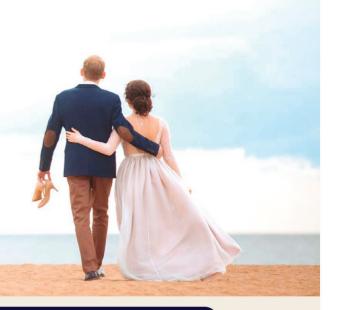


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# The importance of engagement photos

(MS) — During their engagements, couples will make many decisions in regard to their weddings.

Wedding planning can sometimes seem like a runaway train of appointments, schedules and deadlines.

As a result, some couples do not take the time to enjoy being engaged, which is a special and unique time in their lives.

Engagement photo shoots can be a unique way for couples to commemorate and enjoy the months preceding their weddings. Engagement photos memorialize the engagement and provide many additional benefits as well.

#### CONNECTION

Engagement photo shoots give couples a chance to connect with their photographers.

Booking an engagement photo shoot provides helpful information to both the couple and the photographer.

The photographer gets to see how the couple interacts in front of the lens and can determine any insecurities or strengths and weaknesses couples may have.

These lessons can be filed away and help make wedding day photos look better.

Similarly, spending time with the photographer gives the couple an opportunity to develop a rapport with their photographer.

If couples and their photographer don't click, scheduling an engagement shoot well in advance of the wedding gives couples a chance to find someone else to take their photos.

### TIME TOGETHER

An engagement photo shoot gives couples time to spend together.

An engagement photo shoot is an ideal time to spend an afternoon in a special location focusing on each other without wedding planning taking up your time.

### GETTING COMFORTABLE IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA

Photo shoots provide a chance to get comfortable in front of the camera.

Professional photographs taken before the wedding enables couples to view how they will appear in pictures. Seeing these photos might help couples grow more comfortable in front of the camera.

This practice can help couples temper their anxieties prior to the wedding.

An engagement shoot also can be a great time for couples to speak with their photographers about angles or styles they prefer or dislike.

#### **SAVETHE DATE**

The bride and groom have save-the-date or social media photos. Engagement photographs can be used for save-the-date cards or social media postings (check with the photographer for licensing agreements). This can be a great way to spread excitement about the upcoming nuptials.

#### SIGHTS AND STYLES

Photo shoots offer bride and groom a chance to experiment with vivid backdrops.

Engagement photography gives couples plenty of opportunities to experiment with different locales, which may not be possible come the wedding day.

Engagement photography can be a worthwhile inclusion in pre-wedding celebrations.





# Rehearsal dinner planning pointers

(MS) — Rehearsal dinners are customarily held after couples and their bridal parties walk through the wedding ceremony.

Rehearsals may occur one or two nights before the actual wedding, depending on the availability of the wedding venue.

Rehearsal dinners tend to be less formal than wedding receptions, but couples should still prioritize planning to ensure their dinner goes off without a hitch.

### CONFIRM WHO IS PAYING FOR DINNER

Tradition once suggested that the groom's parents pay for the rehearsal dinner while the bride's parents foot the bill for the wedding. But perhaps due to the rising cost of weddings, many couples no longer feel beholden to such traditions.

If couples are financing their own weddings, parents of both the bride and groom may want to pay for the rehearsal dinner.

If parents are splitting the cost of the wedding, then

couples themselves may want to pay for the rehearsal dinner.

Confirm who is paying and if there is a budget to work with before booking a restaurant.

This way there is no confusion once the bill is brought to the table.

### CONSIDER THE DIETARY RESTRICTIONS OF ANY GUESTS

Give consideration to bridal party members' dietary restrictions.

Couples may not want to book a seafood restaurant if a handful of guests have shellfish allergies.

So before booking a restaurant for the rehearsal dinner, couples can ask members of their bridal party and other attendees if they have any food allergies.

#### **EMPHASIZE LOCATION**

Couples whose bridal party includes out-of-towners should look for a restaurant that's close to the wedding hotel and/or the ceremony site to host their rehearsal dinner.

Ideally, one that's within walking distance of both

makes getting to and from a lot easier.

SEE REHEARSAL, PAGE 6



### **REHEARSAL:** Tips, tricks to make your dinner a success

FROM PAGE 5

Regardless of where the restaurant is located, make sure to arrange for transportation for any out-of-town guests who are not planning to drive to the wedding.

### INFORM ALL WEDDING GUESTS **ABOUT DRESS CODES**

Rehearsal dinners tend to be laid back affairs, but members of the bridal party may be uncertain about what to wear.

Couples should inform rehearsal dinner guests well in advance of the wedding if the dinner will be casual. semiformal or formal.

This gives guests the time to shop for and pack their attire for the night, and saves couples the trouble of answering wardrobe inquiries in the busy final days before the wedding.

### **TOAST THE GUESTS**

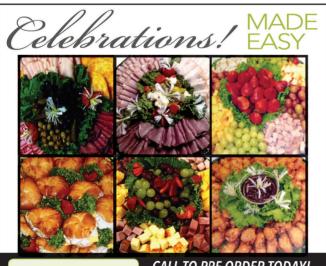
Brides and grooms are toasted at their wedding receptions, but rehearsal dinners afford happy couples the chance to thank their closest friends and family members for their love and support.

### **GIVE A BRIEF TOAST** TO LOVED ONES

Grooms may also want to use this opportunity to toast their brides-to-be, thanking them for all their efforts planning the wedding.

Rehearsal dinners typically are fun, less formal affairs.

But even the least formal dinners require some planning.



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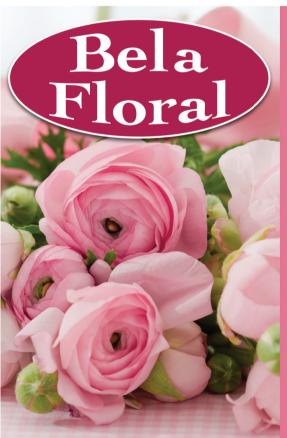


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Kate and Dylan Pratt take a stroll through Cartier Park with daughter, Isabella, after their August wedding.



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(MS) — Paper invitations remain the invite of choice for weddings, and rightfully so. Paper invitations give wedding guests an idea of just how formal the ceremony will be and make for great mementos the happy couple can revisit for decades to come.

Though milestones like weddings are worthy of elaborate paper invitations, many other types of parties and gatherings can utilize evites to get the word out.

Evites may not be governed by the guidelines of more formal paper invitations, but evite designers should still make sure to include certain information so guests learn all they need to know about the festivities.

### WHY?

When designing an evite, include the reason for the party.

For example, let guests

Evites may not be governed by the guidelines of more formal paper invitations they should still include certain information so guests learn all they need to know about the festivities.

know if a backyard barbecue is doubling as a birthday party.

Some guests might not know this if the evite doesn't state it, and they might feel awkward if they fail to show up with a gift for the guest of honor.

#### WHEN?

Less formal get-togethers may not be on tight schedules, but evites to such affairs should still dictate when parties will begin and an estimate of when they will end.

If hosting a game watch or a movie night, use the evite to remind guests when the game starts or when you want to start the movie. Ideally, let guests arrive in advance of the main event so they have time to get settled.

#### WHERE?

Include the full address of where the party will be held. If you're hosting at home, try to include some information about where guests can park their vehicles.

If you're hosting the party at a restaurant or another public place, include parking information about those places as well, especially if parking is limited.

In such instances, look into nearby parking alternatives, such as parking garages, and include that in-

formation on the invitation as well.

#### WHAT TO EAT?

Evites are not restricted by space like more traditional paper invitations. So if you're hosting a party at home, use the evite to inform guests about the foods you will be serving.

This gives guests with dietary restrictions a chance to make other arrangements if the foods you will be serving don't align with their diets.

#### **RSVP**

Make it as easy as possible for guests to respond to your evite. Evite templates typically allow guests to click "Yes," "No," or "Maybe." Ask guests to give their final responses by a certain date.

Evites make it easy to invite friends and family to gatherings big and small.





# The significance of June weddings throughout history

(MS) — Since Ancient Roman times, June has been a popular month for couples to tie the knot.

The month's namesake, the goddess Juno, was said to be the protector of women in every aspect, but most notably in regard to marriage and childbearing.

Therefore, it made sense to get married and take the first step toward creating a family in June.

For practical reasons, June also has been a prime month for marriage because the month is neither especially hot nor especially cold in many areas of the world. While dressed in formalwear — whether having an outdoor wedding or an indoor one — no one wants to be overheat-

ed or uncomfortably cold.

While June is still a popular month to get married, the wedding resource The Knot indicates that autumn, in particular the months of September and October, has overtaken summer as the most popular wedding season. Warmer-than-average temperatures in autumn over the last few years as well as a dazzling display of natural color help make the fall a popular time for nuptials.

Interestingly enough, perhaps due to a slightly cooler climate, a 2015 survey from Wedding Bells found August to be the most popular month to get married in Canada, and that 67 percent of weddings in Canada that year occurred between June and September.







# Getting the most out of a registry

(MS) — Building a wedding registry is a task unlike any other couples may encounter during their lifetimes. Wedding registries are invaluable resources that provide engaged couples' loved ones with gift suggestions. In spite of that value, couples may find it daunting and even a little uncomfortable to build their wedding registries.

Building a wedding registry can feel like walking a tightrope. Couples likely won't want to ask for too much or for gifts that are too expensive, but a poorly built registry can be a major inconvenience for guests.

The following tips can help couples build adequate registries that benefit them without asking too much of their guests.

### **REGISTER WITH MORE THAN ONE STORE**

It's important to register with more than one store. Doing so makes things as convenient as possible for guests and increases the chances they will be able to shop at stores they're familiar with. Unless your guest list is predominantly local, try to register with at least one national chain so guests who live in different regions can shop for gifts in-person if they prefer to do so.

### **KEEP YOUR REGSTRIES UP TO DATE**

Periodically update vour registries to remove items you have already received and to add items if many of the less expensive ones have already been purchased. This also makes things more convenient for guests. Building a wedding registry is a unique task that couples can embrace as their wedding day draws near.

### **MAKE A LIST**

Make a large list. Some

couples are hesitant to make large wedding registries, feeling that doing so gives the impression that they're asking for too much.

But large registries simply give guests more options to choose from.

Many industry insiders advise registering for two to three gifts per guest.

That might seem like a lot, but guests will appreciate having all of those options.

### DON'T BE AFRAID TO INCLUDE PRICEY ITEMS

Don't hesitate to include expensive items on your registry. Couples also may be hesitant to include especially expensive items on their wedding registries.

However, the couples' parents and other close relatives may be honored to purchase more expensive items, so couples should not feel embarrassed to include them on their lists.

It's also important to note that many retailers, after couples' wedding days have come and gone, discount registry items that weren't purchased. So even if no one purchases the more expensive items, including them on a registry may significantly reduce their cost for couples who want to buy such items themselves after tving the knot.

### **VARYTHE PRICES** OF REGISTRY ITEMS

Vary the prices of items on the list. In addition to including more expensive items on the registry, make sure to include moderately priced and inexpensive items.

This gives guests more options and ensures guests who might be spending a lot to travel to and from the wedding can still purchase gifts without digging too much deeper into their pockets.





# Find the best color palettes for your wedding

(MS) — Some brides may feel beholden to the color white on their wedding days, at least in regard to their gowns.

Those who do often embrace the opportunity to showcase their personal styles and set the mood for their nuptials by embracing various colors throughout their ceremonies and receptions.

Color can be a critical component when establishing the ambiance for a wedding. Color can evoke certain moods and set the tone for the day.

Some colors work better together than others, so while choosing a color scheme may seem like an easy undertaking, some couples may find it requires more careful consideration than they first imagined.

According to the bridal guide "A Practical Wedding," wedding colors can give couples a starting-off point for all of the other details of their weddings.

This ensures the wedding ultimately has a cohesive look. Colors need not necessarily match, but borrowing on similar hues can make it easier to plan wedding party wardrobes, flowers, table linens, and much more.

Colors can come from anywhere, but many couples try to coordinate their color schemes with the season in which the wedding takes place.

In fact, couples who are finding it difficult to decide on a palette can look to seasonal colors for inspiration. For example, pastels and blooming flowers can set the scene for spring weddings, while jewel tones and rich reds and greens may be fitting for winter ceremonies.

Some couples opt for more loosely defined color palettes, such as neutral and natural colors.

Country and garden weddings can borrow ideas from the landscape, with natural linens paired with wildflowers.

Using whites, grays and beiges enables couples to add a pop of color without overwhelming the setting.

Brides magazine suggests that couples avoid choosing too many colors. A maximum of three with one metallic can ensure that things

look cohesive without being over-the-top.

SEE COLORS, PAGE 15



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### How to handle seating wedding guests

(MS) — Receptions may be big or small, lavish or casual. But regardless of their size or style, receptions all share a common element: They will require couples set up seating arrangement for guests.

Even though assigned seating isn't mandatory, selecting seats for a sit-down dinner makes things simpler and reduces confusion.

Some reception venues may even require assigned seating so that catering staff can service tables accordingly. Seating guests can be tricky, but employing a few strategies can make the process go quickly and smoothly.

### **USE A SEATING CHART**

A seating chart, whether it's venue-specific or one couples make themselves, is essential.

If you using a self-made chart, inquire with the ven-



ue about the shape of tables, how many guests each table can seat, the location of tables and the area around the space.

### START WITH THE **WEDDING PARTY TABLE**

Couples can ease themselves into the task of seating by doing the easy tables first. The primary one is the wedding party table. This traditionally can be a dais or a sweetheart table flanked by the wedding party. According to Martha Stewart Weddings, the table should be centrally located and the wedding couple should sit in the middle. A male-female pattern follows on either side of the couple, consisting of the ushers, bridesmaids, best man, and maid of honor. If much of the wedding party is already married, couples may opt to have the wedding party sit with their spouses instead of at the dais.

### **ORGANIZE FAMILY TABLES**

Tables for parents, grandparents and immediate family members of the bride and groom also are high priority. Both families can be combined at one table, or they can be separated into two tables. These tables should be the closest to the bride and groom.

#### **CONSIDER MOBILITY ISSUES**

Next seat guests who have specific needs at tables. Elderly guests may want to be away from the band, deejay or speakers. Guests in wheelchairs may need an accessible seat near the exit.

### **GET SOME HELP**

Enlist the help of parents to seat their friends and extended family members. Parents may know best who gets along and who should be separated.

### **SEAT DANCERS NEARTHE DANCE FLOOR**

To encourage dancing, place guests who tend to be lively close to the dance floor so others can see them getting up to dance and join in.

Couples can use apps, lists or self-made charts to plot their reception seating arrangements. Create place cards or a central chart so guests can find their seats promptly and easily.





## **COLORS:** Finding the best tones for your ceremony

FROM PAGE 11

Also, brides and grooms needn't feel pressured by the "hot" colors of the moment.

As with clothing and hairstyles, trends change. It is better to select colors that will stand the test of time and look good for years to

Couples may have to incorporate colors already at their wedding venues into their style. Fortunately many reception sites are outfitted in neutral tones to enable customization.

The wedding resource The Knot also says having a basic knowledge of the color wheel can help.

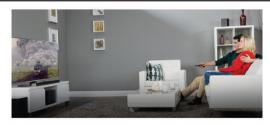
Typically, colors that pair well together are those that are opposites on the color

Colors that share proximity on the color wheel will have similar tones and play well together.

wheel.

Also, colors that share proximity on the color wheel will have similar tones and play well together. Examples of opposite colors include purples and yellows, reds and greens, and oranges and

Couples should not be afraid to take some chances with their color palettes, especially if they want to make a bold and modern statement.



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# Planning a wedding day

(MS) — Wedding days can be hectic. In fact, many couples note after tying the knot that their wedding days were so busy that the ceremonies and receptions were over before they knew

Creating a wedding day schedule can seem like a daunting task. Couples tend to have lots of things to do before saying "I do," and organizing everything so ceremonies begin on time can seem as puzzling as a brain

But certain scheduling strategies can help couples ensure they look their best and make it to the altar on time.

### START WITH THE CEREMONY

Couples can establish a framework for their wedding day schedule by working back from the ceremony.

Once the ceremony time is set, couples who plan to take photos before their ceremonies can then work with their photographers to determine how much time they will need for photos and where they want to take the photos.

Bridal parties may need transportation to the photo session, so determining when and where to take photos before the ceremony gives couples an idea of when to arrange for pickup.

#### **CONFIRM VENUE TIMES**

Confirm when the wedding venue is open to the wedding party.

Before booking hair and makeup appointments, couples should confirm when they will be able to access their wedding venue. Brides may want to get their hair and makeup done at the ceremony sight, but that may only be possible if the venue opens early for the wedding party.

If it does not, then brides must account for transpor-



tation time to the ceremony sight when making their wedding day schedules.

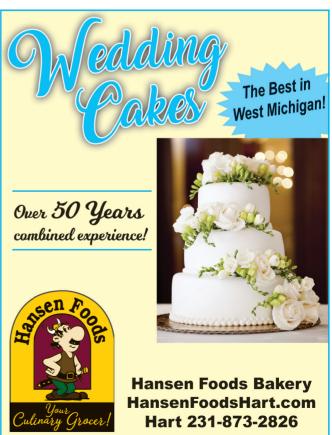
### PLAN FOR HAIR AND MAKEUP

Weddings that feature large bridal parties will require more time for hair and makeup than ceremonies with small bridal parties. Grooms and groomsmen often take care of their own hair, though some grooms might want to schedule hot shaves for themselves and their groomsmen.

Grooms should groomsmen if they want a hot shave and then work with their barbers to determine how much time it will take to tend to all partici-

Brides with large bridal parties may need to book more than two hair and makeup artists so everyone can get done on time. Wedding hair and makeup sessions can last several hours for large bridal parties.

SEE SCHEDULE, PAGE 17



### **SCHEDULE:** Things to consider

**FROM PAGE 16** 

Brides should schedule their sessions early if their parties are big.

### **MAKE LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS**

Some couples choose to tie the knot and host their receptions at the same venue. In such instances, if brides are getting their hair and makeup done at the venue, ask the venue representative if lunch can be provided to the bridal party.

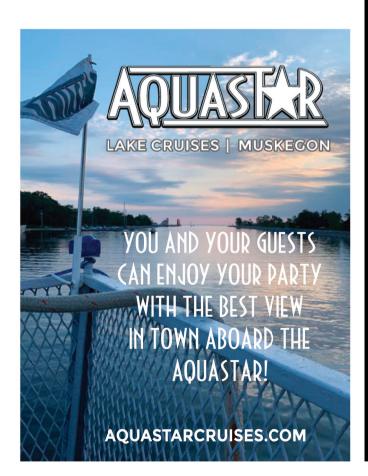
Some venues may include small lunch buffets in their reception costs, while others might charge extra. Confirm the availability and costs, and if it's unavailable or too expensive, then arrange for lunch to be delivered. Either way, couples should not skip lunch, as it may be their only chance to eat until after the ceremony.

### DISTRIBUTE THE SCHEDULE AMONG THE BRIDAL PARTY

Once the wedding day schedule has been devised, couples should share it with each other and their wedding parties.

Grooms' wedding day to-do lists might not be as extensive as brides', but grooms should still be kept in the loop regarding the schedule so they can help if anyone has questions or something goes awry. Sharing the schedule with the wedding party decreases the chances of someone being late or missing an appointment.

Couples can solve the riddle of scheduling their wedding days by working backwards and asking their vendors to cooperate in laying out the day's events.





# Make the first dance even more special

(MS) — Donna Summer may have sung about making the most of life with her song "Last Dance" in the 1970s, but during a wedding reception most of the focus is on the first dance of the evening when the newlyweds take to the dance floor for the first time after tying the knot.

Not only does the first dance give the couple an opportunity to shine on the dance floor, but it also can help set the tone for the reception to follow.

A couple's first dance is significant. Traditionally, the first dance was performed to a slow waltz, but now the first dance is not governed by any rules.

Many couples like to push boundaries or get creative with their first dances, and this can make the wedding even more memorable.

In fact, some couples en-



roll in dance classes or enlist the help of choreographers to ensure an epic opening dance number.

Social media is full of videos of innovative couples performing spot-on dance routines from classic dance movies like "Dirty Dancing" or beautifully choreographed dances to popular first dance songs such as "At Last" or "Can't Help Falling in Love."

Whether a couple wants to perform an intricate tango or simply wants to sway to the music on the first dance. here are some pointers to keep in mind.

SEE DANCE, PAGE 19



### **DANCING:** Getting it right

**FROM PAGE 18** 

### **CHOOSE A WEDDING** SONG THAT HAS MEANING

It may be fun to do a dance routine to DNCE's "Cake by the Ocean," but remember your first dance song will forever be linked to your life as a couple.

Select a song that has deep meaning to you. Read over the lyrics to make sure it's an appropriate wedding song.

### **TAME THOSE NERVES**

Practicing is a way to feel more confident in your steps, and that will help keep nerves at bay. Many couples experience a bit of stage fright. Just keep in mind that these friends and family are at the wedding to support you and not judge vour dance moves.

### **CHOOSE A SIMPLE ROUTINE**

If dancing is not your strong suit, select an easy

song that allows you to simply sway back and forth and move around minimally.

Dancing takes practice, but with that practice even the self-professed "worst dancer" can cut an impressive rug.

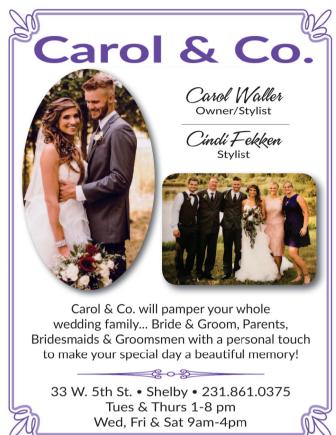
#### WORK WITH A PROFESSIONAL

If you desire something more intricate for the first dance and you have the budget to pay for some dance lessons, go for it.

An instructor can take you through dance basics or help you choreograph a more polished piece.

First dances are memorable moments at wedding receptions.

Take the dance and the song choice seriously. Guests can't wait to hear the song couples choose, and some couples exceed guests' expectations with their impressive moves.







# Make your guests comfortable

(MS) — Weddings may focus on the couple tying the knot, but guests play a key role in the festivities as well. Keeping them happy and

comfortable is a benefit to all.

It's important that couples do not overlook the comfort of the guests at the ceremony and reception.

### **PLAN FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The weather is unpredict-

able, so establish a backup plan should the weather not cooperate on your big day.

SEE GUESTS, PAGE 21



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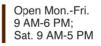
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### **GUESTS:** Be an advocate for your friends, family

**FROM PAGE 20** 

Outdoor weddings in warm, sunny locations can get hot quickly, so make sure there is shade available.

Ask ushers to hand out sunscreen so guests don't burn in the sun.

If there's a chance for rain, have umbrellas or a tent available to keep guests dry.

Regardless of the month you choose to tie the knot, making accommodations for the weather is essential for the comfort of guests and the bride and groom.

# CHOOSE A VENUE THAT CAN SUPPORT YOUR GUEST LIST

Be conscious of the amount of space that's available.

Guest comfort can be compromised if everyone is packed into a recep-

# Guests will appreciate knowing what to expect and when to expect it.

tion room that is much too small. Choose a venue that's appropriate for the crowd size you're expecting.

Everyone should be able to sit and move around freely.

This notion also applies to the dance floor.

Be certain guests can dance comfortably and have a good time.

### PUT YOURSELF IN YOUR GUESTS' SHOES

When selecting venues or ceremony sites, investigate whether guests will have an easy time getting to and from the room.

There are a few questions you can ask yourself about the venue and your guests that will help ensure that everyone is comfortable, such as:

- · Are paths easily accessible for those with mobility issues?
- · Are restrooms located close enough to seating areas so elderly guests won't have to walk far to use the bathroom?

Put yourself in your guests' shoes and figure out solutions to any potential obstacles that might affect your guests.

### OFFER WELCOME DRINKS AND SNACKS

A cocktail hour might be on the horizon, but guests may arrive at your wedding with an appetite already.

Make a few light refreshments available, such as crackers, chips, pretzels, and some soft drinks. Icecold water or lemonade can make an outdoor ceremony more comfortable in the heat.

Conversely, hot chocolate or coffee warms up a body in chilly weather.

#### PROVIDE A PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Clue guests into what will happen and when during the weddding you're planning as well as the reception and dinner.

This way they can adjust their schedules around the wedding.

Guests will appreciate knowing what to expect and when to expect it.

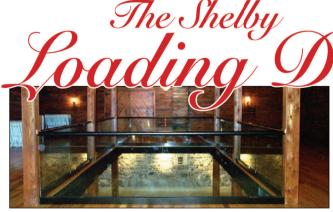
### PROVIDE CREATURE COMFORTS

Stock extra toiletries in the restrooms, and consider making inexpensive sandals available for guests with sore dancing feet.

Guest comfort is of the utmost importance when planning a wedding.



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### Candles can illuminate a wedding ceremony

(MS) — The warm, undulating light cast off by a candle adds an unmatched ambiance to a space. Multiply that candle by many and it can create a truly awe-inspiring atmosphere.

Candlelight is a must at any evening wedding and can be a key to a successful party as guests tend to loosen their inhibitions in a dimly lit room.

While candlelight can add a warming glow to post-wedding festivities, it can play a significant role during the ceremony itself.

Flickering flames within a dimly lit chapel or alternative ceremony site can establish an intimate setting in which a couple exchanges yows.

Candles can even become a focal point of the ceremony. For example, some couples may opt to light a unity candle during their ceremo-



nies. The unity candle symbolizes the joining of the families and merging of two individuals into one blended family. Representatives from both families, typically the parents of the couple, come up and light a candle for each side of the family. Then the bride and groom

will light a center candle from these two candles. The center candle then represents the unity of the new family and their commitment to each other.

Apart from the unity candle, there may be other ways candles play a role in the ceremony.

They can be religious and secular. Candles can symbolize different things, including:

- · casting away darkness and showing how love can brighten life.
- · candles can provide direction and draw couples together.
- · a candle can represent the love that lights up the couple's world, and
- the warmth of a relationship mirrored in the warmth of the candle.

Apart from symbolism and ambiance, there is an added benefit to including candles in a wedding ceremony. Brides magazine says that the amber light given off can make for beautiful photos as well.

Speak with a photographer about the best ways to arrange candles to fully take advantage of their photographic potential.







PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUE BROWN

Erica and Nick Hawkins celebrated their wedding at the Ramsdell Theater in Manistee.

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# Make a statement with your wedding cake

(MS) — Brides and grooms may pour over every detail of their weddings, but few components of the festivities may be as fun, especially for foodies, as deciding what the wedding cake will look like. Couples who want to deliver show-stopping visuals often express some measure of their creativity and personalities through statement wedding cakes.

Many couples now eschew the classic three-tiered white cake in favor of a dessert that garners instant attention.

Whether the cake is brightly colored or hand-painted, a towering architectural marvel or shimmering in metallics, couples are opting to make a statement with their confections.

Apart from clever caketoppers, here are ways to stand apart when dessert is served.

### **PAY ATTENTION TO TRENDS**

According to the Perfect Wedding Guide, a rising trend in cakes is to cover a white or naked cake with translucent glaze tinted in the couple's wedding colors.

This artistic expression can be especially stunning in boho-chic weddings.

### STATEMENT TIERS **ALSO ARE POPULAR**

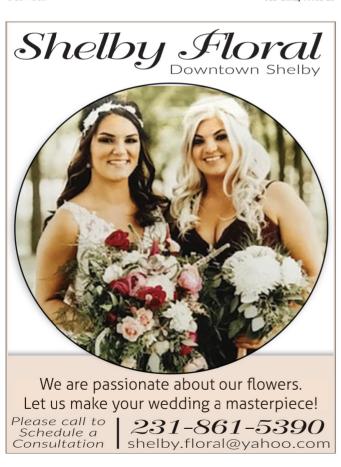
The cake may be traditional in nearly every way, but couples then set the cake apart by featuring an elaborate design or a different hue in one tier.

### **USE COLOR**

Martha Stewart Weddings advises that more than just color can be used to make a statement

SEE CAKE, PAGE 25







### **CAKE:** Tasty ways to add color, flavor, spunk to your ceremony

#### **FROM PAGE 24**

Lifelike sugar flowers can really set cakes apart. Guests may not be sure if they can consume all aspects of some cakes. But delicate sugar flowers taste as good as they look.

### **CONSIDER HAND-PAINTED TILES**

Hand-painted tiles on a cake are another way to add panache.

A bride and groom may be inspired by a European vacation or the stained-glass effects of religious windows and want to add that feel to the tiers of the cake.

### **TEXTURE**

Sometimes a statement comes by way of texture. Even an all-white cake can be dressed up with interesting textural effects. Ruffles, lace, embossing, and 3-D ro-

settes are different textural components that can be incorporated in cake designs.

#### **TELL A STORY**

Couples also may want to tell their unique stories with cake.

Individual tiers designed to reflect various milestone moments from the couple's relationship can be quite engaging.

### **EDGINESS**

Capitalizing on the trend of edgier weddings, couples may opt for darker hues on their cakes — even a black tier — or nontraditional geometric shapes to the cake itself or its design elements.

Statement cakes can really say something about the couple getting married. Much like other wedding elements, cakes provide a window into the minds of happy couples.









# Wedding flowers becoming larger than life

(MS) — Move over bouquets and centerpieces. Flowers are taking over weddings in a big way. While wedding trends come and go, flowers will always have a place at the wedding

The blooms brides and grooms choose and how they decide to display them can say much about the couple's style.

Many modern couples are opting for statement pieces with their flowers to rival the big and bold ideas they're incorporating elsewhere into their occasions, such as in cakes and clothing.

In fact, floral designer Tom Uberuaga says traditional hurricane vase centerpieces are outdated and only focus the eye on the middle of the table.

He prefers guests enter the wedding and have their senses stimulated by flowers from all angles.

Large flower installations, as well as blooms popping up in unexpected places, are some of the hot trends for couples to keep their eves on.

### **FLORAL CHANDELIERS**

There's no need to worry about seeing over table centerpieces or flowers getting in the way of photo mo-

Thanks to hanging flowers and floral chandeliers, flowers are quite literally moving up in the world. Hanging floral pieces can add instant drama and make a large visual impact.

Florists can hang flowers from beams over tabletops to increase visual impact, whether as individual baskets, single stems or floral swags.

Hanging floral chandeliers are dramatic but naturally expensive.

Think about a large installation that forces guests to look up into a sea of greenery and flowers. The smell and the sight can be breathtaking.

#### **WELCOME WREATHS**

Why should wreaths only be reserved for front doors and holiday decor?

A welcome floral wreath

can be placed by the entryway to a chapel or reception hall with a heartfelt sentiment that shows guests how much they're appreciated. SEE FLOWERS, PAGE 27



### **FLOWERS:** Make your big day pop with the perfect arrangement

FROM PAGE 26

### **FAIRY-TALE FLOWERS**

A floral curtain of hanging flowers can line a chuppah or drape the altar in beautiful blooms.

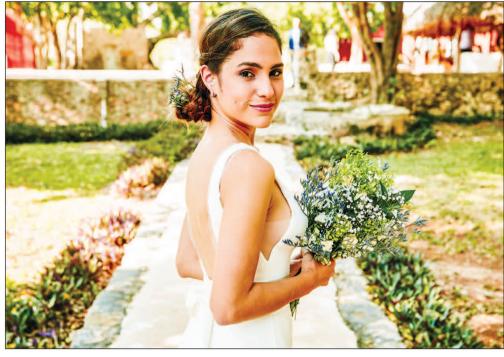
Couples who would like a fairy-tale entrance also can make their debut as a couple by coming through a flower curtain at the reception. Martha Stewart Weddings says a cascade of flowers and greens can be romantic and elegant.

### **DANCE FLOOR BLOOMS**

Who says flowers have to be overhead or on a table? With a plexiglass dance floor, or one made from some other transparent material, flowers can be underfoot, creating a magical floral carpet.

#### **FLORAL NECKLACES**

Brides needn't carry their bouquets, they can wear



ethereal and whimsical floral pieces around their necks or on their waists instead. Couples are urged to speak with their florists about the innovative ways they can make flowers an even more aweinspiring component of their weddings.







# Various ways to preserve wedding memories

(MS) — Couples' wedding days are momentous occasions, and couples want their memories of the day they tied the knot to endure long after the final guest has departed.

Weddings can be amazing, but they only last a few hours. Memories can be forever if they are effectively documented.

The following are some ways for couples to permanently memorialize their wedding days.

### **DRY THE BOUQUET**

Wedding bouquets can be freeze-dried and/or chemically preserved so that the

Weddings can be amazing, but they only last a few hours. Memories can be forever if they are effectively documented.

colors, textures and the volume of the blooms can appear just as vibrant as they were on couples' wedding days.

After preservation, the bouquet can be displayed in a vase or in a specially prepared shadow box with other mementos.

#### **CREATE A CUSTOM LOCKET**

Brides can wear a piece of their wedding gown day after day with a custom necklace or locket.

All they need to do is trim a small piece of the lace or other embellishment from the gown and enclose it in the

Jewelry designers also may be able to convert a section of the gown pattern into metal through a casting process.

### HAVE GUESTS SIGN THE LABEL

Purchase a special bottle of wine or champagne and ask guests to sign the label or the

bottle itself. Store the bottle until a special occasion, such as a memorable anniversary, and then toast to a happy marriage.

### **MAKE A CAKE REPLICA**

Ask an artist to make a miniature replica of the wedding cake out of pottery.

Put the clay cake out for display or ask for it to be made small enough to serve as a Christmas tree ornament.

### **TEDDY BEAR TRANSFORMATION**

Have tuxedo fabric or wedding gown material turned into a keepsake teddy bear.

SEE MEMORIES, PAGE 29

# **MEMORIES:** How to preserve precious moments

#### FROM PAGE 28

Bowman Bears produces such bears, which can be passed down to future generations.

### **CREATE BOUOUET JEWELRY**

Encapsulate favorite wedding flowers into a resin pendant, bracelet or earrings.

#### FRAME THE INVITATION

Display the wedding invitation in a beautiful frame with custom matting. This can be an inviting way to remember.

#### **REVISIT THE SITE**

On their anniversaries, couples can visit their ceremony site or have brunch or dinner at the venue where the reception took place. Take an "after" picture to

display with the "before" shot from the wedding day.

### MAKE AN INVITATION ORNAMENT

Cut the wedding invitation into strips and place it inside of a hollow glass ornament. Seal the top and hang with a ribbon.

### DESIGN A GREETING CARD SCRAPBOOK

Turn all of those special handwritten messages and well-wishes into a scrapbook so that memories can be revisited time and again.

The planning may take months and the wedding might only amount to mere hours, but well-documented wedding day memories can last a lifetime and be passed down through generations.



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# 'Thank you' card etiquette

(MS) — Receiving wedding gifts is an added joy of getting married. Writing thankyou notes for each of these gifts, however, can be a challenge. This is especially true if you receive a large number of gifts. Not to worry, with this simple guide, your thank-yous will be thoughtfully written and in the mail in no time.

#### **WHO TO THANK**

Everyone who has given you a gift should receive your thanks. Be sure to add anyone who helped in planning, organizing, and decorating or ran errands on your behalf.

Your wedding would not have been what it was without help.

Start by making a list. This will ensure you don't forget anyone and makes it easy to cross off each name as cards are written.



### WHEN TO SEND

For every gift you receive before your big day, you have a couple of weeks to post a thank you note.

For every gift received at or after your wedding, you generally have a few months. This is not to say you should wait until the end of this etiquette deadline. Try to send your thankyou notes out as quickly as possible — ideally within the first few weeks after you return from your honeymoon

### **WHAT TO SAY**

As a culture, we have always struggled with the best way to say, "thank you."

The best way to pen a mass quantity of thank-you notes is to stick with a simple formula, with a touch of personalization.

Start with a simple greeting. Next, mention the gift by name and add a personal detail. This could be how you plan on using or displaying the gift. If the person has given money, describe how you plan to spend it.

Follow up this sentence by stating when you hope to see the person again, what the person means to you, or just that you're thinking of her. Finally, end with your regards.

### **MAKING IT FUN**

You can relieve much of your anxiety about the task by making the experience an enjoyable one.

Start off by stocking up on some beautiful stationery.

Thank-you cards are items vou will need again and again.









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