Spring 2009

Utah Statesman Bridal Guide Spring 2009

Utah State University

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Planning a Cache Wedding

Justin Cardon and Wendy Roskelley knew each other since eighth grade. They chose July 31, 2008 as their special day. They were formally engaged on May 15th. The planning and shopping had a two and half month period to get ready. Wendy was working and had to juggle work, courtship and shopping.

What were the first thoughts? Pick a date that would work in their schedule. Wendy had to choose her colors. She wanted bright happy colors to go with the summer wedding she always wanted. She had certain ideas. The colors of pink, yellow, green, orange were chosen. She wanted a blue but found out that flowers she wanted did not come in blues. Blue went out to allow the other colors of gerber daisy’s.

Wendy is an organized to details, doing her best, competitive personality. Justin’s personality is to enjoy the moment and he leads a very busy lifestyle. Like many guys Justin was not into shopping for wedding things. Wendy took the soul role of event planner. It was at RSM Foods shopping for plates that Wendy picked up the Bridal Faire Wedding Directory.

The wedding ring was one she had found at Morgan Jewelry. She had been trying rings on before the engagement and knew what she wanted. She arranged the country club to host her special event. One of the places she was employed for many years. Her dad is also the golf pro there.

Andi Saxton was awesome says Wendy, as she meet with her in arranging the floral. Wendy had some ideas, which was enhanced by Andi’s professional experience. Andi was a great help in putting together all the floral and decorations.

Marcie Taylor from Dream Weddings had the sashes with the colors for the tables. Marcie and Andi had worked together on other weddings and were a great team in the decorating. They were a great source of ideas in other areas as well.

The wedding dress is what really sets the bride apart. Wendy visited Bridal shops. She wondered just how a bride could chose the right dress out of so many. Her mom went with her to Petals and Promises. They selected three dresses to try on. It was the second dress that Wendy fell in love with. There was something about the dress that made it feel her own. She didn’t want to take it off. So she bought it and later had it altered to fit just right.

Photography is important to capture the moment of the special day. Wendy never shopped for this before and went online to several photographer’s websites. She evaluated their style. She chose Wendal Pace from Pace Photography. Wendal has years of experience in shooting photos and video for brides. For the bridal portraits he took Wendy to many locations. An experienced photographer like Wendal knows the spots that adhere to great photography. Wendy went to Square One Printing with an idea for her announcements. It just happened to be that her idea was the most expensive choice. She consulted with them on different paper and color. Wendy was shocked at the many choices she had. Wendy was very pleased with Square One, they worked out just the right announcement and the right price.

The men in the wedding party needed to look sharp in tuxedos. Wendy visited The Kater Shop in downtown Logan. She really respects Lynn and Steve Hicken. There she was able to select the right colors to match her colors. The Kater Shop really goes out of their way to take care of the details for the guys.

The girls’ dresses took a lot of shopping in many stores. This was a monumental task for Wendy. Matching her colors and the needed sizes and finding enough to dresses of that style was tough. Two of the girls were expecting babies and would have their babies before the wedding. Can you guess the size to buy? Wendy had
the solution, buy several extra sizes and return the extras.

The mothers chose their own dresses but had the four colors to choose from. Justin’s mom, Jan Cardon, bought two dresses to decide later which one she would wear.

The Wedding Cake was provided by Shantel Leishman from Shantels Cakes. Shantel commented that Wendy was one of the fastest brides in making her selection. There is a parady here that during the reception, because the guest line never ceased and there was no break in the line from five to eight there was no time to do the ritual cutting of the cake. They luckily got a picture before the reception of pretending to cut the cake.

The whole wedding experience went really fast. They had a wedding banquet at Bluebird at 11 am the wedding was scheduled at 2:30 pm. Wendy greeted and visited guests coming to the wedding, instead of spending hours before in the Brides room.

The most momentous time came during the ceremony. It finally arrived. Wendy become very emotional coming done the aisle. She was so happy. Justin nearly fainted, he was so nervous.

The months of planning, shopping and hard work was finally being rewarded.

They visited with guests after the ceremony and taking time for photos before the Reception. The time just went by super fast. The reception started at 5:15 PM (15 minutes before scheduled time) and went until 8 PM (half hour after the scheduled time). There was no break in the guest line.

No wonder the wedding couple never had a chance to notice the hard work in the table settings. Andi Saxton and Marcie Taylor did a beautiful job in decorating. It was all captured by Wendal in the photographs. All in all he had a thousand pictures. Now if each picture could tell a thousand words. What a story the pictures tell.

The most fun was the candy bar. Wendy really enjoyed shopping for candy to match her colors. She bought in bulk and had to pick out the colors that was not in her list. All this candy was placed in beautiful vases the guests could place in a bag as a keepsake with a thank you note. It was the adults not the kids that hung around the candy bar. Shopping for the candy was neat for Wendy and she felt it was a good outlet for stress.

They did order online custom M&Ms printed with the names and date. Wendy was a little disappointed when the order came and she realized how small the 7-oz. bags were.

These M&Ms were used on the table as accents. But it all worked out well. The sisters helped out with the day. One a professional piano player set the mood during the reception. Music is critical in making a comfortable and enjoyable setting. Wendy Sisters knew from experience that there just isn’t much time to eat. So they provided a cooler with Subway sandwiches, chips and drinks at Anniversary Inn where they spent their first Night.

They were registered at Kitchen Kneads and Walmart. There were no specific items picked out, But later they were able to select just the right gifts they needed.

Reflecting on the day Wendy has no regrets. She advises future brides to not hold back. She learned from one of her sisters, that regretted not getting the announcements she had wanted. The binder she has organized her notes in, not only gave her a sense of organization, but will be a keepsake of a special time cherished forever.

This information was provided by Scott Falslev, director of Bridal Faire Organization. Photos by Pace photo
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Change of pace
Unusual themes, venues make for unique weddings and memories

Five years from now no one will remember your exact wedding vows, but they’ll never forget your reception: wine, sumptuous roasted pig and flowing Roman togas.

Having an unusual wedding reception theme is one way to make the most important day of your life undeniably memorable to your guests.

PICK A THEME
A great themed reception has to start with a great theme. Make sure it fits your personality, experts say. Some themes are more serious, others are edgy and playful. Popular themes, according to beaucoup.com, include beach or nautical themes, garden themes, even Western-style or Renaissance themes.

The over-the-top Roman theme from wedthemes.com calls for the wearing of tunics or togas with sandals. The meal would be buffet style with fresh fruit and rotisserie. Decorations could be tall columns, wreaths, garlands and anything else in the Roman fashion. The salad would be Caesar, of course.

Can’t remember your Latin?
“Motorcycle themes are growing in popularity,” says Rose Smith of wedthemes.com. She recently advised a couple on a pirate-themed reception and another on a wizard theme. “It was absolutely wonderful.”

Other themes to do: fairy wonderland, Scottish, Mexican fiesta, Arabian nights or Greek mythology (where guests can come dressed as a particular Greek hero of their choice.)

NASCAR themes are also revving up.

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**LOCATION, LOCATION**

Where you have your ceremony or reception is important.

Parks, clubs, theme parks and gardens are all popular venues. In selecting a spot, you need to look at weather, setup, cleanup, theme and cost.

One special way to spend your wedding day is aboard a cruise ship.

“You’re guaranteed to have the memory of a lifetime,” says Rebecca Milkey, director of marketing for Hornblower Cruises. “You’re going to talk about it for the rest of your life, so go for it.”

**HOW’S YOUR RECEPTION?**

There are as many wedding reception traditions as there are favorite wedding songs.

Many of the old standards have unusual origins, often traced to ancient Egyptian and European customs, according to chicagomarriage.com.

For instance, wedding bouquets were originally made of strong herbs, thyme and garlic, which were meant to frighten away evil spirits, and to cover the odor of those who did not bathe routinely.

As for wedding cakes, during the days of the Roman Empire, wedding cakes were baked of wheat or barley. At the reception, they were traditionally broken over the head of the new bride by the groom as a symbol of her fertility. Guests would then scramble for pieces of the cake, and take them home for good luck.

One new tradition, used mostly by Hispanic couples, is the groom giving his bride 13 gold coins as a symbol of religious faith and then the couple being circled in a decorative rope or lasso during the ceremony.

Whatever playfulness you bring forth make sure you end it with an age-old Irish marriage blessing that really sums up the day for all and everything:

*May God be with you and bless you;*

*May you see your children’s children.*

*May you be poor in misfortune, Rich in blessings, May you know nothing but happiness. From this day forward.*

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Consider needs, long-term value when using bride’s gift registries

The work of planning the wedding and your new life together gets fun when you focus on the registry. Your choices are boundless.

First start with your situation and intention. Determine your needs. Today brides use registries beyond the traditional china, towels and cooking pots. Registries can include sporting goods, hobby items, home improvement and décor, home office, groceries or money towards a home loan.

The advantage of a bridal registry is that you choose what you need most. You can choose the style color and features that best match you and your lifestyle. A bridal registry eliminates the need to return six vacuum cleaners, four blenders and items that the color just doesn’t match anything you have. What you choose should reflect your situation. Some couples have been living on their own for years and have some of the basic items. Some may be moving out on their own for the first time and need all the basic items.

Think of the couple’s needs. Do you think the new groom would really enjoy the pink linen? Would you be happy with lots of power tools and sporting goods? You can choose two to three registries. There are lots of questions you can ask a potential registry. Do they have an online registry? Do they have some perks they give the couple? How easy is it for your guests to give. What are their prices like? Ask them what makes them stand out from other registries.

Each registry functions differently. Some you scan the items and the guest chooses the item you picked and that item is taken off the list. Some they just collect the money and you shop later with the credit.

When choosing your items think of the long term. Fad patterns soon become outdated. Natural colors like black, white, tan, brown and gray will match your décor for years to come.

You can add accessories to liven things up. Be realistic about the space you have. Think of items that will last and be useful. Don’t choose a gadget simply because it is cool. Will you use it? Think of the budgets of your guests. Choose some smaller items and larger items.

For a list of local registries simply log onto www.bridalfaire.org and click gift registry.

This information was provided by Scott Falslev, director of Bridal Faire Organization.
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Say it with flowers

Bold and bright color choices make a splash

Flowers allow brides to incorporate a personal touch that will make their wedding day unique, whether it is with color or style. The design of the bouquets and arrangements can set the mood of a wedding.

Kacey Weiss chose the color green in honor of her parents’ wedding on St. Patrick’s Day. Her arrangements and bouquets displayed a rustic look with less traditional flowers. Using green cymbidium orchids with an accent of chocolate brown monkey tails, Weiss had a trendy yet personal arrangement of flowers for her July wedding.

Erin Blair Kluzak, a florist, helps brides take their colors and find corresponding flowers.

“Flowers aren’t something most people know about,” says Kluzak.

Most flowers are available throughout the year. Julie Mulligan, floral and lifestyle expert for 1-800-Flowers, lists roses, calla lilies and hydrangeas as popular year-round blooms. Tulips, orchids and Gerber daisies also seem to populate current weddings.

Fall’s stronger hues continue to be popular. Mulligan lists mango calla lilies, sunflowers, antique green hydrangeas and red-orange roses as some boldly colored flowers. Chocolate cosmos are popular due to the true brown blooms. Since autumn honors the season of harvest, Cori Russell, editor director of elegala.com, recommends including fruits, vegetables and twigs in flower arrangements. Branches, leaves, acorns, pears or cranberries can create more of a rustic atmosphere. Fill a glass bowl with fruits and vegetables for a centerpiece.

Amy Finley, group editor of LoveToKnow Weddings, says traditional fall colors as well as new color blends are making a statement.

Traditional colors include plum, deep blue, emerald, navy, cranberry and forest green. Nontraditional colors that have hit the aisle are light chocolates, saffrons and grays.

“Pink and chocolate as a color combination is another trend that has proven a favorite and is appropriate for a fall wedding,” says Finley. “The juxtaposition of these colors offers a fresh appeal that can be carried out in either a formal or informal wedding.”

Metallic colors like gold and silver can accent red or brown for fall and add to white for winter weddings, according to Russell. Consider trying bright citrus colors, such as lime, fuchsia or orange.

Winter weddings are rare compared to other seasons. They are usually indoors and tend to be more sophisticated. Monochromatic with white-on-white allows brides to play on the snow and ice theme. Other common winter colors are red, burgundy, silver and forest green, ac-
Hints with floral decisions

Monochromatic with white-on-white allows brides to play on the snow and ice theme. Other common winter colors are red, burgundy, silver and forest green, according to LoveToKnow Weddings. Red and white roses, snowball mums, daisies, poinsettias, gardenias and magnolia are popular blooms. Holly leaves, berries, pine cones, or evergreen branches can bring some winter cheer to the arrangements or bouquets.

“Take elements of the season and incorporate them with details,” says Mulligan.

A recent wedding trend is going green. Not a wedding in all green, but “green” for helping the environment. The wedding party could decorate with organically grown flowers, cluster plants for guests to take home and give out seeds as guest gifts, according to Mulligan. Bablove suggests a natural pine cone collection for a centerpiece at Christmas or shells to go along with a summer theme.

Submerged flower centerpieces seem to be gaining popularity. Anchored roses, orchids or other blooms remain underwater in a clear glass vase. Kluzak says floating flowers and/or candles are also common. Clusters of vases are a modern, trendy look for tables. Group an odd number of different sized vases. If you are in favor of low table arrangements, Bablove recommends using large blooms like chrysanthemums.

When it comes to bridal bouquets, colorful is in and white is out. Kluzak rarely prepares all-white bouquets for weddings compared to bright bouquet flowers. Most brides prefer hand-tied bouquets versus cascading ones for a less traditional look.

Flowers can put a damper on your funds, but florists are willing to work with a bride’s budget. For a better deal, buy vases and candles instead of leaving the duty up to the florist, says Kluzak. Some florists even rent vases to brides. Pick in-season flowers that are more available; off-season blooms are pricey and hard to find. Bablove suggests brides use silk flowers in arrangements. Opt for simple wedding bouquets. Finley says brides can save money on additional blooms and be trendy with a few elegant bright-colored flowers. If you want a large bouquet, pick the same type of flower for less expense. Choose to use plants instead of flowers. Reuse the ceremony flower arrangements for the reception.

Mulligan feels there are more flower options for brides and grooms today. “Take a little time to put a new twist on it,” says Mulligan.

— By Copley News Service
Colors, seasons, themes — consider when planning for flowers

Planning weddings can be stressful. Flowers can add an element to your wedding that nothing else can. It sets the mood as your guests walk into the room. Here are a few things that will help you in the process of your floral arrangements.

Choosing the right florist makes all the difference. It is important to pick a reputable florist. Look into their background. How long have they been in business? Do they have a business license? Choose a full service floral shop. Also choose a shop that has the ability to do all design styles whether it is contemporary, traditional, rustic, romantic, casual, etc. This will help you have more options to be able to choose from so you get exactly what you are looking for.

Book early! We recommend at least one month ahead depending on what flowers you choose. This goes along with choosing your location, caterer, and of course flowers! Some flowers are easily accessible but some may need special ordering. Give your florist enough time to do the research and planning for your wedding. Advance planning and organization will help your special day go smoothly.

When choosing your flowers keep the feel you are looking for in mind. If you want a more elegant wedding you might be interested in orchids, calla lilies, roses, etc. If you are planning a casual/fun feel you might be more interested in gerbera daisies, lilies, iris, sunflowers, etc.

Keep in mind flowers when choosing your colors. For example, blue is becoming a more popular color for weddings; however, there are not as many flowers in blue. Other accessories to emphasize your colors could be things like ribbons, fabric, beads, and crystals.

Consider the season of your wedding. Temperature extremes affect the durability of your flowers. Flowers are susceptible to extreme heat or extreme cold. Some flowers hold up better than others in these conditions. Some color schemes are more appropriate in some seasons than others.

Let your planner know your budget. This can help them with the ideas they give you. A good florist is able to make your wedding memorable whether you want something simple or something elaborate.

At one point in time the bride was in charge of the all decorative flowers and the groom’s boutonniere. The groom has been in charge of the bridal bouquet and flowers that are worn. This tradition is slowly dissolving and it is now more common to work out a payment plan that is best for each party.

Let your mind go! There are so many possibilities. Although your florist should have a variety of books for ideas, there are other places you can go to for ideas—floral magazines, the internet, etc. If you have something in mind that you can’t find anywhere, your florist should be able to help formulate your ideas.

Your wedding is a big day and you want it to be amazing. Choosing the right floral shop will help to make it so.

Provided by Plant Peddler Floral of Logan.
Little gifts can add your personal touch to big day

*Think about thank-yous*

Wedding favors come in many shapes. From traditional candied almonds to philanthropic gifts, anything goes as long as it serves as a reminder of the big day.

“The wedding favor is a way to say thank you to guests for sharing the day with the bride and groom. It’s a token to show that the wedding day is as much about the guests as it is about the couple,” said Elena Mauer, senior associate editor of Bridal Guide magazine.

Clever keepsakes include small bottles of wine with personalized labels, pocket-size photo albums matching the wedding decor, candles inscribed with the day’s date and even Krispy Kreme doughnuts packaged in pairs for the guests to enjoy at home.

“Some couples have even given out miniature versions of the wedding cake with the guests’ initials on them. You can really go all out,” Mauer said. “I heard of a destination wedding in Texas where they actually gave everyone Stetson hats. There are really some high-end things you can do.”

Charitable contributions top the list of trendy favors. In lieu of gifts for their guests, many couples are choosing to donate money to a charity close to their heart.

“More and more couples are doing this because they realize, when you take the money you would spend on favors and add up the total, you can really make a difference,” Mauer said.

“See Thank You, page 13

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What’s on the menu?
Choosing party foods to please you and your guests

Of all the decisions a couple must make while planning their wedding - and the list is long - choosing the right menu can be one of the most daunting. Selecting hors d’oeuvres and dinner for a large group of well-wishers, some of whom you may not even know, presents challenges you won’t come across as you make your weekly grocery list.

Coming up with a lively and intriguing menu that reflects the personality of the happy couple is just as important as choosing the right reception hall or the perfect flowers. While couples want to serve food with some flair, they need to keep in mind who will be attending, and if they share the same sense of culinary adventure as they do. Couples should try to strike a balance between offering an overly exotic array of foods and trying to please every last guest, said Millie Martini Bratten, editor in chief of Brides magazine.

“I think that they should think about the whole group, and probably realize that most people don’t routinely go for very unusual food. And if you decide that it’s going to be food of one ethnic type make sure you have something that’s not spicy for those who can’t tolerate spice,” Bratten advised. “Think about what you’re asking your guests to eat and plan with that in mind. But it is your wedding. Take some guidance from the caterer, also.”

When you sit down with the caterer to go over the menu, they will want to know if any of your guests have any dietary restrictions and exactly what they are. If someone is allergic to peanut oil or can’t have anything with milk in it, most caterers will be able to accommodate them, if they know in advance. Including a line on the invitations asking guests to list any special needs when they RSVP will help the caterer

know what to expect.

“One of the most important things to remember is who are the guests that are going to be there. No just (the couple’s) own personal taste, because a lot of times that enters into it,” said Jerry Siegel, owner of Peartrees Catering in San Diego. “I think the important things are, number one, you tailor the menu to the guests that are there, and just try to find out in advance any special dietary needs.”

Getting the menu just right doesn’t happen overnight. In the months prior to the wedding, couples should meet face to face with the caterer to discuss what they’re looking for that fits their price range.

“We talk to them on the phone the first time around, come up with a tentative scenario, so we can give them an idea of the price range, what it costs more or less,” said Michel Malecot, a caterer in California since 1979. “Then the next step is they come over, we narrow down the menu, we do a tasting so they actually see what the food looks like, they get a feel for it.”

Changing culinary trends in the United States through the years have given couples different options that would have seemed radical 25 years ago. Serving sushi at a reception would have raised some eyebrows in the 1970s, but now it’s a common sight.

Changing culinary trends in the United States through the years have given couples different options that would have seemed radical 25 years ago. Serving sushi at a reception would have raised some eyebrows in the 1970s, but now it’s a common sight.

“Today, sushi, somosas, bruschetta, it’s all available. ... Years ago you went to a wedding and you had roast beef or you had chicken,” Bratten said. “And now you can have roast beef, you can have a fabulous pasta, you can have an amazing soup or an incredible stew, or heavy hors d’oeuvres and a very light salad for dinner. So people are mixing it up in very interesting ways. “I think the keys things to keep in mind are: This is not the moment to experiment with the entire menu, and make sure everyone feels very welcome and comfortable and they have enough to eat.”

But today’s couples
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can also have a little fun with some whimsical hors d’oeuvres that their parents will remember.

“While we are seeing more crab meat and lobster being served as appetizers, we’re also seeing pigs in a blanket, as a fun, kitschy, retro kind of thing. And Swedish meatballs. Retro canapes are back. Deviled eggs, baked brie, puffed pastries and stuffed olives, those things are back and they’re new to people now,” Bratten said.

“You can do a lot of things with vegetables that are really nice,” Siegel said. “I always tell the bride and groom you need to reflect your personality in your menu. Without getting too experimental we still came up with some very interesting things that made everybody happy.”

--By Tom Roebeck
Copley News Service

Here are some ideas on how to avoid common mistakes

Brides, here are some thoughts from others who have been through the wedding wars. Avoid These Costly Mistakes:

1. Procrastinating: Start planning your wedding as soon as you get engaged. There is so much to do and so many people that you will need to rely on. The more time that you allow, the more choices you will have and the easier on your pocketbook. Also, extremely short engagements can be stressful. Jump right on it!

2. No Vision or Theme makes for a fragmented look and flow. Envision your wedding day in your mind from the moment you wake up to the end of the day. A theme should emerge that will help you have continuity and a pleasing outcome.

3. Trying to do it alone: This can get ugly. Even if your family is not available, delegate some tasks to trustworthy friends. You would do the same for them.

4. No Budget or Unrealistic Budget. Although you can’t know exactly what you will spend on each item, try to set an overall budget and what you can spend in each category. Be realistic, we’re in 2008 not 1950.

5. Vendor Disaster. Hiring the wrong vendor. You only get one chance and it needs to be right. Check references. Don’t hire friends or relatives unless you would hire them if they weren’t connected.

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Avoiding common mistakes

6. No agreements: If money is to be exchanged you should have a contract spelling out the details and outlining what each party can expect from the other that is dated and signed. Make sure you keep track of your copy.

7. Bridezilla obsessing about the wedding. Have one day a week when nobody talks about the wedding. It will help you to enjoy the process. Pace yourself.

8. Assuming that things will work themselves out on their own. Don't be afraid to make decisions. Trust your gut. Nobody knows what you want unless you tell them. Confident communication is key. Many of your details can be arranged by your mom, sister or trusted friend. Some things will require your attention. Make a list of what you need to do, broken down by tasks. Divide the tasks by how many months you have left.

Prioritize what must be done first. Take one day per week when you will focus on your wedding planning.

9. Waiting to order your gown and attendants' dresses. Bridesmaids come in all shapes and sizes. You may need to special order so that the dyelot (shade) matches which takes 2-10 weeks for the dresses to arrive. Wedding Gowns can take anywhere from 5 to 17 weeks depending on the source. Rush charges eat into your budget. Not getting the right dresses is one headache you can avoid with a little pre-planning.

10. Allowing the wishes of the bride to be overruled by someone with their own agenda or those who think they are experts. When hearing advice, just smile, nod and tell them thank you. If they are not a professional in the area of planning weddings or paying, it is just an opinion, nothing more. Remember, this is your wedding.

For more advice, timely information, make a comment or ask a question, please visit our blog at gallerybylynette.blogspot.com

Information provided by wedding planner Lynette Robinson
Stone-cold advice for finding the perfect diamond

Buying a diamond isn’t too different an experience from buying a car. Decide what’s most important, what you like the best and what you can afford. With a little research and patience, you’ll have an investment that will bring years of pleasure. Simple, right?

It is, says Mike Schramm, owner of Schramm-Bacher Jewelers Inc. in Springfield, Ill. When it comes to buying a diamond, he says, “there’s nothing mystical there. You either like it or you don’t.” And because a diamond purchase will outlast a car by many years, it’s important to feel confident you’ve bought the right one. The four main diamond characteristics are cut, color, clarity and carat weight, says Betty Sowarsh, co-owner of Bridge Jewelry Co. Inc. For Sowarsh, the most important feature is the cut.

**CUT**

“The cutting of the diamond - not the shape, but the proportions and facets designed to get the maximum amount of brilliance or sparkle - is most important,” Sowarsh says. “A well-cut diamond talks back to you. It says, ‘Here I am!’” Schramm agrees. “The things that affect the appearance of a diamond are not necessarily the things that affect the price. The color and clarity will always affect the price, but the cutting will have more influence on the actual appearance. So, for absolute best appearance, the cutting is what I start with. Everything else is secondary.”

The cutting should be as close to “ideal” as possible, Sowarsh says. In an ideal cut, light enters the diamond and returns to the eye, guaranteeing brilliance and fire. If a cut is too deep or too shallow, the light enters the diamond but “leaks out” the bottom or side and doesn’t return to the eye.

**COLOR**

Most diamonds are rated by how close to colorless, or white, they are. The more colorless (ratings of D, E or F), the more expensive the stone. Prices go down accordingly, from near colorless through light yellow (ratings of G through Z). Diamonds come in every color of the rainbow, though, Schramm says. Blues and pinks are more rare, and can be several times more expensive. He had one diamond in his store in the late 1980s valued at $200,000. It was not a typical steel blue, he says, but much like a sky blue topaz. There were only two other comparable stones in the world, one in New York City and one in Switzerland.

Most blue diamonds are artificially colored, though, says Brian Lauer, president of Stout & Lauer Jewelers. Diamonds with poor color have been intensely irradiated in a laboratory to alter the color. Natural blue colors are so faint that, usually, if someone selects a distinctly blue diamond, it probably has been irradiated.

**CLARITY**

This describes the degree of imperfection, or inclusions. The standard is an internally flawless (“I”) diamond, with no inclusions visible under 10-power magnification. A “vv” rated diamond has “very very” slight inclusions, “vvs1” may have a tiny inclusion, “vvs2” may have two, “si1” and “si2” are slightly imperfect with more noticeable inclusions that are relatively easy to locate. “Imperfect” ratings have obvious imperfections, visible to the naked eye.

**CARAT**

Also referred to as “points,” this roughly is the size and weight of a diamond. A full one-carat diamond will have 100 points, a three-quarter-carat is 70-79 points, and a one-half carat is equivalent to 47-59 points. There also are “light” 90-99 point carats, light 42-47 point half carats, and so on.

There also is the mounting (the ring without the center stone) and shape of the
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center diamond to consider. A classic center-stone shape is the round brilliant, which, Sowarsh says, is the “most sparkly.” Other shapes include rectangular/emerald, heart, elongated and pointed oval marquis, oval, pear, trillion or triangle, and radiant modified rectangle.

The center stone can be set into a classic 2 mm, plain, polished band with a solitaire mounting, Lauer says. Or, perhaps a more contemporary design is desired, such as a wide, 8 mm band and half- or full-bezel setting. A bezel is a band that surrounds the diamond rather than the stone being held by four or six prongs. A half-bezel encloses the diamond like parentheses, exposing more of it to light.

Jewelry store manager Mark Fandel has seen a lot of interest in the pave and micro-pave designs. (Small, bead-set stones surround a center stone and run along the sides of a ring.) One popular shape is the princess cut, a square shape. It’s popular, Schramm says, because less of the stone is lost in the cutting. However, this shape never was intended as a center stone, he adds, and is more easily damaged in certain center settings where its pointed, not beveled, corners are exposed.

“A diamond has a grain, just like wood,” Schramm says. “And if you hit it along the grain, you can damage it. It’s not easy, but it’s possible.”

Also, he says, the princess shape is cut nearly flat across the top. The “crown angle” from the edge (girdle) to the top (table) should be about 34 degrees. The lower the angle, the more susceptible the diamond will be to damage.

“The princess shape is almost all table, no angle,” he says. For a more stable and better-looking square diamond, Schramm recommends the beveled, not pointed, corners. Radiant and Lucere shapes are both more stable and more attractive, with comparable affordability.

A hard hit can loosen a diamond. For this reason, the quality of the “bench work,” everything from the metal-work to placing the stone into the head, is essential. High-quality, well-cast metal; appropriate selection of the head (prong work, bar work, bead setting, etc.); methodical and complete cleaning; measuring; firing; polishing; and positioning ensure the stone stays in place.

Before customers make a decision, Schramm makes sure they have looked at their selection under a microscope. “There are so many things about buying a diamond that can be really fun and very interesting. You can really see the differences (among the diamonds).”

Lab reports that come with some diamonds are no substitute for a trained, experienced jeweler, Schramm says. “We take time so they can decide ultimately what they want and understand what they’re buying so that, when they get done, they know they’re buying a nice piece of jewelry.”

And the process is indeed simple, Sowarsh says. “When you compare diamonds, you’ll usually see one and say, ‘Oh! That’s beautiful.’” Others may be larger, but won’t shine, be as pretty or draw as many compliments, she says. Get the beautiful one, the one you like, Sowarsh says. “You’ll always be proud of it.”

— DiAnne Crown, Copley News Service
Thank you

FROM PAGE 13

you can really do a lot of good with that money,” Mauer said. “The guests like it. They realize that the couple is spending a lot of money on the wedding, and when some of that money can go to help someone else, they really appreciate it.”

Make sure each guest gets a card detailing the gesture, however, instead of making a blanket announcement at the reception, Mauer said.

Unforgettable favors don’t have to be lavish or expensive. When packaged in a unique container and personalized with a small tag, virtually any item becomes an instant keepsake.

“Food is definitely the way to go if you’re on a budget. Plus, edible favors are really hot right now,” Mauer said. Small candies like Jordan almonds, M&Ms or jellybeans are sure to win over guests of all ages and preferences, especially if they are packaged in a clever way. From embellished candy-filled tins to Chinese takeout containers chock-full of cookies, almost anything goes.

“Packaging is very big right now,” Mauer said. “Almost anything can be embellished with a little tag or a ribbon with your names or initials on it. Personalization is very big for weddings in general. The favor is just another way to add a personal touch to the day.”

Gifts of food aren’t the only option, though. Keepsakes that come in handy long after your wedding day are also in vogue.

“Everyone loves something that they can use later on - maybe a little potted plant or a CD of the couple’s favorite songs. Anything that will be a reminder is appropriate,” Mauer said.

“If you have a lot of out-of-town guests, it’s nice to do something that’s kind of a souvenir. If the couple lives in New York City, they might have miniature taxicabs or fresh apples with personalized tags on them to represent the Big Apple. If you are in Maryland, you might give out crab-shaped cookies.”

TIPPING

Gratuities are more often than not included in the cost of wedding services. However, if a wedding vendor, waiter or other person has gone above and beyond the call of duty, extra tipping is appropriate. Here are some people who should receive a tip on the wedding day:

– Limousine driver should receive 15 percent of the bill if a tip hasn’t already been included.

– Organist and musicians at the ceremony should receive at least $50 per person.

– If your reception features a maître d’ or head waiter who oversees the staff, this person should be tipped as well.

THANK-YOU NOTES

These simple notes are a must for each gift you receive. They should be handwritten and mention the gift given. If a guest gave you money, do not mention the specific amount, but do say how you plan to spend it.

Be sure to include your new address on the return label.

– BY CHANDRA ORR, COPLEYS NEWS SERVICE

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Brides still take stock in traditional invitations

The heavy paper, raised ink and elegant type all signal that this piece of mail is something special -- a wedding invitation. Modern brides still rely on tradition to design their invitations, experts say, but are adding personal touches with colored inks, ribbons and tinted papers.

"People have been going back to very conservative styles, but they still want to express themselves," said Micah Chase, president of Checkerboard Ltd., a custom stationery maker in West Boylston, Mass.

Self-expression for an engaged couple can take the form of subtle touches like ink in teals, browns and other muted colors, or calligraphy in unusual styles. Invitations printed in a vertical, "tall" style come in envelopes with long pointed flaps. Details are printed on paper delicately embossed with floral or botanical patterns.

"It has this traditional theme with a modern interpretation," Chase said. "It's modern but it still has the feel of Old World craftsmanship."

With invitations, as with weddings, couples want to blend the traditional and the individual, Chase said. "They want to pay homage to this institution, but brides say, 'I want mine to be different, as we are.'"

Some new offerings in invitations: Paper with leaves stamped in gold, invitations with delicate parchment jackets and cards embellished with ribbon and watercolor images. Embossed cards feature intricate Victorian motifs or a simple interwoven pattern as a border.

Before designing your invitations, think about the mood of your wedding. Is it formal or casual? Traditional or quirky? Big-budget or on a shoestring? Your invitation should reflect what guests can expect on the big day.

Some style options popular with modern couples:
- Paper: Handmade papers have joined traditional vellum as an option for couples seeking a more distinctive look.
- Type style: Classic typefaces with lots of flourishes remain popular, along with flowery scripts. Just make sure that your typefaces mesh with each other and reflect the tone of your wedding.
- Ink: Quality stationers like Checkerboard offer up to 25 colors of ink for invitations, but subtle is best, Chase advises. Bright colors were popular several years ago but have faded with the more traditional mood of the country.

- Envelopes: Heavy paper, longer cuts and pointed flaps add to the impact of your invitation.
- Effects: If you like the engraved look but are on a tight budget, consider thermography for an engraved effect.
- Extras: Ribbons, cutouts and unusually shaped cards are other options for more adventurous couples.

Innovations in technology have also given couples more flexibility in designs and deadlines. Online stationery sites can deliver printed invitations in as little as three days, and allow you to design every facet of the finished product.

Checkerboard works with einvite.com on higher-quality invitations, which can even be printed out at home on special printer paper.

"We've seen a tremendous increase in sales of the home product," said Chase. "(Couples) do love the convenience."

After deciding on the look of your invitation, pay close attention to the contents. Some important invitation tips:

-- Basics: Every invitation should include basic information including the wedding hosts; names of bride and groom; day of the week, date, time and address of the ceremony and/or reception; and RSVP information. It also helps to include maps to events for out-of-town guests.
-- Double-check: Make sure you are certain of the date, time, and place of your wedding. Corrections can be costly and confusing to guests. Also make sure to get a look at a "proof" of your invitation from the stationers before the print run.
-- Word: With modern "blended" families, wording can be tricky. Consult with family members on what they prefer on invitations.
-- Take your time: Set aside at least a month to hand-write addresses and prepare invitations for mailing. Make sure that return postage is sufficient.
-- Order extras: Buy 20 or 30 extra invitations in case of mistakes in addressing or last-minute additions to the guest list.
-- Test run: Mail yourself an invitation first -- you'll catch any problems with size, postage and addressing.
-- Mail call: Send out invitations six weeks before the wedding, eight weeks for long-distance guests or if your wedding is planned for a holiday.

-- L.E. Klein, Copley News Service
There’s plenty to do after you say ‘I Do’

You’re coming off a wedding planning whirlwind, a fabulous day of officially becoming man and wife and a honeymoon that you’re wishing never ended. But the reality is, it did. Now what? While it might seem like a good time to sit back, relax and revel in the fact that you “really did it,” your work isn’t done just yet, newlyweds. Riann Smith, deputy editor of TheNest.com, shares the top 10 to-do’s after saying “I do.”

TACKLE THE LEGALITIES

Chances are, you still have your parents listed as your beneficiaries. Consult with your family attorney and appoint your spouse as your beneficiary within two weeks of the wedding, Smith said. Also within that time period, figure out whose insurance plan you want to use. If your spouse’s insurance is less expensive and you can continue going to your trusted doctors, merge onto his or her plan.

FIGURE OUT YOUR FINANCES

Prior to getting married, you should have discussed and decided how you want to handle your finances. Within two weeks following the wedding, you’ll want to put those decisions into action. If you decided to have two separate accounts and one joint account, go to the bank and open up the joint account. If you received checks as wedding gifts and they’re addressed to both of you, you’ll need to decide how you’re going to spend or save that money. Make the decision together and quickly.

SEND OUT THANK-YOU NOTES

Old-school etiquette says you have a year to send wedding guests a thank-you note. Today’s etiquette recommends doing it sooner rather than later. Don’t wait longer than six months, Smith said. The longer you wait, the fogger your memory will be. Guests want to be acknowledged for the time and energy they used to pick out a gift for you. Don’t just say “thank you for the gift.” Each thank-you note needs to be personalized and specific. You might say something like: “Thank you for the red Le Creuset Dutch oven. The color matches our kitchen perfectly.” Since personalizing each note takes quite a bit of time, Smith recommends splitting the task up between the two of you and each doing 10 a night between commercial breaks.

GIVE EVERYONE YOUR NEW ADDRESS

In this technologically advanced society, it’s perfectly acceptable to send out a mass e-mail letting everyone know your new address. However, not all your guests may use computers. If your 90-year-old grandmother is more of a traditional mail user, send her card (check out movingannouncementstore.com) with your new address. If your best friend eats, works, sleeps and vacations with her BlackBerry, sending her an e-mail with your new locale is probably best. This should be done within six weeks.

TACKLE BRIDAL REGISTRY RETURNS

Don’t assume you can return gifts for up to a year. Make sure you know and understand each store’s return policy. Even if a store has a 90-day return policy, don’t wait that long. Return items within two months after the wedding, Smith said. Things go on sale and you want to make sure you get the full value of the item. Smith said the most painless way to return wedding gifts is to group them together by store and tackle each store at one time.

CHANGE YOUR NAME

Whether you’re going to take your husband’s name or hyphenate, do it within three months post-wedding. Smith suggests beginning with your driver’s license, then moving on to your Social Security card, credit cards and passport.
Preserving gowns

FROM PAGE 24

Finally, as our gift to you there’s a certificate for free pressing should you ever remove the gown from the box.

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For the Bride, one more idea: Include gown cleaning and/or preservation by Your Valet Fine Drycleaning on your bridal gift registry. A gift certificate or monetary contribution to the cleaning and preservation of your gown will be a gift that will be appreciated for years to come. We offer gift certificate for this purpose in any amount.

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What comes next?

From page 28

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CLEAN AND STORE YOUR GOWN

Whether or not you think you want to keep your dress or you’re unsure, Smith says “clean it anyway.” The fabrics used on wedding gowns are typically delicate and require special cleaning. If you leave that streak of self-tanner or that spot of red wine on your dress for two years, then decide you want to preserve your dress, chances are the stains won’t come out.

AGREE ON WHERE YOU’RE SPENDING THE HOLIDAYS

It’s not even so much that there will be tension between you and your spouse, it’s your in-laws, Smith said. Whether you’re getting married in October or February, Smith urges couples to make the holiday location decision within three months of the wedding. If you and your spouse celebrate different holidays, the time commitments for each holiday celebration may be different. “Work out a solution that will make everyone happy,” Smith said. Some couples find success in alternating holidays with each side of the family - Thanksgiving with her family, Christmas with his. Or, host the holidays at your home and invite everyone.

CHOOSE PHOTOS/FINALIZE DVD

Getting your wedding photo proofs and/or DVD back is one of the most exciting post-wedding moments, but choosing which of the proofs you want to order can be rather daunting. Within six months after your wedding, go through the photos with your spouse and select the ones you think best capture your day. And, make sure you like the edit on your DVD. Make sure you read and understand your contracts so you aren’t faced with any surprise charges.

CALL THE TAX MAN

Figure out if you’re going to file taxes separately or jointly by December of the year you’re getting married, Smith said. Decide on which one of you has the better accountant and go with that person. You’ll most likely get more of a tax break if you file jointly, but this is something to discuss with the accountant you decide to employ.

Copley News Service

Utah Statesman Bridal Guide, Spring 2009

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