

IDEAS BOUTIQUE

INSPIRATION & WEDMIN

KNOW-HOW

Your round-up of the latest trends and can't-miss tips



SWEET TREAT



CALLIGRAPHY



FAVOUR



WOW-FACTOR WAYS TO SET THE TABLE

Rated!

"We just got engaged and haven't decided on much, but I'd love to do something creative with the tables and place settings. Any suggestions?"

BRIDE-TO-BE SAMANTHA HARRIS

WORDS BY JULIA SCIRROTTO, ILLUSTRATIONS BY TELEGRAMME/CENTRALILLUSTRATION.COM, PHOTOGRAPHS BY (MAIN IMAGE) KATHRYN MCCRARY PHOTOGRAPHY AT KATHRYNMCCRARY.COM, (TOP LEFT) SUNSHINE PHOTOGRAPHY (AND STYLING BY CHARLOTTE MUNRO), (BOTTOM LEFT) ANOUSCHKA ROKEBRAND, CALLIGRAPHY MENU, FROM A SELECTION, CALLIGRAPHY BY CLAIRE GOULD AT ETSY, PHOTOGRAPHED BY MELISSA BEATTIE AND STYLED BY EMMA AT TEBBEY & CO. FOR STOCKISTS SEE YOUANDYOURWEDDING.CO.UK

2 MINUTES WITH... *The Wedding Fairy, George Watts*



WHAT DOES A WEDDING FAIRY DO?

Aside from planning weddings, I also offer wedding parties for couples looking to get the experience of a wedding planner at a fraction of the price.

Basically, we plan out the entire wedding in three hours. It's so much fun, with a few slices of cake and a glass or two of bubbles thrown in to really get the party started! I am also obsessed with the W word and am always sharing my finds via social media.

WE HEAR YOU'VE LAUNCHED A GIFT LIST SERVICE...

Theweddingfairygiftlist.com is the UK's first combination list that can be spent anywhere online; book the honeymoon, buy a few bits for the house – even pay your suppliers' bills. You can also bank money on your wedding gift card to spend at a later date, avoiding that awkward issue of asking your guests for money directly.

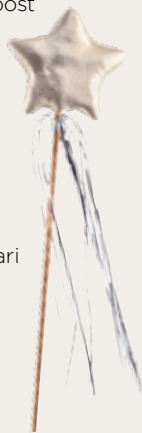
IN YOUR VIEW, WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT ETIQUETTE RULE?

Greeting your guests on arrival. It doesn't need to be a formal line up, but post ceremony you need to ensure you have personally welcomed everyone to the wedding. It makes everyone feel welcome and ready to party.

WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE SEEN AT A WEDDING?

Giraffes! A wedding set in a safari park is definitely a story for the grandkids and makes for some pretty unforgettable snaps!

Follow George on Twitter @weddingfairyuk or visit theweddingfairy.tv



51% of men play no part in the wedding planning. (Time to start delegating?)*

MEET MY MAIDS

Kirsty Tither chose vintage silhouettes for her cousins Bryony and Chloé

HOW I CHOSE THEM

I always hoped to have family by my side on the big day. I had been a flower girl when Bryony and Chloé's mothers got married back in the '80s, so it seemed perfect that I ask them to be my right-hand ladies.

WHAT THEY WORE

I wanted their dresses to have a relaxed, easy-to-wear feel (we were in a barn at a brewery!). We fancied them up with little belts at the waist that the girls picked themselves. The dresses matched the aqua petticoat I was wearing – which was a surprise to them on the day.

HOW THEY HELPED

They were wonderfully calming influences as they breezed through the venue, mastering the art of messy bun hairstyles and supplying me with a glass



or two of champagne while I was getting ready. They set up a beautiful sweet table at the venue and made sure that Philip (the groom) was coping OK and had attached his buttonhole correctly. They also whipped up a storm on the dance floor, which every good bridesmaid should be able to do!

EXTRA CREDIT

I have to thank them for wearing the shoes we ordered for them, because they were ridiculously high!

Photograph by mybeautifulbride.co.uk



TREND WATCH *Selfie slide shows*

WHAT A big-screen display of your guests' photos, sharing all the reception action as it happens.

HOW An app that collates everyone's snaps, then streams a live feed for projecting. Manage the slide show yourself, or have a pro come to run it.

WHY Because, as much as we all love disposable cameras on wedding tables, it's time to get digital. Pics are shareable on the day, and you still get to keep them all afterwards.

WHO jauntytwig.com/weddings



INSTAGRAM INSPIRATION

Four accounts to follow

- 1 **knotandpop** A wedding planner's photo diary – inspiration galore.
- 2 **joannetrubyfloraldesign** Uplifting floral ideas to put a smile on your face.
- 3 **pinksugarworks** Super-sweet cakes, and biscuits on sticks in perfect pastels.
- 4 **annelimarinovich** Beautiful brides and romantic couple shots from this London-based wedding photographer.

PRENUPS GO MAINSTREAM

"People are getting married later in life, with more assets," says Marwi Hadi, a family solicitor at Rawlison Butler LLP. "We're also seeing an increase in women instructing us to draw up prenups, as they are often the main breadwinner now."

ETIQUETTE 999

Q WHAT ARE THE RULES WHEN IT COMES TO BEING WALKED DOWN THE AISLE? DOES MY DAD HAVE TO DO IT?

A As we say on the spine of every issue, it's your day, your way. So whether you want to be accompanied by your dad, a dachshund or no one at all, it's your choice. A popular option these days is to have both your mum and dad join you, one on each arm. When the bride's father has passed away or isn't in the picture, we've seen mother and daughter take to the aisle together, and stepdads frequently do the honours, too. In perhaps the most heart-warming display of togetherness we can remember, a bride and groom who had both lost their dads walked into the ceremony arm-in-arm – a team from beginning to end. There's no wrong way so long as it feels right for you – just be sure to inform all the relevant parties with plenty of notice to avoid any misunderstandings.

TRADITION V TWIST Guest books vs wooden keepsakes



DO IT!

For heartfelt guest messages with a new spin, we're wild about The Wedding Tree's personalised oak creations. Friends and family sign wooden hearts or Jenga-style pieces instead of the classic paper guest book.

From £135, theweddingtree.co.uk

The average UK wedding has 92 guests.** How does yours measure up?



YOUR BIG-DAY PLAYLIST

JAZZ, SOUL AND FUNK BAND, SE11 SESSIONS, SHARES ITS MUST-LIST

Down the aisle: *Let There Be Love* by Nat King Cole

Signing the register: *Too Marvelous For Words* by Ella Fitzgerald

Cocktail hour: *Fever* by Peggy Lee

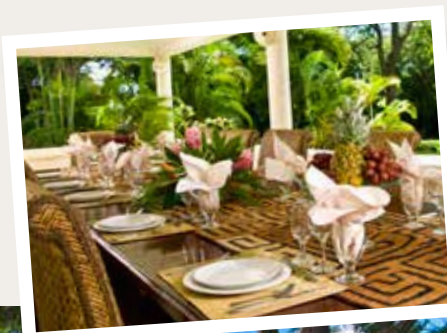
During dinner: *My Funny Valentine* by Frank Sinatra

Last song: *Sweet Life* by Frank Ocean

Visit facebook.com/SE11Sessions

IT'S TRUE PUPPY LOVE!

Why not make a donation to homeless pups with Dogs Trust's alternative wedding favours? The cards make for super-cute table decorations, too! Contact fundraiseforus@dogstrust.org.uk



5 WAYS TO... rock a Caribbean wedding

Sarah Jane Gaselee, bridesmaid to Princess Diana and co-owner of the historic Bellevue Plantation in Barbados, shares her destination wedding secrets

1 THE TIMING The best month for a Caribbean wedding is May. It's the low season and most of the hotel rates have dropped, but the weather is usually good, with less rain. Schedule a beach wedding late afternoon (about 4pm), when the sun is going down.

2 THE FLOWERS Tropical flowers are in abundance and even the foliage comes in a range of hues. Orchids look glorious in bridal hair, and tuberose is popular in bouquets. Heart-shaped red anthuriums are a great choice for decorations.

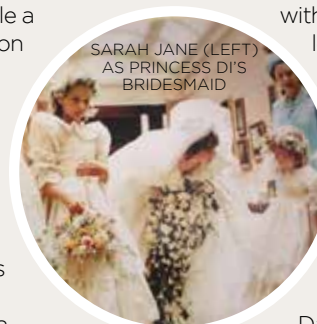
3 THE DRINKS Apart from champagne, of course, it's all about local rum-based cocktails. Our house rum punch is made

with lime juice, rum, syrup, a sprinkle of nutmeg and a secret ingredient...

4 THE CAKE The Bajans love black cake – a form of fruit cake but without the fruit! Instead, there's lots of rum and spices – it's dark, rich and heavenly.

5 THE PARTY One of the joys of a tropical wedding is the opportunity for fun with a difference. On Barbados, a troupe of professional Bajan dancers – usually from the African Dance Theatre – can put on an exuberant dance show. Particularly exciting are the fire-eaters and limbo dancers as the lowering pole is fire-lit!

Visit bellevuebarbados.com



SARAH JANE (LEFT) AS PRINCESS DI'S BRIDESMAID

BRIDELINE

— WHAT TO DO WHEN —

A cut-out-and-keep guide to getting from “I will” to “I do” – whatever your engagement timeline

START WITH THE BIG THREE

THE BUDGET

- Who's contributing and what are they paying for?
- Draw up a guest list to estimate cost per head

THE VENUE

- Ask yourself: civil ceremony or religious? And city, country or abroad?
- Choose a season and secure a date

THE DRESS

- Made-to-order (which can take six months) or off-the-peg?
- Will it complement your venue and vibe?

Here comes THE FUN
Colour schemes, mood boards, photographers, bridesmaid dresses, flower ideas, stationery samples, cake tastings, music...



Make it LEGAL

You both need to give notice at your local register office at least 15 days before the ceremony. Specifics depend on where you are (outdoor weddings are allowed in Scotland, while in England and Wales you'll need a licensed structure) and different religions have different rules (think banns for Church of England and pre-marriage courses for Catholic). If you're looking for further information, the following resources will help:
gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships
yourchurchwedding.org
humanism.org.uk
gov.uk/marriage-abroad

WORK YOUR TIMELINE

GOT 18 MONTHS?

Slow and steady is key. Don't burn out in the first six weeks – it doesn't all have to happen *now* – and save the finer details for later so you're not sick of them by W-day.

GOT 12 MONTHS?

The most usual amount of time to give yourself. Check out our month-by-month guide at youandyourwedding.co.uk.

GOT SIX MONTHS?

Plenty of time to plan a glorious day but you may need to be flexible on suppliers as they can book up far in advance. And don't overcommit on DIYs and end up in last-minute panic mode.

The final COUNTDOWN

Don't forget these essentials...

ORDER THANK YOU CARDS WHEN YOU CHOOSE YOUR INVITES

FINALISE FLOWER AND MENU SELECTIONS WITH THREE MONTHS TO GO

SEND INVITATIONS EIGHT TO 12 WEEKS BEFORE THE DAY (OR EARLIER, DEPENDING ON WHEN YOUR VENUE NEEDS FINAL NUMBERS)

RECONFIRM ALL BOOKINGS WITH TWO MONTHS TO GO

CHASE RSVPS AND FINALISE SEATING PLAN WITH ONE MONTH TO GO

ARRANGE GIFTS FOR BRIDESMAIDS, MOTHER-OF-THE-BRIDE AND GROOM

WITH ONE WEEK TO GO, CHECK IN WITH SUPPLIERS ON ARRIVAL TIMES/LOGISTICS

MAKE FINAL PAYMENTS AND TRACK THEM ON A SPREADSHEET

REMIND BRIDAL PARTY OF ON-THE-DAY DUTIES (I.E. BRINGING THE RINGS)

SEND READINGS TO SPEAKERS (AND BRING EXTRA COPIES ON THE DAY)



YOUR BUDGET: *The ceremony*

Make aisle magic with pro tips for the heart of your event



Where to spend...

- “Costs vary depending on the location and style, but allocate approximately 5-10% of your budget for the ceremony,” advises planner Kelly Chandler of The Bespoke Wedding Company, who styled the stunning aisle set-up pictured here.

- Book a gospel choir. “So atmospheric and a great way to incorporate a guest singalong, too,” says Kelly.

- Go bespoke on an order of service booklet with intricate laser-cutting, super-luxe card, custom illustrations or elaborate materials like mirror or leather.

- “I’m a big fan of aisle runners or thick lush carpets, like the one used in the White Drawing Room at Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire (above),” says Kelly. They help to add the sense of occasion to a civil ceremony.

- Don’t forget the flowers! “They can transform any space and make it that certain kind of special that’s needed at a wedding,” Kelly insists. At this shoot, for instance, voluminous blooms by JF Flowers created a focal point displayed on a sequin tablecloth by Pudding Bridge.

Ways to save...

- Choose one location for the ceremony and reception. “You can reuse elements more easily and cheaply,” says Kelly. Ceremony flowers can later flank the top table, and decorated chairs can be positioned around the reception.

- Get to know your celebrant, because nothing will be more memorable than the personal touch. “Focus on the people and the vows, readings and music if budget is an issue,” Kelly says.

- Choose fewer musicians. Instead of a professional 12-person choir, try an elegant harpist – or get musical friends and family involved, Kelly suggests.

- Short on floral budget? Make the registrar’s table smaller. And cut back on confetti by allotting enough for half of the guests. “Men tend to be less keen anyway!” says Kelly.

- Go DIY on the order of service. “I’ve seen some lovely ones designed at home with the most amazing guest welcome note, story of how the couple met and description of readings and musical choices,” says Kelly.

HOW TO... *deliver vows that wow*

By celebrity wedding planner Sarah Haywood

1 Practise! Get used to hearing yourself say your own names out loud, then learn the rest of the marriage vows.

2 Keep your breathing under control. Take a full and deep breath

before speaking, form the words with the outgoing breath, and make sure you hear them.

3 Concentrate on the person you’re speaking to. You’re trying to convince your partner of what you’re saying. Putting the focus outside yourself will help you to be less self-conscious.

4 Try not to stand with your backs to the guests. Turn to the side and open yourselves out so that the congregation are part of the experience.

5 Smile! Our expressions affect the sound of our voice; when we smile we are more vibrant and alive.

Sarah Haywood’s Wedding Bible (£40, Accent Press) is out now

