



# WED DOSSIER VENUES

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**OUT WITH THE OLD!** Clockwise from top: The recently updated ballroom at the Hilton on Post Oak. A peek inside the Mokara Spa at the Omni. Hotel ZaZa's new Ultimate Ransom.



## INN VOGUE

Three of Houston's hippest hotels are showcasing renovated places and wide open spaces

These sophisticated H-Town overnights—touting some of the city's most fabulous weddings to date—are prime spaces for your big day. Packed with smart new updates (read: wine therapy spa treatments, European ballrooms dripping in chandeliers and sexy dinners al fresco), you'll be clamoring to claim your date!

**OMNI HOUSTON HOTEL** Currently under a \$30 million renovation (with a room-by-room update set for completion in late 2009), the Omni is already flaunting additions like a decadent new spa and its spacious 10,000-square-foot Regency ballroom. Set in a contemporary 7,800-square-foot space overlooking the hotel's green 12-acre setting, the Mokara Spa doles out signature treatments like chardonnay wine therapy facials and massages. It also features a full fitness center and couples treatment room. Brides can schedule their big day 'do at the spa's Cerón Salon, where the namesake H-Town stylist is available by appointment. And for the day of, newlyweds can take center stage in the Omni's sophisticated Regency ballroom, cloaked in beige walls and rich mahogany wood paneling. *Four Riverway, 713.871.8181 or omnihotels.com.*



**HILTON HOUSTON POST OAK** One of the few classically designed ballrooms left in the city, the Hilton's just-renovated event space (and 448 guest rooms) still channels its original glory days with a modern twist. "It's a very Renaissance-looking room... intended to have a classic, palatial look. Tradition never goes out of style," says Margery Reinhardt, director of catering at the hotel. The ballroom's classic, Italian white-marbled foyer gives way to a traditional European tone—now modernized with updates like fresh taupe and cream wallpaper, lustrous burgundy and gold flooring and window fixtures. Additions to the 10,360-square-foot space also include a pre-programmable light dimmer switch, refurbished sound system and 36 hang points suspended from the ceiling to secure your choice of projection screens, decorations or wall drapes. But it wasn't completely in with the new: The ballroom retained its 12 French-inspired Louis XIV-style teardrop chandeliers and antique gold leaf millwork columns to preserve an elegant vintage feel. Consider them your "something old." *2001 Post Oak Blvd., 713.961.9300 or hilton.com.*

**HOTEL ZAZA** Known for its flirtatious tone and sultry décor—and, arguably, as one of H-Town's prime party locales—the Hotel ZaZa has a new look. ZaZa's Monarch restaurant just moved to encompass the hotel's lounge and terrace areas as a centralized space—outfitted in plush details, marble tile, dark wooden floors and low-lit chandeliers. "It's Bill Gates meets Cirque de Soleil meets George Clooney meets Ralph Lauren," says Benji Homsey, president of Z Resorts, ZaZa's parent company. A canopy with removable sidewalls now accompanies the terrace, so guests can have the option of dining al fresco on Texas native and exec chef Bradley Manchester's American-Mediterranean fare. Meanwhile, the *prior* dining space now serves as a private event venue, Ultimate Ransom. The 900-square-foot space, sectioned off by beveled glass doors, features rich Baroque-inspired tapestries over stately windows, softened by faint lighting and lofty ceilings. Ultimate Ransom's rectangular layout includes a carpeted, wood-paneled space, two hardwood-floor sunrooms and the adjoining Fountain Room, with views of the sparkling Mecom Fountain. (The spaces can all be reserved separately or together.) For even larger affairs, ZaZa's Phantom Ballroom boasts 6,000-square-feet of grandeur for up to 600 guests. Our favorite feature? The aptly dubbed room hosts an underground lift (accessible from the basement) allowing a bride and groom to make a "phantom" reception entrance. *5701 Main Street, 713.526.1991 or hotelzaza.com/houston.* ■