

# FOOD + WINE

Pretty in

# PINK

A COLORFUL BRIDESMAID LUNCHEON  
USHERS IN THE WEDDING SEASON

La Tavola's paisley Gypsy Watermelon linen drapes the table, decorated with pink hydrangeas.





“IT WAS A GATHERING OF AMAZING, SMART, AND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN who all loved and deeply appreciated the guest of honor,” says event planner Merryl Brown. The bride-to-be and her dearest friends and family members gathered around a pale-pink and lime-green paisley tablecloth adorned with antique sterling silver candy dishes filled with fuchsia M&M’s and vases of blush-color hydrangeas picked fresh from Brown’s garden. “We chose green and pink because they were the guest of honor’s favorite colors and they matched her favorite Pucci dress,” says Brown. “And by coincidence, she wore that dress to the party!”

For the outdoor lunch, the ladies enjoyed the sunshine and sweet sounds of Brazilian guitar strings while sipping fresh lemonade and brisk iced tea. They nibbled on seasonal fare—an organic arugula salad drizzled with truffle oil, an orzo and goat cheese pasta salad, asparagus soup, and slices of fresh fruit prepared by Brown and the hostess of the party.

Afterward, to top off the meal with something sugary, the ladies strolled down to the guest cottage, where they were greeted by an ambience of blooming

## ORZO & ARUGULA SALADS

1 one-pound box of orzo • 1 large yellow onion, chopped  
 1/3 c. olive oil • Pinch of salt for the onion • 2 c. sugar plum tomatoes, cut in half • 1 c. feta cheese, crumbled • 1 c. pine nuts, toasted • 3 tbsp. capers, rinsed • 1 can of whole artichoke hearts packed in water, quartered • juice from two lemons  
 Fresh parsley, basil, and/or mint, minced • salt and pepper to taste

1 bag baby arugula • 1/2 c. Marcona almonds  
 2 tbsp. white truffle oil • salt to taste • Parmesan cheese, shaved

Cook orzo in boiling salted water for nine minutes. Rinse under cold water until completely cool before adding other ingredients. Sauté onion and olive oil over medium heat. Put a pinch of salt on the onion while cooking. Cook onion for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until it is translucent. In a large bowl, toss the warm onion and oil with the cooled orzo. Add tomatoes, feta, pine nuts, capers, artichoke hearts, lemon juice, herbs, and sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.

Toss to combine. Place arugula in a separate bowl. Add Marcona almonds and truffle oil and toss to combine, seasoning with salt to taste. On a plate, place a portion of the orzo next to a portion of the arugula. Top arugula salad with shaved Parmesan cheese. Serves six.



dahlias and “the real piece de resistance,” says Brown—a cupcake trailer. Los Olivos-based Enjoy Cupcakes’ vintage Shasta painted in bright Tiffany blue, white, and yellow delivered batches of sugary confections in fun flavors such as ginger lime Chardonnay, its signature chocolate blackberry Syrah, and vanilla bean crème brûlée.

Filled with sweet treats and billows of laughter, guests departed with a book of poetry about friendship designed with a custom bookplate engraved with the bride’s name and date of the party. ■

LEFT TO RIGHT: The bakery’s 1964 Shasta Airflyte antique trailer; inspired by local produce and wines, Enjoy creates ginger lime Chardonnay cupcakes. OPPOSITE: Beautiful blooms adorn the tables by the guest cottage.



### SOMETHING OLD is SOMETHING NEW

Event planner Merryl Brown’s tips on personalizing a party

**BE CREATIVE** Troll thrift and vintage shops for unique items. A little paint, a few stitches, or five minutes with a hot-glue gun can transform old or found objects into new treasures.

**BE UNEXPECTED** Mix gorgeous antiques with simple but beautiful relics from nature. Picture antique crystal combined with iridescent-green mossy stones.

**BE RESOURCEFUL** Look around your home; figure out a new way to use your own pieces in your event decor. We have sets of vases that we use over and over, sometimes they are filled with locally sourced flowers or one large succulent, or we may just use them as votive holders.

**BE SCHOLARLY** Go back to the history books and do your research. Find old styles and think about how to make them new again. Whether it’s vintage elegance from the 1920s or sensible modernity from the ‘50s.

**BE BRIGHT** A few properly placed up lights, pin spots, and gobos can transform a tired old venue into a wonderful new space.