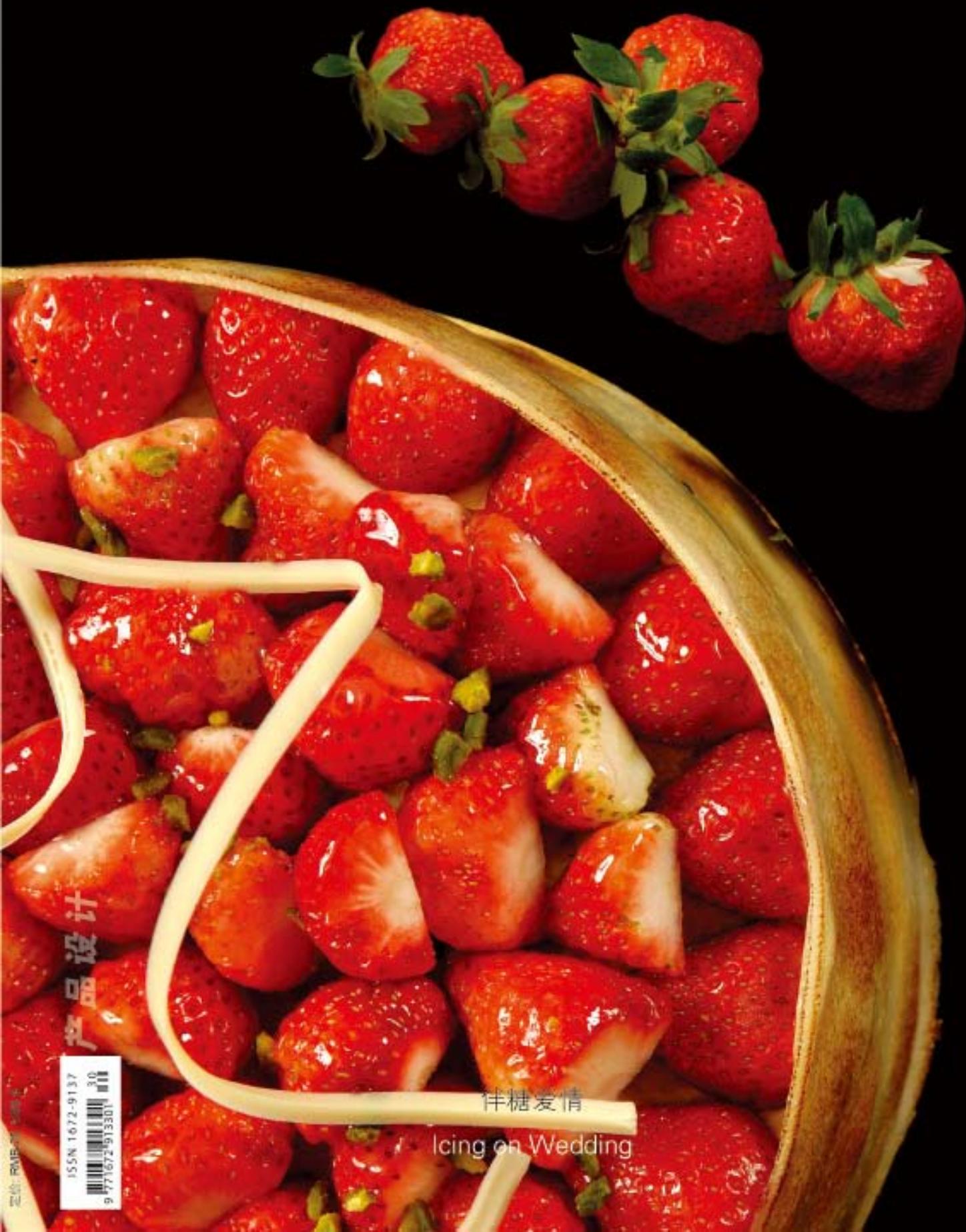


New Western Cuisine

ISSUE 63 September 2010

新妙餐



产品设计

伴糖爱情

Icing on Wedding

ISSN 1672-9137
9 77672913201

A Marriage of Families

Let Your Wedding Toast Be Forever and a Day

婚姻有多长
新婚祝愿的“保鲜度”



Photo by Geoff Lung



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Fred Tibbitts, Jr. is the foremost global wine & spirits consultant for National Account chain hotels and restaurants, based at Bangkok and New York. He travels the world annually attending several of the leading wine and spirits expositions, seminars and conferences. He is a writer for industry and entertainment publications in China and the U.S.

常驻在曼谷和纽约的田博华是全球最著名的品酒顾问之一，他为众多的连锁酒店及餐厅提供咨询。还参议过许多国家重要的餐饮会展以及项目。大量相关的著作及评论发表，在业界，一时洛阳纸贵。

In the movies the wedding scene is always the same: The broadly smiling bride and groom are toasting one another with Champagne glasses held high. Life is good. And they lived "Happily ever after". Well, sometimes. The divorce rate in America in recent years has been 50%, but in truth, it is now surely even higher; and around the world, even in countries where divorce has traditionally been unheard of, divorces are being made public. So, while the choice of wine for the wedding toast is always important, keeping the marital commitments both in spirit and in practice is far more important. A happy ending is a joyous wedding with just the right wines, followed by decades of happiness for all concerned and, of course, children, if it is meant to be or it is possible.

Like many relationships, business and personal, marriage is usually a contractual obligation between the parties under the laws of the region and/or country in which the parties enter into said agreement. The marriage contract is legally binding for both parties, as is often discovered the hard way by many who decide to end their marriage in divorce, rather than "...until death do us part". Of course, if there are children from the marriage, the financial implications escalate with each child.

So, why the increasing divorce rates around the world? Well, for one thing, most couples who enter into marriage never have the benefit of pre-marital counseling by senior family members; or a government, social welfare or spiritual agency to better insure that the parties are entering into their union for the right reasons. Asking the right questions ahead of time, often saves an ocean of tears by showing the intended couple that their reasons for "tying the knot" may be just begging for trouble and that without a better understanding of each other's needs, wants and aspirations going into the marriage, misunderstandings are certain to follow, quite possibly leading to irreconcilable differences.

Another reason for divorce is the tradition in some places of "arranged marriages", where families decide for the bride and groom, often from birth, their wedding partners. Many of these marriages are doomed from the start, when the girl is often as young as 12 and the groom may be as old as 75; the girl's family being paid a handsome "dowry" and as is often the case, if her family is very poor, it becomes a matter of serving the needs of her family to stay in the marriage. For centuries arranged marriages were rarely questioned by the partners, regardless of their incompatibility; however, today many youths are refusing their families, where one must "learn to love".

Of course, we cannot overlook the 24 hour Las Vegas "Marriage Chapels", which to no one's surprise do most of their business between midnight and five o'clock in the morning without reservations: The couples are usually intoxicated from drugs or alcohol or both and instead of formal wear, most couples come dressed as they met the evening before. These weddings, being arranged over the course of few hours rather than a few years or at least a few months, rarely take into consideration the need for a witness; however, ever eager to satisfy the needs of their customers, for a small fee the chapels will supply a witness. Naturally, all chapel associates appreciate being tipped generously. As one might imagine, these types of marriages are often reversed in a matter of days, if not a matter of hours. How sad, indeed.

With respect to the right wines, never forget what I have told you before: The definition of a good bottle of wine is one that you both like and can afford. So, for your wedding toast, if money is no object, go for the best French Champagne you can find, such as Moet & Chandon or Veuve Clicquot. But if you need to economize, there are plenty of good alternatives: Instead of Champagne, you can choose a delicious Spumante, such as the Vino dei Poeti Bottega Gold Spumante Brut, costing around RMB 298 per bottle. Just be a wise shopper, know your budget and remember for the red and white wines you are

selecting for your guests, it's important to consider the food you are serving; so just be sure the wines compliment the food. One bottle of sparkling or still wine provides one glass of wine for five guests; so if you have 50 guests, figure on one 12 bottle case for each wine you intend to pour on your very special day. **I am Red Fred**, over & Out.

所有电影里的婚礼场景几乎都如出一辙：笑容满面的新人与亲朋好友高举香槟，共贺幸福。生活是美好的。新郎新娘从此“幸福地生活在一起。”好吧，有时这样的事情的确会发生。近年来美国的离婚率已经达到50%，实际上，可能更高。世界范围内，在那些传统里视离婚为禁忌的国家里，离婚已成为可以公开谈论的话题。尽管为婚礼选择合适的葡萄酒十分重要，但是忠实地在婚礼上许下的誓言更加举足轻重。何谓幸福的结局？那就是一场愉悦的婚礼配上正确的选酒，然后接下来是数十年的幸福，如果可能的话，当然还有儿女绕膝、子孙满堂。

就像很多其他关系，无论是商业关系还是个人关系，婚姻通常就是双方在遵从地区以及国家法律法规之下达成协议而建立的契约责任。婚姻合约对双方都具有法律约束力，所以当人们在决定以离婚再终结这一契约时，会发现这种方法其实比“……直到死亡让我们分开”难度更高。当然，如果其中还涉及到子女的问题，那么涉及的每个孩子的财务问题会更加剧难度。

尽管如此，为什么离婚率还在不断增高？原因之一，许多年轻人从未得到家庭中长辈的婚前指导，或者说政府、社会福利或宗教机构更清晰地明确他们有充分的理由步入婚姻的礼堂。事先提出正确的质疑或许能省去不少眼泪。如果没有深入了解彼此缔结婚姻契约的需求和愿望，那么“携手一生”只会成为双方的烦恼所在，误解也会随之而来，很大可能最后导致分道扬镳。

另一个导致离婚的原因是，很多地方传统中的“包办婚姻”。从出生开始，家庭已经为新郎新娘做好了决定。这种婚姻从一开始就是悲剧，新娘也许才12岁，新郎已经年入古稀。只不过新年家已经收到了丰厚的嫁妆。如果新娘的家庭十分贫寒，那么保持这种婚姻便成为维持其家庭生计的问题。尽管其中问题很多，但是几个世纪以来，这种包办婚姻很少被质疑。不过今天，很多年轻人开始与家庭抗争，他们认识到必须“学会去爱。”

当然，我们不可能24小时监测拉斯维加斯的“婚礼教堂”。但是令人惊奇的是，他们的“业务”大多在午夜到凌晨五点之间，而且没有预约。新人们大多沉醉于毒品或者酒精的作用中，不着正装，他们大多是穿着前一天遇到时的衣服便直奔教堂。不是数年，甚至不是数月，只是几个小时便促成了这些婚礼，几乎连见证人都不需要。但是这里却能满足他们的消费需求，花费不多，这些教堂便能提供一个见证人。常理说来，所有的婚礼教堂都不会拒绝慷慨的小费。也许有人会考虑，这样的婚姻也许只能持续几个小时，或者几天。多么悲哀！

回到选酒的问题，别忘记我以前说过：好酒的定义就是你与TA都喜欢而且买得起。所以，就婚礼而言，如果钱不是问题，那么尽你所能找到最好的法国香槟，比如酩悦香槟或者凯歌香槟。但是如果你选择经济实惠一点，选择也不少：不用香槟，你可以选择口感香醇的气泡酒，比如波特嘉诗人普罗塞克汽泡酒、金汽泡葡萄酒，大约价格为人民币298元每瓶。清楚你的预算，记住你为客人们选的红白葡萄酒，当然搭配的食物也同样重要，务必记住这一点。一瓶汽泡或者无汽葡萄酒大约是5杯，如果每位客人一杯的话，就是5位。如果有50位客人，大约需要12瓶酒。你选的每种葡萄酒都将成为这特殊日子里的纪念。我是田博华，一直在这里。