

# Groom's cakes no longer just simple or Southern

By LISAA. FLAM  
For The Associated Press

Baseball stadiums, poker chips and racks of saucy ribs don't usually come to mind when you think "wedding." But these manly pursuits have found their way to the dessert table through a new breed of groom's cake that is more elaborate and personal than ever.

Traditionally a gift from the bride to her new husband, the groom's cake was usually a simple affair, made with fruit and liquor, and perhaps chocolate. It is believed to have originated in Victorian England and arrived in the United States in the mid-19th century, where it became popular mostly in the South.

Take today's trend of highly personalized weddings, add the fact that more grooms are involved in wedding planning, and throw in the popularity of extreme baking shows such as TLC network's "Cake Boss," and you'll find that humble groom's cakes have evolved into works of edible art.

While traditionalists still honor the groom with a plain, round cake, many couples are ordering cakes in the groom's favorite flavor and in the shape of golf clubs, fishing gear, football helmets, smart phones, and guys-night foods like burgers, pizza and hot dogs.

"It's really about the groom's interests and his hobbies and something that's reflective of the groom," said Darcy Miller, editorial director of Martha Stewart Weddings. "A wedding is about the two of them. That's one detail that can be all about the groom."

After last spring's royal wedding, at which Britain's Prince William requested a groom's cake made of biscuits, the popularity of the cakes among U.S. couples is likely to get another boost, Miller said.

"All eyes were on that wedding," she said. "I think (William's) groom's cake will definitely help inspire the growing trend here."

Groom's cakes originally were served at weddings. Today, they also appear at rehearsal dinners or day-after brunches. Wedding planner Tara Guerard, who owns Soiree in Charleston, S.C., urges her couples to enjoy the groom's cake at the rehearsal dinner to give the groom a night in the spotlight, so his cake doesn't get overshadowed by the big white one.

"A lot of our grooms want this groom's cake," she said. "It's really important to them."

Women sometimes keep their grooms in the dark about the cake; other men help select it with their fiancées while choosing a wedding cake.

John Keenan wasn't interested in having a groom's cake for his August wedding in Baton Rouge, La., but his fiancée persisted. "We have to have something that puts you in the picture, too," his wife, Ashley, 26, recalled telling him.

Pushed to choose, Keenan, 31, asked their baker if she could create the only design he could imagine for himself: Yankee Stadium.

"I almost fell down," Keenan said, upon seeing the highly detailed cake. "It was more than I could have asked for."

Being a native New Yorker in Louisiana is "such an odd thing," Keenan said, in the drawl of a true Southerner. "The fact that I was able to put a New York twist (on the wedding) ... it was really nice."

Like Keenan's confection celebrating the Yankees, these cakes often highlight something that reminds a guy of home.

Patrick Delaney wanted a groom's cake when he got married last year but was resigned to missing out when his fiancée told him they couldn't afford one. Instead, she surprised him at their rehearsal dinner in Alexandria, Va., with a cake touting his Kansas City roots.

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*Patti Cakes/Associated Press*  
This undated photo courtesy of Patti Cakes, Inc., shows a groom's cake made to look like a bottle of whisky by Patti Cakes for bride Stefanie Rulis in Moyock, N.C. Traditionally a gift from the bride to her new husband, the groom's cake was usually a simple affair, made with fruit and liquor, and perhaps chocolate. Today, some groom's cakes have evolved into works of edible art.

