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ASK THE EXPERTS

Q&A

BRIDES ASK TEXAS WEDDING EXPERTS FOR PLANNING ADVICE

Q: I really want to be the first to share photos of my wedding online. How do I stop guests taking pictures and posting them online before me?

A: I've had several brides come up to me telling me they don't want their guests posting anything online, at least not until they've had a chance to post their wedding photos first. I suggest adding a line in the program that says: "Please do not take photos at my wedding." There's not much you can do as far as stopping people if they're going to be sneaky. You just have to make it clear that you don't want any photos put out there.

Donnie Brown, Donnie Brown Weddings and Events

Q: My friend offered to design our invitations. How can I let her know that she doesn't have to buy us a present, too?

A: As a cake designer and decorator I have offered to do this for friends as their presents. If she hasn't mentioned that this would be your present, you can mention to her that it would be wonderful to have her do the invitations and that you will only let her do it if she considers that her gift to you.

*Heidi Allison,
Sugar Bee Sweets Bakery*

Q: I want a formal wedding, but the ceremony is in the early afternoon. Will tuxes look out of place?

A: If you want a formal event, make sure it is formal from the beginning. Starting with invitations, menu, venues, vendors, etc. That way, it won't seem out of place for tuxedos mid-day.

*Jenna Heilman,
The Reserve at Lake Travis*

Q: When should I create my wedding website, and what should be on it?

A: You should create your wedding website before you send out your save-the-dates. It can include as much or as little as you would like, but the "must haves" are gift registry information, ceremony information (where and when), reception details (where, when, attire), hotel and/or transportation

accommodations (if offering any).

*Chelsea Rollert,
iLove Wedding & Event Design*

Q: Do I really need to hire a wedding planner?

A: Yes! A wedding planner will help in three critical areas. First, a planner will help you with the overall look and feel of your wedding and make sure your "brand" has continuity throughout. Second, the planner will help you hire the best and most dependable vendors. Finally, the planner will not only help take the stress out of your wedding day, they'll save you money! We always recommend hiring a wedding planner.

*Randy Ro,
Randy Ro Entertainment*

Q: I'm paying for my bridesmaids' hairdos. How do I handle a bridesmaid who insists on doing her own hair when I want a certain look, without seeming like a demanding bridezilla?

A: At the end of the day, it is your wedding and you are the boss! If it is really important to you that your bridesmaids all have a similar look to their hairstyles, make sure your bridesmaids know that if they do not want to use your hired hairstylist, they should follow the parameters of the look you want. Be clear and straightforward without being grumpy. My honest advice is that at the end of the



Q: Are favors really necessary? I can't think of anything meaningful, so I might skip them.

A: Personally, I think the traditional favors are a waste of money because eventually they will find themselves in the trash. So when you choose your favors be sure you would keep it yourself if it wasn't your wedding. Very few people will throw away a photo of themselves, so I am loving the trend of a photo booth at the reception. You knock out a wedding favor and add a fun activity your guests can do when they are taking a break from the dance floor.

*Amy Herfurth,
Amy Herfurth Photography*

Q: One of my bridesmaids can't afford the dress I picked out. What should I do?

A: After the dress, shoes, hair, makeup, wedding gift, hotel, showers, bachelorette parties, etc., the cost of being in someone's wedding can be astronomical. So, one thing you can do is keep all of the costs in mind and pick something to purchase for them as a gift, like the dress.

*Jenna Heilman,
The Reserve at Lake Travis*

Q: What is the best kind of flower one can use to fill up a space and to make it look like you have more flowers than you actually do for your wedding, yet without it screaming "cheap"?

A: I would say the best flower to give bulk or fill space is the hydrangea. It is not as expensive as some of the other flowers but it can be designed with other stems to give a more expensive look.

*Lisa Pritchett,
Lilium Florals*

day nobody (except for maybe some single men) will pay much attention to your bridesmaids' hairstyles anyway! You will not be thinking about your bridesmaid's hair

once you see all of your guests. Pick and choose your battles when it comes to your wedding.

*Leslie Aldred Lambert,
Rancho Mirando*

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ASK THE EXPERTS

Q&A

BRIDES ASK TEXAS WEDDING EXPERTS FOR ADVICE

Q: My fiancé and I would like to host a reception that is more in line with our personalities. Meaning, we want to make it a little less formal with no assigned seats. Is this an invitation for disaster?

A: No way! If you prefer open seating, then go for it! Escort cards can be a great tool to help keep the reception organized and curb guests from asking others to shuffle seats, but it is not the end-of-the-world — and your reception will still be great — if you choose not to use them.

Chelsea Rollert, iLove Wedding & Event Design

Q: What is basic etiquette every bride and groom should know when it comes to the rehearsal, ceremony, reception, etc.?

A: Take time to thank everyone for coming to your event. Give a special shout-out to those guests who have traveled a distance to be with you. It is important to show your gratitude to everyone who has helped make your day possible, including parents, in-laws and even your staff. Most of your guests will remember how gracious you were as a bride, not what flowers were in your centerpieces. Don't let small things get in the way of the bigger picture: this is a celebration! Enjoy the

time with your friends and family while you can. The day goes by fast!

*Leslie Aldred Lambert,
Rancho Mirando*

Q: How much time should I allot for photographs after the ceremony, and what should I do to keep my guests entertained between the ceremony and reception?

A: I always try to allot one hour for photographs between the ceremony and reception. To entertain the guests during this time, have a cocktail/appetizer hour where guests can have drinks and small snacks and be able to mix and mingle.

*Chelsea Rollert,
iLove Wedding &
Event Design*

Q: My friend had a really obnoxious DJ at her wedding. How can I avoid that?

A: I always recommend that you preview the DJ prior to hiring them. It is great to see them in action.

*Jessica Cates,
The Adolphus*

Q: My fiancé's parents are laid back and can only afford a barbeque in their backyard for our rehearsal dinner. I'm pleased, but my parents are not and are almost insistent to book and pay for a rehearsal dinner at a restaurant/venue of my choice. His parents will be offended. How should I approach this with my parents?

A: Traditionally, the groom's parents are



PHOTO BY CINDY AND SAYLOR PHOTOGRAPHY

the ones who host and pay for the rehearsal dinner. Be honest with your parents and let them know that his parents really want to contribute and plan the rehearsal dinner.

*Jenna Heilman,
The Reserve at Lake Travis*

Q: If someone spills wine or a beverage or drops food on my wedding dress, what should I do and have on hand to remove it?

A: Talcum powder and club soda can be lifesavers when you get a stain on your dress the day of your wedding! For most stains, try placing talcum powder all over the spot, let it sit for several minutes, and then shake or scrape the excess powder off. For wine spills, try

patting the stain first, then use club soda with a white washcloth to remove the excess. Whatever you do, do NOT rub a stain. Instead, pat and dab the stain away!

*Leslie Aldred Lambert,
Rancho Mirando*

Q: I've heard the horror stories where the couple never gets to sit down to eat their meal at the reception. How do I avoid this, but still make sure my guests don't feel slighted or neglected?

A: As a recent bride myself, I can now completely understand this one. I didn't eat a bite at my wedding, but honestly, I didn't want to. With all the excitement, you may not even be hungry, which is totally okay.

A plated dinner will help designate a time that all guests will be seated together to dine, hopefully giving yourself this time to eat as well. However, for a buffet-style meal, I might recommend having a designated person prepare your plates, and sit down immediately to eat (time won't free up later). I think sometimes we worry too much about the guests "feelings," but honestly I've never heard a guest complain that the bride and groom didn't spend enough time with them. They know you're busy and they're excited to share your day with you. Best alternative plan: Have an extra large pizza waiting for you in your hotel room at the end of the night.

*Jessica Smith,
Magnolia Hotel - Dallas*

Q: Do you recommend having an open mic at a reception or rehearsal dinner?

A: Open mic is always a great idea at the rehearsal dinner. At the reception it might take up too much time.

*Jessica Cates,
The Adolphus*

Q: I'm having a destination wedding. How much do I pay for when it comes to my bridal party? How do I deal with guests who wanted to attend, but couldn't afford to or get the time off?

A: Although most bridesmaids and groomsmen will expect to pay their way for a destination wedding, it is a kind gesture to pay for their hotel rooms if you do have the ability to do so in your budget. If there is no



PHOTO BY JOSH RODRIGUEZ

room in your budget to pay for their lodging, let your bridal party know that you consider their presence to be your gift. For guests who couldn't afford the travel expenses or time off,

consider having a smaller reception close to home for those who missed your out-of-town affair.

*Leslie Aldred Lambert,
Rancho Mirando*

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