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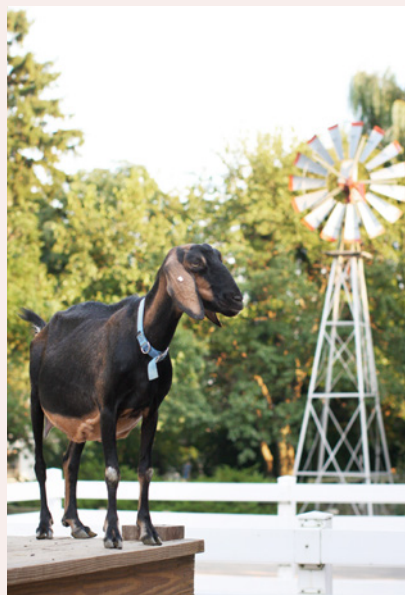
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your style



J. Crew
"Emilia Gown"

Our wedding dress update on the classic ball gown includes a textured jacquard and features all-over hand-applied sequins, beads and crystals in a prettier-than-pretty sunburst pattern. We added a built-in tulle petticoat and full silk lining because it's the little details on your big day that make it extra special.

Feel The Love

Congratulations on your engagement! We are thrilled to be part of your wedding planning process.

Here at Chicago Bride, we are dedicated to providing you with resources that will make your wedding preparation run as smoothly as possible. That's why we have plenty of amazing advice to ensure that the journey to your special day is as exciting and enjoyable as the day you got engaged.

In this issue, we start from the very beginning with a wedding planner checklist to make sure that you've covered the necessities. You'll discover some unique and beautiful places for your wedding. You'll also see advice from other couples on things you should register for that they did not and wish they had.

You will see some money-saving tips to help you stretch your wedding budget dollar. Also, you will learn what questions to ask when booking a photographer. And, you will get some simple tips for making sure you get your dream hairstyle.

You want to be feeling and looking great leading up to your big day, so you can check out a step-by-step 21 day detox and diet from Alexis Wolfer's book, Radiant Bride. There's also Do It Yourself facemasks from Radiant Bride so you will look and feel flawless throughout the festivities.

Of course, we continue to feature your wonderful weddings and we are excited to showcase three beautiful brides that are sure to inspire you. Please continue to send in your real weddings submissions.

You will find the guidelines on our website, www.ChicagoBrideMagazine.com.

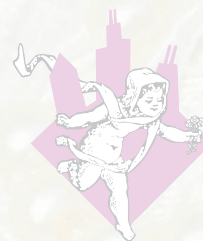
Happy planning!

The Editors of Chicago Bride



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Arrowhead Golf Club





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your style

Winnie Couture
"Noella 3216"

Fit and flare with Alençon lace,
sweetheart neckline and bow belt
at natural waist line.

You want everything to be perfect. Use this checklist to make sure you've covered the necessities.



12 to 18 Months Ahead

- Announce engagement to friends and family
- Take engagement photo
- Place engagement announcement in paper
- Determine a wedding budget
- Figure out the style and size of wedding, level of formality, time of day
- Meet with clergy or wedding officiant
- Reserve church or ceremony site (keep in mind it may be a different time than what you want if you don't book early enough)
- Reserve reception site
- Select bridal party
- Reserve florist
- Hire a caterer if the reception site isn't catering the event
- Reserve photographer
- Reserve band, DJ, and/or any other type of musician you want
- Send out "Save the Date" letters or cards

9 to 11 Months Ahead

- Shop for wedding dress, headpiece, shoes and accessories; order them as soon as possible
- Make honeymoon plans and reservations
- Meet with bridesmaids to select their attire
- Compile tentative guest list
- Reserve rental equipment if needed

6 to 8 Months Ahead

- Arrange for wedding day transportation
- Begin registering for shower/wedding gifts
- Order bridesmaids' attire if you haven't already and begin selecting their accessories
- Select Mothers' dresses
- Discuss where the two of you will live after the wedding and begin looking for places together
- Order your wedding cake

3 to 5 Months Ahead

- Book site for rehearsal dinner
- Make a final guest list with names, addresses, and phone numbers and compile a response chart so you can keep track of your guests
- Start the dreaded wedding workout
- Select and order wedding invitations (don't forget to include maps with the invitations and purchase Thank You notes)
- Reserve rooms at hotels for out-of-town guests
- Select groom's attire
- Plan rehearsal dinner
- Make a food tasting appointment with caterer and baker
- Select ceremony readings and music and choose your readers
- Order wedding rings and engraving
- Get the undergarments necessary for your gown
- Meet with ceremony officiant again to discuss obligations to the church, religion, etc.
- Purchase bridal party gifts (and don't forget the parents)
- Purchase wedding favors

- Reserve room for wedding night

Two Months Ahead

- Now is the time to be calling and reconfirming all those vendor contracts!
- Check requirements for medical tests and marriage license for wedding and honeymoon
- Mail invitations four to eight weeks ahead
- Plan luncheon/special party for bridesmaids
- Choose gifts for attendants and future husband
- Meet with musician(s) to discuss song list
- Meet with photographer to discuss the particular wedding photos you want taken
- Finalize the details for the flowers
- Make final fitting appointment
- Organize ceremony rehearsal arrangements
- Start practicing your makeup if you're doing it yourself
- Make appointment for bridal portrait
- Schedule a practice hair appointment (do any hair color changes and/or drastic cut changes now so it isn't a shock to you right before the wedding)
- Start working on those vows to one another (if you've decided to write your own)

One Month Ahead

- Make appointment(s) for hair, make-up, manicure, pedicure, and/or massage for yourself and bridal party for the day of or day before your wedding (and don't forget about the Moms!)
- Send your wedding announcement to the paper
- Attend your final fitting
- Make arrangements to change your name
- Put together programs
- Go for a practice hair and makeup appointment. Don't forget to bring your veil or hairpiece!
- Attend your bridal portrait
- Have those vows done!
- Inform your bridal party of the rehearsal and dinner plans

Two Weeks Ahead

- Pick up marriage license
- Prepare seating chart for reception and rehearsal dinner
- Make a wedding day flowchart of events, hour by hour, to give your bridal party and all key vendors
- Give caterer finalized guest count
- Confirm honeymoon reservations and buy travelers checks
- Break in the wedding shoes
- Between two and four weeks ahead, have a facial and start drinking eight glasses of water everyday

One Week Ahead

- Pack for the honeymoon
- Give the ushers their instructions
- Confirm all transportation for the wedding day and honeymoon trip
- Gather attendants' gifts to give to them at the rehearsal dinner
- Confirm all vendors again
- Put together your emergency kit for the big day. (Take the whole week to do this so you don't leave out anything crucial!)

The Day Before

- Attend rehearsal ceremony and dinner; set a specific time for everyone in the wedding party to meet on the wedding day and make sure everyone knows where to go for pictures
- Give gifts to the bridal party
- Lay out all clothes, jewelry and other accessories you'll need for the next day, including your emergency kit
- Discuss receiving-line procedures with parents and bridal party
- Leave gift for the groom to find tomorrow, or exchange gifts with one another today
- Relax and get some rest—tomorrow is a big day!



Sabrina Dahan
"Marian"

Ivorie, illusion deep V-neck,
A-line gown with brocade and
lattice beading.

Exquisite Cuisine in A Historic Setting

The Haley Mansion

The massive limestone structure took two years to complete. It stands three and a half stories high and boasts immense front and back balconies...

The Haley Mansion was built in 1891, named after its inceptor, the then Joliet mayor, who envisioned the "Castle on the Hill" to overlook the city. He commissioned nationally known architect and certified Egyptologist Frank Shaver Allen to design his dream and make it a reality.

The massive limestone structure took two years to complete. It stands three and a half stories high and boasts immense front and back balconies. The Mansion has since been updated to include important modern-day amenities necessary for events, such as central air, beautiful bathroom, handicap friendly and an in house sound system.

However, efforts were prioritized to maintain all of the original oak, cherry, and mahogany woodwork, stained-glass windows, intricate friezes, ornate adornments and six fireplaces throughout in addition to the authentic Victorian décor.

The Haley Mansion offers an array of cuisine options, ranging from tower room service, delicious hors

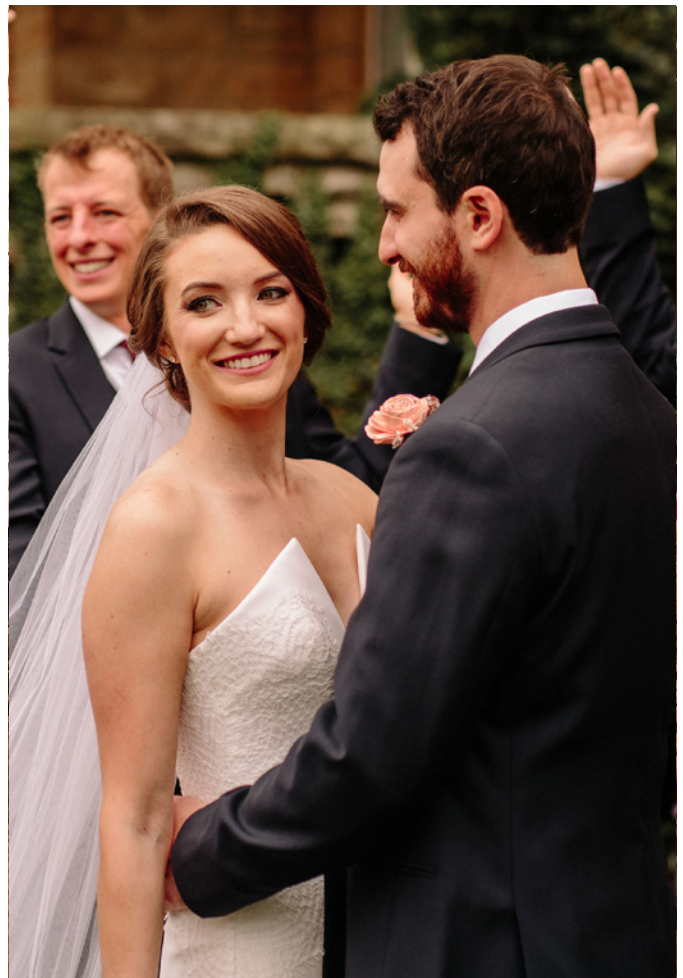


d' oeuvres, lobster martini appetizers, a wide variety of plated dinners, fabulous sweet tables, wedding cakes, late night snacks and let's not forget libations. An onsite event planner is available via appointment for private tours.

Event duration is 5 hours, and your guests will be able to enjoy full use of this historic mansion as well as the majestic ballroom, lush gardens, walkways, and a beautiful brick patio with wrought iron furniture overlooking the ponds and gardens.

The Haley Mansion | thehaleymansion.com

17 S Center St, Joliet, IL 60436 (P) 815-726-6800 | Photography compliments of Timothy Whaley & Associates (TWA)







Sarah Traverso & Nick Carney



LOCATION OF CEREMONY & RECEPTION: RADISSON BLU AQUA HOTEL

PHOTOGRAPHER: REMPEL PHOTOGRAPHY

PLANNER: PLUM & IVY

FLORIST: KLOECKNER'S PREFERRED FLOWERS

HAIR: RARE BIRD BEAUTY

PRODUCTION: MDM ENTERTAINMENT

BAND: TVK ORCHESTRA



Get Your Dream Hairstyle for Your Big Day

Once you've determined your wedding theme and secured the perfect dress, deciding on your hairstyle doesn't have to be difficult.



Before The Big Day

Test the waters! Schedule 1-2 hairstyle trials with your stylist. Create a look book or pin any images you are drawn to, including pictures that represent your wedding theme/style, and, of course, of your wedding dress. During your consultation, your stylist can determine your hair type, evaluate and treat any concerns, and discuss your vision for the big day.

Your Trial Appointment(s)

Bring along any inspirational pictures of wedding looks and hair style ideas, jewelry, hair accessories, and/or your veil. If you're still deciding on your dream 'do, some salons, including DreamDry, offer a style menu and expert advice to guide your selection.

If you love the look and feel of your hair, make the investment and purchase the products used during your service. We highly recommend the purse size versions for your wedding day!

Test your Style

Give your trial style a run through. Enjoy an evening out with your bridesmaids to test the longevity and to determine if the style needs to be tweaked.

Take Photos with your Hairstyle

Taking photos from every angle will give you an idea how your style and accessories will look on your big day!

Your Wedding Day

The night before, shampoo and treat your hair with the recommended products from your trial. Unless advised, refrain from putting product in your hair.

Tips courtesy of Felicia Mani, DreamDry Chicago Salon



Sabrina Dahan
"Chloe"

Silk embroidered Tulle in Crème.
Racer front and open back
embroidered gown.

Bay Pointe

FROM SIMPLE AND SWEET TO GRAND AND GLAMOROUS

When it comes to unique wedding venues, Bay Pointe is in a class of its own. This magnificent resort offers an unparalleled level of elegance and sophistication, making it the ideal choice for your special day. From Bay Pointe Woods, with its grand ballroom and blooming botanicals, to the Lakefront Pavilion on the sparkling shores of Gun Lake, Bay Pointe provides the perfect settings for ceremonies and receptions.

As one of Michigan's top resorts, Bay Pointe provides more than indulgent details and world-class service, it also offers exquisite cuisine

and customizable wedding packages. Whether you're dreaming of an intimate ceremony for 50 to a grand affair for 300, Bay Pointe's attentive staff will ensure that every detail is taken care of, leaving you free to enjoy your special day. And with its prime location, only 2.5 hours northeast of Chicago, Bay Pointe offers easy access for your guests, making it the perfect choice for a destination wedding.

So if you're looking for a venue that truly embodies the simple and sweet to the grand and glamorous, look no further than Bay Pointe!



BAY POINTE WOODS



LAKEFRONT PAVILION



LAKESIDE LAWN

Bay Pointe's unique locations include Bay Pointe Woods, a unique equestrian style wedding venue surrounded by 10 stylish cottages, water and fire features, and a picturesque wedding lawn. The Bay Pointe Woods ballroom seats up to 300 guests with exposed beams and romantic ambiance. The Lakefront Pavilion, a unique waterfront setting for your dream wedding offers stunning sunsets, an extensive bar, a greenery

wall, and fire features. The Fireside Banquet Room is Bay Pointe's perfect indoor space for intimate winter or cozy weddings and dinners. Steeped in history, Bay Pointe also offers The BoatHouse Villa, an exquisite Gun Lake estate adjacent to the Inn, boasting its own lakeside ceremony site, lavish garden courtyard, and lakeside patio. For a detailed wedding packet, visit baypointeweddings.com.

RECEPTIONS | CEREMONIES | REHEARSAL DINNERS | PRIVATE ROOMS



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WOODS BALLROOM**



**THE BAY POINTE
WOODS LAWN**



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Plan the Wedding of the Decade

Survey Reveals Items Couples Didn't Register for but Wish They Had

We've scoured the top expert sites to bring you the latest and hottest trends for the year.

By Cathy Demetropoulos, Editor, Chicago Bride Magazine

A national survey by Erie Insurance asked about items couples didn't register for but now wish they had, as well as gifts they are still glad they registered for versus ones they regret. The survey also asked respondents about their most unusual wedding gifts, their attitudes on various etiquette topics including registering for money, and their advice to other couples registering today.

Common registry items people didn't register for but now wish they had included a robotic vacuum cleaner, an air fryer and lawn equipment. Below is a ranked list of what people wish they had registered for.

When asked to name their favorite gift that they registered for and received, one person said an elephant ride; another said a trip to Paris; and another said his and hers matching bathrobes. Regarding items people most regretted registering for, write-in answers included a back scratcher, dog seat covers, and "too many casserole dishes."

Some of the more unusual gifts couples received were regifts. One person said they received a restaurant gift card for an odd amount, as if part of it had been used. Another received a registry book that had already been written in.



Respondents also weighed in on etiquette topics, including registering for money. While two-thirds of people (66%) think registering for money is fine, the other third (34%) think it's tacky/in poor taste. Registering for money is least socially acceptable in the Northeast, where 41% of respondents think it's in poor taste, while it's most accepted in the South, where fewer than a third (30%) think it's tacky.

Almost half of those surveyed (46%) said they registered for money. Of those, nearly half (45%) said it was for general use, while 31% said it was for a honeymoon. Ten percent said it was for

a down payment on a house, and the same percentage said the money was for a home improvement project.

People were of two minds when it came to offering advice to couples registering today. Several said they'd advise couples to register for expensive items they'd never buy for themselves (one said to register for "something special that will make you cry when you see it") while others encouraged registering only for practical items they would use often, with one saying "get the needs out of the way before the wants."



Stand Mixer



*Lawn
Equipment*



Luggage



Barbeque Grill



*Robotic
Vacuum
Cleaner*



Air Fryer



Bread Maker



Food Processor



*Food Saver/vacuum
seal system*



Tools

Beyond Your Expectations...

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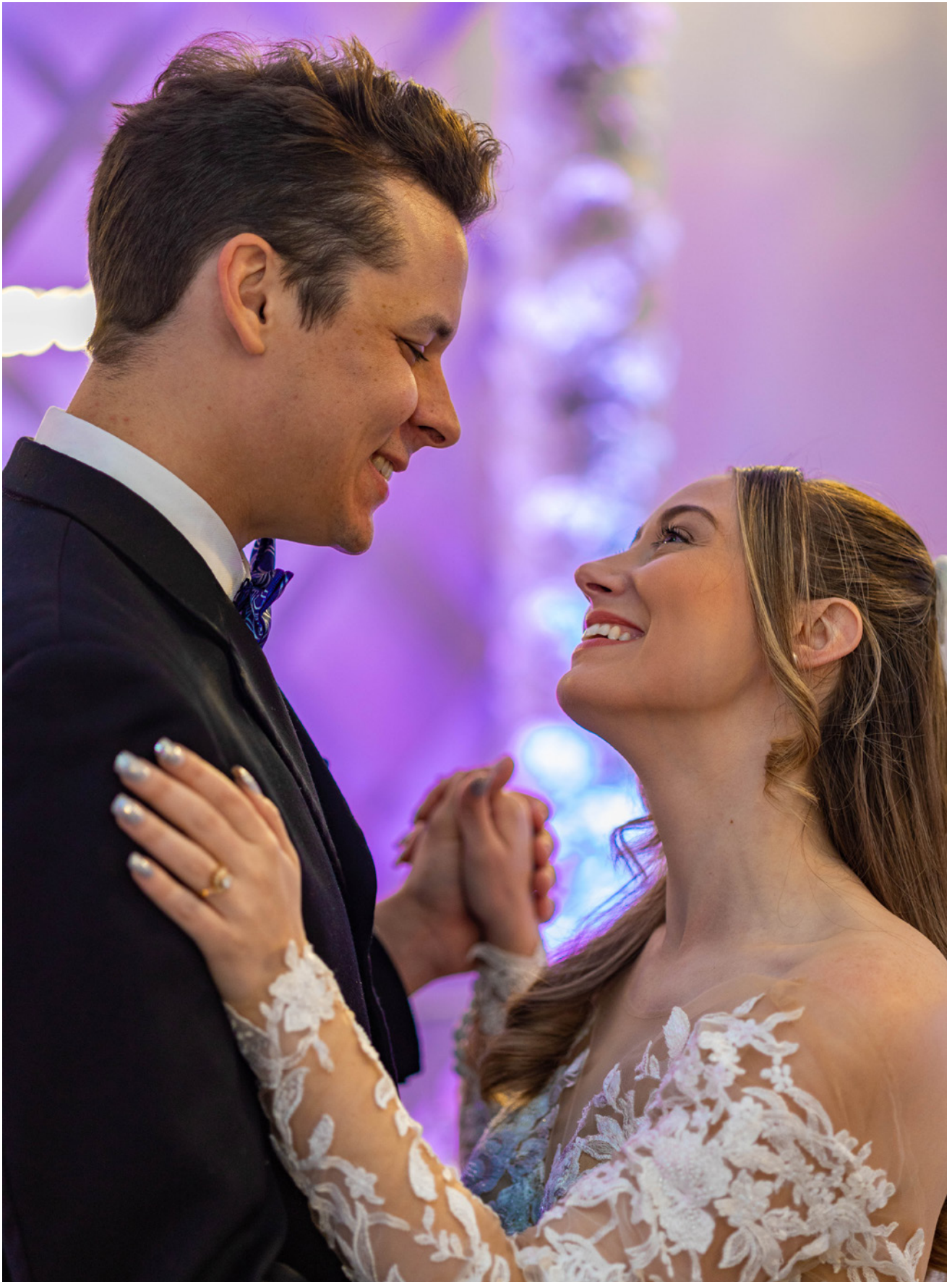
Our Eagle room can accommodate 150 people seated and 200 standing. The facility has 200 Silver Chiavari chairs, 25 standard 60 inch tables, that can accommodate 8 people. Additionally, we have 25 highboy tables to accommodate a standing cocktail event. The banquet room has 2 mahogany, 1957 Chris Craft Boat Bars. The Eagle room itself is approximately 3,500 sq.ft. and is directly attached to a 100,000 sq. ft. Automotive exhibit space. To accommodate all events there is a 100 space parking lot. The design of the Eagle room is such that it allows your wedding planner to create their own independent vision.

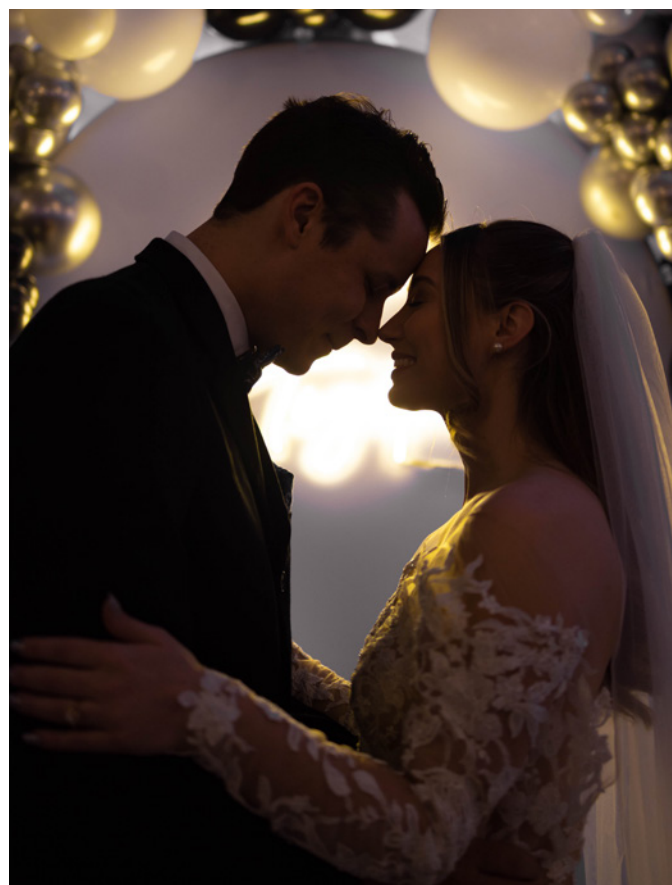
The KKAM is an educational Museum that has a mission to enlighten guests of all ages as to the significant role that automobiles and their creators have played throughout history. These vintage classic cars are in and of themselves pieces of art. The atmosphere of an event at KKAM is equal parts entertaining and electrifying.



Klairmont Collections Automotive Museum

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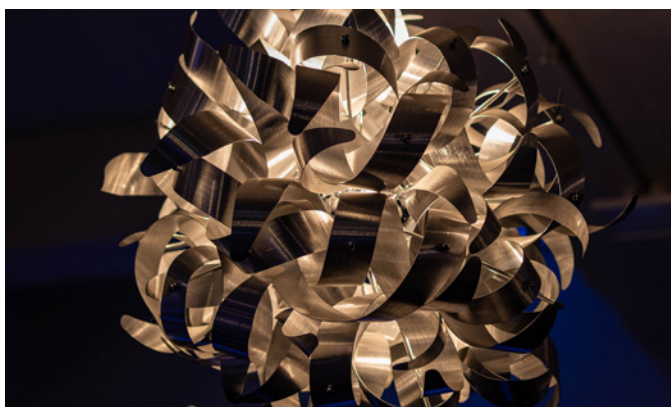


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Emily Couch & Elias Impens



PHOTOGRAPHER: BONPHOTAGE

WEDDING COORDINATOR: CLEMENTIN E CUSTOM EVENT

VENUE: GALLERIA MARCHETTI

BAND: BLUEWATER KINGS BAND

HAIR/MAKEUP: GOLDPLAITED

DATE: 7.2.22

LOCATION: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, GALLERIA MARCHETTI



Mosaic tiles was the theme for the celebration. La Pergola at Galleria Marchetti offers small glimpses of tile embedded among the ivy around the room. As a small token of thanks, our guests were gifted a 4x4in tile coaster decorated around every table seat. Bold jewel tones were the primary focus and energy of the entire night that can be seen in the florals. The bride is American and the groom is Belgian. In order to incorporate a “bridal party”, the bride used her bridesmaids to help build her bridal bouquet as she walked down the aisle. The six “flower girls” stood at the end of every aisle chair holding a small bouquet to pass to the bride as she walked down the aisle; creating the final bouquet. Chicago offered the best option for a destination wedding for majority of our international guests as well as our immediate Texas Family.







Sabrina Dahan
"Chloe"

Silk embroidered Tulle in Crème.
Racer front and open back
embroidered gown.

How to Make the Serious Wedding Stuff Unique

Best. Ceremony. Ever.

Wedding officiant Christopher Shelley shares his unique approach to wedding ceremonies.

In his book, *Best. Ceremony. Ever.* wedding officiant Christopher Shelley shares his unique approach to making a wedding ceremony joyful, unique, meaningful, and entertaining.

We've all been to a wedding ceremony we wished would end. Images of a stuffy church, a hot, humid field, or a bland catering hall come to mind. It's really no surprise that wedding ceremonies can garner such a bad rap. Thanks to Shelley and his tips, those thoughts won't even cross your guest's mind. Shelley approaches ceremonies with two ideas: that they can be both meaningful and entertaining. Thanks to his experience as a Certified Life-Cycle Celebrant™, he skillfully guides the reader through all the usual ceremony requirements, but also provides tips on how to create magical and unique opportunities that create an unforgettable guest experience.

Shelley divides the book into a series of acts, designed to guide the reader through the various stages of a wedding ceremony. Highlights from each act include:



Act I: Setting the Atmosphere

Act II: Words of Welcome

Act III: Performing the Ceremony

Act IV: The Serious Stuff: Stating Intentions and Exchanging Vows

Act V: Wedding Zen

On top of this, Shelley also provides 2 planned sample ceremonies, questions for couples, and a wedding vow workshop. And, if there are still any residual questions, Shelley supplies the reader with a "Wedopedia," an A to Z glossary of buzzwords that couples will encounter during the

wedding planning experience.

Thanks to Shelley, you can take all the stress, conflict, and exhaustion out of planning your wedding, and instead plan a ceremony that will be not only joyful and fun, but also meaningful and unique. With Shelley's help, you'll have the best ceremony ever.



Anna Cartwright & Alexander Wigal



LOCATION OF CEREMONY: LONDON HOUSE HOTEL

LOCATION OF RECEPTION: GIBSONS ITALIA

PHOTOGRAPHER: NICOLE RYANN

FLORIST: WILLRETT FLOWER COMPANY

HAIR STYLIST: ERIN GRAHAM

MAKEUP ARTIST: LAUREN MURPHY

DRESS: ALYSSA KRISTIN BRIDAL

TUXEDO: THE BLACKTUX

CAKE: BITTERSWEET PASTRY SHOP



Capture your picture perfect memories with the right photographer

10 Questions to Ask Before Hiring Your Wedding Photographer

Some moments are simply too important to trust to a camera phone

Your wedding will be one of the most memorable times of your life, and no one can capture it better than a professional photographer. How do you find the right one? As you begin the interview process, here are 10 questions to help you determine if you've found the best photographer for your wedding.

Does the photographer have a gallery of wedding images you can review?

Reviewing sample work allows you to see the photographer's strengths and weaknesses. You'll also be able to get an idea of the photographer's style. Think of three words that describe you, and share those with your photographer. Reviewing the photographer's gallery can help you determine whose style is right for you.

What is the photographer's working style?

Some photographers are orderly and operate like wedding planners, while others sit back and let the events unfold. It's important to find someone who can understand and meet your expectations. Discuss this ahead of time, and ask away to find out how well the photographer's working style matches your own.

Is the photographer available for an engagement session?

An engagement session is your first opportunity to work with your photographer and develop a relationship that will allow you to be completely at ease

on your big day. Use this session to confirm if the photographer is indeed the right person to capture your wedding.

Will the photographer create a detailed shot list?

This list will ensure no important photo is missed during all the commotion and excitement. You should create that list together; add to the list leading up to the day; and have a copy of that list on hand on your wedding day. Fill your photographer in on situations he or she might need to be aware of in order to prevent awkward moments and to ensure that he or she gets the shots that matter most.

What kind of lighting will be used?

Whether you have an indoor or outdoor wedding, you'll want to make sure your photographer has professional grade lighting equipment to deliver the images your wedding deserves.

Does the photographer have backup equipment?

You've prepared contingency plans for every other aspect of your wedding; your photographer should as well. A true professional photographer will always bring one or two backup cameras, lenses, flashes, additional lighting equipment, extra memory cards, and batteries.

Does the photographer have liability insurance?

Accidents happen at weddings and if

a guest trips over your photographer's light stand, it's good to know you both are protected. Your reception venue may ask the photographer to submit a certificate of liability ahead of time.

Will there be one photographer or two?

A second shooter increases the probability that no shot will be missed. If there will be two photographers, ask to meet them both to get a feel for how well they might blend in on your big day.

What will happen to the images after your wedding?

Will your images be backed up to a hard drive or the cloud once processed? How long will your photographer keep the images afterward? If you have any concerns about losing your photos, knowing what the photographer plans to do with your images after your wedding is important.

When will you get your photos?

It's a good idea to get a general idea of the timeline ahead of time. You might even be able to agree on getting a couple of images ready for social media use very quickly, but obtaining your photos will likely take several weeks. To help with the wait, some photographers will send you a sneak peak with a few images.

You won't be able to see everything that happens during your wedding day. The right photographer will capture moments you never knew existed.

To learn how you can find the perfect photographer for your wedding, visit
www.PPA.com/SeetheDifference/Wedding



City Gal: Meet Nature

The Best of Both Worlds

As a Chicago gal, it may seem daunting to leave everything that our big city has to offer for a destination wedding. Let's be honest, there is no place like sweet home Chicago.

By Lisa Finelli



But imagine: sitting in the heart of a major US city, eating at a waterfront restaurant watching the sky turn shades of orange as the sun sets behind the mountains. That place could be in the heart of the Pacific Northwest: Seattle, Washington. Seattle is one of our country's great cities boasting its own brilliant culture and

urban scene. Not only does Seattle have famed Pike's Place market and the Space Needle, but it also offers all the beauty of the mountains, greenery of an arboretum and an unmatched waterfront. City gal, consider incorporating the mountains and waterfront into your big city wedding.

The Edgewater hotel is Seattle's only waterfront hotel, boasting

beautiful floor-length windows overlooking Elliot Bay with the Olympic Mountains lining the horizon. The Edgewater encapsulates that old-time mountain feel with plenty of modern touches. The Edgewater hotel can accommodate a smaller wedding in the Forest room, or a larger wedding of up to two hundred in the Olympic ballroom.



Whatever you fancy, City gal. Whichever your style, you simply cannot forego a cocktail hour on the terrace. The Edgewater has an absolutely breathtaking cocktail patio with an unobstructed view of the Space Needle and the entire Seattle skyline. It is the perfect way to impress before the night has even begun. Then off to delicious dining, dancing and celebrating while watching the sunset behind the mountains is an unmatched experience at the Edgewater hotel.

If you or your guests arrive a day early or need a post-wedding brunch, there will be an opportunity to check out the restaurant, Six Seven, on the first floor of the hotel. That same modern, rustic feel that the hotel has is continued in the restaurant. It has a fancy ambience, exquisite menu and impeccable service. The wait staff is professional and accommodating, offering wine pairings,

food suggestions and even a bit of humor. The waterfront restaurant is the perfect setting for you and your guests to appreciate the beauty and personality of the only Seattle waterfront hotel.

The natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest coupled with the urban beauty of Seattle make the Edgewater Hotel the perfect location for your destination wedding, City gal.

www.EdgeWaterHotel.com



Lisa Finelli is Destination Weddings Editor

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Make Your Wedding Dollars Work

Dream Weddings for Less

Many couples are finding ways to scale down on costs, simply by making smart money choices.

Here are some money-saving tips to help you stretch your wedding budget dollar:



Reduce your guest list. This may sound like a no-brainer but it is the number one way to reduce costs. The less people you have, the less you pay for food and beverage, which is the costliest of all wedding categories.

What are you doing Thursday night? Tying the knot on a non-traditional day of the week (basically any day other than Saturday) will save bundles. Schedule an early afternoon reception or a brunch instead of a formal evening reception. The earlier the reception, the lighter

the courses. Order a three-course meal versus the usually more expensive five-course meal.

You will also have a little more negotiating power because some venues can only do one wedding a day since most couples go for an evening reception. If you end your reception early enough, the venue can still fit in an evening wedding; which will make the vendor very happy and more than willing to cut you a break.

Timing is everything. Having a rehearsal breakfast or lunch (instead of dinner) will not

only save money on food and drinks, but will also give everyone involved in the wedding the rest of the day to relax (or more likely finish up those last minute tasks). When contacting vendors, ask for the price difference for hosting on alternate days of the week to help you gauge how much could be saved.

Family Style. Dread the thought of a line at the buffet but worried about the cost of a sit-down meal? Talk to caterers about serving dinner 'family style' when negotiating costs. It

can be significantly less expensive and everyone gets to stay seated. Oh, and will there be kids? Serve them something different and less expensive, like cheese pizza.

Comfort Food. And while you're at it, serve simple, well cooked food rather than elaborate or extravagant preparations that cost more and combine too many flavors. Everyone loves comfort food!

Get crafty. Wedding favors, centerpieces and even the bride's veil are some items that can be created by simply getting some friends together for a crafting party. Local craft stores hold classes on making these items. You and your girlfriends can check out some of those classes to get some great crafting ideas.

Designate a driver. You can ask a friend or family member to be your wedding day chauffeur, and that person can rent a luxury vehicle (at your expense) to drive you. Instead of renting a limousine for a few hours, you will have the rented vehicle for at least 24 hours, as well as transportation to the airport for your honeymoon if needed. Just be sure to request for the vehicle to be dropped off at the airport you'll be flying out of.

Flower Power. Flowers can take up a large portion of a wedding budget, about 15–20% in most cases. Reduce, reuse or recycle flowers; consider a large flower, or one with eye-popping color. Less will be needed (reducing) and it will have more impact. Reuse ceremony flowers at the reception and have bridesmaids drop their bouquets in a vase or scatter them here and there at the head table. Ask the florist if there's another wedding that weekend similar to the one you're planning – maybe an arrangement can be made to the cost of those swanky centerpieces by sharing them.

Use fresh flowers that are in season or what is available in bulk to your florist. Also, downsize the centerpiece or opt for more inexpensive flowers. Sometimes, the simpler the arrangement, the more understated elegance and sophistication it exudes. Think a simple, clear vase packed with fresh-cut, similar stems or two to three long stems in a tall clear hurricane vase for simple drama.

Do us a favor. Forego the big, expensive party favors that no one will end up using. Try something simpler, cuter and more practical like homemade cookies or earth-friendly gifts like flower seeds.

Dress for less. You don't have to spend a fortune on your wedding dress. Especially now that alternative wedding dresses are trendy, women are opting to visit high-end boutiques for evening gown options instead of ornate, special ordered bridal gowns.

Plan on it. While wedding consultants are still being used and have invaluable connections and resources to plan a fabulous wedding, more brides are sacrificing their own time to cut costs in planning. Don't be afraid to try social networking sites like Facebook.com and MySpace.com to solicit help and collect opinions from guests, friends and family to aid the planning process along.

Don't discount the discount sites. Several shopping websites are available now to help brides cut their costs. Sites like CouponWinner.com and CouponCabin.com offer discounts from thousands of retailers for an array of items – anywhere from flowers and gifts to dresses and even travel.

Bridal registry alternatives. Since many couples have places of their own before getting married, they probably don't need to register for too much. Edivvy.com is a site couples can use to create a gift wishlist that would allow them to specify types of gifts (from specific items to cash donations) and allows their guests to buy these "gifts" as a group, donating as much or as little as they wish.

Make some music. DJ services have successfully elbowed their way into the band scene for weddings. But with technology becoming easier and more ubiquitous, you can even take care of the music yourself and cut your costs in that category. MyWeddingMusic.com can offer advice on how to use your iPod to play music off of playlists you specifically create for your event. A word of caution: There are many things that can go wrong when handling entertainment on your own (i.e. equipment malfunction, wrong songs at wrong times) so if you don't have a tech-savvy, reliable person to be in charge of this, it's best to leave it to the professionals.

Drink up. There is no need for premium liquor. Guests won't know the difference in a mixed drink. Save it for a good bottle of wine with the dinner.

Invite me not. You can have a nice invitation without spending a fortune. Have you ever kept an invitation from a wedding? They all

end up in the recycling bin at some point. Don't allocate too much of the budget on elaborate invites.

Tripping out. If you've always dreamed of honeymooning in Hawaii, by all means, go to Hawaii. Instead of staying 14 days, stay for 10. Rent the compact car instead of the convertible. Stay in a hotel room and not the private cabana on the beach.

Picture this. You can have your friends help with anything from planning to chauffeuring, but don't go cheap on the photography and video. Those are the only things that remain from your day. Make sure they are done right.

Shop around and stick to your \$\$ guns. You have less to spend so don't let yourself get carried away (which can happen very quickly when planning your wedding) and blow your budget. You should figure out the maximum price you can pay and work toward that. Having a level-headed outsider with you when visiting vendors and negotiating contracts is a big help, but in their absence, try WeddingBook.com. It's a great resource that allows users to set their budget parameters when searching, so the only options that surface are for vendors you can afford, by researching all the options, contacting multiple vendors and reviewing quotes from top choices. WeddingBook.com gives you more options which allows for better negotiation leverage. It lets you review options in your market. You can even practice over drinks, conspiring over how to get that caterer to throw in free desserts. Good cop, bad cop, anyone?

Give us some space. Expand the hunt for a venue beyond traditional hotels and banquet halls. Maybe a local garden, theatre or boat-house would cost less and be more personal and memorable.

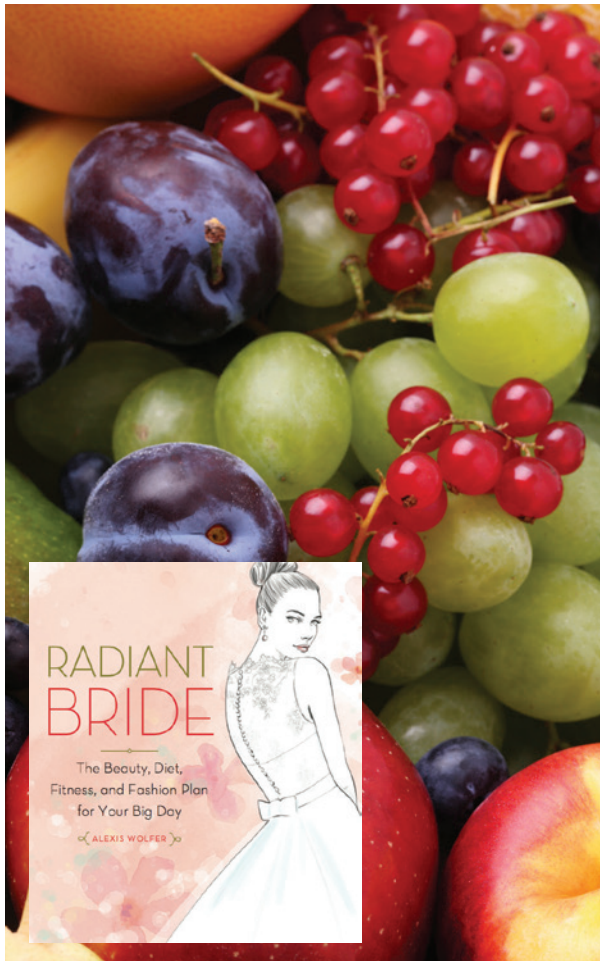
And remember...everything is negotiable. Times are tough all around, so no smart vendor will turn away business if you ask for a better quote or have extras thrown in as part of the overall deal. Everyone is willing to work with you these days so leverage it to your advantage to get what you need for a reasonable cost. Just be sure you know exactly what will be included and what will not when you review your contract and quote. You don't want any last-minute surprises.

Additional sources: www.Godselegance.com; Alyse Liebowitz of 3 Chicks That Click Photography

The Radiant Bride Detox

What to Eat... And Not to Eat

Dieting for your wedding day shouldn't leave you obsessing over grams of fat or counting calories. And it shouldn't make you grumpy or miserable. It also shouldn't have you crash dieting and obsessively weighing yourself. Instead, this Radiant Bride Detox + Diet is all about finding the foods that are causing you to feel bloated, your skin to look less than luminous, and your body to hold on to weight it doesn't need.



PREP.

Before you start the twenty-one-day Radiant Bride Detox you need to prepare mentally, physically, and logistically. Before you get started, it's important to . . .

THROW AWAY YOUR SCALE.

I know you want to lose weight, but trust me on this. When you're stressed out over the number on the scale, your body doesn't know the difference between the stress it feels from feeling fat and the stress your ancestors used to feel during a slow hunting season, when holding on to fat was evolutionarily adaptive for survival. As a result, your cortisol levels spike and your body goes into immediate fight or flight mode. When those cortisol levels spike, losing weight is all but impossible. Plus, the number on the scale tells you nothing about how hot you look, so let's start by throwing that sucker away and instead measuring our health, wellness, and beauty by how we feel.

PREPARE YOURSELF MENTALLY.

What we're about to do is going to be challenging, but it's only for a very short period of time and, after that, you will know exactly how to eat for beauty and health. Twenty-one days is nothing to "pay" for that, right?

BUY A JOURNAL.

The most important part about this detox is figuring out what works for you, and to do so, you're going to need to keep track. It's essential that you're able to keep this with you all the time, so make sure that it's small and handy. You can even use the "notes" on your phone, if that's easier for you—just be sure it's set to back up so you don't risk losing it.

TELL FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

While this detox in no way needs to put your social life on hold, it does require you to take some

extra steps to ensure you know what you're eating in order to accurately document how your body responds. Rather than having to explain at each social occasion why you're passing on the booze, fill in your nearest and dearest and ask for their help and support. Or, better yet, get them on board, too! You definitely don't need to be getting married to do this detox!

ALTER PLANS, IF NEEDED.

Look at your calendar for the next three weeks. Planning a dinner with your best friends at your favorite Mexican restaurant? Ask them to come over for dinner instead so you know what you're eating (restaurants often add gluten or dairy unknowingly) or call the restaurant ahead of time to discuss the menu options that will be best for you.

CLEAN OUT YOUR KITCHEN.

Having to rely on willpower sucks. Give yourself the greatest odds of success by doing a major clean out. If you live with your fiancé, family members, or roommates, you're going to have to get them on board, too (or just ask them to keep their special stash in hiding), so you're not tempted. While you're at it, check out any supplements you usually take to ensure they're gluten- and dairy-free as well.

KNOW YOU MAY FEEL WORSE BEFORE YOU FEEL BETTER.

Many of us are walking around with pounds of toxins in our bodies (some experts say an average of five to twenty pounds!). It's completely normal to feel like crap as your body works to eliminate them. It's also normal to gain weight as your body releases built-up toxins until you're able to eliminate them. This is a normal—and temporary!—part of the process.

CLEAN OUT.

Spend time getting familiar with the chart and clean out your kitchen of everything labeled “Don’t Eat” and load up on everything in the “Eat” list—having lots of delicious healthy options easily accessible will make sticking with this plan exponentially easier.

DETOX.

For the next twenty-one days eat ANYTHING you want from the “Eat” list, without worrying about portion control (whatever that means!), fat, calories, or anything else you’ve worried about before. Be creative, try new recipes (pick up my first book, *The Recipe for Radiance*, for lots of beauty-boosting recipes!), and crowd out all the foods you own on your “Don’t Eat” list with loads of delicious new ones. Experiment with herbs to deliciously and detox-friendly flavor foods. And remember, if you can’t pronounce it or can’t recognize it, skip it. Unlike other diets, this detox is about tapping into your body and your needs. Prefer to graze throughout the day? Go for it! Rather have three sit-down meals? Wonderful! Like to play it by ear based on how you’re feeling? Even better, since hormonal fluctuations, activity levels, and stress all affect how much food we need.

DRINK LOTS OF WATER.

It not only helps your skin to radiate, it also helps to support your body’s detoxifying mechanisms. Aim to drink at least eight 8-ounce cups a day.

PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOU FEEL . . . AND WRITE IT DOWN!

Unlike food journals you’ve perhaps done in the past, this isn’t about keeping track of what you eat in order to stay within a restricted calorie or point allotment so much as it is about keeping track of how you feel when you eat certain foods. The goal in embarking on an elimination diet is to see what works for you and what doesn’t and the best way to spot patterns is to write it all down so you can go back later and evaluate what you’ve found. The key here is to write down both what you eat and how you feel both immediately after eating anything as well as if how you feel changes later. Ask yourself these questions when you’re journaling:

How does my stomach feel? How are my energy levels? How is my skin? Have I been going to the bathroom regularly?

LET YOUR BODY REST AND HEAL.

It takes your body eight hours to fully digest food. Give yourself a full twelve hours between dinner at night and breakfast the next morning to allow your body to fully process and release toxins.

MAKE SURE YOU GO TO THE BATHROOM.

Going to the bathroom is an essential part of detoxing but any change in a diet plan can cause your bowels to either go into overdrive or stop altogether. This is largely based on how you’ve been eating before now. If you’re constipated, make sure you’re drinking enough water, eating enough fiber (leafy greens, dried fruit), and exercising (even just brisk walking). If you’re still not going, pick up some Natural Calm at the health food store and use as directed.

EAT CALMLY.

When you’re constantly eating on the run or while judging your food choices, you’re putting your body into stress mode and sending a message to it to hold on to every last bit of body mass. Sit down, enjoy it, and savor it. You’ll reduce your body’s stress response and allow your body to focus on digestion (and enjoyment!).

CHEW.

Just like you can exfoliate your skin to break down dead and dull skin cells chemically (with fruit acids, for example) and manually (with anything granular), your food is also best digested when both manually and chemically broken down. When you swallow your food without chewing it thoroughly, you skip the mechanical breakdown and rely solely on the chemical processes that take place in your stomach, putting undue strain on your belly. The result: bloat, constipation, diarrhea, and more! The goal should be to chew your food until liquefied in your mouth (gross as it sounds) to help your body to more efficiently use the energy you need and eliminate the rest.

TAKE A PROBIOTIC.

Talk with your doctor about adding a probiotic to your daily routine. For many of us (especially if you’ve taken antibiotics in the past, have eaten a lot of meat and dairy, or just have persistent stomach issues) our gut bacteria is out of balance and a single pill a day can help put everything back in balance.

EASE INTO IT, IF NEEDED.

If your diet up until this point has been largely fast food and processed, packaged snacks, take an additional week before starting the cleanse to slowly cut back on processed foods and add in healthier foods.

EASE OFF OF CAFFEINE.

If you’re struggling with caffeine dependency and feeling the effects of stopping cold turkey, gradually switch from coffee to caffeinated tea or yerba mate to help ease the transition. Alternatively, try starting your morning with spicy warm water with lemon (just add a dash of cayenne to a mug full of hot water and lemon juice) or an energy-packed chocolate “milk” by stirring a tablespoon of raw cacao powder into a mug of hot almond milk.

WHAT YOUR CRAVINGS ARE TELLING YOU.

If you’re craving sweets: you probably need more sleep and emotional support. When all you want to do is dive into a bag of candy, it’s usually your body looking for a quick energy boost or the food equivalent of a hug from sugar’s immediate endorphin boost. Try getting more sleep and get a real hug from your significant other instead! No time to sleep or no one to hug right away? Fresh fruit and sweet vegetables (like sweet potatoes and carrots) can often satiate a sweet tooth, healthfully.

If you’re craving chocolate: you may need more magnesium, which can be found in nuts, seeds, and legumes.

If you’re craving carbs: you’re probably not getting enough protein and/or are just feeling down. Next time you’re craving a big bowl of pasta, get your serotonin and dopamine boost by getting a massage, taking a bath, or catching up with a girlfriend, all with a protein-packed snack.

4 DIY Facial Masks

Tried and true tips that really work!

Once or twice a week, treat yourself to an at-home facial to target your skin's primary concerns. DIY it with an all-natural homemade facial recipe you can make with ingredients you likely already have in your kitchen.



You can buy facial masks, too, but the active ingredients in food are actually more effective (and better for your skin) so if you can, whip up one of the following recipes. Really prefer not to DIY it? Look for masks with limited ingredients, targeted for your exact skincare needs.

Gentle Chemical Peel

Let fruit acid in the strawberries and lactic acid in the yogurt help to gently break down the dull, dry skin cells fogging your complexion. Then, scrub it all away with sugar to reveal a brighter, dewier complexion (perfect for flawless makeup application).

For dull, dry, clogged skin, not for very sensitive skin

2 medium strawberries
2 tbs full-fat Greek yogurt
1 tablespoon white sugar

Puree the strawberries in a food processor until smooth. Mix the strawberry puree and yogurt until well combined.

Apply a thin layer to your face, neck, and décolleté. Let dry for twenty minutes before using the sugar to exfoliate the mask off. Rinse with warm water.

Anti-Aging Hydrating Face Mask

The vitamin A-packed egg yolk helps to encourage cell rejuvenation and the red wine bathes your skin in free-radical-fighting antioxidants, while the honey helps to pull moisture deep within your skin. The result: soft, smooth, supple skin that looks and feels younger.

For dry or aging skin

1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon red wine
1 tablespoon raw honey

In a small bowl, beat the egg yolk. Slowly add the wine and honey, stirring constantly to mix. Apply to your face, neck, and décolleté with a pastry brush, avoiding your eyes and lips. Let dry for 15 to 20 minutes before washing off with your favorite facial cleanser.

Blemish-Busting Facial Mask + Spot Treatment

Yogurt, with its probiotics to balance bacteria and lactic acid to break up clogged pores, is one of the best blemish fighters around. Combined with vitamin A-packed sweet potato to help encourage cell turnover and antibacterial honey, this mask quickly and painlessly reduces redness and inflammation without drying out your skin.

For acne-prone skin

2 teaspoons plain Greek yogurt (at least 2 percent milk fat)
1 teaspoon sweet potato puree
1/2 teaspoon raw honey

In a small bowl, combine all ingredients until smooth. Apply a thin layer to affected areas and let sit for 20 minutes before rinsing off with warm water. You can use this as a daily spot treatment, too.

Calming Cucumber Latte Compresses

The caffeine in the coffee constricts your blood vessels to reduce redness, while the cucumber calms your skin, and the milk promotes healing.

For red or irritated skin

1-inch sliced cucumber, with skin
2 tablespoons caffeinated coffee
1 tablespoon whole milk

Combine all ingredients in a blender. Refrigerate to chill. Saturate cotton rounds in the mixture and apply to affected areas until no longer cool. Repeat for 10 minutes before rinsing your face with cool water.

TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL



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