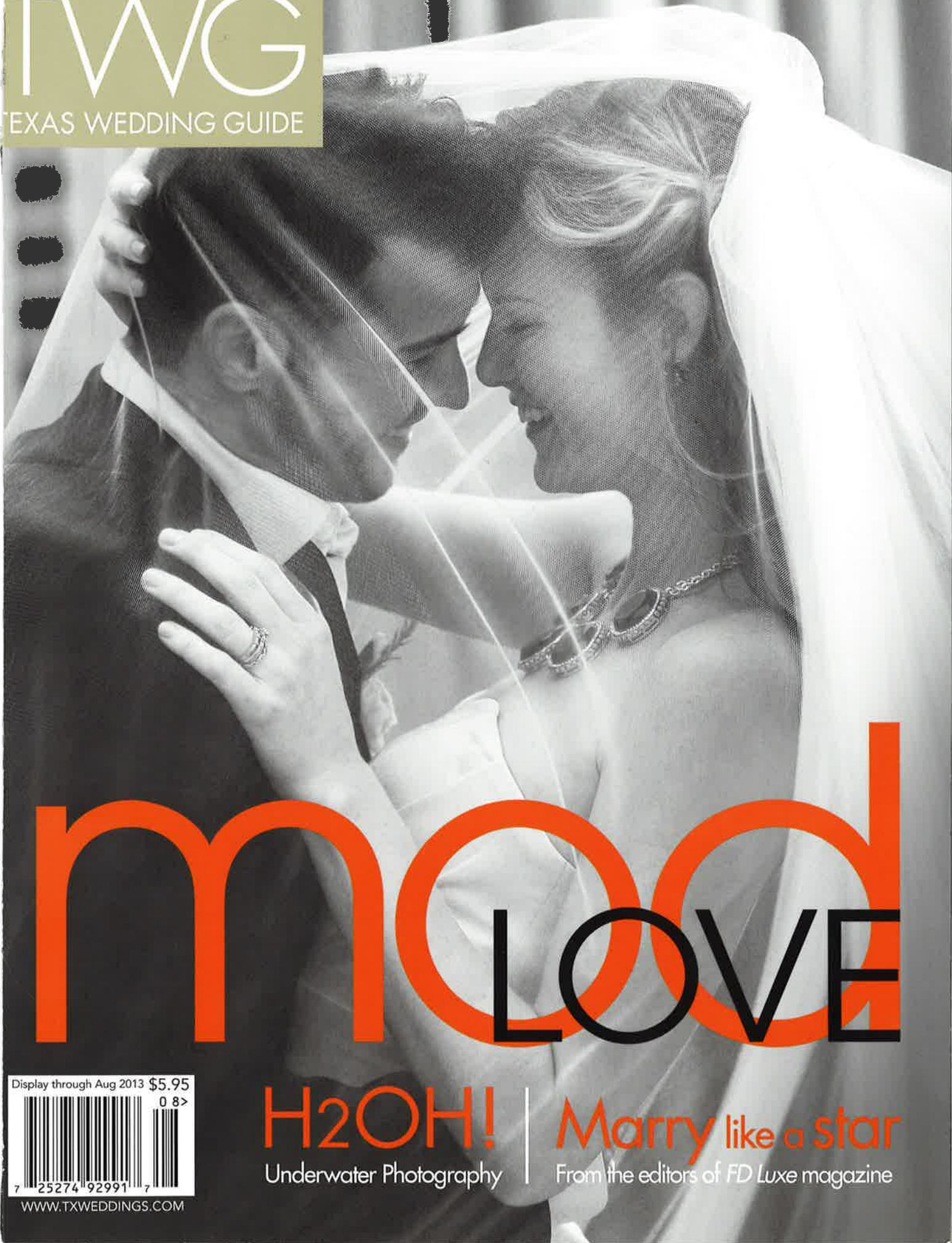


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From the editors of *FD Luxe* magazine

Ask^{the} EXPERTS

We're not planning on having dancing at the reception. What else can we do to liven up our reception?

We'd recommend having some sort of dinner music playing in the background, whether it is performed live, from an iTunes playlist or an in-person disc jockey. A photo booth is always a hit! If your reception is outdoors, have some games stationed in various places around the venue.

*– Randy Roberson,
Randy Ro Entertainment*



I've heard it's best for the bride and groom not to drink at the rehearsal dinner. Is this true and why?

It's okay to have one drink, but don't overdo it. You don't want to feel and look hungover on your wedding day! Too much alcohol can cause baggy eyes. Drink lots of water to hydrate before the wedding so your skin looks flawless and there is no puffiness.

– Lisa Pritchett, *Lilium Floral Design*

How much direction should you offer to those giving toasts, and what's an appropriate time limit?

We suggest offering a few guidelines with a reminder not to say anything inappropriate. Shorter toasts are better. One to two minutes is about right.

– Randy Roberson,
Randy Ro Entertainment

I love pastels but want to have a winter wedding. Is there a way to make my palette look less springy?

Color can be a refreshing thing in the gray days of winter. What makes pastels look "springy" is the color combinations people tend to use with them. To cool down those tones, try using the pastel colors more as accent colors to add a little life to more seasonal hues.

– Jenna Heilman, *events and membership director, Cypress Club at The Reserve at Lake Travis*

Are we supposed to seat our guests next to close friends or with guests they may not know?

It can go either way, but think about their personalities. You don't want an entire table of quiet people; you need someone who can and will break the ice in conversation.

— Lisa Pritchett, *Lilium Floral Design*

Is it customary to invite vendors and their staff to eat at the wedding?

Yes, feed the vendors at the reception. You can do this one of two ways: Let vendors eat the same food as the reception guests and increase your guest count, or arrange a special area for vendors with a different menu selection. If you go with the first option, communicate to the vendors that guests are served first.

— Jenna Heilman,
events and membership director,
Cypress Club at The Reserve at Lake Travis

We can't afford an open bar at our reception. Is it inappropriate for us to charge for drinks?

There are a few ways to handle bar options:

Simply offer a cash bar. Or, pay for beer and wine and offer cocktails on a cash basis.

You can also host a "specialty drink" and have the remainder of the bar be cash. Be sure to make that clear in your invitation, so your guests come prepared. Another option is to host the first hour of the bar and switch to a cash bar once the hour has passed.

— Brittany Ranson, complex catering manager,
Hotel Galvez & Spa

My fiancé and I love our dogs and think it would be fun to include them in our wedding. What are some tips for incorporating them into our ceremony?

Having dogs in the ceremony can be tricky, depending on how "well-trained" they are. If they are manageable, have a bridal party member or family member escort them down the aisle on a leash, dressed in a doggie bow tie/tux or dress. Or, they can greet guests at the entrance to the ceremony, again, escorted and leashed. Make sure the venue is pet friendly!

— Brittany Ranson, complex catering manager, *Hotel Galvez & Spa*

