

The idea not only adds warmth and a personal touch, but helps to cut costs as well, according to Williams.

Rather than a formal, plated sit-down meal, the couple has chosen to host a little more relaxed dinner setting by having stations with chefs on hand to carve beef, ham and turkey with rolls and side dishes. Although it took some convincing of her fiancé, Williams also chose one somewhat unusual station to keep her guests both fed and entertained.

"We're having a mashed potato bar," she says. "The chef will put mashed potatoes in a stemless martini glass and the guests will add toppings like caramelized onions, shredded cheese, bacon crumbles, butter and sour cream."

David Ouimet, chef and owner of Purple Sage Catering, and Brian and Laura Justice, chefs and co-owners of Tasteful Temptations catering, often team up to create the ideal setting for a bride's reception. They agree that one of

the hottest trends for 2009 is an emphasis on fresh, local and regional dishes and native infused foods.

"Buying regionally is important to many of the brides now," Ouimet says.

"There is a real push for seafood, cheeses, vegetables and fruits – everything we can get locally."

He stressed the importance of accommodating

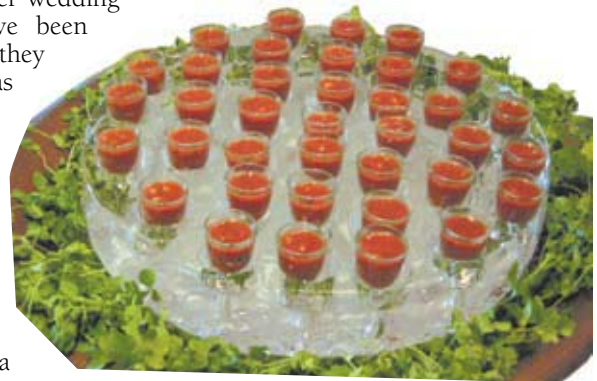
the bride on her wedding day. "Most brides have been dreaming of this day since they were kids," he says. "It has to be special."

Some of the most requested regional reception foods include a seafood gazpacho; Sapelo Island clams; Vidalia onion dip with smoked bacon; wild Georgia shrimp over stone ground grits with local chevre and a

grilled peach, habanera and pecan chutney with sweet potato butter; and sweet tea brined Caw-Caw Creek pork chops.

Other popular trends for 2009 include innovative hors d'oeuvres and the mini-entrée, according to Brian Justice. Some favorites include oyster shooters with pepper vodka and cucumber relish, mini chicken pot pies, bite-sized tournedos of beef and sliders – miniature sandwiches or burgers. The mini size keeps the food completely recognizable but exciting for guests.

Ouimet described a fun and unique starter as a sip, "like soup in a shot glass," with poached rock lobster, tomatillo salsa, cilantro and a lime emulsion or a spring pea puree made



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