



wedding boutique, is Seattle's only seller of Conscious Clothing wedding dresses, pretty designs made in luxurious blends of hemp and organic silk and ranging from \$800 to \$1,300. These dresses have a gorgeous drape and sheen that rival the more ubiquitous, factory-made styles. Blue Sky also offers dozens of secondhand wedding dresses at about 50 percent off the original price, many of which have never been worn. We spotted a lush Vera Wang for \$3,000 and a never-worn, last-year Lazaro for \$2,800. "Sometimes the color is wrong," owner Jen Akin says, "or the bride changes her mind. Either way, a beautiful dress goes to a woman who might not have thousands to spend on a gown, and the planet is all the better for it."

Lessons for a Show-Stopping First Dance

TANGO ARGENTINO

The new trend in the first dance is to bust out with surprise hip-hop moves, break dance or reenact a famous movie scene (à la the YouTube *Dirty Dancing* first-dance classic). While we love a good comedy routine, we're even more smitten by the first-dance trend of doing the Argentine tango. The instruction from award-winning dancers Tony Fan and Ilana Rubin of Tango Argentino will ensure that you don't miss a step (or dip). Classes range from \$50 per hour to \$80 for an eight week course.

NATALIE FOBES



Lara Seefeldt and Albert Coburn danced the tango at their August 18, 2007, wedding

three generations of dancers from the same family and realized that he had played at two of their weddings and one anniversary party. "I remembered each one of their favorite songs," Benson laughs. With an impressive repertoire of music ranging from Frank Sinatra to Justin Timberlake, it's clear why the Michael Benson Band has soared to the top of our list for the sixth year in a row.

DJ for the Reception

WAVE LINK MUSIC

Brian Dale, the owner of Mill Creek-based Wave Link Music, isn't interested in playing a cookie-cutter song list or soundtrack. "I encourage my couples to reach into their history and pull out songs that will make their wedding unique to them," he says. Couples know they are in good hands with Dale's 20 years of experience that includes hundreds of weddings across Washington state. So with all due respect to Kool and the Gang and the Village People, how does Dale—a second-year winner in this category—keep the show fresh and unique? "I like to throw on something they wouldn't have thought of and watch the dance floor go crazy because they haven't heard the song in 20 years," he laughs.

Musicians for the Ceremony

WINDSONG TRIO

Megan Imrie, founder of Seattle-based Windsong Trio, has been sending Washington brides down the aisle to timeless classical compositions for more than 28 years. Imrie, who began playing music when she was 2 years old, works with brides to create a unique wedding sound that will linger in their minds long after the nuptials are over. Windsong Trio (actually a company of 12 flute, trumpet and string musicians) consistently delivers flawless, elegant performances that have put it at the top of our list for three years. "I just make sure I work with musicians that can help the bride make beautiful music," says Imrie modestly. "My co-workers appreciate and understand that we only get one shot at this, so we want to make sure that we do it perfectly."

Place for First-Dance Instruction

CENTURY BALLROOM

Your first dance as husband and wife should be a joyful moment—not an awkward one. Hallie Kuperman, ace hooper and owner of Capitol Hill's Century Ballroom, says the only way

to lighten lead feet is to just get out there and start moving. Kuperman doesn't just talk the talk; as a dance instructor since 1991, she's out on the dance floor teaching dancers of all ages beginner and advanced moves. Twelve different instructors teach Century Ballroom's lively group classes in swing, salsa and the tango almost every night of the week. Once you're comfortable with the basic steps, schedule a private lesson closer to the event to polish off the rough edges. Couples with two sets of left feet are welcome to watch a class first and maybe grab a bite from the ballroom's fabulous café. Take the first steps and you're sure to find some moves that suit your celebration.

RECEPTION SITES, REHEARSALS AND HOTELS

New Reception Site

SANCTUARY AT ADMIRAL

As luck would have it, Sanctuary at Admiral, a grand, stylish mansion in West Seattle, recently sidestepped the all-too-common fate of going condo to become one of the newest and most sought-after reception sites in the city. Built in 1929, the Sanctuary was designed as a church by architect Gilbert C. Field. After 74 years of serving the devoted, the building briefly became a private residence and then made the transformation to a spectacular wedding venue that somehow suggests a combination of *The Secret Garden* with a fairy-tale castle. The Tudor-style hand-carved woodwork artfully contrasts with a large contemporary kitchen that is open to the event space, while complementing the 25-foot ceilings, 19th-century paintings, massive bay windows, quirky furnishings (such as vintage merry-go-round animals and an antique piano) and an English-style courtyard hidden behind wrought-iron fencing.

Northwest Destination Wedding Site

KIANA LODGE

Kiana, a Suquamish word that translates to "garden of the gods," is a western Washington classic. The tranquil lodge is located about an hour from Seattle in Poulsbo on the lush Kitsap Peninsula. Couples feel as if they've entered another world when they step onto Kiana's breathtaking waterfront property and gaze across Agate Passage. The six-acre estate includes manicured gardens, the rustic and cozy Main Lodge and the bright and airy Garden Atrium. All three areas are designed for ceremonies or receptions, and overlook an expansive