

**Brides**

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# Northern California

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Where-You-Need-It  
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MAGAZINE

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## **M**enu Tastings What You Need to Know

Most caterers offer tastings at which you can nail down the menu, but all caterers do it differently. Some offer buffets with multiple brides, other serve full meals one-on-one. Some caterers and reception sites hold tastings after you've booked them for your wedding, others allow a taste test before you decide. We asked a caterer who does both, **Ethan Mantle** of Componere Fine Catering in Walnut Creek (925-429-2400, [componererefinecatering.com](http://componererefinecatering.com)), to guide you through the process.

▶ **BOOK YOUR LOCATION FIRST**

"If you have a reception location in mind, make sure the caterer can work in that venue, since some venues have exclusive catering contracts," says Mantle. However, if great food is more important, book your caterer first, and let them suggest suitable spots.

▶ **INVOLVE ANYONE WITH FINANCIAL SAY**

"The decision makers should be there, whoever that may be," says Mantle (read: the one signing the checks). "The couple and the bride's parents are the most common folks we see."

▶ **THEY'RE NOT ALWAYS FREE**

"It can be very expensive to put together a tasting," says Mantle, whose company charges a \$250 flat fee for four people (but if you end up booking, they credit that amount toward the final bill). Ask if your caterer will do the same.

▶ **DON'T JUST PAY ATTENTION TO THE FOOD**

Look at what the food is served on, and note the quality of the service and cleanliness of the kitchen. Also ask if the chef preparing the tasting will be available on your wedding day. If the answer is no, ask what steps they will take to make sure the food is of the same quality.

▼ Tuna tartare with wasabi caviar and tamarind sauce



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