

Rehearsal Dinners
Modern Bride
August 2003

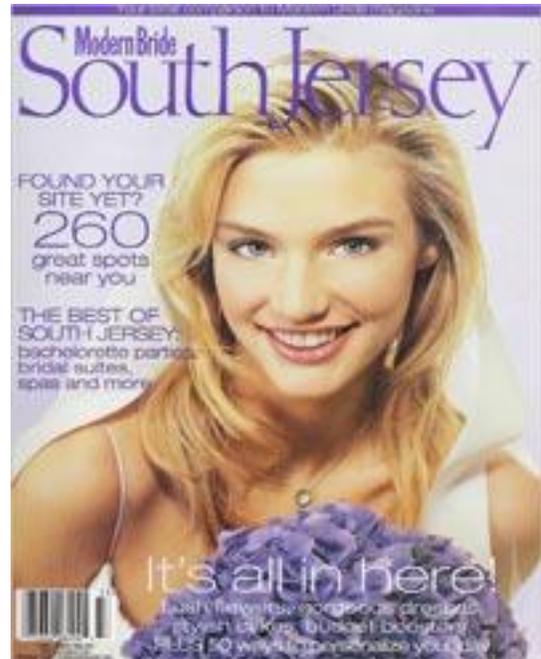
When your wedding rehearsal is over, that pesky To Do list should finally be empty! Now you've earned a little relaxation with your nearest and dearest: a chance to kick back and anticipate the next day. Whether you opt for a formal, sit-down dinner or a mix and mingle cocktail hour and buffet, the Philadelphia area offers a veritable smorgasbord of restaurants.

Set up married life for smooth sailing by dining in style on The Moshulu. Without leaving Penn's Landing, you will feel as if you're on an exotic vacation on this largest four-master still afloat. Its name means "fearless" and its nearly century of service includes stints in both world wars. If your guests are more adventuresome diners, they will enjoy the Sesame Crusted Ahi Tuni served with baby Bok Choy and a ginger soy glaze. Very popular among slightly more conservative diners is the char grilled filet mignon served with jumbo lump crabmeat.

Either way, the Moshulu's staff works with you to provide a truly unique experience. If you choose to dine below decks, the South Seas décor of rattan, bamboo and leather offset by muted earth tones, offers a sophisticated dining experience. If the weather cooperates, take your guests on deck to dine under the stars and thousands of tiny twinkling lights strung along the masts and rigging. The views of the Philadelphia skyline and waterfront are unparalleled.

The Moshulu, Penn's Landing, 401 S. Columbus Blvd., Philadelphia, 19106 215/923-2500

History fairly oozes from the intricate brickwork walls and through the leaded glass windows of the Aldie Mansion in Doylestown. The oak-paneled Library, perfect for groups up to 60, overlooks the terrace, gardens and fountain. It's elegant yet intimate and comfortable. Eat inside or out, or combine the two. A more casual dinner can include grilled pesto chicken and hot mulled cider. Or plan for a hearty pasta station with choices of vodka cream sauce, basil pesto or Bolognese with wild mushrooms. This restored Tudor mansion also has a new atrium space with floor to ceiling mullioned windows, able to accommodate up to 200 guests. Jeffrey Miller Catering is



the exclusive caterer there and works to customize your rehearsal dinner. Signature dishes include rosemary-encrusted rack of lamb and saffron-scented Spanish paella.

Aldie Mansion, 85 Old Dublin Pike, Doylestown, PA 18901 215/348-3509

If your goal is to try something completely different, then circa is for you. Never eaten in a restored bank vault? Now's your chance. The two vaults feel spacious and certainly provide lots of conversation points. Polished silver safety boxes hold flickering candles, that are reflected off a mirrored wall in the inner vault, which seats about 40 comfortably. Add the outer vault, and you can invite nearly 75. Although decorated in a simple, spare style, the rooms avoid a cold or intimidating feel. A pan broasted organic chicken, wood grilled spiced filet or crispy skin salmon are three popular choices at circa, or work with the staff to create your own menu. If your group is large, consider renting the whole main dining room, complete with a spectacular, 25-foot high cathedral ceiling and 45-foot antique mahogany bar.

circa, 1518 Walnut St., Philadelphia, 19102 215/545-6800

Imagine a gentle waterfall surrounded by an explosion of colorful wildflowers in summertime or pine boughs bent under the weight of winter snow. This peaceful setting is a trademark of the Cuttalossa Inn just a few miles north of New Hope in beautiful Bucks County. The menu changes seasonally along with the view, with a profusion of fresh fruits and vegetables from local growers supplementing such favorites as rack of lamb with garlic mashed potatoes or the house speciality, crab imperial, a soufflé that manages to be both light and rich. This tranquil location was once a major stagecoach stop on the Philadelphia to New York route as well as an active lumber mill. The ruins of the mill provide an historic backdrop for smaller groups. Two working fireplaces, Bucks County stone and roughhewn barn siding complement dining indoors for groups of up to 100.

Cuttalossa Inn, River Road, Lumberville, PA 18933 215/297-5082

First, indulge at Talamore at Oak Terrace, then stroll its formal gardens. The Ambler country club has several private rooms to accommodate intimate groups of 20 or an expanded guest list of up to 120. Your guests will love the homey feel of the Governor's room, recently renovated in the style of a library with fireplace and wood beams or the light and airy Sutherland Room with its high ceiling, stone fireplace and windows overlooking the golf course and lake. The soothing ambiance is the perfect setting for such appetite pleasers as Chicken Julia, broiled shrimp butterflied in lemon butter sauce or a filet mignon stuffed with boursin cheese and wrapped in bacon. Only about 20 minutes north of Philadelphia, the Talamore is the perfect spot to end single life.

Talamore at Oak Terrace, 723 Talamore Drive, Ambler, PA 19002 215/641-1300