they free themselves from the pressure of "is everything perfect, what about the flowers, the cake, etc." and simply be themselves and enjoy that magical day.



Micro-moments are not planned, but we can prepare the ground and create spaces for spontaneity, leaving gaps between activities and trusting that emotion will do the rest. This is key for them to emerge and for the spaces to be created.

To the couples, allow me to give one of the most valuable pieces of advice: do not underestimate your wedding if it is small. It is not luxury that makes a wedding unforgettable, but the way love is conveyed in every gesture, in every action. It is these details that build the bridge to authenticity. An impromptu toast from a friend, an unexpected family dance, a secretly dedicated song... each one adds to the narrative of that unrepeatable and unforgettable day.

The most memorable weddings are those in which the protagonists enjoy every second. Being aware of the present, stopping to breathe, looking around, and thanking God for what one has, turns the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Even the end of the party can be a decisive micro-moment. A final hug on the dance floor, a song sung in chorus by everyone, an unexpected dance by cousins and siblings—these are scenes that seal the experience with shared emotion.

That is why we say that the power of details lies in transforming the ephemeral into the eternal. Couples who understand this truth discover that their wedding is



not measured by the magnitude of the investment or the cost, but by the richness of the moments lived, by its authenticity. Thus, the micro-moments become the true legacy of a wedding: memories that travel through time, that strengthen the union, and that remain as a testament to love in its purest and most authentic form, conveying that unique feeling from each of them.

### Julie E. Franco

National Chapter Leader Panama  
Entrepreneur Creator and Owner of Expoboda Panamá  
@expobodapanama  
@vacacionesjuliattours T  
Phone (507) 69495544

A woman with long brown hair, smiling, stands outdoors with her arms crossed. She is wearing a black turtleneck, a black blazer, and black wide-leg trousers. She is also wearing black sneakers with white soles. The background features lush green foliage and warm, out-of-focus lights, suggesting an evening setting in a garden or courtyard.

# Gaby Maldonado

The Future of the Wedding  
and Event Industry in Guatemala



With more than eight years dedicated to the world of wedding and event planning in Guatemala, my career as an event planner has been marked by excellence, innovation, and creativity. This journey is complemented by my prior experience of over 14 years in the hotel and customer service industry, where I learned the importance of details, genuine hospitality, and the value of creating memorable experiences. That solid foundation has allowed me to develop a comprehensive vision for each event, understanding not only the clients' expectations but also the logistics behind impeccable service.

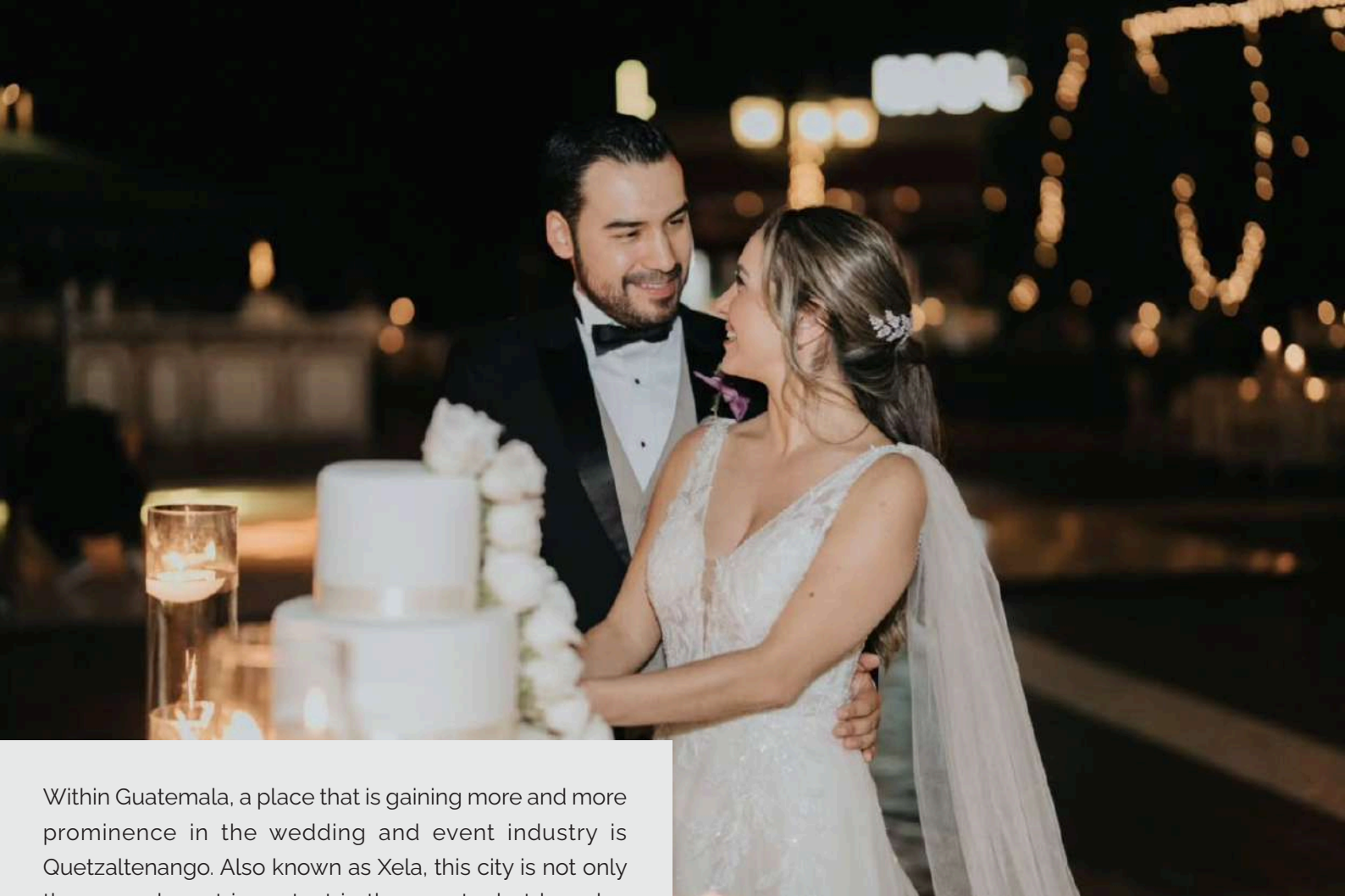
I have had the privilege of planning and executing destination events in different departments of the country, as well as large-scale corporate events. My primary focus on destination weddings has opened up the opportunity to collaborate with couples who choose Guatemala as the perfect setting for their special day. In each of these celebrations, my mission has been to transform ideas and dreams into unique realities, meticulously caring for every detail with passion. The management of local suppliers, logistical coordination,

and the creation of personalized atmospheres are elements that define every project I undertake.

Interdepartmental weddings have also played a fundamental role in my career. In these, the essence of the couple becomes the central axis, adapting traditions, styles, and specific needs to create an authentic event that represents them both. Over the years, I have confirmed that the union of couples from different regions of the country results in celebrations full of cultural richness and diversity.

A key aspect of my career has been building strong relationships with a network of industry professionals, both in Guatemala and abroad.





Within Guatemala, a place that is gaining more and more prominence in the wedding and event industry is Quetzaltenango. Also known as Xela, this city is not only the second most important in the country but has also become a constantly growing cultural and social hub. Its colonial architecture, the beauty of its mountainous landscapes, and the warmth of its people make Quetzaltenango a unique setting for destination weddings.

More and more couples are discovering in this city the perfect balance between tradition and modernity. Quetzaltenango offers an expanding infrastructure with boutique hotels, private farms, haciendas, and convention centers that can be adapted to different styles of events, from the most intimate to the most sophisticated. Furthermore, its strategic location in the western highlands allows guests to enjoy a complete experience, complemented by nearby tourist attractions such as hot springs, volcanoes, historic churches, and a vibrant cultural life. For those seeking an authentic and different destination, Xela represents a fresh alternative full of possibilities.

I am convinced that the future of the wedding and event industry in Guatemala lies in the diversification of destinations and the ability to innovate in each experience. My commitment is to continue contributing to that growth, positioning places like Quetzaltenango on the international map, and creating celebrations that transcend the expectations of every client.



**Gaby Maldonado**

Event Planner  
@gabymaldonadoplanner



# Boutique Weddings

Minimalist Luxury for an  
Unforgettable "I Do"

# The Charm of the Intimate

In the universe of weddings, each season brings new trends, but there is one style that is winning over more and more couples: minimalist luxury boutique weddings. Intimate, exclusive, and profoundly personalized celebrations that transform "less is more" into a manifesto of elegance and authenticity.

Unlike weddings with more guests, these celebrations typically bring together between 20 and 60 guests, creating a close-knit atmosphere where connection is paramount. The priority is no longer on magnitude, but on the experience: less quantity, more quality. With a select list of loved ones, an emotional and memorable ambiance is achieved.



Ph. Tato Escobar



Ph. Light Studio



# Characteristics of Boutique Weddings

**Intimate and Exclusive:** Designed for a small group, each guest holds a special place in the story.

**Absolute Personalization:** From the music to the gastronomy, everything is custom-designed.

**Unique Venues:** Private homes with enchanting gardens, terraces with sea views, historic haciendas, vineyards at sunset, infinite beaches, serene lakes, majestic volcanoes, or botanical gardens full of life. Latin American settings that offer character and an incomparable natural backdrop.

**Attention to Detail:** Every space becomes an experience that reflects the essence of the couple.



Ph. Light Studio



Ph. Tato Escobar



# Trends in Minimalist Luxury

Minimalist decoration does not mean emptiness, but refined elegance. Neutral palettes with subtle accents, precisely chosen flowers, and artisanal pieces make the difference. Unique tableware, warm lighting, and personalized menus ensure that every detail has a purpose.

Outdoor weddings are also gaining prominence: ceremonies by the sea, receptions under starry skies, or setups in the midst of nature that do not need excess to shine.

# Advantages of a Boutique Wedding

**Unique Experience:** Each guest lives the celebration as part of the story.

**Creative Flexibility:** Greater freedom in design, schedules, and formats.

**Personalized Attention:** The entire process revolves around the couple.

**Intimate Atmosphere:** Proximity is favored over the crowd.



# Tips for Creating a Minimalist Luxury Boutique Wedding

**Define Your Essence:** The couple's story is the starting point.

**Choose a Place with Character:** Let the space speak for itself.

**Invest in the Essential:** Few elements, but of high quality.

**Personalize the Experience:** Make each guest feel something unique.

**Create Meaningful Moments:** Vows, rituals, and details with purpose.



## Real Inspiration: Ana and Luis

For their 30th anniversary, Ana and Luis gave themselves what they deserved: a boutique wedding full of details, surrounded by love and many promises of "I would choose you again."

The beach was the witness, the wind the accomplice. Delicate white flowers, candles lit to the rhythm of the sunset, silver tableware, and vintage glasses narrated a story of time and enduring love.

Every corner was designed with intention, from the intimate altar facing the sea to the family table that invited sharing memories and toasting the future.

The court of honor: their children and grandchildren. A celebration that not only renewed vows but also the certainty that true luxury lies in celebrating love in an intimate, conscious, and meaningful way.

With love,

### Rebeca Jerez

Destination Wedding & Event Planner  
Rebeca Jerez CO  
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Ph. Tato Escobar



# The Dream Dress

A Guide to Finding Your Style  
Between Trend and Tradition



I have accompanied many brides in the search for their dress, and if I have learned anything in all these years, it is that the choice is never just about fashion or fabrics: it is about identity. The dream dress is not the one on the cover of a magazine, nor the one everyone says is "perfect." The dream dress is the one that allows the bride to look in the mirror and say with her heart: "There I am."

I remember the first time I truly understood this. A bride arrived with a notebook full of clippings, featuring dresses from great designers and photos of celebrities. She was overwhelmed, confused, almost resigned to wearing something that would "please everyone." But when we started talking, what emerged was not a neckline or a cut, but an essence: she wanted to feel free, she wanted to dance without thinking about the dress, she wanted her smile to be what everyone remembered. In the end, her choice was a much simpler design than she had imagined... but when she tried it on, she cried with happiness. And in that moment, I knew we had found her dream dress.

That scene has been repeated many times. Some brides dream of a three-meter veil, others of a bohemian dress, others of sparkles and beading. But they all share the same thing: the fear of not meeting the expectations of others. My job is to remind them that **the only expectation that matters is their own.**





I teach them to try on dresses without fear, to dare to experiment with silhouettes they never imagined. I remind them that trends pass, but authenticity remains in the photos, in the memory, in the heart. And above all, I give them a piece of advice that I repeat like a mantra: do not look for the perfect dress for other people, look for the perfect dress for you.

Finding the ideal style is like falling in love: sometimes it takes time, sometimes it surprises you, sometimes it doesn't resemble what you imagined. But when it arrives, you know it. You feel it. The dream dress is not just worn; it is lived.



# Practical TIPS for Choosing Your Dress

**Define your personal style before you start:** Think about how you dress day-to-day, what clothes make you feel confident, and translate that into the bridal world.

**Be open to trying different silhouettes:** Often, the dream dress appears on the hanger you least expected.

**Don't be guided solely by trends:** Use them as inspiration, but not as an imposition. Fashion passes; your essence remains.

**Listen to opinions, but make your own decision:** The final voice must always be yours.

**Think about comfort:** You are going to laugh, dance, and hug. The dress should accompany you, not limit you.

**Don't get frustrated if it doesn't appear right away:** The search is part of the experience. Enjoy it calmly.

**Honor tradition, but add your own touch:** You can wear an antique veil, a family detail, or a symbolic nod, without ceasing to be authentic.



*The secret is to choose a dress that speaks of you, that allows you to shine without a costume, and that makes you feel whole on your day. Because the dream dress is not the one that is imposed; it is the one that is discovered as your own!*

**Adrián Pavía**

Director of IADWP Latin America  
& Spanish-Speaking Caribbean Chapter  
[www.adrianpavia.com.ar](http://www.adrianpavia.com.ar)

# The Echo of Their Joy

Wedding Story, Told in Motion





If you could bottle a feeling, which would it be? Perhaps the electricity in the air just before walking down the aisle, the exact sound of your father's laughter during his toast, or the murmur of your partner saying "I love you" in the middle of the dance floor. These are moments that a photograph captures beautifully, but that a video allows you to relive.

I have spent nearly two decades immersed in the most spectacular weddings, and believe me when I tell you that true luxury is not only in what is seen, but in what is felt, in what is heard, in the atmosphere that envelops all those present. And the guardian of that atmosphere, the artisan who bottles it for you, is your videographer.

Let's forget for a moment the idea of a simple "wedding video." Let's think of a film. Your film. One that is not about recording every second, but about finding the seconds that contain an eternity.

The story doesn't begin with the kiss. It begins with the sound of the dress zipper closing, with the whispered joke among bridesmaids that provokes a genuine laugh, with the silence heavy with emotion as one reads a letter in private. A good videographer doesn't just see these moments; they feel them coming. Their lens is not invasive; it is a silent confidant who knows exactly where to rest to capture the truth of an instant.

And then, the ceremony. This is where the magic becomes palpable. A photograph will show you a tear on your mother's cheek. A video will let you hear the soft sob that accompanies it. A photo will immortalize your joined hands. A video will capture the slight tremor of nervousness and emotion in them. It is the fundamental difference between remembering and reliving. Hearing your own voices, with all their vulnerability and certainty as you pronounce your vows, is a gift that transcends time.





When the celebration erupts, the videographer becomes a choreographer of joy. They weave the stories of your guests with yours. A friend's toast is not just a speech; it is a spoken legacy, full of pauses, inflections, and an affection that only the voice can convey. The energy of the dance floor is not just people dancing; it is an explosion of collective happiness, and in your film, you will be able to feel that rhythm, that vibration, almost as if you were there again.

Allow me to give you a piece of advice from the heart. When you search for the person who will film your day, don't just look at short, dynamic clips. Ask to see a complete wedding film. And as you watch it, ask yourself: "Do I feel something for these people I don't know? Am I moved by their story?". If the answer is yes, you have found a true narrator.

The person you choose should be someone with whom you feel a connection, someone you trust completely. Let them in. Not just to your wedding, but to your emotion.



The day will pass in a sigh, in a blur of happiness. But that film... that film will be the anchor to your memories. It will be what you put on a future anniversary, snuggled on the sofa, to hear those voices, to see those smiles in motion, and to feel, once again, the exact echo of the joy that founded you. And that, I assure you, is one of the greatest treasures you will ever have.

**Diana Sciarrillo**

Creative Director of "I Do, Guatemala"  
by Diana Sciarrillo  
National Chapter Guatemala



25

Años  
Dato Neurenán

Logiss

More than a decade  
creating experiences  
that transcend



# The Vision of Karla de Burgos

In 2014, in Guatemala, **Karla de Burgos** decided to bring a dream to life: founding **Logiss & MKT de Guatemala S.A.** with the purpose of transforming corporate events into memorable experiences. Today, more than a decade later, her company has established itself as a **benchmark in the corporate events industry in Central America and the Dominican Republic.**

"We don't just do events; we create memories that remain at the top of mind of the guests." - **Karla de Burgos.**

# Innovation That Inspires

Every Logiss project is born from **creativity, strategic branding, and constant innovation.** The philosophy is clear: it is not just about logistics, but about building living experiences where brands shine and manage to connect with their audience in a unique way.

From **experiential activations** to **large-scale corporate conventions**, the company is characterized by always adding a **differentiating touch**, with details designed to surprise, excite, and leave a mark.

# A History with Brands That Make History

Confidence in **Logiss** has transcended borders.

Over the years, the company has worked with renowned national and international brands: **Fox, Disney Channels, Universal Channel, Telemundo, National Geographic, E! Entertainment, Google, P&G, Bimbo, Avon, CMI, Omnilife, Guatemala.com, Spectrum, People Media, USAC, Vick, Melissa, and Chep**, among many others. Each of these alliances has been an opportunity to demonstrate that **Guatemalan talent** can shine on the level of major global stages.



## An Experience from Start to Finish

One of the company's greatest differentiators is the **direct involvement of its founder**.

**Karla is involved in every stage of the process**—from the initial consultation to the final execution—ensuring that every detail meets standards of excellence and creativity.

The result: events that are not only lived, but are remembered, shared, and celebrated.

## The Legacy of Logiss

With more than ten years of experience, the company projects itself into the future as a **driver of innovation** in the corporate events industry. Its mission remains intact: to **create extraordinary moments** that connect brands with people, and people with emotions.

"A well-executed event is never forgotten. It is a testament to our passion, and it is what sets us apart".

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\*El Dorado Maroma

A man with short, graying hair is standing in front of a large, dark wooden door. He is wearing a black tuxedo jacket with white floral embroidery on the lapels, a white dress shirt, and a black bow tie. He is holding a black folder or book in his right hand. The text "A Conversation with Rui Mota Pinto" is overlaid on the left side of the image in white. The background is a large, dark wooden door with vertical panels.

A Conversation with  
**Rui Mota  
Pinto**

**Rui Mota Pinto is an award-winning Wedding Designer & Planner from Portugal with over 30 years of experience designing immersive, disruptive, and emotionally charged destination weddings around the world. His philosophy.**

Crafting Love Around the Globe—is based on creativity, disruption, authenticity, ethics, responsibility, and the careful selection of trusted suppliers. Rui believes that weddings are not just events, but emotional journeys where design, culture, and storytelling merge to create something timeless.

Throughout his career, he has received multiple international awards, and has been named one of the 50 Most Influential Wedding Professionals and one of the 100 Most Influential People in the Global Events Industry by Eventex. Today, beyond designing weddings, he dedicates a large part of his work to mentoring and educating, guiding the new generation of planners to understand that creativity, quality, ethics, and disruption can and must walk hand in hand.

**1. How did you feel when you found out you had obtained the quality recognition: Wedding Tourism Specialist?**

I felt proud, grateful, and reaffirmed. For me, this was not just a celebration of creativity, but above all, a validation of my values: ethics, structured processes, responsibility, security, and the curation of trusted suppliers.



The drive that led me to design immersive concepts such as Love Land – Path to Romance and Eternity – The Game of Love, or to create emotional and cultural journeys such as A&G in the Sky of Love in Mexico alongside Paula Abreu, is also rooted in responsibility and quality.

## **2. What motivated you to apply for this recognition in the first place?**

It was an easy decision. I have always believed that we should never stand still: we must constantly evolve and expose ourselves to evaluation if we truly want to grow. For me, applying was a natural step, because I firmly believe that only by being regularly evaluated and held accountable can we ensure our work is aligned with the highest parameters of quality, ethics, and safety.

## **3. How would you describe the process? Was it what you expected, or were there surprises along the way?**

The process was meticulous, and the biggest surprise was how valuable it was as a tool for self-reflection. It wasn't just about demonstrating what I already do, but about looking at my work from the outside,

, through a structured and detailed lens. It allowed me to examine each stage, recognize strengths, and also identify small details that could be improved.

## **4. If you had to choose one moment or step of the process that really stood out to you, what would it be?**

What impressed me most was the extraordinary level of detail in the analysis of my processes. More than anything, the concern for professionalization: for ensuring that we, as wedding professionals, are genuinely prepared and conscious of quality, safety, and ethics. That was what stood out most for me: the seriousness with which the industry is being elevated.

## **5. Now that you have the distinction, what has changed for you: in your business, your brand, or even your confidence?**

It has reinforced my confidence, but also the trust that my couples and colleagues place in me. This distinction has become a visible symbol of trust. When couples see it, they know they are working with someone whose creativity is backed by ethics, processes, and a proven commitment to excellence.





**.6. What do you consider the biggest advantage of having a quality recognition like this in the world of destination weddings?**

The peace of mind it offers couples is invaluable. Planning a wedding abroad often involves uncertainty, and this recognition acts as a guarantee that they are in good hands. It demonstrates not only the planner's professionalism but also that the network of suppliers is carefully selected, credible, and committed to the same standards.

**7. Have you noticed any difference in how clients or colleagues perceive you since you obtained it?**

Yes, absolutely. Clients feel more secure and proud to work with someone whose work has been recognized at that level. Colleagues see it as proof of a serious commitment to excellence and ethics. As a mentor and educator, it allows me to inspire other professionals to see evaluation not as a threat, but as an opportunity to improve and professionalize their craft.



**8. Would you recommend it to other wedding professionals? Why?**

Without a doubt. The recognition is important, but the real value lies in the process itself. It forces us to stop, reflect, and evaluate our work with honesty and depth. I believe this is crucial regardless of your status, fame, or years in the industry. Challenging ourselves and allowing accredited entities to review our work is something every professional should embrace because it leads to growth, evolution, and, ultimately, a stronger and more respected industry.

**9. If someone reading this is thinking, "Should I apply?" - what would be your best advice?**

Do it with authenticity, honesty, and an open spirit. Don't see it as an evaluation; see it as an opportunity. For those of us with long and successful careers, it can be uncomfortable to be evaluated again, but that is precisely why it is important. This process is not about questioning your achievements, but about giving you the chance to evolve, perfect yourself, and ensure that your future work is even more solid.



**10. And finally, what's next for you? Any exciting projects on the horizon?**

2025 and 2026 will be years of transformation. Today, I design not only for couples as final clients but increasingly for colleagues: planners from all over the world who invite me to partner with them so they can offer their couples truly immersive and bespoke experiences from scratch. My role has evolved: I am no longer just a wedding planner; I am a wedding designer, and a large part of my work now consists of elevating the projects of others with my creative vision. At the same time, I am preparing new projects and educational initiatives that I hope will become game-changers in the industry. My goal is for them to set new benchmarks for innovation and redefine the way we design weddings and educate the next generation of professionals.



**Extra Question - If your career were a wedding, what would be the theme and why?**

It would be Rebellion. Because my career has always been about breaking barriers, questioning what is "supposed to be," and refusing to simply follow trends or formulas. The best example of that spirit is Unleash the Steam: The Post-Apocalyptic Wedding, a concept that shattered all conventions of what a wedding "should be". I consider myself an anti-planner of weddings: not against weddings, but against conformity. My theme is rebellion because only by breaking the rules can we create new stories, design new emotions, and produce weddings the world has never seen before.

Thank you, Rui, for sharing your experience with quality recognition: Wedding Tourism Specialist! #ProudWTS

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# | The Lighting

The Silent Extra



When couples ask us what lighting is most suitable for their wedding, we consider several factors, from who the potential photographer is to what kind of details we want to highlight. We are not the typical person or company that gives a price and that's it; we are a team of professionals who seek to make your wedding memorable for you and your guests. We are passionate about getting involved and listening to your dreams to be able to design and transform the environment into a perfect, warm, and romantic atmosphere.

Each wedding, each project, leads us to a meeting between the client's dream and our mastery of light. In the gentle caress of warm, dim lighting, we see the reflection of a romantic dinner under the stars, which extends into the magic of each person. A well-positioned light can instantly transform a table, a decoration, a detail, a wall, or even an entire ambiance, turning its coldness into a warm atmosphere full of romance to make it last in the immortality of a beautiful memory.



When the blue hour—the perfect light for all photographers—arrives, the sun sets, and the world goes dark, our work is just beginning. We go out to meet the night to fill it with warmth and love, with dreams and hopes, with brightness. Because in every lighting installation we set up, a part of us stays there, immortalizing and shining for you.

Trujillo Lighting is more than just lights; we are a declaration of passion, a promise that there will always, always be a glow.

In weddings, lighting is indispensable; it is like a universal language, the idiom that speaks to the soul without needing words. A simple switch can turn on a great memory; a simple light can awaken an emotion.

**Erick Trujillo**  
Regional Chapter IADWP Guatemala  
Ericktrujillo\_lighting

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# The Magic of the Table

Setups and Gastronomy  
That Surprise



The success of a wedding, and any event with banquet table setups, lies in the careful harmony of every detail; at the heart of this symphony is the table. More than just a place to eat, the table setup and the gastronomy that accompanies it become the epicenter of the celebration, dictating the tone and style of the event.

The choice of decoration is not a whim; it is an extension of the couple's and hosts' story, a reflection of the type of celebration they wish to share with their loved ones. This applies to both gala banquets and more relaxed receptions; the table is the canvas where the magic of that great day is painted.

For highly formal events, such as dinners and banquets, the table is dressed in its finest. Here, every element is a statement of elegance: porcelain dishes, finely cut crystal glasses, and polished silver or steel cutlery combine to create an atmosphere of sophistication. The centerpieces, whether tall and exuberant or low and delicate, not only add beauty but also harmonize the guests' gazes and complement the architecture of the room.

The napkin rings, often with personalized details, add that final touch that demonstrates impeccable attention to detail.

In these setups, the gastronomy must be up to par: multi-course menus, with refined dishes and wine pairings that elevate the culinary experience. The presentation is artistic, where each dish not only nourishes but also delights the eye. Everything is part of the experience and requires planning that always includes a visual of the space, attention to ergonomics, and ensuring that all elements can be used at the right moment with the necessary comfort. It is always recommended to do a pre-setup to visualize how it will look and if it fits what is desired and what is needed—these are not always the same. Sometimes we want too many elements and overload the space; other times, we omit an element that we later miss. It is very important to plan it and rely on the experts, that is, the planners and the service staff who will attend our event.





In contrast, setups for informal events, such as outdoor weddings, birthdays, cocktails, or daytime receptions, embrace freshness and spontaneity. Here, rigidity gives way to warmth and closeness. Instead of a single banquet, a more dynamic concept is chosen, with themed food stations, lounge areas, and buffet tables that invite guests to interact and move freely.

The decoration becomes more rustic or boho-chic, using natural elements like branches, olive leaves, candles of different sizes, and linen tablecloths. The tableware can be more eclectic, mixing patterns or textures, and the napkin rings can be simple jute cords or tied lavender sprigs. The gastronomy in these cases is versatile and accessible: taco stations, sushi bars, artisanal cheese tables, or food trucks that offer a more relaxed and personal culinary experience.





Regardless of the style, consistency is key. The magic of the table lies not only in the beauty of its components but in how they synchronize with the gastronomy and its respective service. The type of food, from the selection of appetizers to the grand wedding cake, must complement the created atmosphere. It makes no sense to serve a haute cuisine menu at an outdoor buffet, nor simple finger food in a banquet hall. The gastronomy should be a reflection of the environment, the time of the celebration, and the personality of the hosts. Cakes, for example, can be elaborate with detailed decorations for formal events, or simpler and deconstructed for rustic celebrations, like a naked cake.

Ultimately, the table setup and catering are the two pillars that, when fused perfectly, ensure that each guest not only feels honored but also takes home senses imbued with the indelible memory of a truly unforgettable gastronomic experience.

### **Juan Salvador**

Master Wedding & Event Planner  
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# Couples Who Marry in Their Own Land with an International Gaze

Emerging Destinations  
in Ecuador



When I think of Ecuador as a wedding destination, my heart lights up. I am a wedding planner and I live each day in love with my country, because I know that here, in this small yet giant corner of the world, we have settings that could be the fulfilled dream of any couple, regardless of whether they come from afar or are Ecuadorians seeking to discover the magic of their own land.

Today I want to talk to you about something that moves me deeply: the **emerging wedding destinations** in Ecuador. Places that do not yet appear on every Pinterest board, that are not saturated with tourists or repeated weddings, but that have a unique essence. And that, with teamwork between the industry, the local community, and associations like **IADWP Ecuador**, are paving their way as hidden gems for couples seeking unrepeatable experiences.

## What Does an Emerging Wedding Destination Mean?

An emerging destination is not one that everyone names from memory. It is not the famous beach everyone visits nor the hacienda that appears in every magazine. An emerging destination is that place that surprises because it holds authenticity, dreamlike landscapes, living traditions, and above all, the **potential to become the perfect setting for a wedding with soul.**

For me, talking about emerging destinations is talking about **couples who dare to experience something different**, who choose the intimacy of a hidden lake, the warmth of a coffee hacienda, the strength of the Amazon rainforest, or the magic of a sunset on a virgin beach. And the most beautiful part is that this trend not only captivates foreign couples but also our own Ecuadorian couples, who discover that you don't need to leave the country to have a wedding of international caliber.



# Ecuador, Land of Destinations with Soul

Allow me to take you on a journey through some of the places that excite me every time I name them:

**Imbabura**, with its lakes and volcanoes, is a setting that breathes culture and nature. A wedding at the Yahuarcocha lagoon, like "Portal del Lago," or at a hacienda at the foot of the Imbabura volcano, like "Quinta El Trébol," is a gift for the senses.

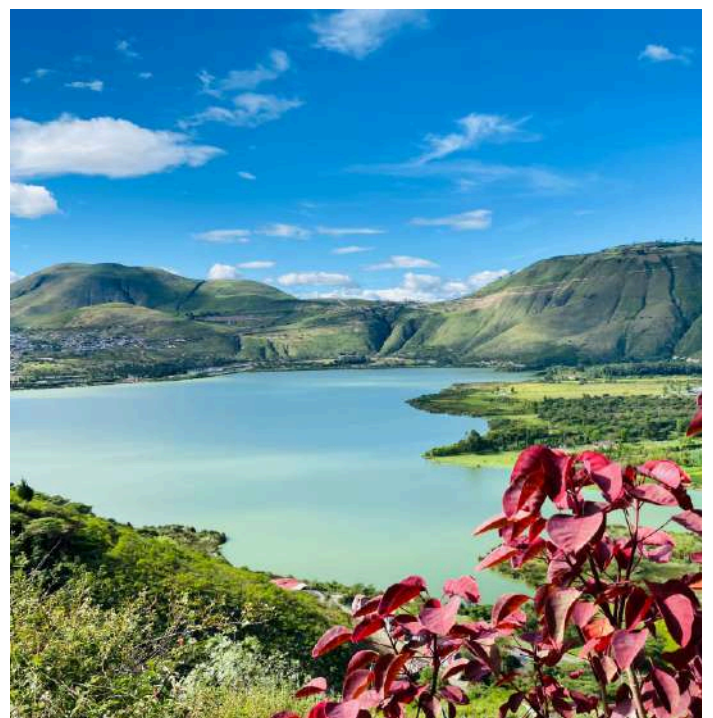
**Loja**, land of music and coffee, offers a romantic and bohemian air. Imagine a ceremony surrounded by coffee plantations and a toast accompanied by live serenades, with an experience of touring the coffee route.

**Orellana**, in the Amazon, is a destination for adventurous couples. There, the jungle becomes a witness to an "I do" that connects with the very essence of life.

**Manabí**, with its virgin beaches and unparalleled gastronomy, invites weddings by the sea in an intimate and warm environment.

**Galápagos**, although world-renowned, holds corners still little explored for boutique weddings, where luxury is nature itself.

Each of these destinations has something in common: they are authentic, different, and capable of charming both an international photographer and the grandmother who arrives from the nearest town.





# Why Does an Emerging Destination Charm Couples?

Because it is **authentic**: there are no molds; each wedding is designed from scratch.

Because it is **intimate**: they are less massive places, where the couple feels unique.

Because it is **competitive**: they offer luxury experiences at more accessible costs than saturated destinations.

Because it is **transformative**: the positive economic impact reaches communities that truly value it.

## Recommendations for Couples

As the director of **IADWP Ecuador**, I am proud to lead, along with my provincial colleagues, a constant effort to give visibility to these destinations. It is not just about dreaming, but about managing and building, through:

**Strategic alliances** with hotels, haciendas, and local authorities.

**Fam trips** that allow national and international planners to get to know the destinations firsthand.

**Field visits and networking** to open new collaboration opportunities.

**Institutional efforts** so that the private and public sectors join this mission.

Our goal is clear: to position Ecuador as a country of destination weddings, but starting by empowering our local couples to value what is ours. Because I am convinced that when we ourselves consume what we have, it is much easier to show it to the world with pride.

If you are an Ecuadorian or international couple dreaming of a different wedding, here are some tips from my experience:

**Dare to look beyond the obvious**; emerging destinations are hidden treasures.

**Trust a local planner**; we are the ones who know the routes, the suppliers, and the secrets of the place.

**Think in experiences, not just scenarios**; a wedding is not just the ceremony, it is the journey, the culture, and the people around you.

**Be part of the positive impact**; choosing an emerging destination means supporting communities and generating a legacy.

**Enjoy the authenticity**; do not seek to copy a Pinterest wedding; create your own, with its own identity and Ecuadorian seal.



Ecuador has everything to become a world reference for destination weddings, and the best part is that the path begins here, at home, with our own couples saying, ***"I want to get married in my land, but with an international gaze."***

That is the true power of emerging destinations: they teach us to value what is ours, to fall in love with our country all over again, and to show the world that in Ecuador, we have more than enough magic to celebrate love. As a wedding planner, as a woman in love with Ecuador, and as the director of IADWP, I will continue working so that every corner that is still silent can become a stage that shouts love. Because couples deserve weddings with soul, and Ecuador, more than a destination, is a promise fulfilled.

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# How to Create a Unique Experience for Each Couple

Weddings with Identity

**Weddings are much more than a social event. They are an intimate reflection of the story of two people who decide to unite their lives. In a world where immediacy and the "standardized" seem to be gaining ground, today more than ever, couples seek to celebrate their love authentically, with an experience that speaks of them, their essence, and their way of loving.**

When we talk about weddings with identity, we refer to celebrations that are not copied or repeated. They are weddings born from listening, from a deep understanding of the couple, and from the creation of a setting where every guest can say, "This is exactly them. This is who they are, this is how they love."

## The Power of Identity in a Wedding

A wedding with identity is not measured by the luxury of the floral arrangements or the magnitude of the party, but by the truth it conveys. It is about turning the couple's memories, symbols, and details into tangible moments:

The scent of the bride's favorite flower accompanying the path to the altar.

The song that marked their history playing at the instant they see each other for the first time.

A typical dish that recalls family roots served amidst an international banquet.

A setting that relates to their story: the farm where they met, the city they dreamed of visiting, or the beach where they had their first kiss.

It is these gestures that make each wedding unique and unrepeatable, because no love story is the same as another.





# My Story and My Path in Events

I am Kathryn Martinez. I was born in Montería, in the heart of the Colombian Caribbean, and I arrived in Bogotá at 21 with a suitcase full of dreams. For this girl from the provinces, landing in the capital was an opportunity to spread my wings in a big city full of challenges, but also infinite possibilities.

Together with my partner, we started a small furniture and decoration company with just 150 chairs. I never imagined that those first steps would lead me, years later, to produce large-scale events and even presidential inaugurations.

I was trained in the world of events from the backstage: carrying furniture, setting up decorations, and supporting organizers in silence, observing every detail. Over time, the opportunity to get formally trained presented itself, and I embraced it with all the responsibility and love that this profession demands. Since then, every setup, every wedding, and every event has been a stage for learning and growth for me.

Today, I can proudly say that I love representing my country at every opportunity, showcasing the talent, the beauty of our destinations, and the warmth of our people through every destination wedding I produce.



# My Journey in Romance Tourism

Romance tourism opened the doors for me to go beyond logistics: it allowed me to connect cultures, stories, and dreams through weddings. I have accompanied couples who have trusted me to celebrate their love in magical settings in Colombia like Cartagena, Villa de Leyva, Bogotá, Santa Marta, and the Coffee Axis, and also couples from countries like Mexico, Panama, the Dominican Republic, and Aruba who have chosen Colombia as their dream setting.

From each experience, I take away unique memories: brides who wanted to recreate their favorite childhood cake, couples who dreamed of weddings inspired by a New York museum or a work of art, and who saw that dream become a reality on their big day. That is my passion: to ground each couple's dream and transform it into a real and exciting bridal experience.





# Keys to Designing a Wedding with Identity

**1. Listen with the Heart:** Beyond logistics, it is necessary to understand the essence of the couple: what inspires them, what moves them, what they wish to share with the world.

**2. Choose the Perfect Destination:** Every place has a different soul; some radiate elegance, others romanticism, others adventure. The choice must resonate with the couple's story.

**3. Bring Symbols to Life:** It could be a color, a ritual, an object, or a tradition. When integrated authentically, it becomes the unique seal of the wedding.

**4. Design a Complete Narrative:** From the invitation to the last dance, everything should speak the same language. The wedding should feel like a book that is opened, read, and treasured.

**5. Create Memorable Emotions:** The details that touch the soul are the ones that last forever: a handwritten letter at each table, an unexpected toast, a surprise planned just for the couple.

**6. Select the Right Wedding Planner:** Choosing a wedding planner will always be the key to the success of a celebration. With my guidance and the support of my team, the couple has the certainty that every detail will be cared for with dedication and excellence. This investment should not be seen as an expense, but as the guarantee of living an incredible, fluid, and authentic wedding.

## Conclusion

Weddings with identity are not a passing trend; they are a reflection of what today's couples seek: to celebrate life with authenticity and true love.

As a Wedding Planner, my mission goes beyond organizing events: it is to transform spaces, create atmospheres, and bring dreams to life. I do not organize "perfect" weddings, but authentic weddings, that convey the essence of those who dare to love without limits.

Every wedding I organize is also part of my own story, because behind every glance of complicity and every "I do," I too am transformed. I confirm, time and again, that love, when celebrated with identity, is the most powerful experience that exists.

**Kathryn Martinez**  
@kathrynplanner  
Colombia

A close-up photograph of a chef's hands in a dark uniform, pouring a vibrant orange-red sauce from a spoon onto a gourmet dish. The dish is elegantly plated on a light blue ceramic plate and features seared meat, a green vegetable, and other ingredients. The background is softly blurred, showing another person's hands and a bowl, creating a professional kitchen atmosphere.

# Gastronomic Experiences that Surprise at Events



Besides the decoration, the venue, or the music of an event, a factor that leaves a mark on the memory and palate of the attendees is the gastronomy. Increasingly, Wedding & Event Planners are committed to transforming food into a sensory experience that excites and surprises. It's no longer just about eating well; it's about living the flavor.

The most exclusive events on the planet are betting on multi-sensory, interactive, and memorable gastronomic experiences. The times when food at events was limited to trays of snacks and rigidly served main courses are long gone. Today, food is not just consumed; it is lived. From live cooking stations to immersive experiences that fuse art, technology, and flavor, events become stages where the chef is an artist and the dish, an ephemeral work of art.

One of the most surprising formats is the "chef on stage," where guests watch their dish being prepared at the moment, interact with the ingredients, and can even choose them. They don't just eat: they learn, they converse, and they celebrate the culinary process of each proposal.

Some events take gastronomy even further, turning each dish into a chapter of a story. In themed events, the menu becomes a script, and the diners become protagonists of a completely sensory and immersive experience.

Mixology has evolved at the same pace as gastronomy. In many events, bars cease to be service stations and are transformed into sensory laboratories. At high-level events, the cocktail is no longer a drink but an artistic experience. Ephemeral bars, molecular mixology, local ingredients, and spectacular presentations are now the standard. Some events even integrate aromas, lights, and sounds when serving a drink, achieving a multi-sensory pairing that goes beyond taste.





Another trend that has gained popularity is live gastronomic workshops during social or corporate events. Whether participating in a guided tasting or creating desserts with ingredients of their own selection, active participation makes the guests part of the show.

This is not only fun: it generates connection, encourages conversation, and turns a dinner into a shared memory.



The new gastronomic experiences not only seek to surprise but also to raise awareness. Sustainability is already influencing the way event menus are designed: local ingredients, creative plant-based alternatives, and reinvented ancestral cooking techniques.

Furthermore, integration with sensory technology (augmented reality, 3D sound, intelligent lighting) promises to take event gastronomy to dimensions we are just beginning to explore.

Food at events is no longer just part of the protocol: it is a way of narrating, exciting, and connecting. In a world where the sensory is increasingly valued, these surprising gastronomic experiences remind us that, many times, the way to a guest's heart is also through their palate.

**Mirta Sánchez**

Chapter Head Dominican Republic & The Caribbean  
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# The Power of a Good Supplier in Weddings

A large, ornate hall with high ceilings and arched windows is being prepared for a wedding. Several staff members in blue shirts and dark aprons are working. In the foreground, a woman is arranging a large bouquet of white roses on a table covered with a gold sequined cloth. In the background, a man is hanging strings of warm white lights from the ceiling, and other staff are setting up tables and floral arrangements. The atmosphere is warm and festive, with soft lighting and a bokeh effect from the lights.

In a wedding, where emotions overflow and every glance becomes a memory, there is a mechanism that sustains the magic.

Suppliers are responsible for transforming what the couple imagined in their dreams into a real experience. Choosing them well is not a minor detail; it is the key to an unforgettable wedding.

## Beyond the Contract, the Supplier is Your Ally

Signing a contract ensures a service, but a good supplier offers much more: vision, commitment, and creativity.

A true ally does not wait for exact instructions; they understand the couple's style and interpret it with sensitivity.

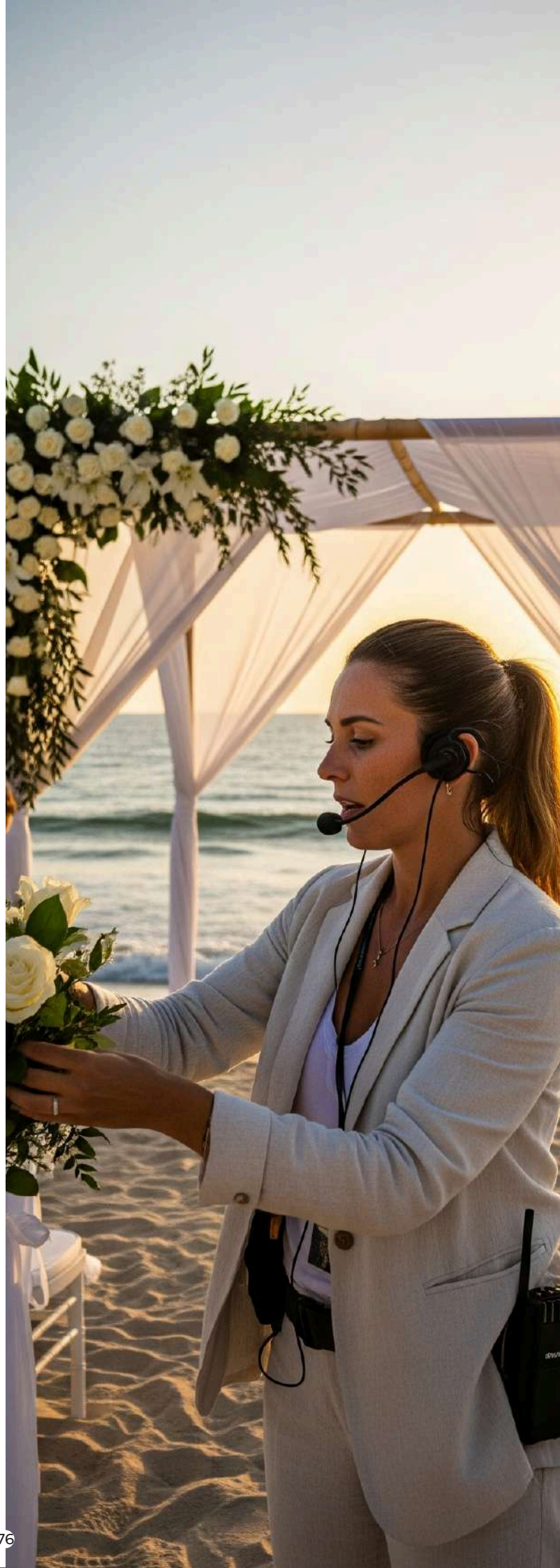
Moreover, they are willing to suggest, to innovate, and to build solutions when obstacles arise.

The ability to react is what differentiates a hired service from an ally who defends your dream as if it were their own.

## A Supplier You Trust Creates Peace of Mind

Organizing a wedding is exciting, but also stressful. The couple spends a lot of time planning and dreaming of their big day, and there is no room for second chances—everything has to be perfect.

This is where the power of trust comes in: when a supplier conveys security, it frees the couple from anxiety.





A supplier with experience is capable of facing any unforeseen event and is not frightened by challenges.

## Quality That is Felt and Remembered

Technical details often go unnoticed, but quality is perceived in the whole. A guest may not know that the glassware is imported or that the flowers arrived that very morning from another country, but they will remember the feeling of being in a well-cared-for, harmonious, and fluid environment.

The music that accompanies the dinner, the perfect timing of each toast, the texture of the cake, the light that turns the dance floor into a magical stage... all of this creates memories that last. And behind those memories are suppliers who love their craft and demand the best from themselves.

A good supplier doesn't just deliver a product: they offer experiences that touch the senses and are engraved in your memory and that of your guests.

## The Synergy of a Team

Successful weddings do not depend on a single protagonist, but on the team formed by all the suppliers. Planner, photographer, florist, decorator, DJ, caterer, pastry chef... each one plays their part, but together they make the celebration a symphony.

When communication is clear and the experience flows, the setup seems like a choreography, the musicians' rehearsal. Everything happens in perfect harmony.

An experienced supplier understands that they are not competing with others, but integrating. Their greatest success is not to stand out individually, but to make the couple and the entire event shine. That synergy is the true power of a good team.



# The Power of Choosing Well

At a wedding, the dress can be dazzling, the location majestic, and the decoration impeccable, but if the suppliers are not aligned, the result is felt. That is why choosing suppliers is not a formality; it is a strategic decision that defines the success of the wedding.

A good supplier is a problem solver and a creator of moments. They are the hands that hold the illusion, the minds that transform ideas into realities. Investing in them is investing in peace of mind, in tangible quality, and in memories that will live forever.

And at the end of the day, when everything is over and the music fades, what remains are not the contracts or the invoices, but the certainty of having lived a unique experience, woven by professionals who love what they do.



# Practical Tips for Choosing Your Suppliers

## How to choose a good supplier:

**Review their track record and experience** in the type of event you desire.

**Ask for references** from previous clients or acquaintances.

**Evaluate their responsiveness:** a good supplier answers quickly, clearly, and with solutions, not excuses.

**Look for personal affinity:** you will be interacting with them for months; chemistry matters as much as professionalism.

## Warning Signs

**Prices that are too low compared to the market:** what's cheap can end up being very expensive.

**Lack of clear and detailed contracts:** without written rules, the risks increase.

**Not having a plan B for unforeseen events.**

**Lack of communication or constant evasiveness:** if they don't respond well during planning, imagine on the wedding day.

**Conflict with other suppliers.**

**Not being an organized company.**

**Marypily Lopez**

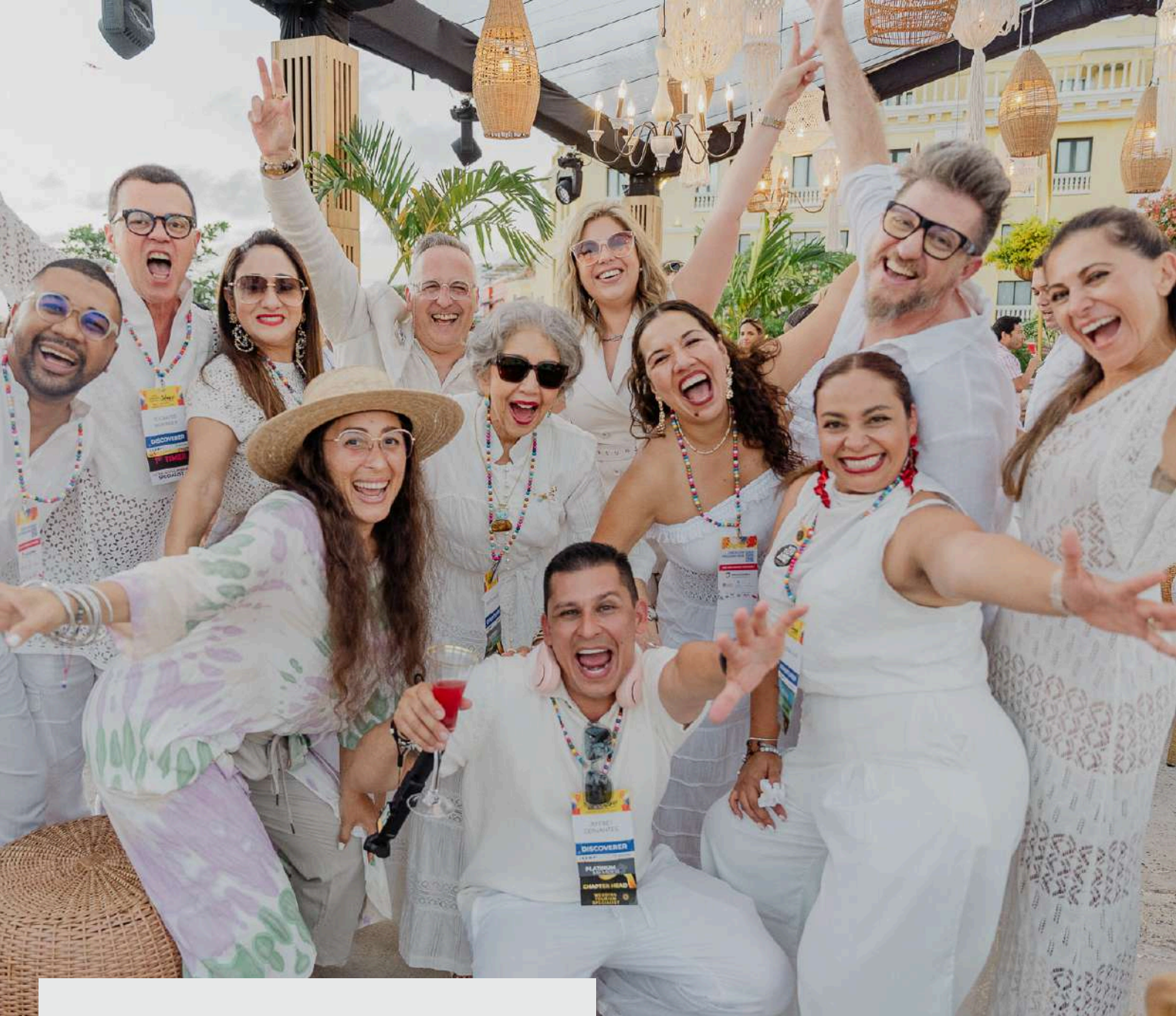
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A man and a woman are smiling and posing together. The man is wearing a black shirt, and the woman is wearing a black strapless dress. They are standing in front of a backdrop that features large green leaves, yellow butterflies, and a house with a tiled roof. The word "Living" is written in a cursive font at the top right, and "MAACONT" is written in a bold, sans-serif font below it.

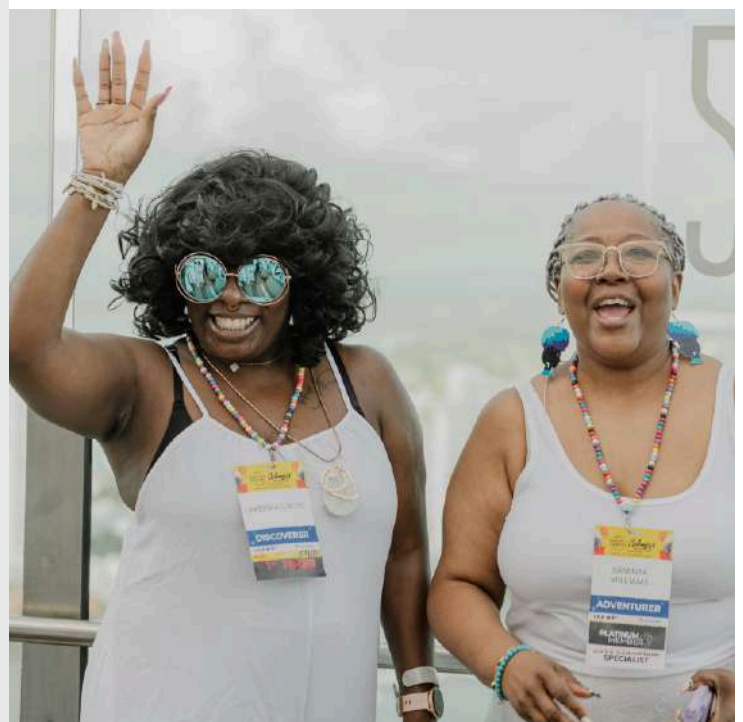
# Costa Rica

The Central American  
Switzerland of Romance  
will host the World  
Romance Travel Conference.



The "Pura Vida" country dresses up to welcome the elite of the wedding and romance tourism industry. From November 3rd to 6th, the luxurious JW Marriott Guanacaste at Hacienda Pinilla will be the epicenter of the World Romance Travel Conference, an event that promises to revolutionize the bridal sector in Costa Rica.

Organized by the International Association of Destination Wedding Professionals (IADWP), this world-class congress is not just a meeting; it is the gathering point for the best Wedding Planners who design the most spectacular events in the most exotic destinations in the world. After being held in iconic cities like Cartagena, Colombia, and the Riviera Maya, Mexico, the conference finally lands in the land of "Pura Vida," an unprecedented honor for the country.



# An Immersion into the World of Dream Weddings

The IADWP has managed to bring together more than 200 of the most influential and successful Wedding Planners from North America, as well as select professionals from Europe and Latin America. These experts, with a keen eye for detail and a global network of contacts, are here with a single purpose: to discover and connect with the best suppliers in Costa Rica to create unparalleled wedding experiences for their clients.

The event's program is as intense as it is promising. For three days, attendees will participate in a marathon of activities designed to foster collaboration and professional growth:

**Networking on the trade floor:** A vibrant space where suppliers and planners will meet face-to-face.

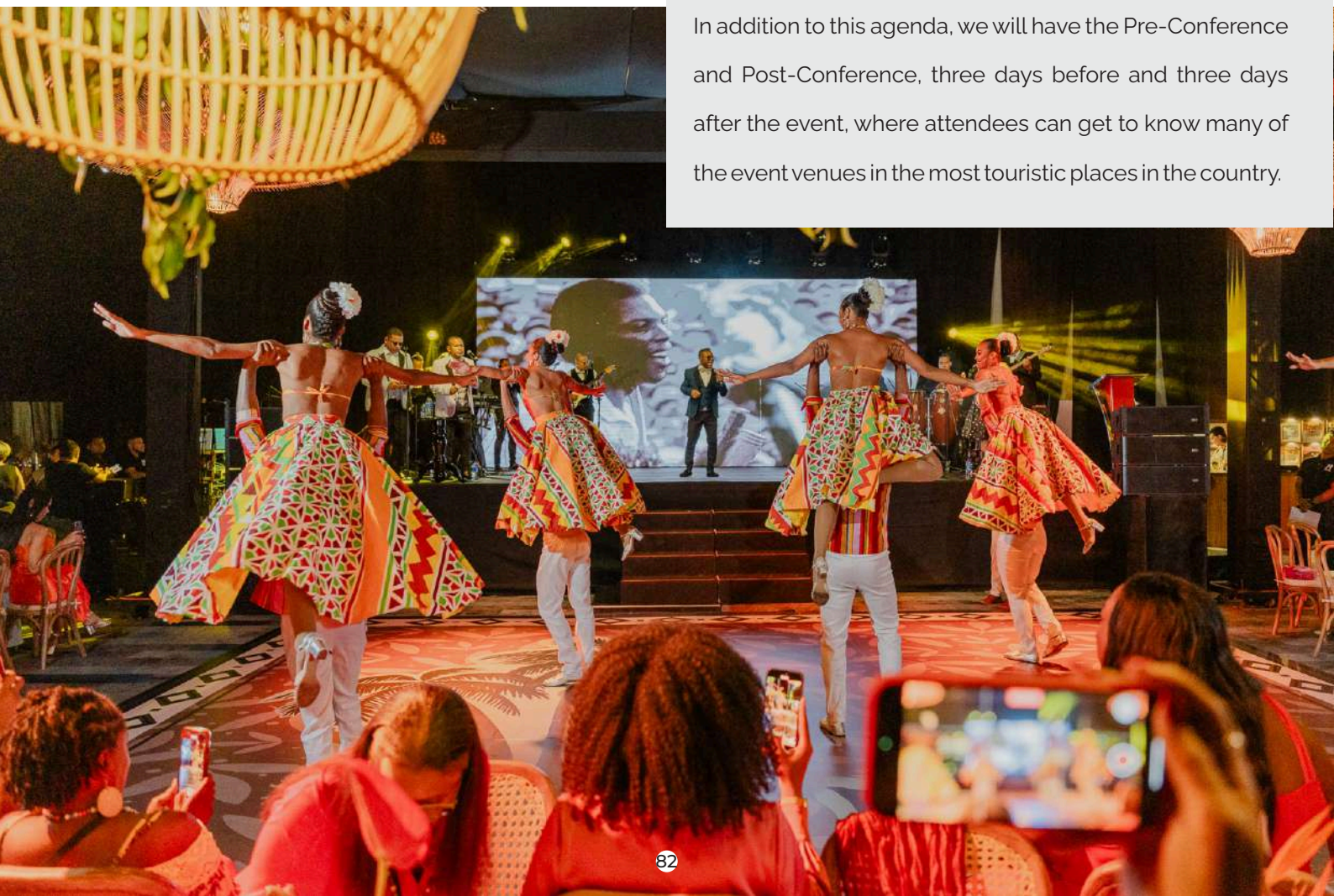


**Personalized business meetings:** One-on-one opportunities to discuss projects and seal deals.

**Trainings and congresses:** Keynote speeches and workshops given by industry leaders, addressing the latest trends, tools, and challenges of the destination wedding market.

**Exclusive social events:** Evenings designed for informal networking, allowing the magic of business to happen in a relaxed and sophisticated atmosphere of camaraderie.

In addition to this agenda, we will have the Pre-Conference and Post-Conference, three days before and three days after the event, where attendees can get to know many of the event venues in the most touristic places in the country.



# Costa Rica on the Romance Map

The arrival of the World Romance Travel Conference is a monumental milestone for Costa Rica. The country has been globally recognized for its ecotourism and adventure, but this event firmly positions it as a top-tier wedding destination. The presence of the most important Wedding Planners from the North American market, the main source of destination weddings, is a golden opportunity for Costa Rican Wedding Planners, photographers, videographers, hoteliers, bridal service providers, travel agencies, transport operators, DJs, caterers, venues, mixology companies, and local florists to showcase the best they have to offer.

Beyond business, this event is a celebration of love and the art of planning an unforgettable day. It is proof that Costa Rica not only offers breathtaking landscapes and unparalleled biodiversity but also the infrastructure and human talent to orchestrate world-class ceremonies. The professionals visiting the country are not just looking for a pretty place; they are looking for an experience, a story to tell. Costa Rica, with its warmth, its exuberant nature, and its exceptional service, has all the credentials to become an undisputed leader in the region.



The World Romance Travel Conference is not just an event; it is a declaration: Costa Rica has arrived to stay on the map of the most exclusive destination weddings in the world. This congress will open the doors to countless opportunities, consolidating the country's reputation as the perfect setting for the most memorable "I do" of all.

## **MSc. Jeffrey Cervantes Calderón**

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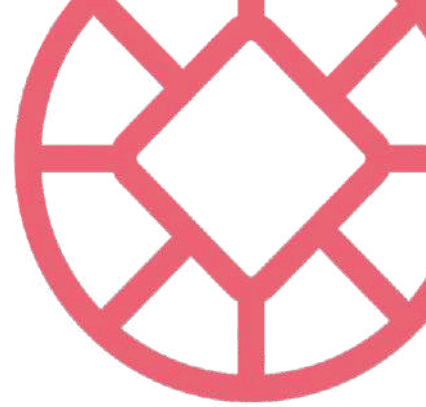
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Diana Sciarrillo is a renowned luxury event designer and founder of I Do, Guatemala, with 17+ years creating bespoke weddings. Named among the Top 20 Destination Wedding Planners worldwide, she promotes Guatemala globally through her award-winning work, media features, and collaborations with INGUAT.



**Nadia Gallo**

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Nadia Gallo is the founder of WHEN I TRAVEL in the US and Mexico, with over 17 years of experience in hospitality. As a travel advisor, she focuses on exceptional customer service and specializes in destination weddings across Mexico, Europe, and the Caribbean.



**Lucy Ferreira De Abreu**

Lucy Ferreira Wedding  
Planner

Regional Chapter Leader  
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Lucy Ferreira, a Luso-Venezuelan architect with a Master's from Harvard, found her passion for destination weddings after marrying in Oaxaca. With 10+ years of experience, she has boosted Oaxaca's wedding tourism and now serves as Executive Director of IWEA, holding multiple international certifications.



**Mel George**

Mel George Weddings /  
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Mel George is a destination wedding expert and founder of a travel agency and Mel George Weddings, specializing in luxury intercultural celebrations. After attending an IADWP congress in Colombia, she expanded her expertise beyond travel to full wedding planning. Today, she delivers seamless, culturally rich destination weddings.

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