Last year, Dana Cook, AAF, of Julia’s Florist in Wilmington, North Carolina, noticed a troubling trend in her wedding business: Out-of-town brides attracted to the beautiful resort city would call or stop by the shop to inquire about a la carte items for their upcoming destination weddings — usually personal flowers or an array of centerpieces. Cook and her staff would deliver the same level of service they offered to brides with larger budgets, and grander affairs, including a sit-down consultation and, occasionally, extensive follow-up with the staff. That system wasn’t working, Cook said.

“I looked at our labor costs and realized profitability really went out the window [on smaller weddings] when we had a long consultation and then the brides went back and forth with my staff,” she explained.

Her solution: a practical wedding book that turns any staff member into a wedding planning pro and appeals to budget and destination brides who want to make their selections from an edited (but still special) menu. Cook called the effort “Petite Weddings by Julia’s.”

“We played around with other names, but then hit upon ‘petite’ and that’s been wonderful,” Cook said, explaining that she’s trained her staff to steer anyone with a budget of $1,000 or less to the book. “Brides understand the term immediately and aren’t offended by it,” and it gives Cook’s team a clear line between a “big” and “small” wedding — and a clear understanding of who should be helping each bride. (The shop has sold about 750 weddings in the past 12 months; about 61 percent of those fall into the petite category.)

“Because the book is standardized, anyone in the shop can help a ‘petite’ bride, and our wedding consultant, who’s also our lead designer, has more time in the design room” and in consultation with higher-end affairs that merit more hand-holding, Cook explained.

The book, also available as an electronic PDF for out-of-town clients, may be aimed at smaller weddings, but it doesn’t skimp on quality or provide brides with the dreaded “cookie-cutter” experience. Instead, monobotanical designs include clear prices for upgrades (seeded eucalyptus in a rose bouquet, for instance, or wax flower added to callas) and vibrant pictures, taken on-site rather than pulled from a catalog. The book also includes themed designs such as Summer Splendor (think hot pink, lime and orange roses and seasonal accents) and Sandy Shores (hand-tied pale green, blue and ivory delphinium roses and hydrangeas). Prices for additional items, including centerpieces, and services, including delivery, also are clearly outlined.

“Brides love it, my staff loves it,” Cook said. “So far, it’s been a hit.”