



Fine Star Productions has done a Moroccan theme wedding at the Culinary Institute of America. They have done Asian weddings with Taiko drummers. They have done western weddings, fifties weddings and just about everything else one can dream up.

“We did an ‘after reception, reception’ once,” said Mary, “sort of like a Casbah, with guests seated on the floor, and everything draped with fabrics, pillow and candles.”

Between them, John and Mary have over fifty years experience in event planning. Mary spend over fourteen years in sports marketing, sales and hospitality. John worked on the corporate side of the business.

Wanting to stay closer to home and not travel anymore, Mary began to explore how she might use her experience and talents locally. She began to ask people in the event and hospitality business what they needed.

“I learned that they didn’t need even planners,” what they needed was services,” she said.

According to Mary, she saw an opportunity to be creative and use her production skills. “I started working out of my home office doing corporate hospitality. It wasn’t much different producing for 500 or 5000,” she said, “since in the past I’d produced events for over 5000 on a regular basis.”

Mary emphasized that she is not a wedding planner, but rather a producer. Once the plan is decided on, Five Star Productions can provide everything needed to make the vision come true.

“We provide the visuals and the props,” said Mary. “We can take your idea and make it come alive.”

Going behind the scenes at Five Star Productions is like walking

Recently in the Napa Valley a young Scottish man married a lovely woman from Vietnam. They wanted to celebrate both of their cultures at their wedding, but, obviously, most wedding facilities wouldn’t be able to handle an order like that.

What to do?

The couple contacted Five Star Productions, a design, production and prop rental company based in Napa for ten years.

Five Star owners Mary and John Ross were not daunted at all. The created a beautiful alter in red and gold with both the Scottish and Vietnamese flags and a statue of Buddha. The groom wore traditional Scottish garb, kilt and all, and the bride wore a traditional Vietnamese wedding gown. It went off without a hitch.

“That one was easy,” said Mary Ross, laughing. According to Mary, lots of theme weddings evolve from cultures.

**Continued**

Photo by Bonnie Durance



onto a Hollywood movie set. Over here is a palm-fringed bar for tropical venues, over there is a complete fifties soda fountain with barstools and jukebox. Turn around and you'll see a western horse-drawn carriage. Do you need a fifteen-foot replica of Woody's head from the Movie *Toy Story* for your wedding? It's here. How about a wooden ship with built-in waves? No problem. There are also chandeliers and candelabras as well as yards of drapery and fabric stored here.

"We did a wedding for the producer of *Scooby Doo*," said Mary, gesturing toward rolled fabric. "He had us tent the entire ballroom at the Sonoma Mission Inn in ivory silk drapery."

Asked about her biggest challenge Mary responded, "We did the décor for Steve Tisch (produce of *Forest Gump*) at B.V. Gardens. It was cold and we needed a tent, but we didn't want it to look like a tent. So we flew in a clear tent and hung crystal chandeliers and Louie

the XV furniture from Paramount Studios. At night, with the chandeliers lit, the tent became invisible. It was phenomenal."

At the height of the wedding season Five Star Productions keeps very busy. When fully staffed they have as many as 25 employees working on all aspects of the many productions they do.

According to Mary, Five Star Productions is the only full-service production and décor company in the valley. "No one else is offering our full range of creative and production services in this area," she said.

Apparently they do it well. In 1999 they won a special gala award from *Special Events Magazine* for "Best Event Produced for a Private Individual." The event in question was a birthday party with "white and transparent" as the theme.

But you don't have to be planning a wedding with a thousand guests to take advantage of Five Star's services. If your wedding is smaller and more intimate, Five Star can still help, with design, props, décor or just about anything else you might need.

Want a western wedding with an Asian flair and tropical overtones set in the fifties? No problem. Just give Mary and John a call. They'll take care of everything.

*Five Star Productions is located at 1952 Iroquois Street in Napa. 707-257-2200.*

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