

WED  
DOSSIER

VENUES

FOR ALL OCCASIONS  
Clockwise from top left: An aerial view of theWit lobby. A warm cocktail reception at Roof. A wedding toast in the third-floor ballroom. The ballroom's dance floor can be positioned for prime downtown views.



## Wit To Be Tied

From rehearsal to reception, theWit hotel offers a uniquely urbane backdrop | *By Liz Grossman*

When theWit hotel opened its doors at the corner of State and Lake in May, the buzz on the boutique hotel was immediate. Boisterous late-night lines began to snake around the block, awaiting access to Roof lounge on the hotel's 27th floor. Chicago's after-work set found a happy-hour home at lobby-level State and Lake restaurant faster than you could say "microbrew." That ballyhoo, and the added vitality that comes from being located just steps from the Lake Street El and the Chicago Theatre, wasn't lost on then bride-to-be Michele Stowers. She booked her wedding before the paint was dry and had the first reception hosted by the hotel on August 22.

"We were booked [somewhere else] but didn't have a contract," says Stowers. "My parents wanted to invite more guests so we needed to rethink our venue. I was totally opposed to a hotel, but I started looking and theWit was the least 'hotel' hotel I'd ever seen. We saw the space and it was a done deal—within three days we changed everything."

Indeed, the spaces at theWit don't disappoint. First there's the aforementioned Roof. With 7,000 square feet of well-appointed fireplaces and fire pits, oversized lounge chairs, a DJ booth, multiple bars and panoramic city views, it's prepackaged for a chic cocktail hour or 200-guest indoor/outdoor reception—that is, if you can afford it. (A private Roof reception has a \$50,000 food and beverage minimum, and there are no ceremonies allowed here.)

foot ballroom with floor-to-ceiling views of landmarks like Marina Towers and the Chicago River. Here, up to 200 guests fit comfortably for a ceremony and/or sit-down dinner with dancing, all for an easier-to-swallow \$24,000 food and beverage minimum that includes part of Roof for a cool cocktail hour.

In addition to Roof and the ballroom, bridal-friendly spaces abound at theWit, including Screen, a 1,600-square-foot movie theater equipped with 40 reclining seats where groomsmen can relax with a game and bar bites while the ladies luxuriate in the full-service Spa@theWit. Then there's the lofted Library that overlooks the lobby, a prime locale for casual cocktails and farewell brunches (and photo ops on the glass staircase); Italian restaurant Cibo Matto for rehearsal dinners; and State and Lake, with its pub-inspired menu, the perfect hangout for early-arriving guests.

With four weddings down and 15 already booked for 2010, couples are realizing that with impeccable service, dramatic views, type-A attention to detail (including the help of "master of ceremonies" Laura Ekker, theWit's wedding planner and catering director) and striking design all under one roof, what's not to love? "It's such a unique venue, and that was something I could control," adds Stowers. "I had more pride in having created an awesome atmosphere through my venue choice than investing in details the bride might care about, but no one else really does."

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