

SPRING 2016

AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
**WEDDING
PLANNING**

Newbury Weekly News





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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO WEDDING PLANNING

WELCOME to the first edition of *The Essential Guide to Wedding Planning*.

This guide has brought together information that we hope will be both interesting and of practical use at an exciting time.

There is so much to think about, from the dress to the venue, transport, photographer, food, entertainment, invitations and, of course, who to invite.

It should be a fun time and with careful planning and preparation shouldn't be too stressful.

This essential guide has a few ideas on unusual ways of getting to the venue, cakes, fashion and advice on what you have to do by law in order to get married. And last but not least a few honeymoon destinations



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LEGAL BITS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

YOU can get married or form a civil partnership in the UK if you're 16 or over, free to marry or form a civil partnership (single, divorced or widowed) or not closely related.

You need permission from your parents or guardians if you're under 18 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Only same sex couples can form a civil partnership.

There are usually two steps to getting married or forming a civil partnership in England and Wales.

1. Give notice at your local register office.
2. Have a religious ceremony or civil ceremony at least 28 days after giving notice.

GETTING MARRIED OR FORMING A CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ABROAD

Find out about who to contact and which documents you may need to get from the UK authorities if you want to get married or form a civil partnership abroad.

Your overseas marriage or civil partnership will be recognised in the UK if you follow the correct process according to local law.

GIVING NOTICE AT YOUR LOCAL REGISTER OFFICE

For most marriages or civil partnerships you must give at least 28 full days' notice.

You need to include details of where you intend to get married or form a civil partnership.

The register office will publicly display your notice for 28 days.

You may also need to give notice here if you plan to marry or form a civil partnership abroad.

You can only give notice at a register office if you have lived in the registration district for at least the past seven days.

If you've been divorced or widowed or if you've been married or in a civil partnership before, you need to take either a decree absolute or final order, or the death certificate of your former partner



RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

A religious wedding can take place at a church, chapel or other registered religious building.

Religious blessing can take place after a civil ceremony in a register office.

You can't get married in an Anglican Church as a same sex couple.

You can get married in other religious buildings if the religious organisation allows the marriage of same sex couples to take place and the premises has been registered for the marriage of same sex couples

ANGLICAN MARRIAGES

You don't usually need to give notice with the register office if you're getting married in an Anglican church and both you and your partner are British citizens, from the European Economic Area or Switzerland.

Officials performing Anglican marriages will register your marriage.

JEWISH AND QUAKER MARRIAGES

You need to give notice with the register office at least 28 days before the ceremony. Officials performing Jewish or Quaker marriages will register marriages.

MARRIAGES IN ALL OTHER RELIGIONS

You need to give notice with the register office at least 28 days before the ceremony.

Authorised officials, including ministers and priests of other religions, can register marriages.

Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies

VOWS

You must exchange some formal wording if you're getting married.

Discuss any other wording you want in the ceremony with the person conducting it.

You don't need to exchange vows for a civil partnership, but you can do so if you wish.

Civil ceremonies can include readings, songs or music, but must not include anything that's religious, eg hymns or readings from the Bible.

You'll need to have at least two witnesses at the ceremony.

SIGNING THE REGISTER

You, your partner and your two witnesses must sign the marriage register or civil partnership document.

COST OF REGISTERING A MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

You have to pay a fee to register a UK marriage or civil partnership – different fees may apply abroad.

This is £46 if you have the ceremony at a register office, but may be more at other venues. Ask the registrar or religious minister for details.

The marriage or civil partnership certificate costs £4 on the day of the event or £10 after. You may need a copy to prove your marital status in the future.

VENUES

You can have a civil ceremony or civil partnership at a register office, any venue approved by the local council, eg a stately home or hotel, a religious premises where permission has been given by the organisation and the premises approved by the local authority

The Home Office has a list of all approved civil marriage and civil partnership venues.

www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships/overview



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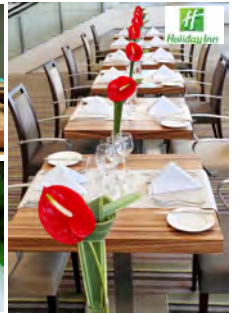
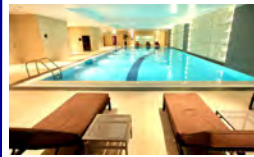
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HOW TO BUDGET FOR A DREAM WEDDING



THE average cost of a wedding is said to be in excess of £20,000 in the UK. And what's more, many brides expect to go over budget to get the wedding they want.

Here are five top tips about marriage and money compiled by independent finance experts:

1. STICK TO YOUR BUDGET, USE A SPREADSHEET AND KEEP IT REAL

You just need to pay a few hundred pounds to register your marriage and get a certificate.

Everything else is up to you.

Work out your budget, prioritise what's important and find opportunities to cut costs.

Don't be afraid of sale shopping or getting a few vintage items.

The day and the time of year can also make a difference in venue hire fees.

If you've got a friend who's a photographer or a star baker, go ahead and use them.

If you buy something at a jeweller, some will even be generous enough to lend you a tiara.

2. FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY IS THE BEDROCK OF ANY RELATIONSHIP

Once you're married, you become responsible for each other's financial behaviour.

If one of you runs up a debt or misses a payment in a joint account, then you become jointly liable.

Make sure you talk to each other, address any elephants in the room and know what you're getting into.

3. PRE-NUPS AREN'T FOR THE UBER-WEALTHY, THEY CAN BE FOR EVERYONE

The reality is that the average

marriage lasts about 11 years in the UK, according to the latest ONS report.

Of course, everyone hopes for the best, but it is prudent to be prepared just in case and a pre-nuptial agreement can be a good option for many people.

It's important to remember if you want a pre-nup to be upheld, you need to have it signed at



least four weeks before you get married – so make sure you get in touch with a lawyer two-three months in advance.

4. IF YOU'VE GOT CHILDREN FROM A PREVIOUS MARRIAGE, OR ARE GETTING REMARRIED, IT MAY BE WORTH CONSIDERING GETTING PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Large families can be great, but it may make your finances more complicated if you have financial obligations from a previous relationship.

For example, if you're a stepfather and get divorced, it may be worth seeking advice about whether you might still be financially responsible for your step-children.

Anybody with concerns may also find the Child Maintenance Service website a useful of guidance.

5. EVERY RELATIONSHIP WILL END EITHER THROUGH SEPARATION OR DEATH – PREPARE ACCORDINGLY AND GET YOUR WILL SORTED

Getting a will may be a bit of an investment now, but it is worth it in the long-term, especially if you have a family.

It doesn't need to be expensive but you should seek legal advice to ensure your wishes will be upheld.

If you're looking to cut costs, in November each year some solicitors will waive the will-writing fee in return for a small donation to charity.

Visit the Will Aid website

to find a participating solicitor near you.

6. SAVINGS

Currently for every £100 interest earned, basic rate taxpayers lose £20 in tax, higher rate £40.

From 6 April the new personal savings allowance (PSA) means every basic (20 per cent) rate taxpayer can earn £1,000 interest without paying tax on it, higher rate £500.

For most people, the new personal savings allowance means tax is now not an issue, so to maximise interest pour your cash where you earn most.

Once you know your budget, the aim's to work out how much you can actually afford to spend on different areas and prioritise what's important to YOU.

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Owners Jonathan and Jean set out to build not just a barn-style room, but to realise a dream to have their perfect wedding room.

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The Barn caters for parties of 50-80 daytime with 80-100 in the evening.

You can come along and check The Barn out any time, or if you want to have a serious tour round and discussion, please do call to make an appointment.

Owing to the popularity of The Barn, they only do 20 weddings a year, and only one in any week.

It is already booked for 2016 and 2017 is filling up fast. Pay The Barn a visit, where they look forward to welcoming you and to celebrating your special day.



Weddings

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REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF THEIR COMPANY

DEFINE YOUR WEDDING STYLE

The invitation reflects your wedding style. Browse wedding invitation photos and websites to gather inspiration.

KNOW YOUR COLOURS

Think about your wedding colours. While ivory, cream or white card stock paired with a black or gold font is the classic choice, you can also brighten your invites with colorful or metallic fonts, paper stock, envelopes and liners. Just keep readability in mind.

PLAY WITH THE SHAPE AND SIZE

Instead of traditional wedding invitations, look at circular, scalloped and square ones. However, veering away from the standard envelope size can increase the postage.

MAKE SURE THEY'RE LEGIBLE

As you consider colours and patterns, don't forget about the text. In general, avoid light ink on

light backgrounds and dark ink on dark backgrounds. Be wary of hard-to-read fonts like an overly scripted typeface.



CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY

Learn the rules to wording your invitation. Traditionally, whoever is hosting is listed first.

DON'T CROWD THE CARD

List only the key points on your invitation: ceremony time and location, the hosts, the couple's names and RSVP information. Leave things like directions to your wedding venue for your wedding website and/or print them on separate cards.

START EARLY

Aim to order your invitations

about four to five months before the date, so they're ready to post six to eight weeks before the wedding. Make the deadline to RSVP about three or four weeks after guests receive the invitations. The more time you give them to reply, the more likely they are to forget.

CONSIDER COSTS

Top-of-the-line papers, color ink, formal printing techniques and custom design will add to your costs. That's why it's important to research your options.

TRIPLE-CHECK THE PROOF

You'd be surprised at the things you may miss. Borrow a tip from copy editors and read the proof word for word from right to left so you don't accidentally gloss over any mistakes.

ORDER EXTRA

Order enough invitations for your guest list, plus 25 extra in case you want to put some aside as keepsakes or have a B-list.



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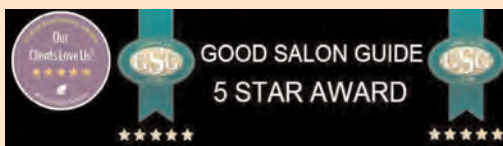
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HIS 'N' HERS - SOME FASHION IDEAS FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM

THE experience of shopping for a wedding gown can be stressful and highly emotional. This is the most important dress of your life, so here are some helpful hints.

Don't build the wedding around the dress

Is it a country church wedding with 50 guests? Or a more largescale affair in the heart of the city? Start with the kind of wedding it will be and work backwards to the dress.

Less is more with accessories

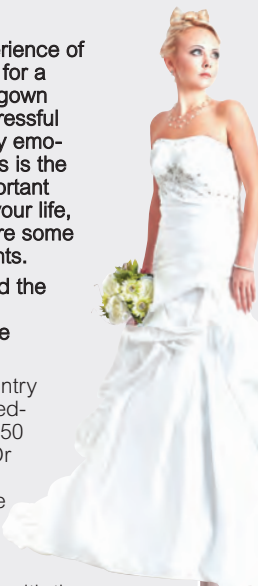
The dress will determine what to do with your hair and how much jewellery you need. Large earrings can dominate, and a hairstyle can be subtly improved with delicate adornments. Be careful of necklines and be mindful of how small, well-made jewellery can have a better effect.

Find out which designers do bridal really well

A wedding dress is the one occasion most women get to experience made-to-measure dress-making, and for that reason a ready-to-wear designer may have the kind of expertise needed.

Be realistic about what you can afford

If you have a small budget then you can't expect a top designer dress, unless of course, you get lucky on eBay or the charity shops. Auctions are another good place, especially for vintage or retro dresses. But there are many off high-quality off-the-rail dresses, which with slight alterations become personal to you. A good bridal



shop is the best starting point.

Get fittings as close to the wedding as possible

A made-to-measure dress has to be ordered four to five months in advance, so you need to allow that time. Don't try it on too much because you will probably lose weight before the wedding, so it's best not to start fittings until you are the size you want to be.



Listen to your heart

A wedding-dress maker or bridal specialist in a shop hones in on what the bride wants. Your sister, mum or aunty might have different ideas but it's your day and it's about what you want.

First question for the groom: formal or casual?

It is essential to discuss with your bride whether or not you are having a more formal wedding or a more casual wedding? Because this is how you could loosely bundle up the options for the groom.

Formal options include:

Morning suit: A traditional choice consisting of a tailcoat, waistcoat, and striped trousers. Morning suits should only be worn for noon or early-afternoon weddings.

Tuxedo: Classic black tie evening wear, complete with satin-striped trousers and bow

tie. Should be worn to evening weddings only. Avoid coloured dicky bows and cummerbunds.

White Tie and tails: The evening equivalent of the morning suit, white tie and tails is an extremely elegant choice for a formal evening wedding.

Are you even a suit and tie man?

Over the last few years the combination of tighter budgets, more informal workwear and an increasing interest in menswear and fashion, has meant that grooms' taste when choosing a wedding suit has changed significantly.

For many grooms now preparing to get married, the formal look has been replaced by a more informal, laid back look.

Casual Suit/Jacket: A linen or cotton suit makes a casual and very comfortable wedding outfit for the summer groom; in



winter a wool jacket and trousers. Either can be accessorised with a great bow-tie to make a groom stand out in a fun and relaxed way.



Modern day suit: Simple, elegant, preferably slim-fit two-piece suit and easily accessorised with a fun colourful tie to coordinate with the bridal party.

Slim cut three-piece suit: This is a fun alternative for a man who wants a touch of formality and yet look modern and fresh. Smart choice of cufflinks and tie are essential, while a pocket watch would add a retro/vintage feel.

Waistcoat and bowtie/tie: Relaxed and informal look for a

groom, but, with the unpredictable weather, really only suitable for a summer wedding. Probably best to buy a jacket to fall back on just in case.



Or Are You Mr. Fashion Forward?

If you're a complete maverick and have your own very individual style you could go wild and have as much fun as the bride fashion-wise.

Think colour, personality and individual accessories.



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THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

MAGICIANS

Let's be honest, who doesn't love a magician? Easy to organise and with plenty of bang for their buck, ask your magician to do the rounds mid-meal to entertain your diners.

PAPARAZZI

A more quirky idea is to hire faux-paparazzi to show up at your wedding. Providing laughs and photographic gems for your wedding album, what's not to love?

PALM READER

Add a touch of the supernatural to your reception, and put Mystic Meg's name on your guest list. Organising a palm reader to wander round the tables mid-course is a great way to fill a sometimes-awkward gap.



FLASH MOBS

There's no better way to make your friends and families' jaws hit the floor. From cabaret dancers to a band of animals, the wilder the better.

PETTING ZOO

In the world of unusual wedding entertainment, anything is possible. If you're getting hitched on a country farm, head outside with little guests to visit the venue's resident animals. Mobile petting zoos are even available, so you can bring the farmyard to you.

with the catering staff, it'll bring out the competitive nature in your friends.

SURPRISE FIRST DANCE

We've all seen the YouTube videos.

Or maybe reptiles is your thing – snakes and crocs mingling with the guests could make for some interesting photos.

DANCE OFF

There comes a time when things can only be solved with a good old-fashioned dance off. You know the rules: men on one side, ladies on the other, and anything goes. Let the DJ decide the prizes for best and worst moves.

PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

Not just one for the children, create a photo scavenger hunt for your guests to complete throughout the course of the day. From snapping a picture of planting a kiss on the groom's cheek to selfies



Learning a secret dance routine with your partner to perform at your reception will affirm your eternal places in the wedding hall of fame.

CARICATURES

Give your guests a seriously personalised favour in the form of a caricature. Even better, the doodle of you and your new hubby can claim a place on

your kitchen wall. Or you can hire a silhouette artist to create portraits of you and your guests during the celebrations.

MRS AND MRS CONTEST

How well do you really know your groom? From the easy ones like shoe size and how he likes his tea to the trickier topics of first pet and A-level subjects – you might even learn something new. Rope in your best man to host the quiz, but keep it short.



RSVP A FLOORFILLER

Simple but oh-so-effective, ask guests to jot down their must-have party song on their RSVP note, and hey presto, a ready-made playlist is yours.

CELEBRITY IMPERSONATOR

If David Beckham didn't respond to your invitation, there is another way to have a star-studded wedding: hire a lookalike. Great photo opportunities.

SERENADING BAND

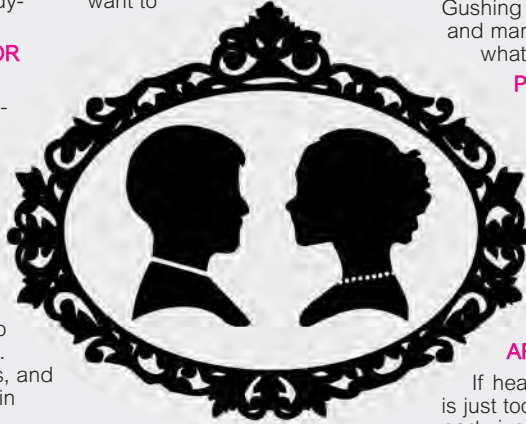
The best types of serenading bands are the ones who make up songs on the spot. Give them a couple of facts, and they'll make up a song within seconds.

SINGING WAITERS

A fun way to liven up your dinner and, to make sure you get a reaction, keep it a secret from your guests until they suddenly burst into song.

VODKA LUGE

Strictly for the adults, an ice vodka luge will certainly spice up your night. If you want to



really go all-out, stock up on flavoured spirits that reflect your theme or colour scheme.

TAKEAWAY VAN

As the party gets into full swing there is no more welcome a sight than a takeaway van. Hiring a

burger or fish 'n' chips van for when you're the other side of midnight will go down a treat.

CHOCOLATE FOUNTAIN

Gushing chocolate and fruity and marshmallow dips – what's not to like?

PHOTO BOOTH

Silly hats and wigs and a host of other disguises, everyone from granny to the over-excited youngsters can get in on the act. And they definitely create a display for the album.

AFTER PARTY

If heading home at midnight is just too early, or your bridal party just love a good night out, arrange an after party. Book a minibus to transport your most hardcore guests to a bar or club – book a VIP area if you're feeling extra generous.

Whatever you do, have fun.

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GET ME TO THE CHURCH ON TIME...

IF you want to make an entrance at your wedding, that guests will remember, there are plenty of options available.

Here are just a few ideas, from the eco-friendly and economic good old walking to the top-of-the-scale arrival by helicopter.

BIKE

Vintage brides will love a vintage bicycle for this big day – they make a fun prop for your wedding photos or you could actually ride one to the venue. Just make sure the journey's not uphill.

WALK

This is the ultimate eco-friendly way to arrive at your ceremony. If you live close to the venue, or there's a picturesque approach, why not make the most of it and walk there with your dad and bridesmaids?

BUS

This one is a great wedding transportation idea for the groom.

If he needs to calm his nerves, then his best friends can all hop on, making the journey more comfortable – and exciting – and heralding his arrival with his entourage.

And after the service if you need to get to the reception venue, you can all travel together and chat about how incredible the ceremony was.

TRACTOR

If you're a country-loving couple, why not ask the local farmer if you borrow one of his tractors?

It's a fun photo opportunity – you could even get some wedding wellies to complete the look.

However, you'll need to allow extra time for arrival, going at tractor speed.

HORSE AND CARRIAGE

If you've dreamed of being a princess on your big day, then it has to be horse and carriage.

One word of warning – make sure you hire one with a hood, just in case of bad weather.



HELICOPTER

To make a *Made in Chelsea*-style arrival, a helicopter has to be the most impressive way to make your entrance.

This idea might be more suited to the wouldbe-007 grooms as most wedding dresses aren't easily accommodated in the cockpit.

TUK TUK

Perfect for an oriental-themed wedding, a Tuk Tuk is essentially a motorised rickshaw.

It's highly-maneuverable, making it the ideal wedding transportation choice if access to the venue is tight.

They're unique, quirky and will certainly help make your wedding stand out from the crowd.

ELEPHANT

If you're tying the knot abroad, why not go the 'whole wedding transportation hog' and arrive at your beach ceremony riding an elephant.

Not really much to add to that idea.

STAY THE NIGHT BEFORE

One of the quickest ways to arrive at your ceremony, if it is a civil service, is to stay at the wedding venue the night before.

All-inclusive packages may include this option, leaving you and your bridesmaids to wake up slowly and get ready in your own time, without the added stress of traffic jams.

Whatever form of transport you decide on, make sure it is comfortable for you and fits in with the style of the rest of the wedding.

And don't forget to make allowances for time, the weather and look out for planned road-works or traffic hold-ups.





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HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT

THE main focus of most wedding receptions is the wedding cake.

Your wedding cake will feature in a lot of wedding photographs, which you will have to look at for years to come, and not many people leave the reception before the cake is cut. So, you should take some time to choose the perfect wedding cake.

Traditionally, wedding cakes used to be three-tiered, and were covered with royal icing.

Nowadays, there are hundreds of cakes that you can choose from,

which vary in design, look and taste. You can get a wedding cake customised to your own unique design and have just about any design under the sun.

When you are ready to start looking for the perfect wedding cake, these are the factors you should take into consideration:

Size of the Cake – this will depend on the number of guests that you are expecting. If you are planning to save some cake for guests who are unable to attend, then you should keep this in mind while determining the exact number of people.

Design – go through the cake sample pictures from different confectioners and bakers. Look through wedding magazines and the internet for inspiration. If you do not find something that you like, you can always design your own cake.

Flavour – There are so many flavours to choose from, but you want to be sure it tastes good or you'll have a load of cake left over. If you can't make up your mind, then have each tier in a different flavour.

GET THE CAKE YOU WANT

You may have a relative who is keen to make the cake but if you're hiring a professional cakemaker, here's a few questions to ask:

Can I have a tasting? – It's handy to be able to sample their handiwork to make sure it tastes as good as it looks.

Do you custom-make cakes? – Your wedding cake maker might have a portfolio of tried and tested cakes, but if you want something unique it's best to check if they make bespoke wedding cakes.

Can I see your portfolio? – Ask to see a portfolio. The more variety they have shows their range of experience and creativity.

Will you deliver my wedding cake and set it up? – It's important to establish with your cake maker who will deliver the wedding cake. You should also find out if they'll set up the cake at your venue or if that's down to you.

Are there any additional charges? – Find out if they want deposits for wedding cake stands, pillars or cake toppers. If they come with your cake, they will want them back and in the same condition you received them in.

Alternatively you can provide your own, but check with the baker if you need to bring them



in or if they can all just be set up at the venue.

Once you've decided on your wedding cake maker, make sure you have everything you discussed written down and confirmed by them.

Tips for wedding cake display

Wedding cakes are usually displayed right from the start of the wedding reception and cut towards the end.

Depending on how long you expect the reception to last, the wedding cake could be on display for a considerable length of time.

To ensure that the cake holds up for the duration, make sure that the filling used in the cake, if you're not going for the traditional fruit cake, will not cause it to go bad.

Display the cake in a prominent location but not in the way. The wedding cake should be visible to your guests but not placed where they may accidentally knock it off.

Remember to add some special lighting for your wedding cake. A spotlight to focus specially on the cake is a great way to make the wedding cake display look smashing.

Never display your wedding cake close to the dance floor. Over-enthusiastic guests just may cause a mishap.

The size of the table for the wedding cake should be according to the size of the cake – neither too big nor too small. Cover it with a beautiful table cloth, and you can then use flowers, garlands, and sprays to decorate it.

Dare to be different

Instead of icing the cake, show off the sponge and decorate with berries and seasonal fruit.



If you love chocolate, go for it. Choose creamy chocolate buttercream, smooth ganache or opt for fondant or chocolate marzipan.

Place small cakes at each table so everyone can have a go at cutting it. Go for a variety of flavours, so people can wander round and try different cakes.

Why not pick a quote from your favorite book, poem or

movie and have it iced onto your wedding cake.

Go for different shapes such as a hexagonal- or petal-shaped



cake for a totally unique design.

Display a large table of mini-cakes, or cupcakes, stacked to look like one big cake, and then invite guests to help themselves.

How about a cheese cake? No, not a sweet creamy variety, although that is a thought. But rounds of cheese, decorated with grapes or flowers. A perfect savoury option for guests to munch on.

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The advertisement features a central logo with the initials 'KH' in a pink circle. It is surrounded by four images of cakes: a tall yellow cake with white roses, a white cake with pink roses, a close-up of a white rose cake, and a tray of decorated cupcakes. Two award medals are shown in the bottom right corner.

MARQUEES TO SUIT ALL SIZES AND STYLES OF WEDDING

YOU may want to hire a marquee for your wedding. Here are the main types to choose from:

A TRADITIONAL CANVAS MARQUEE

Traditional marquees are erected on poles, with guy ropes and tent pegs to keep them upright and secured to the ground.

It is the perfect choice for summer as guests can socialise both inside and out. They are best suited for smaller wedding venues such as your own garden.

The sides can be removed in good weather, but they are not very wind and waterproof if the weather is not so good.

A TEPEE-STYLE MARQUEE

Tepees are built on a tripod arrangement of poles, with interior guy ropes and exposed beams.



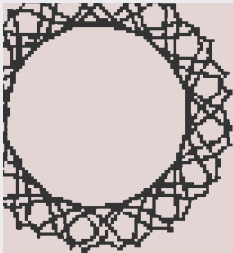
They work well for seaside weddings or a casual summer barbeque.

Small Cowboy and Indian-style tepees can provide extra shelter if you are holding your drinks reception outdoors, or, for a com-

plete outdoor wedding, hire Kata marquees which can be joined together to form a tent village.

A BEDOUIN OR INDIAN TENT

The interior decor is exotic and opulent, with rich colours and



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beautiful Moroccan or Indian fabrics draped across the ceiling and the walls.

They can be used for any outdoor wedding where you want to achieve a different look from the traditional marquee, or for winter weddings where you want a warm and cosy atmosphere.

Because the interior can be quite dark, they are usually best-suited for an evening wedding.

Furniture in a Bedouin or Indian tent tends to be quite low, including cushions on the floor for guests to recline and low tables on which the food is served.

A FRAMED MARQUEE

A framed marquee is the most expensive choice and is best for large formal weddings, especially winter ones, when there is more chance of rain, or midsummer when you want to keep your guests cool.

This type of marquee is usually roomy enough to divide off various parts using extra walls, making a bar area, a dining area and a dance floor.

The pros and cons of hiring a marquee for your wedding

PROS

■ You can hire a marquee based on the ideal number of guests you want to invite instead of having to limit your guest list to fit in with your venue.

■ You won't be restricted by the existing decor or style of your wedding venue. You will have a blank canvas for your wedding theme and decorations.

■ Assuming you are using your own garden and don't have to hire a garden or park, it should work out cheaper than reception venue hire. You should be able to save money on food and alcohol too as you won't have to use the services of a catering company provided by a venue.

■ A marquee is flexible – for example you can take off the sides if the weather is dry and sunny. You can also section off the dance floor. It's not difficult to change the layout of a marquee, you can simply add screens or curtains.

CONS

■ Your hire list could include tableware, a dance floor, tables and chairs, lighting, a power supply, a stage, a sound system and guest toilets.

■ Marquees aren't soundproof so you may risk aggravating your neighbours. You will most likely have to finish the celebrations at a certain time out of respect for your neighbourhood.

■ You can have a marquee reception in summer or winter, but you will need extras such as air conditioning, heating or flooring to ensure your guests are comfortable. It is a seasonal venue and is best suited for summer.

■ Staff clear up the mess at a wedding venue, but if you have a marquee in the garden, it's very likely that you will have to do at least some of the tidying and cleaning.

Advertisement feature

WHERE DID YOU GET THAT **HAT**?

THE last few years have shown a dramatic rise in the popularity and wearing of hats for many occasions. Still top of the list are those for weddings.

Choosing a hat, though fun, is also a serious business. For hats can make or break an outfit.

The Clothes Shop has around 900 hats and fascinators, nearly all different styles, for customers to try on. With their expertise they can see which shapes will suit a particular customer as soon as they meet her.

If you already have your outfit, bring it with you so you can see the overall effect – complete with hat. You not only have to think about colours but whether or not the style of the hat matches the outfit.

Don't believe people who say your hat and shoes must match. This can have a detrimental effect, especially if you are short. Shorter people need to bear in mind that downward brims can lose them, whereas an upward brim can give them height and enables them to see taller guests without straining their neck backwards.

Hats can always be trimmed to match outfits. This way your overall look is original and unique to you.

The Clothes Shop also offers a hat hire service for those who would prefer.

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HOLIDAY OF A **LIFETIME** – HONEYMOON DESTINATIONS

ALL the planning and preparation for the big day has paid off and you have had a wonderful wedding. Now it's time to relax and enjoy your honeymoon, whether you're heading for a far-flung exotic location or somewhere closer to home.

BALI, INDONESIA

Nicknamed the Isle of the Gods, Bali has long been a haven for romance-seekers with its mist-shrouded temples, beautiful mountain vistas and vivid arts scene.

Arrange a trip to Pura Luhur Uluwatu temple. Located atop a cliff rising 200 feet above the Indian Ocean, it has one of the most unforgettable sunset views in the world. Then, stay for the mesmerising nightly kecak dance performance.

ORKNEY, SCOTLAND

If you just want peace and quiet in beautiful surroundings, then Orkney with its green-topped islands and sandstone cliffs will give you just that.

Take a day trip to the Neolithic Ring of Brodgar, an ancient and eerie ring of standing stones, northeast of Stromness. With the weather moving in and the water lapping at the shore, it makes for a supernatural sight.

VENICE, ITALY

Nothing says amore quite like a gondola ride through the Grand Canal as you sail past historic buildings.

Take a romantic, leisurely stroll around St Mark's Square, wander over the Rialto and marvel at the



Bridge of Sighs. Then, escape the sights and sounds of the city with a boat ride to one of the unspoiled islands nearby.

HARBOUR ISLAND, BAHAMAS

A pink-sand paradise, Harbour Island is a magnet for celebrities.

Visit Pink Sands Beach and settle in among the three-mile stretch of sand and turquoise waters. Above the beach, join the jet-set for an open-air lunch at Sip Sip.

FIJI

The islands that make up Fiji are surrounded by coral reefs resulting in warm lagoons and beautiful coral beaches.

Stroll along quiet nature trails that lead to spectacular views of the Mamanuca Islands.

MAUI, HAWAII

Hawaii's clear waters, tropical sunsets and lush greenery make this a perfect romantic getaway.

Watch the sunrise while wrapped in a blanket at the top of Haleakala Crater, or gaze at the sunset as you cruise along the Kihei coastline. Instant romance.

PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY

The once-sleepy fishing village is now the St. Tropez of South America.

Take a trip to nearby José Ignacio for a laid-back, boho beach scene. Or hop on a daily boat tour to visit Isla de Lobos's colony of sea lions.

MARRAKESH, MOROCCO

You'll feel like you wandered onto a movie set complete with snake charmers, belly dancers, horse-drawn carriage rides and an

extensive maze of markets.

Visit Yves Saint Laurent's former home and gardens and stop by the Galerie Love—a collection of all of the designer's collage posters with the word "love" scrawled on each one.

ICELAND

Largely uninhabited, Iceland changes scenery every few minutes. You can go from volcanic, lunar-looking landscapes or grassy, green Middle Earth to shattering waterfalls and soaring geysers or massive Blue Lagoon hot springs.

Head over to the picturesque Snæfellsjökull National Park to see some of nature's most beautiful creations, including two massive lava formations and a dreamy hidden waterfall. Then stop by the Blue Lagoon and dip in and out of the various pools and hot springs.

Whether you want to relax, party, see the sights or have a bit of an adventure, the world is your oyster – enjoy.

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