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A RABBI'S REVELATION

David Wolpe finds reason for hope among Haiti's children

Beautiful Bridal Showers and Receptions on a Budget

by ELYSE GLICKMAN, Contributing Writer

Even if real life affects the bottom line of your bridal budget, you can still make your shower or brunch reception the first-class affair of your dreams.

Event manager Renata Burian-Ferguson and sommelier Paul Bologna at the Desert Springs JW Marriott Resort & Spa in posh Palm Desert share a few surprisingly simple ideas designed to make a memorable — and affordable — event spent with family and friends.

Tee Off for Teatime

Burian-Ferguson says English garden-style teas are never out of fashion, and there are some beautiful, modern ways to update the popular bridal shower theme simply by using hot color schemes (greens, blues and browns), some updated cocktails and creative edibles.

- Tea Forté not only makes fantastic artisanal teas but also tea-drinking accessories that guests can take home with them.
 - Because sun protection is a must, a crafty way to get guests interacting and shaded is by creating a hat-making station, where they can use ribbons, feathers, flowers and other notions to dress up basic hats. The makings of this group fashion statement are as accessible and affordable as neighborhood crafts stores, such as Michaels.
 - Make it a garden party, literally. Garnish the season's freshest vodka and gin drinks with edible flowers and leaves.
 - For guests not ready for liquor-based cocktails early in the day, you can serve fresh-squeezed health boosters with carrot, pomegranate, guava and wheatgrass juices.
 - Sushi for breakfast? Yes. Use slices and rectangular cubes of fruit to dress up blocks of sushi rice for an edible that's light, sweet and refreshing.
- Consider dressing up the tea party with a golf theme:

- Transform unused golf clubs and fresh



flowers into eye-catching centerpieces.

- Party favors can be double-entendres. For example, a crystal wine-bottle stopper bears a striking resemblance to a golf ball on a tee.
- Serve foods inspired by the hearty delicacies of such golf destinations as Scotland and Ireland: Try scones, potato cakes, oatmeal crème brûlée and smoked salmon in bite-size portions.

Happy-Hour Shower

Bologna notes that wine tastings built

around themes of favorite genres of wine (Californian, Italian, German) have become popular for weddings staged at the hotel. However, he notes that with a little research, you can achieve the same kind of "gee whiz" factor anywhere with a little bit of planning and a commitment to a favorite region or style of wine. When done right, the get-together can also be educational.

Here are some of Bologna's suggestions for a successful sipping session:

- Pick five or six wines that fit both the season

and favorite genre of wine, and order them by price or by intensity.

- Explain that there are phases of a sip:

1. Attack: first notes that hit the tongue
2. Midpalate: the fruits, woods and other nuances that spread across the tongue over several seconds.
3. Finish: the notes of the wine that linger at the end of the sip.

- Explain to your guests that *terroir* is a French descriptor that indicates a wine's geographical origin, as the wine takes on the unique characteristics of the soil in different locations. A Cabernet from Napa, for example, will be a very different from a Cabernet from Paso Robles.

- Visit a respected cheese shop or deli to provide cheeses that will pair with the various wines you select for your evening.

- Invest in fresh honeys, jams and nuts to serve with cheeses and quality crackers.

Well-Received Reception

Burian-Ferguson notes that although the sky's the limit when it comes to wedding planning at her property, many of the ideas are as accessible as your neighborhood gourmet food market, housewares store and farmers market.

- **Olive bar:** Feature different types of fresh and cured olives in giant martini glasses.
- **Pasta bar:** Offer the classics, plus gnocchi (potato dumplings), as well as toppings and sauces that can be mixed and matched to satisfy vegetarian and omnivore alike.
- **Heirloom tomato bar:** Include balsamic vinegar, olive oil and burrata cheese.
- **Cheese table:** Include dried fruits, honey and port, sherry and liqueurs.
- **Cocktails:** In a bowl or other oversize vessel, serve sangria, limoncello lemonade or mojitos.
- **Fruit-infused water:** Serve in pitchers or dispensers — very little effort for a luxurious, summery touch that quenches the thirst on a hot afternoon. ●

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WEDDINGS

['BLUE LAGOON' HONEYMOON]

by ELYSE GLICKMAN, Contributing Writer

Islands and honeymoons are a time-tested match made in heaven. Perhaps that's why so many newlyweds flit with Fiji, a gorgeous archipelago nation in the South Pacific.

This country is the embodiment of romance. One of its most recognizable islands is the Turtle Island resort, made famous as the backdrop for "The Blue Lagoon," the 1980 classic movie featuring Brooke Shields and Christopher Atkins as shipwrecked children on a tropical island.

Overall, the nation of more than 330 islands is a luxurious expanse of flora, fauna, surf and sand, enlivened with a mix of British, Melanesian, Polynesian and Indian

patterns occupying nearby vacation homes.

A visit to the Fijian capital of Suva on the opposite end of Viti Levu is a must. It has a full complement of vibrant colonial government buildings, museums and public gardens. It also happens to be home to the nation's small Jewish community. In 1881, 20-year-old Australian Henry Mark was the first Jew to settle in Fiji, where he was joined later by Jews from India, the Middle East and other Asian countries. Today's community of about 60 individuals is just as eclectic.

Still, for many honeymooners seeking an isolated, self-sustaining paradise, it all comes back to "The Blue Lagoon." The movie was filmed on Turtle Island, known as Nanuya



Fiji offers an isolated paradise for destination weddings and honeymoons. Photo by Elyse Glickman

cultural influences. Most days, the skies are deep blue, and when rains do hit, the showers are short and mild. Its garden-by-the-sea feel trickles over into its towns.

Adventurous couples will discover that Nadi, on the main island of Viti Levu, has plenty to keep them busy. Architecture buffs can wander the grounds of the colorful Sri Siva Subramaniya Hindu temple, while botanists should not miss the Garden of the Sleeping Giant (home of actor Raymond Burr's world-famous orchid collection). There are also local village tours, golfing and multi-island cruises.

Bargain hunters will be drawn to the bustling bazaar environment of Nadi's central business district, which can be as intense as open-air markets in Thailand and India. Those with more upscale tastes can head to Port Denarau. It serves the local Sheraton and Westin outposts as well as well-to-do ex-

Levu before cable television pioneer Richard Evanston purchased it in 1972.

More than an advertisement for Fiji, the film gave Evanston unexpected inspiration to transform his once private island dream into a resort devised almost exclusively for honeymoons and destination weddings.

Arrangements can be made for Jewish weddings, thanks to Turtle Island's planners based in Washington, not far from where Evanston grew up. The "Richard's Retreat" area where Evanston, who is not Jewish, married his current wife, has its own built-in *chuppah*. Devil's Beach and Honeymoon Beach, meanwhile, are great for an informal exchange of vows or a private picnic.

Although the island has a long tradition of Christian weddings, as well as a beautiful chapel, planners will also assist Jewish couples with special arrangements and with

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Jewelry

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prices. Speak with several jewelers.

"Often, customers come in again and again and again," Hahn said. "That way you can compare several options, and you also feel comfortable and confident with the jeweler you selected. It is so important that you feel comfortable with your jeweler."

Ask Questions

Asking questions allows you to assess the vendor and determine whether you feel comfortable enough to trust him and to ensure that you become educated and can make a knowledgeable decision before purchasing.

"You don't need to come in knowing anything, but you should leave with an educated

idea of diamonds," Bridal Rings Co.'s Hariz said. "A jeweler really should be making you knowledgeable enough to make a decision. The first rule of a good jeweler is to get the customer to know what he or she wants, not what the jeweler wants to sell."

Some questions, as suggested by jewelers:

- How long have you been in business?
- What are the store's policies? (See below.)
- If a ring is not certified or has a low grade, ask why.

Learn the Store's Policies

Unfortunately, problems can arise. Therefore, it is important to ask the seller: Does this store give money back or store credit for returns? Does it provide service, repair and upkeep free of charge? Does it have an upgrade policy? What is the warranty? ■

Fiji

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their gourmet meals.

While Shields and Atkins had each other and a tricked-out tree house in "The Blue Lagoon," they have nothing on what Turtle Island guests are able to enjoy. Expansive *bures* — wood-and-straw huts — come with hardwood interiors and their own hot tubs, top-shelf wines and spirits, dreamy bedding and delicious coconut-infused toiletries. Each couple has a "Bure Mama" or "Papa" who tends to their needs.

Activities available include scuba diving, snorkeling, mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking, kayaking or just enjoying one's *bure* with a glass of Moët and a good book when the occasional rains come.

It's little surprise, then, that a number of notables keep coming back to Turtle Island. Visitors who have made it their home-away-from-home include movie producer Andrew Tennenbaum ("The Bourne Ultimatum," "Water for Elephants"), Sen. John McCain (14 stays and counting), Al Gore, Eddie Van Halen, John Cleese and Ringo Starr.

From the moment his first guests arrived on Jan. 1, 1980, Evanston was determined to create an internationally acclaimed honeymoon destination that was rooted in nature and true to the Fijian way of life, and it continues to be a work in progress. Ongoing improvements include the preservation of

mangroves and coconut groves, the introduction of freshwater ponds to encourage bird life and the creation of a turtle release program designed to help save endangered green and hawksbill turtles.

Fruits and vegetables from Turtle Island's hydroponic gardens are transformed, along with fish and meats from New Zealand and Australia, into a wide assortment of globally inspired dishes under the guidance of French-Australian chef Jacques Reymond. The menu theme changes on a daily basis with the weekly Mongolian barbecue, Indian feast, American-style barbecue with a Polynesian spin standing as culinary highlights.

Nightly convivial group dinner begins with a nondenominational "grace" said in the Fijian language, and the staff does a choral performance every Sunday — a must for fans of world music. While the church vocals are stunning, more-religious Jewish couples inform general manager Alex Weiss about their preferences if they are uncomfortable.

A handful of couples keep to themselves but most visitors take advantage of these dinners, sometimes forming friendships that could last a lifetime. And so, while Evanston himself will insist the Turtle Island experience is a couple's-only affair, it is the sort of thing that ideally should be shared. Isn't that kind of warmth a big part of what romance is all about?

For more information, visit this story at jewishjournal.com. ■

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ISRAEL TRAVEL

[HAIFA A MANY-FACETED JEWEL]

by ELYSE GLICKMAN, *Contributing Writer*

Visiting Americans often compare Haifa with San Francisco for its hilly landscape and trendy, artsy neighborhoods, or Boston for its mix of academia and maritime culture. While this northern Israeli city is a weekend getaway for Jerusalemites and Tel Avivians, Haifa is also worth experiencing as a city of the future, with its expanding international influence as a high-tech center, or as a quaint port town with a rich, 3,000-year history.

Haifa is also a multicultural metropolis, frequently portrayed as a model of coexistence between Arabs and Jews. The third-largest city in Israel, it features six faiths and a variety of ethnic communities living together near the sea.

One of the city's most popular destinations is the Baha'i Gardens. Located on the northern slope of Mount Carmel, the UNESCO World Heritage site features a staircase of 19 landscaped "hanging gardens" that connect Haifa with the city of Akko, which holds great significance for Baha'is as the final resting place of their prophet, the Báb. The Baha'i Gardens offer awe-inspiring, panoramic views of the city, the Galilean hills and the Mediterranean Sea.

At the base of the Baha'i Gardens is the German Colony, the first of several colonies founded in the 19th century by the German Templars. Among its rustic stone houses is the boutique Colony Hotel (colonyhaifa.



Sign outside of a Haifa cafe. Photos by Elyse Glickman

com) whose manager and staff will candidly steer guests to their personal favorite places to eat, drink and shop in this beautifully preserved area. The surrounding neighborhood, which benefited from a gentrification renaissance in the '80s and '90s, is now peppered with colorful bars, cafes and a mall featuring outlet stores with discounts on several popular Israeli clothing brands.

Fascinating stories line the streets of the German Colony. Among the landmarks that recount Haifa's history is the home of eccentric 19th century author, mystic and diplomat Laurence Oliphant, whose secretary was poet Naftali Herz Imber, who penned "Hatikvah," Israel's national anthem.

The Haifa City Museum (hcm.org.il), or Beit Ha-am (literally, the "People's House") is the German Colony's keystone. Originally established as a public meeting space and school, several renovations have transformed the space into a museum with rotating exhibitions that focus on the city's past and future.

The Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art (tmja.org.il) at the crest of Mount Carmel is home to an impressive collection of more than 7,000 Japanese treasures donated by architect and art dealer Felix Tikotin. Tikotin's dream was that his collection would serve as a means to broaden Israelis' knowledge about Japan. A few

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The Baha'i Gardens, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Haifa

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steps away is the Haifa Museum of Art (hma.org.il), which houses a vivid permanent collection of contemporary painting, sculpture and prints by Israeli and foreign artists.

Other museums around Haifa include something for every visitor, from the Israeli National Maritime Museum (nmm.org.il) and MadaTech — The Israeli National Museum of Science (madatech.org.il) to the University of Haifa's Hecht Museum (mushecht.haifa.ac.il), the Railway Museum (rail.co.il) and the Museum of Edible Oil Production, which traces the 2,000-year history of cooking oil in Israel.

To engage in prime people-watching, stop by the "college town" neighborhoods surrounding Haifa University and the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology. The grounds around the universities constitute an international city within a city, attracting undergraduate and graduate students from around the world, some of whom work at Matam, Israel's first high-tech park, home to R&D divisions for companies such as Google, IBM, Qualcomm, Microsoft and Yahoo!. One of the most striking spots to witness the



Chanukah Gift Guide 2008

by Elyse Glickman, Contributing Writer

Here's some ideas for gifts that will continue to inspire long after the chanukah has been put away. Bling that bridges faith and fashion, a DVD from a local yoga instructor and a Western Wall locket from an Agoura Hills jewelry designer are a few ideas from Southern California and beyond that can make shopping for family and friends easier.



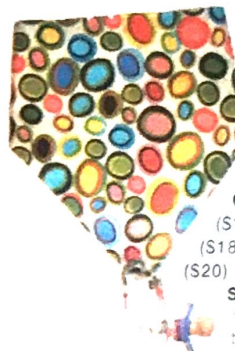
Los Angeles designer **Ellen Hart** offers an alternative to the tired "status bag" with **CareerBags** (<http://www.careerbags.com>), featuring handbags, clutches, laptop bags, messenger bags, babybags and yoga/pilates bags. The **Veronica London Wirkin Carpet Bag** for laptops, above, retails for \$140. Julie Lazarus, meanwhile, designs handbags based on the notion that style should never be sacrificed. Check out her 100 percent vegan handbag collection **Vivi by Elezar** (\$194-\$408, <http://www.elezar.com> or at Royal Dutchess in Studio City).



Those who wear their hearts on their sleeves, or anyplace where a message can fit on a T-shirt, will appreciate designs by Los Angeles-based **Awareables** (\$26-\$32, <http://www.awareables.com>).

Jewtina (\$20-\$25, <http://www.jewtina.com>), founded by **Adriana Lopez** and daughter, Breanna, is another clever T-shirt line for folks of all ages in the Jewish Latino community.

And **The Jewish Zodiac** (<http://www.jewzo.com>) takes the animals of Chinese astrology and replaces them with New York deli favorites. Born in the Year of the Dog? Fuhgeddaboutit. Now you're the Year of the Blintz. T-shirts (\$18-\$20), infant onesies (\$20) and other Jewish Zodiac products make this a fun, personal gift for family and friends.



Stella Rubinshteyn has created a treasure trove of mommy must-haves with **Tivoli Couture** (<http://www.tivolicouture.com>), including **Cuddle Bottle Blankets** (\$12), **iComfort Eye Pillows** (\$18), **Bandana Binky Bibs** (\$20) and **Luxury Reversible Stroller Liners** (\$80, \$130 for memory foam version) to avoid tired tushies.

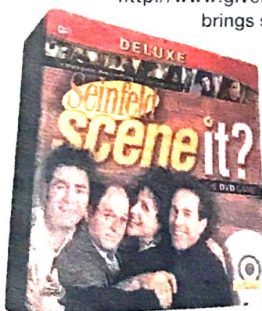


Rock Your Religion (<http://www.rockyourreligion.com>) combines ancient religious symbols with a rock star infusion, offering a Star of David as a necklace pendant (\$100) or mounted on a hand-crafted Italian leather cuff (\$125).



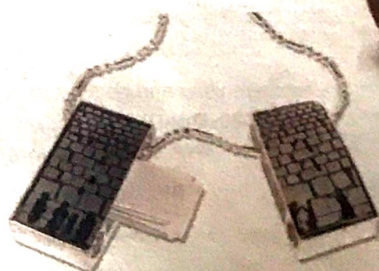
Whether capturing today's business meetings or baby's first words, dad will find himself all the more prepared for what life throws at him with the handheld digital stereo recorder, the **Zoom H2** (\$199, <http://www.samsontech.com>, also available at Best Buy and Amazon.com), which is compatible with both PC and Mac, can hold a 16-gigabyte SD card and features an on-board chromatic guitar/bass tuner.

Keep the conversation interesting past dreidels and sufganiyot with the **Scene It?** games (\$40, <http://www.sceneitgames.com>). The **Seinfeld Edition** gives players a chance to relive their favorite "Seinfeld" moments from each of the show's nine seasons. Kids can school their elders on everything cool with the **Disney Channel Edition**, featuring clips and trivia from "Hannah Montana," "High School Musical," "The Suite Life of Zack and Cody," "Wendy Wu" and more. **Given** (\$30, <http://www.givengame.org>), meanwhile, brings soul to the board game experience.



Move Jerusalem stone pieces from Egypt to Israel, and along the way learn important lessons about **tzedakah** (charity), while fielding questions about Jewish history, holidays, food, prayers and a long list of influential Jews.

The **Wish Locket** by Agoura Hills-based **Monica Nabati** goes the distance from fashionable to meaningful by providing you with a Kotel you can keep close to your heart, among other designs (\$56, plus \$8 for additional engraving). Simply write out your hopes, dreams or prayers, fold the paper and insert it into the locket. Available at <http://www.wishloket.com>, Audrey's Museum Gift Shop/Skirball Cultural Center, Raffia (Agoura Hills), Raw Style (Santa Monica), Beit Judaica (Agoura Hills) and Temple Alyiah Gift Shop (Woodland Hills).



If you are hoping to give (or get) inspiration this holiday, look toward the wisdom of **Abby Lentz**, who imparts hope and spirit with her "Heavyweight Yoga" DVD (\$25, <http://www.heavyweightyoga.com>), making the calming effects of yoga available to everybody and every body. A healing complement to Lentz's message and mission is "I Am Not a Mess" (\$20, <http://www.iamnotamess.com>), a yoga DVD focused on health and recovery of body, mind and spirit created by **Hillary Rubin**, who was diagnosed with MS in 1996 and teaches at L.A.'s City Yoga.



Pitch the baseball fan in your life a Major League dose of history with the 2008 edition of the **Jewish Major Leaguers** baseball cards (\$35, available at Shalom House in Woodland Hills and at <http://www.jewishmajorleaguers.org>).

Produced by the American Jewish Historical Society, the set boasts 1,000 with photos and facts of baseball's greatest Jewish players. It also includes a special tribute to the 75th anniversary of Hank Greenberg's rookie season. Once you're on base, hit a home run with Bergino's Judaica collection baseballs (\$20-\$25, <http://www.bergino.com>).

