

# WEDDINGS

2013 BRIDAL GUIDE



# Are You Ready to Party?

## A LOOK AT FIVE TRENDS IN BACHELORETTE PARTIES

**B**achelorette parties are not the same as they used to be. Gone are the days of heading to the maid of honor's house for drinks and party games. Modern brides are looking for more sophisticated ways to celebrate before their weddings.

Here is a look at some of the hottest trends in bachelorette parties.

### THE WEEKEND GETAWAY

More and more women are opting for a weekend out of town for their bachelorette parties. A trip to an exciting location like Las Vegas or New York means that the bride-to-be can have more than one night out on the town.

The party can go shopping and sightseeing together during the daytime, and enjoy dinner and drinks in the evenings. This is a great option for a bride who is inviting guests from different parts of the country.

Everyone can meet in a central location, and no one guest will have to spend more than the rest on hotel rooms and car rental.

### THE CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH

Older brides and women celebrating a second marriage are opting for the less raucous



PHOTO: IMAGE SOURCE 152 / YAYMICRO.COM

A party bus — whether a limo, bus or stretch SUV — can be a fun and safe way to celebrate a wedding.

champagne brunch. It is a more sophisticated and elegant way of celebrating an upcoming wedding.

This should not be confused with a wedding shower; it is meant for the bride's closest friends and not her entire family.

Typically, this party takes place at an upscale restaurant, and all of the guests dress for a semi-formal event.

### A DAY AT THE SPA

Many modern brides see a day at the spa as a great way to celebrate and unwind just before the wedding.

The entire bridal party can get their nails done together, so everyone has a uniform look for the big day. Many upscale salons offer drinks and light snacks, creating an

atmosphere that is perfect for a relaxing day for the bride and her party.

Brides should steer clear of facials, chemical peels, or any new treatments immediately before the wedding to avoid any irritation that might affect wedding photos.

### THE PARTY BUS

Pub-crawls are not new for

bachelorette parties, but many brides are opting for a bus, trolley, or stretch SUV to carry the party from one location to the next.

Drinks can be served on board the party bus, meaning that the party doesn't have to stop just because everyone has left the first bar.

It is also a responsible way to have fun, as no one in the party has to worry about driving.

### COMBINED PARTIES

Some couples are opting to combine their bachelor and bachelorette parties. Instead of separating the guys and the girls, everyone enjoys a pre-wedding celebration together.

This is ideal when the bride or groom has opposite-sex friends who would otherwise not be able to attend.

Couples who choose this option should make sure that they are in absolute agreement before planning this party to avoid any resentment or regrets later.

# Etiquette: The Basics

**G**etting married is as American as apple pie, but many Americans aren't schooled on what's proper and what's not when it comes to weddings.

Wedding etiquette is important — and any faux pas can be remembered for years to come — but it doesn't have to be complicated or stuffy. Here are a few of the basic rules:

## DRESS UP

Unless otherwise stated, weddings are formal affairs. Women should adorn themselves in non-white dresses, and men should wear suits. These styles of clothing help commemorate the importance of the occasion. They also look good in pictures that can seal the memory for many years in the future.

## ARRIVE EARLY

Plan to be at the wedding venue at least 30 minutes early. You need time to greet other guests and be seated. In addition, you don't want to miss a portion of the wedding because the ceremony has already begun and you have to wait to enter the room.

## BE CORDIAL

Do you have a grudge against a relative who is also attending the wedding? Wedding etiquette dictates that you — at least temporarily — bury the hatchet. Refusing to acknowledge another guest or starting a fight is a no-no. As a result, be polite to everyone regardless of how you feel.

## RESERVE JUDGMENT

Despite what you think about the accommodations or food, keep your opinions to yourself. Your duty as a guest is mainly to support the bride and groom. As long as they are happy, you should be, too.

## SAY GOOD-BYE

Before you leave the wedding, say good-bye to the bride and groom. Thank them for inviting you. In addition, congratulate the pair on their new union.

Wedding etiquette isn't difficult to master. Employ these basic tips and you won't embarrass yourself or be the butt of a few unwelcome jokes.



# Garden Wedding Colors

**G**arden weddings are more popular than ever before as brides and grooms want to start their married lives amid the splendor of Mother Nature.

When planning a garden wedding, it is important to choose colors that match the garden setting.

Before choosing your colors, think about which blooms are dominant in the garden ceremony location. Will you be standing in front of rose bushes, hyacinths or an array of colorful tulips? Choose colors that go nicely with your garden wedding backdrop.

## MOSS GREEN AND NUTMEG

Earth tones are great choices for a garden wedding. Dress your bridesmaids in tea-length gowns of nutmeg cloth tied with moss green sashes.

Choose bouquets of white flowers such as begonias, carnations, lily of the valley or calla lilies. Bronze or silver both go well as accessories for this color combination.

Use natural greenery for your wedding ceremony décor and reception tables.

## DEEP HYACINTH AND TAUPE

If your garden location has purple flowers or hyacinth bushes, deep hya-



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It's a good idea to complement nature, not outshine it, when choosing outdoor wedding colors.

cinth and taupe is a good color theme choice.

Choose hyacinth-colored dresses and accent them with simple taupe sandals, purses and shawls. Either pearl or silver accessories go well with this color combination.

Set the tone for your wedding by choosing wedding invitations with a hyacinth motif.

## CANTALOUPE AND SUNFLOWER YELLOW

The light orange cantaloupe goes well with a bright sunflower yellow. Choose daffodils, daisies or sunflowers as your wedding flowers, and you could even go with a melon or sun-

flower motif.

These light, sunny colors contrast nicely with greenery and blue skies.

Swathe your bridesmaids in full-length cantaloupe gowns for a more elegant feel, or go for knee-length sunflower yellow dresses to keep your garden wedding more casual.

## PEACH AND MINT GREEN

Pastel peach is a nice, soft color for garden weddings. Paired with mint green it goes well with greenery and surrounding blooms.

Choose a floral or fruit motif, or decorate with metal watering cans filled with peach-colored blooms. Have your groomsmen wear tuxedos with peach-colored vests and pin peach carnations on their jackets.

## PERIWINKLE AND LAVENDER

Another soft color combination that works well in a garden setting is periwinkle and lavender. These colors offer a contrast with greenery or pink and red flowers.

Choose a cute periwinkle hummingbird motif or violets to adorn your wedding invitations. Dress your bridesmaids in periwinkle and have them hold sprigs of lavender.

Pastels, earth tones and soft colors work best for garden weddings. Stay away from bold, bright colors like neon orange and fire-engine red. You don't want your wedding color combination to distract guests from the natural beauty of the garden setting.

# Do You Need Wedding Insurance?



**W**hen you are planning your wedding day, the last thing that you want to think about is the possibility of something going wrong. No matter how unpleasant the thought may be, however, it is still a good idea to prepare for the worst-case scenario by investing in a wedding insurance policy.

What could possibly go wrong on your big day that wedding insurance can help you with? Here are five potential disasters that insurance can cover:

## THE WEATHER

No matter how much planning you do, the one thing you can't plan on your wedding day is the weather. If there is a freak storm or snow shower, at least your finances can be protected with some wedding policies.

## A GUEST IS INJURED

If someone slips on the dance floor while getting a bit enthusiastic, you could be sued as a result.

In fact, any accident that occurs at your wedding, including any damage caused to the property where you are holding your party, could end up costing you a small fortune.

As a result, liability coverage is a must to prevent your wedding bill doubling or tripling due to an accident.

## BRIDE OR GROOM ILLNESS

If you wake up on the morning of your wedding feeling absolutely awful, it could just be the nerves kicking in. However, if you are really unlucky, you might have come down with an illness and have to cancel the wedding.

Despite your disappointment, and the fact that all of the planning and preparation

could go to waste, at least if you have wedding insurance you won't lose your investment.

This will allow you to plan your wedding for another day without losing out financially.

## WEDDING GIFTS ARE DAMAGED

It's great to look at the table piled high with wedding gifts and imagine getting back home to go through them all. However, it would be a disaster if something were to go wrong and the presents were to get damaged or stolen.

If you have the right type of insurance then you may be covered for your gifts up to a certain level, so this is certainly worth considering.

## THE PHOTOGRAPHS ARE AWFUL

Even if you hire a professional photographer, accidents can still happen with your photographs. What if all of the photographs are over exposed or they are lost before you get to see them?

With wedding insurance, at least you can cover the cost of these photos. Your insurance may even pay for you to have the photographs retaken with important members of the wedding party.

## WEDDING VENUE GOES BANKRUPT

If your chosen wedding venue announces a few weeks prior to your big day that it has gone bankrupt, not only will your wedding day be ruined but you may not even receive a refund.

Wedding insurance will protect your investment so that you can book another venue without losing out financially.

No one likes to think about things going wrong on their wedding day. However, by purchasing insurance you will be able to enjoy the planning and preparation with greater peace of mind knowing that you are financially covered should something go wrong.

# Choosing the Photographer

**C**ongratulations! You are getting married. Just as you want your special day to be perfect, you will also want the pictures of the occasion to be perfect as well.

Choosing the wrong photographer may not altogether ruin your wedding day, but it can definitely spoil the memory as you look back on less-than-par photographs.

Here are a few tips for choosing the right photographer:

## BE QUICK

Don't wait to the last minute. When planning your wedding, choosing a photographer is one of the first things on the list.

Good photographers are often booked a year or more in advance, so the photographer needs to be one of the first people you call after the engagement is announced.

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Review previous work. And don't just rely on a few good wedding shots posted on a website. Look through your would-be photographer's portfolio.

Is the lighting good? How about the colors?

Also make sure you are reviewing the work of the actual photographer that will be taking your pictures. Larger studios may have several photographers that represent them.

## GET REFERENCES

Personal references from others who have used the photographer in question are always a good idea.

Inquire not only about the finished product, but also about their experience with them. Was it pleasant and hassle-free? Would they use them again?

## KNOW THEIR PLANS

Ask about backup equipment. Not only should your wedding photographer have an assistant to help them, but they should also bring extra equipment in case the originals fail.

Multiple lenses, flash cards and batteries are a must.

## SIGN A CONTRACT

Most photographers are very professional, but this step will ensure that they don't suddenly change the pricing or back out at the last minute.

Negotiate price, packages, proofs and other particulars, and then get it in writing. Don't sign anything until you have had the time to review the contract.

You want to have a good understanding of the products and services you will be receiving before you enter into the contract agreement.

Because great pictures are the cornerstone of your wedding memorabilia, it's important to choose a trustworthy and competent photographer.

Having uniquely preserved wedding memories is a one-shot deal. Do your homework and employ these tips when choosing the photographer for your wedding.



# Tips for Delivering a Speech

Speeches are among the highlights of a wedding reception, so it's important to get them right.

The key speeches are usually delivered by the groom, best man and the bride's father, and each has a slightly different function. Speeches are usually a mixture of humor, sentiment, compliments and messages of thanks.

Getting the balance right is essential and can make or break a wedding speech.

## RELAX

It's natural to be nervous before delivering a wedding speech, and even those used to public speaking will experience anxiety.

Keeping things simple is one of the key tips for delivering a wedding speech. Take deep breaths to calm your nerves, and speak loudly and clearly so that all the guests can hear you.

If using a microphone, make sure you know how to operate it before standing to deliver your speech. Any comedy moments should be intentional, with guests laughing with you and not at you!

## PREPARE

Writing a wedding speech can be daunting. Research, preparation and planning are

the keys to success.

Begin preparing the speech weeks before the wedding day, and don't get caught out at the last moment. Every speaker should have several stories and anecdotes to share, so begin researching these well in advance.

Always consider the audience you will be speaking to, and make sure all material is relevant and of interest. Never set out to embarrass or offend anyone.

## TIME IT

Once you have some stories to share, write them out and time how long it takes to read them. If you are a confident speaker, 10 minutes is a good time aim for to deliver the whole speech.

If you want to be brief, three to five minutes is acceptable. One of the worst mistakes is to speak for too long, and lose the interest of your audience.

## CONSIDER PROPS

Props can bring additional interest to a wedding speech. A slideshow of photographs can be highly entertaining.

For example, showing photographs of the bride and



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Giving a great speech isn't rocket science, but it does take focus, effort and preparation to do it right.

groom as babies and children is always very well received. Remember the boundaries of good taste, and do not show photographs which may offend.

## STAY FOCUSED

Keeping a clear head is

essential when delivering a wedding speech. Weddings generally involve alcohol, and it's important not to partake too early.

Drinking before delivering a speech is one of the worst mistakes you can make, and it's something that will be remembered for years to

come.

Delivering a wedding speech is actually an honor, and it's something you should look forward to doing. If you follow these tips, you should be confident in delivering an entertaining speech to be proud of.

# Shopping for the Dress

If you're like most brides-to-be, you've probably spent countless hours combing bridal magazines and websites looking for your perfect wedding dress.

Whether you're mulling over necklines, beading detail, or train length, wedding dress shopping can be one of the most exciting and overwhelming parts to the wedding planning process.

Here a few tips to help you scout your perfect dress:

## BRING PICTURES

Before your dress shopping appointment, look through bridal magazines and bridal websites to get an idea of what dress styles and designers you'd like to try on.

Bring these pictures to your appointment so your dress consultant will have a good grasp of how you want to look on your wedding day.

## START FRESH

Before you leave to try on wedding dresses, be sure your face is makeup-free and your body is free of self-tanning lotions or sprays.

Bridal shop owners work hard to keep their sample dresses as clean as possible for their clients, so it's important for all brides to do their part in keeping the gowns stain-free.

## MINIMIZE THE AUDIENCE

One of the biggest mistakes a bride can make is bringing too many friends and family members to her dress appointment.

The bigger your audience is, the bigger the chance of encountering clashing opinions – which can ultimately skew your own thoughts on the dress you choose.

A good rule of thumb is to bring three or four individuals who you feel will have your best wedding dress interests at heart.

## BRING YOUR ACCESSORIES

If you've already purchased your bridal shoes, bring them to your appointment. Otherwise, bring a pair of pumps that are the same heel height you anticipate buying.

Having the right shoes on will help you visualize where and how the dress's hemline will fall.

If you expect to wear any shape wear pieces under your dress, bring those as well so you can see how smoothly the dress will lie against you.

## KEEP AN OPEN MIND

It's important to understand that wedding dresses are sewn and structured differently than any other type of dress you've worn in the past. So, it's a good idea to try on as many styles as possible.

If you think a certain dress style hasn't flattered your body type before, that doesn't mean that same style won't look stunning on you in wedding dress form. Don't be afraid to think out of the box and experiment.

There's no mistaking that the wedding gown is one of the most significant pieces a bride will buy for her wedding. When it's time to shop for your wedding dress, remember that the only person you need to please is yourself.

If you feel comfortable, beautiful, and like the star of the day, your wedding will fill you with many happy memories for years to come.



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When choosing a wedding dress, it's best to only bring along a few close friends and relatives. Too large a group can make it difficult to find a dress that pleases everyone.