

*Happily Ever After...*



An Annual Supplement  
of *The Forest-Blade*  
January 25, 2023



## 18 wedding planning questions

*Here are a few of the most-asked queries...*

**OMG, I'm engaged! What should I do first?**

Well, you're not going to love this answer: Setting a budget. Ugh, I know. But you really can't start doing anything fun until you know how much you have to spend. And that doesn't just mean having the tough conversation about who's paying for the wedding (you, your family, your in-laws, or some combination of the three) and how much your total budget will be. You'll also want to divide your budget based on the different vendor categories—WeddingWire's

budget tool and this wedding budget breakdown can help with that.

**How much does a wedding cost?**

Here's the thing: How much you'll spend on your wedding really varies depending on where you're getting married. The average cost of a wedding usually hovers around \$28,000, but it's usually higher in big cities and lower in more rural areas. The WeddingWire Cost Guide can provide the average cost of a wedding in your area.

**How do I create a guest list?**

There are a few ways you can go about creating a guest

list, but here's one strategy. Come up with a target guest count, and divide that number in half. You and your partner take one half for your friends and VIPs, and the other half is divided equally between your parents and in-laws. If you need to add more people, you can adjust accordingly. The guest list tool on WeddingWire can be a lifesaver in keeping your list organized. And remember, that you can't start looking at wedding venues until you've come up with an estimated guest count.

**Can I create a "b-list" of guests who I'll invite in case those on my "a-list" can't**

**make it?**

You can, but I don't recommend it. Your b-listers will probably find out that they didn't make the initial cut, which can lead to hurt feelings.

**We want to have a small wedding and my parents/in-laws want to invite a ton of people. What should we do?**

When it comes to wedding etiquette, you'll often hear me use the phrase "if they pay, they get a say". So, if your parents and/or in-laws are contributing financially, they do get to provide input in your guest list. In this case, I would start by having an honest and calm conversation with your parents (no yelling!), and tell them that you'd like to keep the wedding relatively small and ask for a compromise. You can even bring a favorite venue into the discussion—"We really love this venue but it only holds X people. If we invite too many people, we can't get married here."

**What's a good wedding venue in [name a city]?**

Sure, I can tell you about the venues where I've attended events, but you'd be better off checking out the WeddingWire venue directory to get a fuller picture of all the venues in your area. You'll be able to read reviews from past couples, which will give you a better idea of what it's actually like to get married at those locations.

**How many gifts should I register for?**

Double the number of guests you're inviting, and register for that many gifts. Ideally, you'll register for gifts at a variety of price points, but don't be afraid to register for a few big-ticket items. Some of your guests may want to splurge on your gift, and larger items make for great group gifts.

**How do I tell my guests about my wedding registry?**

So technically you're not supposed to put your wedding registry information on printed materials (the exception is your shower invitations, because someone else is hosting that event). The workaround for this is to put your registry information on your wedding website and then include your website link on printed materials, such as your save-the-dates and invitation inserts.

**Should I hire a wedding planner?**

In most cases, yes! Not only can a wedding planner can help guide you through the planning process, they can help you save money, work with your vendor team, and ensure your big day runs without a hitch. There are several different types of wedding planners, so make sure you're hiring the right coordinator for your needs.

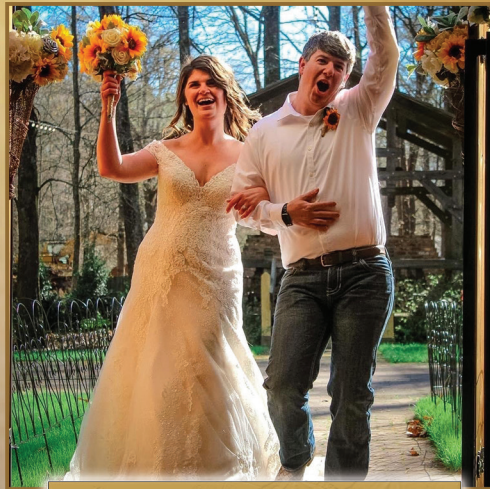
**Can you read this wedding venue/vendor contract for me and make sure it sounds reasonable?**

I'm an editor, not a lawyer! The best advice I can give is to read all vendor contracts carefully, have a friend or family member take a look as an extra pair of eyes, and don't be shy about asking questions if there's something you don't understand. Here's a primer on wedding vendor contracts with some words and phrases to know.

**Do I have to include my parents' names on our wedding invitations?**

You may be surprised to learn that this is the wedding-planning question I get asked most often. And the answer is: If your parents and/or in-laws are contributing financially to your wedding, they should definitely be listed on (Continued on page 4)

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## 18 wedding planning...

(From page 2)

your invites because they are technically hosting the event. And if they're not contributing financially, you can still opt to include them, but that's up to you. There are many different wedding invitation wording options, so pick the style that feels right for your event.

**I hate what my future in-laws are planning for my rehearsal dinner. How do I tell them?**

Your in-laws are being kind enough to pay for your rehearsal dinner, so you just may need to let this one go. However, if you feel really strongly about this issue, you can talk to your partner and have them work with their parents to change course. But in my opinion, it's not worth potentially ruining your relationship with your future in-laws over this.

**What's the deal with plus-ones?**

A plus-one is, to put it simple, a guest of a guest. So, anyone who is in a serious relationship (whether you know their partner or not) should be invited with a plus-one. If you are only inviting a few single friends who don't have serious partners, it's a nice idea to give them plus-ones so they can bring a guest if they choose. However, if you have a lot of single guests, you don't have to give them plus-ones—though if you make this your rule, try to avoid making exceptions or you might cause hurt feelings among your crew.

**Can my mom throw me a shower?**

Traditionally, the maid of honor and bridesmaids throw the shower—it was seen as bad form to have immediate family members host. However, times have changed, and now it's totally acceptable to have your mom or other close family members host your

shower.

**I don't want to invite kids to my wedding. How do I let guests know?**

There's no real way to say "no kids" directly and politely on a wedding invitation, so your best bet is to be clear about who's invited when addressing the envelope. If you're worried about people bringing kids anyway, you might also include a note on your wedding website that reads: "Due to [cost constraints and/or safety concerns], we are unable to accommodate children at our event." If a guest includes children on their RSVP, you'll need to call them directly (or have a loved one make the call) to let them know that, unfortunately, children cannot be accommodated at your event. Don't make exceptions.

**Do I have to tip my wedding vendors?**

You sure do! Here's a wedding tipping guide to help you plan for those big-day gratuities.

**What do I write in thank-you notes?**

We've got a template for that! Basically, keep it simple—thank the guest for the gift, talk about how you'll use it, thank them for attending your wedding or say how sorry you are that they couldn't, and end it there.

**I didn't receive a gift from one of my guests. Do I tell them? Do I still have to send them a thank-you note?**

Your best bet is to send them a thank-you note thanking them for attending the wedding—but obviously don't mention a gift. When your guest receives the note, they'll likely notice that no gift was mentioned and realize that a. They forgot to send a gift, or b. The gift they sent got lost or is delayed, and they'll remedy the situation accordingly.

After the "I Do's"  
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## Honeymoon registry is a popular option

More and more brides and grooms are discovering a delightful new twist on an old wedding tradition. Bridal registries have long been the way for engaged couples to identify exactly what they need and want to start their lives together. Traditionally, young couples who were establishing a home together created a registry chockfull of household items. Nowadays, however, many couples prefer a new registry trend that can help turn the honeymoon they envision into a well-planned reality. The increasingly popular honeymoon registry lets friends and family help the bride and groom afford a trip to Fiji, the Caribbean or anywhere in the world they dream of going. Instead of purchasing an impersonal set of flatware or risking a duplicate gift, wedding guests can now contribute to unique experiences

that can help make a couple's honeymoon all the more memorable, such as sponsoring a couple's massage, a sunset cruise, a snorkeling excursion or a helicopter tour. As one bride, Lisa Dexter Johnson, put it: "Our honeymoon in Hawaii was a once-in-a-lifetime trip that we will always cherish. Our friends and family loved the idea of being able to help us create memories that will remind us of them." The only major honeymoon registry service that also offers full service, complimentary travel planning is 1-800-Registry. It's a free online registry that makes it simple to select unforgettable honeymoon gifts. The company will even contribute \$200 to get the honeymoon fund started. In addition, couples can make the most of their honeymoon trip with some proper planning: SO = You can help a couple you care for to

afford the honeymoon of their dreams. Start early. The sooner you decide where you're going and where you're staying, the more likely you are to get what you want at a good price. It will also give you time to arrange for passports and visas this may take time, especially if a name change is involved. \*Go later. Many couples take the time right after their wedding to settle in and unwind and plan to take their honeymoon trip when they have more time or more money or when the destination is less expensive or less crowded. \*Get to know the destination. Check out the weather, the amenities and the costs. You can consult with a 1-800-Registry Honeymoon Specialist for all the destination details. You can create a honeymoon registry, view a registry or learn more at [www.1800registry.com](http://www.1800registry.com) or by calling (800) 256-4920.

## Wedding 101: Tips for stretching your dollar

Food and wine play an important role in a wedding, often reflecting the tastes of the couple themselves. Most brides and grooms-to-be want to personalize their big day and are seeking innovative ideas that provide a memorable experience for their guests—all without breaking the bank. David Mirassou, wine expert and 6th-generation of America's oldest wine-making family, recommends serving both a red and a white wine at weddings to maximize wedding budgets. Offering a choice makes wedding guests happy, plus Riesling and Cabernet or Pinot Noir can be served with lunch or dinner, as well as with dessert. More and more, dessert is becoming a centerpiece of the wedding menu, as brides and grooms are thinking beyond

the traditional champagne toast with wedding cake. One money-saving idea that is gaining popularity: Serve the couple's favorite dessert and toast with a wine that guests are already enjoying. "Riesling is a delicious option for wedding desserts. It may also help your budget, too, because you can pair it with both the meal and dessert during a wedding lunch or dinner," said Anne Chertoff, senior editor at Brides.com. If you're looking for wedding dessert ideas that express your unique taste (yes, even chocolate!), consider these. With Riesling: White or yellow cake or cupcakes (with or without a fruit filling) topped with vanilla buttercream frosting Vanilla cream cookie sandwiches Mirassou Riesling, with its touch of sweetness and live-

ly mouth- feel, is an excellent wine for both wedding meals and desserts, making it very budget friendly. Fresh fruit tarts with light fruits, such as apple and pear. With Cabernet Sauvignon: Flourless chocolate torte Mocha sponge cake with chocolate buttercream filling and chocolate ganache Dark chocolate truffles with a dark chocolate center, red wine ganache center, port ganache center, cherry, cassis or nut center. Make your dessert shine by adding a monogram or symbol in edible gold leaf. And, for another money-saving option that adds a personal touch, place a beautiful frame on the dessert table that displays a note explaining the story behind the dessert choice. For more unique dessert and wine-pairing tips, go to [Mirassou.com](http://Mirassou.com).



MR. AND MRS. AKRIDGE

## Miss Armstrong, Mr. Akridge wed in fall ceremony

Jada Kelli Armstrong became the bride of Christopher Blake Akridge October 29, 2022, at 5 p.m. at The Frog Pad in Lyons. A reception followed the ceremony.

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## How to plan a wedding step-by-step

*Just got engaged and not sure where to start? Here's our how to plan a wedding step-by-step guide to make it as simple and straightforward as possible, so you can keep stress at a minimum.*

Your wedding will likely be the biggest party you'll ever throw—and figuring out how to plan a wedding can feel pretty daunting at first (and particularly so if you're planning a wedding amid the COVID pandemic). But whether you want a small, simple wedding or a big, lavish affair, the steps remain the same: Set a budget (a critical first step!), find inspiration, start your guest list... well, we break it all down one step at a time below. We recommend focusing on one task at a time so you don't get overwhelmed by the wedding planning process. And if you're in a time

crunch, go ahead and delegate some of these responsibilities to family members and friends—they'll likely be glad to help you as you navigate this process.

### What are the steps to planning a wedding?

When it comes to how to plan a wedding, it's a good idea to follow a checklist—and tackle the listed steps in order. There's a method to the madness here, and sticking to a wedding-planning checklist will ensure a smooth and relatively stress-free process. For example, there's a reason why you should set a date and book your venue *before* choosing your attire—to make sure your look is comfortable for your event's setting and season. And that's just one example of why following the steps to planning a wedding is

so important; you'll find many more in the list below.

If you're someone who finds a wedding checklist a bit overwhelming, here's a list of the basic steps you'll need to complete to ensure your big day is a success. Of course, there are more tasks you may want to tackle, but we're just talking the must-dos here. Ready to go into planning mode? Here's how to plan a wedding step by step.

### Set a Wedding Budget

It's critical that setting your budget be the first step in planning your wedding. It might not be the most fun part of the process, but it's a task that really needs to be completed first because it sets the rest of your wedding planning process into motion. The last thing you want is to fall in love with a venue, vendor, dress,

etc. and realize it's completely out of range. So sit down with your parents or other potential contributors to come up with a total budget, and then divide it up by vendor or service accordingly.

### Download a Wedding-Planning App

You'll be able to accomplish more if you're able to plan your wedding while on the go, rather than just sitting in front of your computer. By downloading the WeddingWire app, you can access planning tools, browse and contact wedding, check out inspo, and tackle many of the tasks listed below right from your mobile device.

### Get Inspired

One of the most fun parts of planning a wedding step by step is gathering inspiration. Think about how you want your wedding to look and feel. Are you going for a super-classic and formal vibe? Or perhaps a wedding style that's more relaxed and rustic? The choice is yours, but it's a good idea to start perusing Pinterest, Instagram, and the latest wedding trends to start considering wedding colors, décor ideas, and more. We recommend starting this process early on, but kicking it into high gear once you've selected your venue and set a date.

### Start Your Guest List

While you don't have to have a final guest list until a bit later, when thinking about how to plan a wedding step by step, coming up with an estimated guest count early on is important. There's a big difference between a 50-person wedding and a 300-person wedding, particularly when it comes to your venue options. So, before you start browsing wedding venues, get an idea of how many guests you'll host.

### Pick Your Wedding Party

Now that you've got your guest list, it's time to choose the people who will stand beside you on your big day—your wedding party. So go ahead and select your bridesmaids, groomsmen, grooms ladies or brides men (or anyone else you want in your bridal party) and ask them to take on this important role. Check out our favorite bridesmaid proposal ideas to get started.

### Narrow Down the Dates

You won't officially "set a date" until you book your venue. But, it's recommended choosing a few potential wedding dates before you start looking at venues. First, think about the season in which you'd like to wed—and if a Saturday night wedding is a must (convenient, but potentially more expensive and competitive) or if you're open to a wedding on a different (perhaps less in-demand) day. Then, take a look at the calendar, taking into account work schedules, holidays, family conflicts, etc., and narrow things down to a few choice dates. Having some potential wedding dates in mind will be very helpful during the venue selection process.

### Choose a Venue

Now that you have a budget, an estimated guest count, and a few potential wedding dates in mind, you have all the information you need to book a wedding venue—one of the most important parts of how to plan a wedding guide. Read online reviews of wedding venues near you, visit a in person, and work with your partner to find your dream wedding location. Once you've thoroughly read your ceremony and reception venue's contract and signed on the dotted line, you've officially set a date for your wedding.

(Continued on page 9)



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## How to plan...

(From page 8)

ding—and the real fun begins! Note: Some couples hire a wedding planner before choosing a venue, others wait until afterwards—it all depends on the type of assistance you need.

### Start Your Wedding Registry

Pretty much immediately after you announce your engagement, your loved ones will ask: "Where are you registered?" When thinking about how to plan your wedding step by step, it's a good idea to create your wedding registry relatively early on in the process. Your family members and friends may want to

purchase engagement gifts—you can always make changes and additions to your registry later on. Use our wedding registry checklist to get started.

### Create a Wedding Website (and Wedding Hashtag!)

Setting up a wedding website is the easiest way to do keep your guests in the loop, and one of the most important steps to planning a wedding. Make sure to include all of the important information about your big day on your website—date, location, travel information, room block details, and more. Now's also the time to create your wedding hashtag to use on social media leading up to

your wedding day.

### Book Vendors

The average couple hires 13 vendors to help create their dream wedding day. That may seem like a lot, but it's important to hire the right people to ensure that your big day runs smoothly. We recommend following this vendor booking timeline to figure out when to book each pro, from your wedding photographer or videographer to your florist and DJ to your officiant, and reading online reviews to help choose the best of the best.

### Finalize Your Guest List

If you haven't already, it's time to create your final wedding guest list. Remember that

if your parents are contributing financially to your big day, they'll get a say in who's invited. Be sure to keep your venue's capacity in mind as well, and don't invite more people than the space can handle. Even though you'll likely receive regrets from some guests, you don't want to risk it.

### Send Save-the-Dates

It's time for your guests to mark their calendars! Save-the-dates should be sent as far in advance as possible to ensure that your loved ones can plan accordingly.

### Purchase Your Wedding Dress and Other Attire

Give yourself plenty of time

to find the perfect outfit for your wedding day. Particularly when it comes to wedding dresses, it can take months from the time you purchase your attire until it's properly tailored and ready to go, so don't wait until the last minute.

### Figure Out Rehearsal Dinner Details

The rehearsal dinner, which usually takes place the night before the wedding, requires some planning as well. Traditionally, the groom's family plans the rehearsal dinner, but it's important to figure out who's planning (and paying) for this event well in (Continued on page 11)



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## How to plan...

(From page 9)

advance—and make sure a venue is booked and details are hammered out in a timely fashion, about six months before the big day.

### Plan the Honeymoon

You may be thinking a lot about how to plan your wedding step by step, but don't forget about the honeymoon! If you're planning on jetting off on your honeymoon shortly after your wedding, it's time to choose a location, book your travel and accommodations, and start planning an itinerary.

### Attend Those Pre-Wedding Events

Engagement parties, the bridal shower (or a co-ed wedding shower), the bachelor and bachelor party, and more—your schedule will likely be jam-packed with pre-wedding events. While the soon-to-be married couple usually has little role in planning these celebrations, you'll need to clear your calendar to attend as guest of honor.

### Send Wedding Invitations

Wedding invitations are usually sent six to eight weeks before the big day—and the RSVP deadline is typically about two or three weeks in advance. Sending your invites on time is one of the most essential steps to planning a wedding.

### Buy Wedding Bands

An important symbol of marriage, be sure to browse and purchase your wedding rings a few months before your nuptials. Pick a wedding band that matches your engagement ring, is comfortable (you'll be wearing it pretty much all the time!) and suits your personal style.

### Create a Wedding Recep-

### tion Seating Chart

Work with your venue and planner to determine how many tables your wedding reception venue can accommodate. Then, use an online tool to figure out who sits where—keeping relationships and family dynamics in mind. Once you've finalized your seating chart (usually a week or so before your wedding), be sure to send to your caterer, venue, and stationer so that escort cards can be created.

### Get a Marriage License

If you're thinking about how to plan a wedding step by step, remember one of the most important tasks—obtaining a marriage license so that you and your partner can actually get legally married! Every state has different marriage license laws, so be sure to study up beforehand. Make sure that you get your marriage license at the right time—in advance if there's a waiting period in your state, but not too far in advance if the license expires after a certain amount of time. If you're interested in changing your name after the wedding, that marriage license will be a critical step in the process.

### Confirm Wedding Details with Vendors

In all likelihood, you've been in close contact with all of your wedding vendors in the days and weeks leading up to your big day. Make sure that you've tied up any loose ends and all of your vendors have all the information they need (and have been properly paid!). Wedding planners are super-helpful in this regard, and will assist you in making sure your vendors know where and when to be present for your wedding

ceremony and reception.

### Get Married!

The big day is finally here! You, your partner, your families, and your vendors have worked hard to follow all the steps to planning a wedding—so enjoy every minute! (Psst, want a step-by-step guide for planning the big day? We've got your covered with our wedding day timeline.)

### So, how much time do you need to plan a wedding?

Honestly, there's no hard and fast rule, as you can really mold the steps above to your own timeline—slowing down or speeding up (we've even got a three-month wedding checklist) where it works. How much time you need all depends on two important factors: 1) the general timeframe, think year and season, that you want to be married, and 2) how long you want to be engaged. The average engagement length is 13 months, which is totally enough time to tackle the above.

### What do you need to know before planning a wedding?

The answers to these four questions are a good starting point as you figure out how to plan a wedding. Once you've discussed these questions with your partner, you can move forward with other wedding-planning steps:

- Around how much do we have to spend on a wedding? (This may involve talking to parents or others who are contributing financially to your wedding.)
- Where do we want to get married? (Just a general location—like a city/town and state/region is okay for now.)
- When do we want to get

married? (A season or month and year is fine to start.)

- Do we want a big or small wedding? (If you can estimate a guest count, great!)

### Is wedding planning hard?

We're not going to lie—different aspects of planning a wedding can be hard for different people. Maybe you love decor but find creating a guest list nearly impossible. Or perhaps you love charts and numbers but find Pinterest completely bewildering. Fortunately, once you've hired your vendors, you'll have a team of people to assist you—and you can also delegate tasks to your partner, family members, or friends. If you're feeling completely overwhelmed and finding all of wedding planning too much, it may

be time to hire a wedding planner, if you haven't already.

### What if you have a smaller budget?

The average couple spends about \$28,000 on their ceremony and reception. You can absolutely have an amazing wedding for less than this, you just have to be a bit more strategic. The number-one way to save money on your wedding? Cutting your guest list! You can expect to spend about \$215 per guest, so the smaller your guest list (hello, microwedding!), the less you'll likely spend. There are lots of other ways to spend money on a wedding, so our best advice is to be flexible—being willing to compromise in certain areas will ensure you're able to stay within budget.

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MR. AND MRS. ALLEN

Ashlyn Mercedes Brown became the bride of Brent Chase Allen on December 3, 2022, at 5 p.m. at The Reynolds Clubhouse.



MR. AND MRS. MOORE

## Bonds, Moore exchange vows

Miss Aubrey Suzanne Bonds and Mr. Judson Bryant Moore were united in marriage December 10, 2022 in West Point, Ga.

## Diamonds are a girl's best friend

While an engagement ring is the ultimate symbol of a couple's commitment to each other, it may also be the first of many diamonds in a bride-to-be's wardrobe. Women want to stand out on their wedding day, to sparkle and shine with classic diamond jewelry. A diamond necklace is one of the most elegant diamond pieces and has been the accessory of choice for many celebrity brides. From a classic  $\frac{1}{2}$ -carat diamond solitaire pendant from Sam's Club to a show-stopping diamond Riviera necklace, there's a diamond necklace to fit every bride's style. Diamond bracelets can be stacked up the wrist, layered or just worn alone for a little hint of sparkle. One of the most desired diamond pieces is a pair of diamond stud earrings. Diamond studs are an elegant and timeless way to accentuate a bride's beauty—from one-carat diamond studs starting at \$2,500 from Helzberg Diamonds to simple diamond drop earrings for \$1,500 from Fred Meyer. Want something with a more romantic sentiment? The Everlon looking for something with a twist? A layered diamond by the yard chain is a great alterna-

tive to the classic, or an Everlon Diamond Knot lariat pendant for just \$1,100 from Sam's Club. Another wedding day trend and the ultimate red-carpet accessory: diamond bracelets. Diamond bracelets come in several styles, from a classic diamond tennis bracelet for \$1,300 from JC Penney to an Everlon Diamond Knot Diamond Knot Collection is an excellent choice for brides on their special day and the whole bridal party. Based on the Hercules knot, the Everlon Diamond Knot Collection is a beautiful way to express the bond you share. The collection comes in various styles and prices, such as a beautiful pair of carat Diamond Knot earrings from JC Penney for \$200, or an elegant  $\frac{1}{2}$ carat Diamond Knot pave pendant from Zale's for \$1,000. Don't forget fragrance. Elizabeth Taylor's fragrance, White Diamonds, is the most successful celebrity fragrance and a bestseller year after year. This classic and timeless fragrance stands true to its name, and just like diamonds, evokes feelings of glamour and fantasy. For more wedding day jewelry ideas and information, visit [www.adiamondisforever.com](http://www.adiamondisforever.com).

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## Be well-dressed at your wedding

On your wedding day, you want everything to be perfect —your shoes, your flowers, your dress but perhaps most importantly, your hair. Afterall, it's the day when all eyes are on you. Great hair begins months before the big day, according to cosmetologist Ernie McCraw, director of professional beauty education for Sally Beauty Supply. He suggests this timetable for your tresses: Six Months Out Six months before the big day, schedule a consultation with your stylist for your hair's state of the union. He or she can tell you if your hair is on the right track and give you some good pointers. Are you happy with your color? If not, do a little experimenting since you have some time. Demi- permanent dyes are great for this as they don't contain ammonia, won't damage hair and only deposit color. They last about four to

six weeks, so you can try a few before settling on the one that compliments your features the best. Ion Color Brilliance carries a clear demi-permanent for those who like their color but want to add extra shine. Three Months Out Moisture is key to good-looking hair, so start a weekly conditioning treatment at this point. Test out a few different products to find one that's right for your specific hair type. Dry hair will need a heavier deep conditioner while those with oily hair might want to opt for a light leave-in conditioner such as Miracle 7. Four to six weeks before your wedding, hold a hairstyle dress rehearsal. Bring along any head- Plan ahead to have beautiful hair on your wedding day. pieces or embellishments you're planning to use to get the full effect. Once the style is complete, take it on a test-drive to see how it holds

up. You won't be spending the entire wedding sitting in a chair, so you want to make sure the style will still look fabulous after you've hugged all those relatives and lived it up on the dance floor. Two Weeks Out For hair that looks fresh without looking too newly done, add color or highlights two weeks before the wedding. To keep color looking vibrant, replace your normal shampoo and conditioner with something specifically formulated for color-treated hair. Ion Color Defense has a complete line to help extend and protect hair color. Ernie McCraw is a licensed cosmetologist with more than 25 years in the beauty industry in all phases of cosmetology and is director of professional beauty education for Sally Beauty Supply. To find a Sally Beauty store, visit [SallyBeauty.com](http://SallyBeauty.com).



MR. AND MRS. JIMENEZ

### Miss Brinson, Mr. Jimenez exchange vows

Natasha Brinson became the bride of Victor Sanchez Jimenez on October 28, 2022, at their home in Midville.



MR. AND MRS. HALL

### Miss Clifton, Mr. Hall exchange vows

Brianna Clifton became the bride of Mason Hall on September 7, 2022, at 6 p.m. at the Georgia Sports Arena. A reception followed the ceremony.

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## What every bride and groom should know when planning a wedding in any economy

While the state of the global economy has taken a toll on most Americans, today's bride is more optimistic than ever. In fact, weddings continue to be on the rise and Idexonline.com reports that the number of weddings in the U.S. will grow by approximately 30 percent within the next decade. Additionally, a recent study conducted by Modern Bride magazine showed 90 percent of brides are either keeping to their original wedding budget or plan to spend more! Despite brides' sunny outlook, style expert and wedding consultant Michael O'Connor encourages couples to think smart and reprioritize their budget by investing in areas of the wedding day that have longevity, versatility and symbolism—since these items will last a lifetime. "A wedding can take months to plan—yet, it's over in a few hours," comments O'Connor. "The dress goes into a storage box, the flowers become today's trash and the only reminder of your wedding music is the bill." Below, O'Connor

offers his smart wedding spending and investment tips: Sharing Memories This is your big day, so don't skimp on hiring a professional photographer. Make sure to view his or her portfolio and ask for references. A good photographer will know how to capture those spontaneous and emotional wedding moments without making you pose like statues for hours. Make the Ring Count Now more than ever, brides are realizing the significance of quality and longevity when it comes to their bridal jewelry, so it is no surprise that 81 percent of bride's desire Platinum rings. Even in a tough economy, 90 percent of brides intend to stick to their wedding budgets or spend even more. the Cond Nast Bridal Group. Platinum is not only 30 times more rare than gold, but it's also the most durable of all precious metals, so it won't wear down over time. And because of its strength, it holds the diamond more securely. Platinum is the one metal that delivers the high quality and long-lasting fea-

tures that brides and grooms are looking for today in her engagement ring and his-and-her wedding bands. Check out online retailer BlueNile.com where high-quality Platinum wedding

bands start as low as \$255. Your First Trip as Husband and Wife Spend time selecting the destination for your honey moon that is meaningful and exciting to both the bride and groom.

After all, couples will remember their honeymoon and recount stories from the trip for the next 50+ years. For more information, visit [www.preciousplatinum.com](http://www.preciousplatinum.com) or [www.engagementguide.com](http://www.engagementguide.com).



MR. AND MRS. BATES

### Harris, Bates wed in November

Amber Harris became the bride of Matthew Bates in November, 2022.

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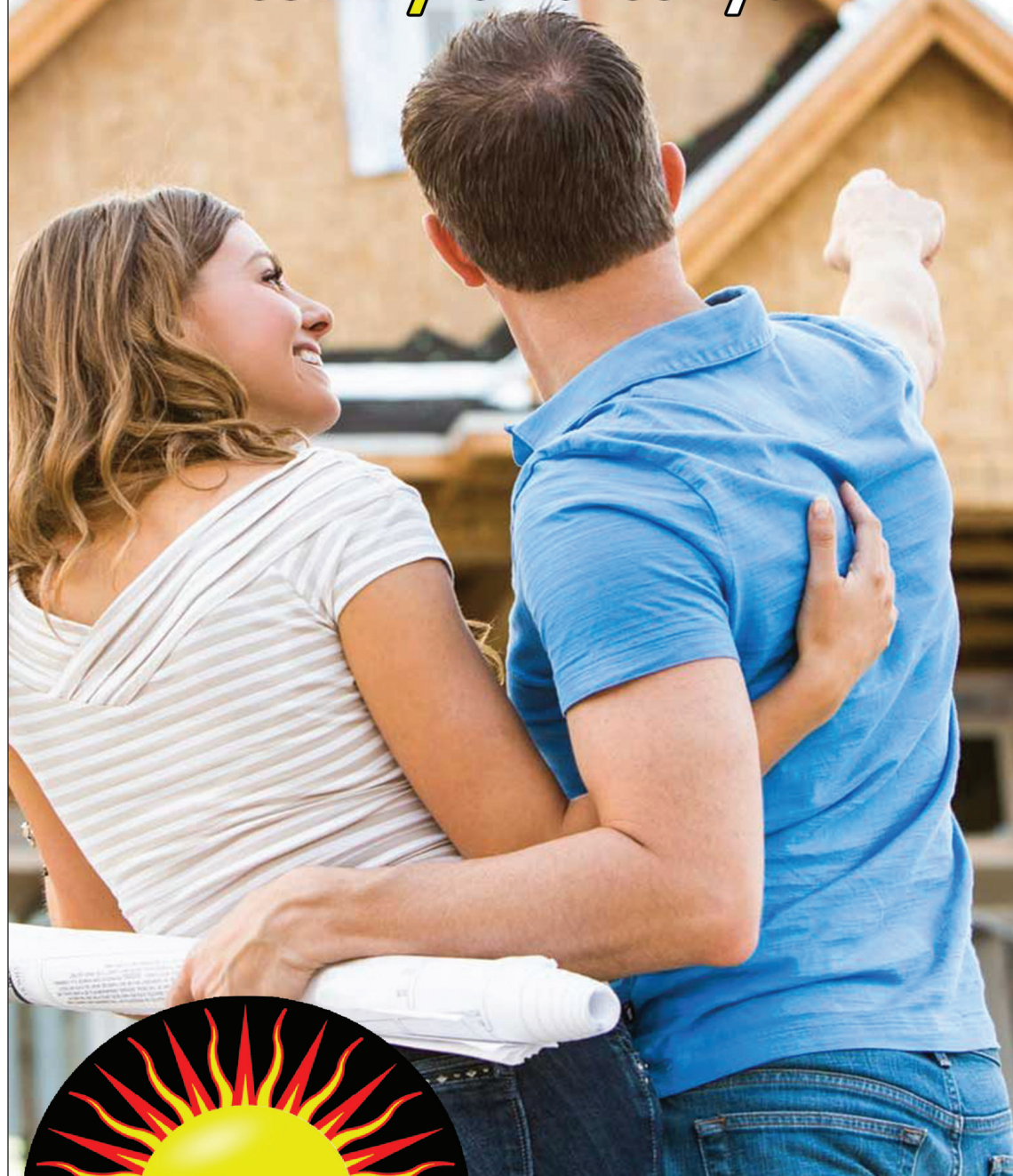
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MR. AND MRS. SCOTT

## Miss Hayslip, Mr. Scott wed

Tara Gabriel Hayslip became the bride of Colby Scott on November 5, 2022, at The Copper Barn in Portal. A reception followed at the same location.



MR. AND MRS. WILLIAMS

## Jordan, Williams exchange vows

Dr. Deidra Christina Jordan became the bride of Terrell Fred'Shad Williams in Callahan, Florida, on August 6, 2022, at 4 p.m.



# Brides save money and time planning their wedding online

by Sharon Naylor, bridal expert with more than 35 published wedding and bridal shower books to date (NAPSA).

Brides will create their dream wedding by threading together a collection of wedding images and inspirations. With all these ideas floating around, brides need, to be organized. Naylor Research shows that being disorganized leads to overspending and miscalculations, ending in wedding waste. With the average U.S. wedding costing \$23,000, brides need every dollar to count. The organized bride needs a single place to coordinate the wedding party, search for the perfect dress, track guest responses, monitor the budget and decide on a venue. In the 21st century, a binder full of papers won't do! A digital solution is better suited to capture and coordinate details. Microsoft OneNote 2010 offers a digital solution that brides can count on—complete with a downloadable wedding-planning template. Couples can copy and paste images that inspire them during wedding planning—right into their custom notebook—and the program will automatically include the

image's URL. Plus, if the bride and groom don't have OneNote 2010 on their computer, they can download a free, fully functional trial copy for 60 days. Here are some tips and tricks for how to use online organizers to help ease the stress of planning: Allow the groom to help with planning. Don't forget the groom! In most weddings, grooms are full planning partners. Keeping the wedding plans in one easy-to-access location makes sharing the task easier. Asking the groom to take an interest in wedding plans is a perfect start to working as a team in the marriage. Brides Save Money and Time Planning Their Wedding Online Wedding planning can be easier with help from an online template. Connect the wedding party early. Often, a favorite cousin or sister doesn't live in the same state as the bride. Online wedding planning can span the miles between members of the wedding party. Brides can now spend less time answering repetitive e-mails and phone calls, because online wedding planning allows them to create a unified place for the wedding party to communicate details, such as tux sizes, dress orders and travel details. Track

the budget's every move. With 60 percent of brides and grooms paying for the wedding themselves, it is important to track the budget every step of the way. Brides and grooms can scan images of receipts into their digital organizer as deposits are paid and use the budget tool to do simple math equations, showing where the budget stands. Plan the honeymoon separately. Planning the honeymoon can be just as time consuming as planning the wedding. Ensure sanity by creating a separate notebook for the honeymoon. OneNote 2010 has you covered with a downloadable travel template, which is full of prompts for details that could easily be forgotten, such as digital copies of your passports. Start planning now. Download the free OneNote 2010 wedding template at <http://www.office.com/onenotewedding>.



MR. AND MRS. SMITH

## Miss Key, Mr. Smith exchange vows

Evans Key became the bride of Hunter Smith on June 11, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Swainsboro First United Methodist Church. A reception followed at the Swainsboro Country Club.







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## Miss Shellenberg, Mr. Hill wed

McCain Shellenberg became the bride of Brandon Hill on September 17, 2022, at 4:30 p.m. on their family land located in Twin City. A reception followed at the family barn.



MR. AND MRS. HILL



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MR. AND MRS. GOODMAN

## Miss Kirkland and Mr. Goodman exchange vows

Brianna Raye Kirkland became the bride of Trevin Matthew Goodman on April 23, 2022, at Fox Head Plantation in Soperton.



MR. AND MRS. SCOTT

## Miss Miller, Mr. Scott wed

Lindsey Caroline Miller became the bride of Gavin Slay Scott on February 26, 2022.



# Seven things to know before planning your own wedding

*Experts share their top words of wisdom for couples who are planning their own wedding, from creating a budget to deciphering contracts.*

Whether or not budget is a big concern when it comes to planning your wedding, you

may be on the fence about hiring a wedding planner. This is especially true if you want to be very hands-on with the planning. Well, there are plenty of reasons to hire a wedding planner, and many couples say it was one of the best hires they

made for their wedding, but some couples choose to go a different route. If you and your partner are planning your own wedding, all the power to you!

So where to begin? When it comes to planning your own wedding without the help of a

planning professional, there's quite a lot to know. You want to make sure you've thought of everything before it's too late—last-minute wedding arrangements aren't so easy to string together.

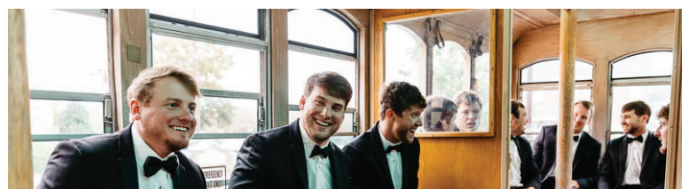
To help guide you along the

way, here are some important things that can make planning your own wedding smooth sailing, according to experts.

**Determine your budget before you start planning.**

Many couples who are plan-  
(Continued on page 20)

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## Seven things to...

(From page 19)

ning their own wedding think it's okay to hire a vendor or two before truly sitting down and ironing out their budget. Big mistake, according to Rothweiler. "You should never just start spending money because you'll fall down a rabbit hole

that you'll never dig your way out of," she says. "Have a serious conversation with anyone contributing to the budget to find out exactly how much they are giving you."

**You can hire a planner for a day or two instead.**

Before shutting the door

on the wedding-planner idea completely, it's worth knowing that not all planners are all or nothing. In fact, some offer a variety of packages that can be more practical for a budget-conscious couple. For Danielle Rothweiler of Rothweiler Event Design in Verona, New Jersey, offers mini-packages where couples get 10 hours of her company's time to use, however they want! "This could be helpful in finding the venue, designing the budget or whatever the couple is struggling with," she explains.

**Organization is key.**

Any planner will tell you the immense importance of using checklists and spreadsheets for planning any event, but especially such a large-scale one like your wedding. "There are many wedding planning binders available for purchase, and free tools lists online, that will cover all of the relevant categories and details related to planning your own wedding," says Kimberly Lehman of Love, Laughter & Elegance in Massillon, Ohio. In fact, WeddingWire offers totally free wedding planning tools keep

track of everything in a shareable and concise way.

**Friends and family are there to help you.**

Without a planner to give you their venue and vendor recommendations, the next best place to turn are your recently married friends, according to Rothweiler. "Did they like their vendors? What did they spend?" she says. "Ask your friends to be open and honest about what they would've done differently and look into their recommendations first."

**Consider timing well in advance.**

The timing of your wedding day won't get fully ironed out until about two months before the date, according to Rothweiler, however, she recommends being conscious of these logistics throughout the entire planning process. "For instance, if you have elaborate ideas for floral design, but your venue only allows 90 minutes for set-up, you might want to consider a venue that gives you the whole day, or you'll have to tell your florist before booking what the time constraints are," she says.

**Don't sacrifice quality for**

**quantity.**

Remember that more guests will cost you, so determine which is your priority—having more people you love there at a greater cost or a smaller, more intimate wedding that's lower cost. Prioritize your budget and see where money can be moved around, suggests Lehman. "Smaller, more intimate weddings are the trend this year," she says. "I also always advise my couples to select the best services and goods possible, within their budget—for example, excellent photography is a must."

**Read your contracts—twice.**

"I cannot tell you how many details have caught my clients off guard that were right there in black and white," says Rothweiler. "Once you sign on the dotted line and put down that first payment, it's too late to potentially make changes or discuss anything really." Also, remember that being told something verbally isn't a contract—it must be in writing. And if there's something you don't understand on a wedding vendor's contract, never hesitate to ask!

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## Ms. Morris, Mr. Galgon wed in July

Kirstyn Julia Morris became the bride of Brian Stephen Galgon on July 23, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at Brick and Ivey in Marietta.



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## Checklist for wedding planning

*Start your wedding checklist*

- Figure out the basics
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  - Book venue and caterer
  - Book hotel room blocks for your guests
  - Set up your registry
  - Select your wedding party
  - Book other vendors
  - Start shopping for attire
  - Set up your wedding website
  - Send out save-the-dates
  - Select your wedding party attire
  - Book more wedding vendors
  - Find your invitations
  - Purchase wedding rings
  - Plan your rehearsal dinner
  - Figure out your favors
  - Plan your honeymoon
  - Hair and makeup trial
  - Have your catering and cake tasting
  - Have your wedding shower, bachelor and/or bachelorette party
  - Pick your ceremony and reception playlist
  - Send out your invites
  - Buy gifts
  - Start writing thank-you notes
  - Get your marriage license
  - Confirm all vendors and details
  - Create your seating chart
  - Create your wedding day timeline
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  - Rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
- Your Wedding Day**  
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MR. AND MRS. CLEMENTS

*Miss Parham, Mr. Clements  
exchange vows*

Haley Marie Parham became the bride of Brian Michael Clements on October 1, 2022, at 5 p.m. at Mont Royal Clubhouse. A reception followed at the same location.

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*Miss Parker,  
Mr. Johnson  
exchanged  
vows in  
spring  
ceremony*

Kensley Anne Parker became the bride of Kenneth Chase Johnson on May 21, 2022, at Dutch Ford Farm.



MR. AND MRS. JOHNSON

**Miss Smith,  
Mr. Padgett  
wed**

Emily Rebecca Smith became the bride of Cliff Coram Padgett on November 19, 2022, at Swainsboro First United Methodist Church. A reception followed at Mont Royal Clubhouse.



MR. AND MRS. PADGETT

**Mr. Steptoe,  
Miss Tuttle  
wed**

Miranda Anne Tuttle became the bride of Avery Steptoe on October 15, 2022, at 5 p.m. at Oaky Grove Church in Wrightsville. A reception followed at the same location.



MR. AND MRS. STEPTOE





MR. AND MRS. MCCOY

## Miss Womack and Mr. McCoy unite

Lily Diana Womack became the bride of Christopher Dalton McCoy on April 2, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at Rosemont Baptist Church in Waynesboro. A reception follow at First Liberty Market in Waynesboro.



MCCLAIN AND TURNER

## Miss McClain, Mr. Turner to exchange vows

Miss Alaina McClain will become the bride of Mr. Nathan Turner on April 15, 2023, at 5 p.m. at The Mont Royal Clubhouse. A reception will follow at the same location.

## Miss Rigdon, Mr. Scott to wed

Miss Railey Fayeth Rigdon will become the bride of Kenton Bishop Scott on February 11, 2023, at The Copper Barn in Portal.



MR. SCOTT AND MISS RIGDON

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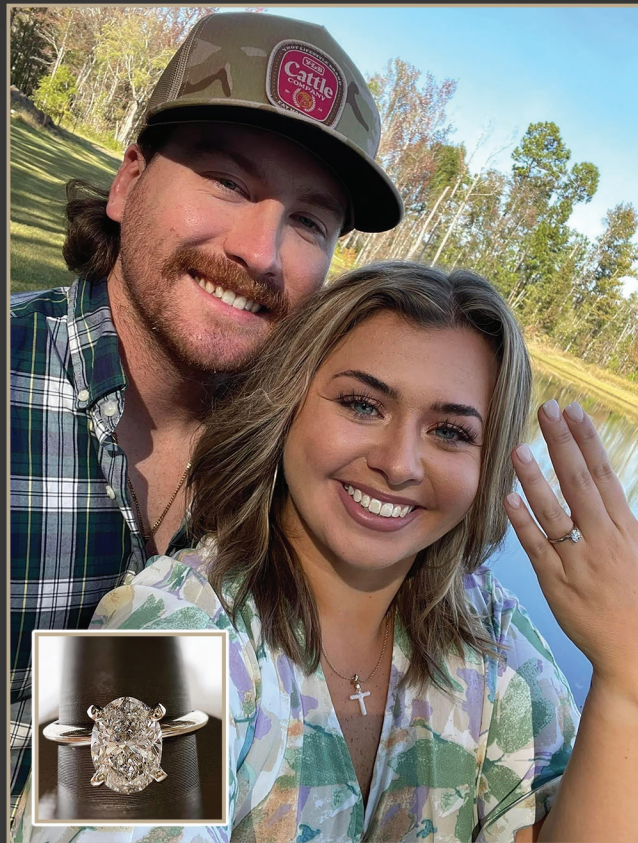
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