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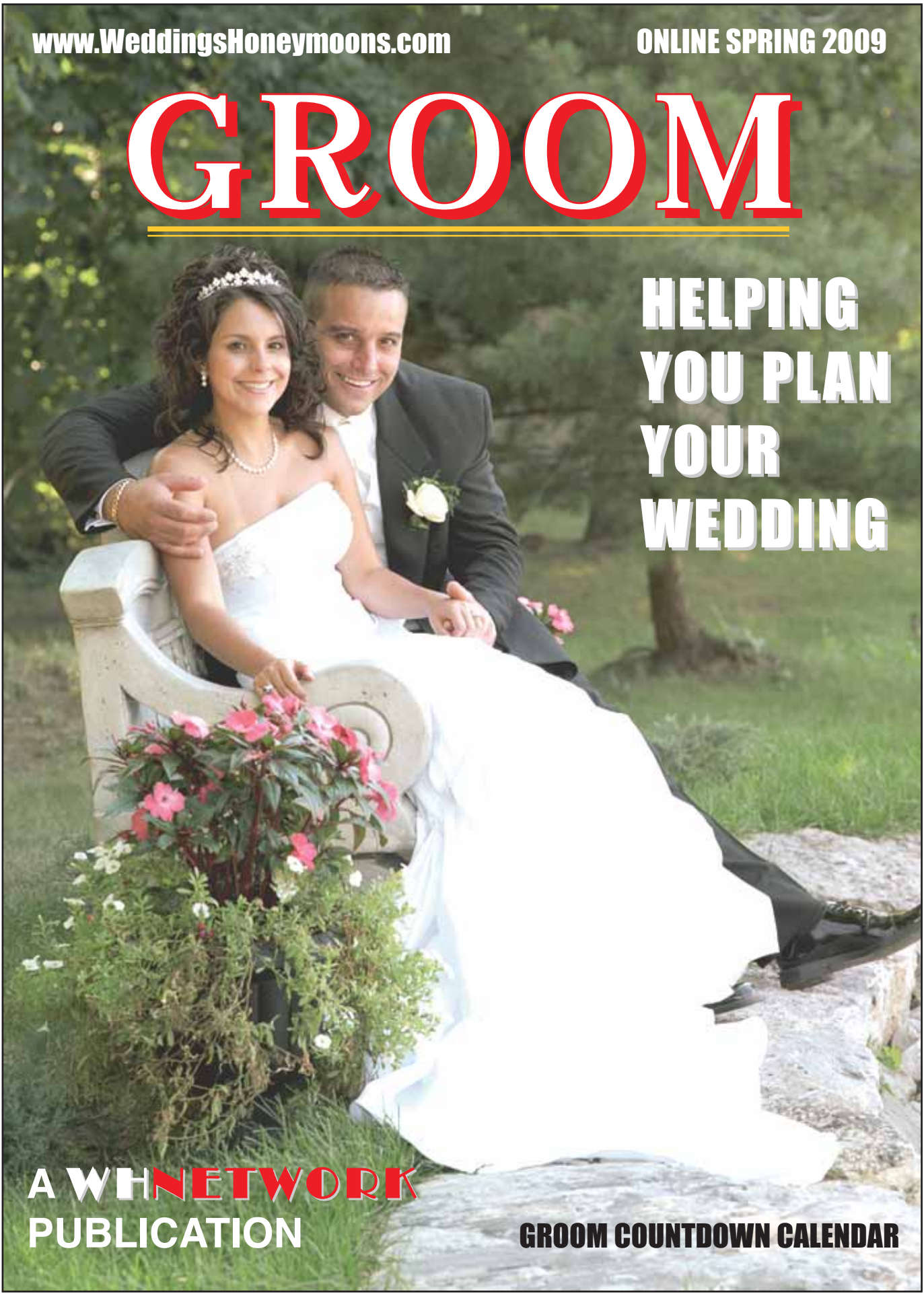
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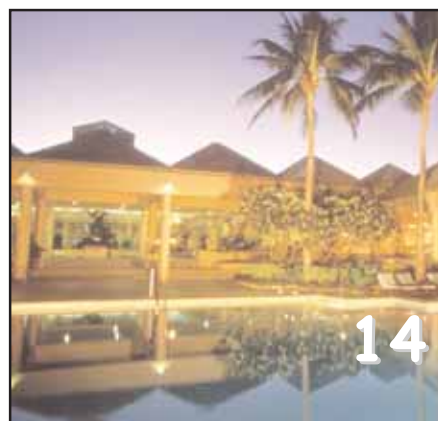
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Proposing



Photo: www.tous.com

There are several things to consider before asking those four little words ... "will you marry me?"

BY SHELLEY WAUGH

Before you propose, talk about the possibility of getting married. Make sure it's something that you both want, and make sure you agree on major issues such as children, religion, where you want to live, your work and how you want to live your life together.

The proposal itself should still be a surprise and a joyful event. Find a way that she won't be suspecting, unless she jumps the gun and asks you first!

Most Brides want their proposal to include an engagement ring. Try to make sure the engagement ring is the right style. Look at rings

together when walking past a store, or bring them up in conversation. Her mother or best friend may help you choose the ring.

Some Brides-to-be want to create or design their own rings. Shop for the right jeweller, then let the process begin.

We've come a long way since women needed their father's permission; however, if she has parents, there is still something respectful about asking for her parents' blessing.

Choose a favorite place, if it's a restaurant (don't hide the ring in food, anything could happen to it), or a special time or date (holiday engagements like Christmas or

Valentine's Day are popular and easy to remember), to ask her to marry you. It's a personal thing between the two of you. Don't do it in front of family or friends. It could be as simple as in your living room, or on a weekend away. It all depends on your personality. If you want to be creative with your proposal, be careful of things that could go wrong. This is a time for romance so you might tell her why you fell in love with her - or you may just leave it to four little words, "will you marry me?" If she says 'maybe', give her some time to consider the proposal. It's a lifetime together. - **G**

Shopping for Rings

BY ANTHONY VEROMBECK, EDITOR

You don't have to buy a ring to become engaged, but if you do there are still two ways to do it: with or without your fiancée knowing. If you are going to surprise her with an engagement ring, you have to be a good listener. When you are out window shopping, you must train yourself to listen to her when she voices what she likes or dislikes.

You can shop for engagement rings and wedding bands in department and jewellery stores, from designer craftsmen or from pawn shops. Some couples bypass the ring tradition and put the money towards something else they want. You may have a stone or setting that has been passed down through the generations that you can have reset or present as is. Or you may have an antique or heirloom that you want resized or put into a new setting. The design may range from simple to decorative. Remember to listen to what will make your intended happy. There is nothing worse than starting off an engagement with

the wrong ring ... you may hear about it for 50 years or more!

Rings are made of yellow, white or rose gold, platinum or silver. Traditionally, the diamond is the first choice for an engagement ring. Semi-precious stones are a second choice; they aren't as expensive and a semi-precious stone can be larger than a diamond at the same price. Some Brides also choose birthstones for their engagement rings.

If you and your fiancée are both shopping for the engagement ring, look at the matching wedding bands at the same time. If you decide on a double-ring ceremony, the bands should match. Don't forget to put an inscription on the inside circle of the ring that includes your initials, and date of your wedding.

When you are shopping for a ring, make sure the condition of the ring matches the price. When you have chosen the ring you want, ask to see the certificate of authenticity and a written appraisal.

Also, if you are insuring it on a listing, have the ring appraised by a reputable company, which will take pictures of the ring and cover the four Cs - carat, cut, clarity and color - as well as list the history of the stone, if there is one. - **G**

Planning

The only thing the Groom has to remember all through the planning stages of the wedding is that without him there is no wedding!

BY ANTHONY VEROMBECK
EDITOR

The engagement period is a good time for the prospective Bride and Groom to work together. It is also the time when they will understand who really makes most of the big decisions, if you haven't figured that out already. You are your Bride-to-be's "tower-of-strength" through this planning of your wedding. She will be looking for you for comfort, decisions and approvals.

Your fiancée will probably be preparing a 2" three ring binder to use as a production book for your wedding. You could also do the same. We've also suggested A-Z dividers and a package of sub-dividers with tabs and pockets to create separate alphabetical categories. This system helps you to have ready access to information you're responsible for. You may want to divide your information by separators marked: Engagement, Wedding Ceremony, Reception,

Honeymoon and so on. Make it easy for yourself so that when you have to find an important piece of information you know exactly where it is. You and your Best Man can share the book.

It is important for you, your Bride and the families to establish how much money you want to spend on your wedding so that you can establish a preliminary budget.

Budget List for the Groom: traditional expenses

- \$ Flowers for Groom and Attendants
- \$ Gift for your Bride
- \$ Gifts for your parents
- \$ Gifts for Best Man, Groomsmen and Ring Bearer
- \$ Honeymoon wardrobe
- \$ Honeymoon travel and hotel charges
- \$ Limousine and car rentals
- \$ Marriage licence
- \$ Officiant's fee
- \$ Out-of-town guest accommodations



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- \$ Rehearsal dinner
- \$ Reception - menu, decorations and entertainment
- \$ Rings - engagement and wedding bands
- \$ Security services for wedding, reception and homes [while the wedding is in progress]
- \$ Travel cheques and credit cards
- \$ Tuxedo, suit, shoes and accessories for yourself and Attendants

Read more in the **GROOM's** section on the Main Menu at WeddingsHoneymoons.com **G**

CONTRACT AND AGREEMENTS TIPS

Any contract or agreement for service is a very important piece of paper.

Once you've sign it you are obligated to live up to its conditions. For you, that means payment on time; for your suppliers it means service as promised.

When you select the final suppliers and services for your wedding, make sure you have a written quotation from them listing exactly what you have ordered - down to the smallest detail. If you have to go into a court of law after your wedding because they did not deliver what you contracted, you need to have your

paper work in order.

Therefore, take your time in reading your contract or agreement. Let your Bride-to-be, parents and Best Man see the quotation and contract or agreement. Don't assume anything. Everything you discussed, agreed upon and are paying for should be listed, along with fitting and delivery dates, taxes, gratuities, payment schedule, extra charges, cancellation fees and suppliers' liability and refund policies. - **G**

Planning

Choosing your Best Man

From the engagement to the honeymoon, he's there

The Best Man is usually a brother or your best friend. He might be married or single, have done this many times before or perhaps be new at these responsibilities. Either way, your Best Man is your gatekeeper of the times and schedules. It's his job to make sure that the important events - engagement party, bachelor party, rehearsal, rehearsal dinner, ceremony and the reception - go well.

The duties range from keeping track of the gift and travel registries to helping you with your guest list and things to do.

About one month before the wedding he'll arrange final fittings and pick-up dates for tuxedos and shoes for the two of you and the groomsmen; follow up on invitations to your bachelor party; be available to assist in writing your vows or shopping for gifts for your Bride-to-be, parents and members of your wedding party; and purchase and wrap gifts for you and your Bride.

To prepare for the wedding day activities, he'll confirm the booking of the limousines and the decorations for the parade of cars from the ceremony to the reception.

At the rehearsal, the Best Man will arrive with you and go over a copy of the guest list to give the Ushers (noting any guests that are handicapped or elderly or who are to be seated in the reserved section), and attend the rehearsal dinner usually hosted by the Groom's parents.

Bachelor Parties

Over the years many stories have come down regarding what happens at bachelor bashes, dinners, parties or stags.

At least some of it is true. The event itself might be offensive but it shouldn't be a major problem as

long as it doesn't happen the night before the wedding - that is usually when the rehearsal is held. The Best Man should organize to have the party or dinner at least a week before the wedding, so that the Groom has plenty of time to recu-

perate.

The Bachelor Party or dinner can be held in a restaurant, club, home or out of town.

PARTIES continued on 15



Photo: www.tomasramos.com

YOUR WEDDING DAY

On the wedding day, your Best Man will arrive at the ceremony with you. He'll escort the Bride's parents to the front row, left; and the Groom's parents to the front row, right. He'll carry the Bride's wedding band for you and the marriage licence, to which he will be an official witness in signing; he also will be responsible for holding and disbursing the envelopes holding the fees for the officiate, vocalist, musicians and other appropriate services.

At the reception he'll take his place in the receiving line and keep an eye on the money gift box. He will probably be the master of ceremonies at the wedding, toast the Bride and Groom, and read telegrams and special messages. He'll assist you in transporting the wedding gifts to your home.

Following the reception, he'll assist in organizing the honeymoon luggage, and if you are staying at a hotel near an airport on your wedding night, he will confirm the booking.

He'll check with you to make sure you have your money, charge cards, passport, driver's licence, luggage and phone numbers for an emergency.

Following your wedding your Best Man will also be responsible to returning any rentals including the tuxedos. - **G**

Fashion & Grooming

To Tux or Not to Tux

BY SHELLEY WAUGH

The style and theme of your wedding will dictate what you will be wearing. If you need a tux and you don't own one - few men do - you can borrow or rent one. If your wedding has a theme, your outfit will be a theme costume which you can borrow, rent or have made. If you are buying a "theme" suit, make sure that the wedding details and theme are clearly indicated, so that the sales personnel can give you their maximum help.

For formal and semi-formal weddings, a tux is traditionally worn. The temperature will dictate the fabrics. Unless you are having a theme wedding, formal attire is usually not worn in the daytime.

For informal weddings, single-color suits or jackets with contrasting trousers are worn. Depending on the season and climate, the colors go from gray to navy blue. Shirts are soft white and ties that are done with a four-in-hand knot. Shoes are white or black dress

with matching socks. If you are in a military service, you can decide if you want to be married in your dress uniform or 'civvies'.

The Best Man and his Attendants will dress in the same style as you.

Because the Groom's father is not in the wedding party, he does not have particular fashion requirements. However, he may dress in the same fashion as the father of the Bride or he may dress as the invited guests do.

FOR THE GROOM

Your Bride will decide if she wants you to wear a flower from her bouquet, which is a romantic custom. White rosebuds are the most popular choice. For the Best Man - his boutonniere is different than yours and can be selected from the Maid of Honor's bouquet. Groomsmen's boutonnieres are different and are often a single carnation or a flower selected from the Bridesmaids' bouquets. Fathers and grandfathers



Photo: Proflowers.com

of the couple - if they choose to wear boutonnieres they should also be different from yours and the Best Man's. Traditionally, a single flower or flowers taken from the Bridesmaids' bouquets are appropriate. Other male relatives who aren't in the wedding party but who want to join in on the celebration also wear boutonnieres.

TUX continued on 15

The best looking guy

BY ANTHONY VEROMBECK

EDITOR

To be the best looking guy at your wedding, maintain your grooming regime throughout your engagement. Don't wait until the last minute to try to fix something that takes time to change, like your face, teeth, hair, feet or weight.

Wedding planning is stressful. Keep your face clean, get or give yourself facials, use daily moisturizer with sunscreen all year round to prevent wrinkles and skin cancer, drink lots of water, get plenty of sleep and

concentrate on your overall wellness.

If you are starting to go grey and want to get rid of it, it's less noticeable to begin when you first notice it with products that can be used at home, or let your hair stylist know what you want to do. There are brush-in color gels for beards and moustaches. A short haircut is good if you are balding.

Clip and file your fingernails and toenails. If you have foot odor, scrub your feet daily and dry them completely. There are insoles you can place in your shoes that will absorb wetness and odor. - G

Rehearsal

Rehearsing for your ceremony

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CEREMONIES

There are many types of ceremonies - religious, civil, military, ecumenical and interfaith to name a few - and then anything else the bride and groom might invent. A ceremony can be performed in a house of worship or in a garden in your back yard; in a helicopter flying over Niagara Falls or underwater in the Caribbean. It can be performed anywhere your heart desires.

Once you've decided on what type of ceremony you want, seek out the appropriate clergy or officials. The type of ceremony you have chosen will probably dictate where you will be holding it. If you are being married in a civil ceremony, contact the marriage licence office at your city or town hall. That office will have a list of officials who can perform a marriage, such as justices of the peace.

Second marriage ceremonies range typically from religious to civil services and from candlelight to honeymoon weddings (where you are married at a particular location).

The rehearsal usually takes place one or two days before the ceremony.

Arrive at your rehearsal at least half an hour before the rest of your wedding party to go over the sequences of events with the person who will be officiating. If you are hiring a wedding consultant, have the consultant attending your rehearsal part of the consultation contract.

To move closer to a perfect wedding, have your photographer, videographer, vocalist and organist or lead musician at your rehearsal. If you are having a group, have the musician bring a tape or CD of your chosen music. Hearing the music helps everyone taking part in the processional and recessional, especially if they have never before been in that location.

Depending on the time lines for your rehearsal, if you cannot go through the entire ceremony make sure the parts are included where there are things for you to do.

Traditionally, the bride doesn't participate in the rehearsal. A stand-in takes her place as the Bride watches. Today, officiates prefer the couple to take their own places and go through the sequence themselves. The actual words said in the ceremony aren't said, but the various activities are explained by the Officiant. To practice, the Bride can carry the bouquet that the Maid of Honor usually makes out of the ribbons from her shower gifts.

The Maid of Honor stands on the Bride's left, and on the Groom's right is his Best Man. The Bridesmaids and Groomsmen form

a semicircle around the Bride and Groom or stand separately with the Bridesmaid in a straight or diagonal line behind the Bride and the Maid of Honor.

The Bride's parents sit on the aisle in the front row, left. The Groom's parents sit on the aisle, in the front row, right. If any children will be included in the ceremony, the Flower Girl can stand in front of the Bridesmaid or sit with her parents. The Ring Bearer stands in front of the Groomsmen. He could also give the rings to the Best Man and then sit with his parents.

Although the Groom's parents are not part of the ceremony, they may want to attend the rehearsal. The recessional is decided at the end when the pairing and forming of the wedding party is decided upon. - **G**

THE REHEARSAL DINNER

The dinner is usually held following the rehearsal for the wedding. It can be held in a home or restaurant. The guest list can be limited to just the wedding party, close family members or in some cases include all the out-of-town guests. The menu can be low key or in keeping with the theme of your wedding.

It is the time that the couple can express their gratitude and thanks to their family and friends who have helped them plan their event, and to toast each indi-

vidual in their wedding party. It is also a good time for the couple to present their gifts to their family and wedding party.

In the past, the Groom's family usually paid for the rehearsal dinner. Now the costs may be split depending on the other financial arrangements, and the number of guests. The invitations can be simple or in keeping with the wedding theme showing the time, date and place with information on parking. Keep it simple. - **G**

Receptions

If you are going to help plan your reception, give yourselves as much time as you can to shop places, products, services and ideas.

By **SHELLEY WAUGH**

Following the wedding ceremony, whether it is a religious or civil ceremony, there is usually a reception of some kind. It can range from just the two of you to a room full of family, relatives and friends. The type of reception often depends on where you are married and if it is a first or second time marriage.

If you are going to be involved in the reception planning, you and your Bride-to-be may decide to share the tasks between the two of you.

If you are going to hire an event coordinator or party rental company, you will need to negotiate with them to establish their fee, what services they include, and when they will start to work on your event.

You might choose a serviced location where everything is included, or a "bare wall" location where you will have to provide all of the services. You can also have a reception in a tent or in your backyard, or at a

favorite location such as a winery, ranch, amusement park, zoo or historic site, some of which lend themselves to creating themes.

Once you've decided on where your reception will be held and how many people you are inviting, the next steps are to create food and beverage menus, pick out your wedding cake, create your seating plan, plan your receiving line, shop for entertainment, decorations and other accessories, decide if you want to budget for other services such as security, and appoint a volunteer to represent you at your reception site to help coordinate the activities in setting up your requirements. - **G**



The Groom's cake always adds to the dessert table. Groom's Tux Cake by The Cake Guys, Dallas, Texas www.thecakeguys.com.

TOAST TIPS

The Best Man is usually the person who has the honor of delivering the first toast to the Bride and Groom.

Toasts (which do not need to be alcoholic) can be traditional or contemporary, ethnic or classical, special or funny, serious or spiritual, but never - dull or sad.

Traditional toast to the Bride:

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand with me as we join in the traditional toast to The Bride: Health, happiness and all the best life has to offer. To (Bride's name).

Traditional toast to the Bride and Groom:

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand with me as we raise our glasses in toast to the bride and groom (Bride's name) and (Groom's name); we wish you a lifetime of health and happiness.

These toasts are generally followed by more toasts from the different speakers in the wedding party - the father of the Bride and Groom, friends and family.

Who says What!

The toasts are made to:

- The Bride by the Best Man, Dad, Groom, Maid of Honor;
- The Groom by the Bride;
- The Bride and Groom as a couple by any one;
- The wedding party by any one;
- The Bride's parents by the Groom, Father of the Groom;
- The Groom's parents by the Bride, Groom, in-laws, guests;
- The special guests by the Bride, Groom, parents.

Toasting

The person making the toast stands. If you are the one being toasted, you do not raise your glass or drink from it during the toast itself. If you wish, you may take a drink after everyone else has done so. If the toast was quite funny, you may need it.

Toasts can go on forever. Twenty minutes should be plenty for all of them.

- The Best Man usually offers the first toast to the Bride.
- The father of the Bride, as host, offers the second toast. (He may also deliver his toast on behalf of his wife; and to the members of the wedding party, the guests and his daughter's new in-laws.)
- The father of the Groom offers the third toast. (He too may toast the couple, the wedding party, the guests and his son's new in-laws).

TOAST TIPS continued on 15

Tux continued from 12

FORMAL WEAR TIPS

A waistcoat is a vest. The ascot is a scarf-like tie looped under the chin, worn with a cutaway coat. The white tie and white vest are worn with a winged-collar shirt, a black tailcoat and matching trousers. The cutaway, also known as a morning coat, is the daytime formal tailcoat. It comes in black or gray and is worn with striped trousers. The walking coat or stroller is a slightly longer black or gray jacket also worn with striped trousers. The slip-on shoe is a plain dress shoe in black patent or smooth leather such as kid. The opera pump is a patent leather slip-on shoe with grosgrain bows on the toes. The pocket square handkerchief is small and dressy, worn in the upper jacket pocket. It is not worn with a boutonnière. The formal dress shirt collar has a stiff stand-up collar with folded-down tips.

FORMAL STYLES

Daytime (before 6 pm)

The Groom wears a morning suit that is a black or charcoal gray cutaway jacket with striped trousers, a pearl gray waistcoat, stiff white shirt with a fold-down collar, and a tie or a traditional ascot. It is worn with black silk socks and black kid

leather shoes.

Evening (after 6 pm) - The Groom wears white tie and tails or a black tailcoat, black trousers, white piqué bow tie, a white wing-collar shirt and vest. Tuxedos have a black or ivory dinner jacket and trousers with a satin or grosgrain stripe down the outside of the pant leg; cummerbunds are worn with single-breasted jackets which hide the waist-band when the jacket is open. Suspenders instead of belts hold up the pants. Black patent leather or kid shoes are the order of the day.

SEMI-FORMAL DAYTIME (BEFORE 6 PM)

A suit-style dark gray or black stroller jacket is worn with stripe pants and worn with a soft white shirt, tie, and black shoes. An Edwardian suit may be worn, but it gives a costume effect with wide velvet lapels and a ruffled, white or colored shirt.

Evening (after 6 pm)

A black or midnight-blue or white dinner or tuxedo jacket and matching trousers, piqué or pleated-front white shirt with attached collar, black bow tie and black waistcoat or cummerbund worn with black patent leather or kid shoes.

INFORMAL DAY AND EVENING

care of itself. If it is being held in a home take-out a simple buffet with lots of food and beverages will fill the bill.

Traditionally the Best Man selects a gift for the Groom. The invited guests often give individual money envelopes to the Groom as well as contributing to the cost of the Bachelor Party and the "group" wedding present to the Groom.

Most Brides are happy enough with - or at least tolerate - with the concept of a Bachelor Party. They know that their intended is going to have fun. Some Brides might even offer to organize some

Depending on the climate and what the Bride is wearing, you can choose a light or dark suit, a navy blue jacket with white trousers, a white jacket with dark gray trousers, or a tuxedo. Suits and jackets are worn with a white soft shirt, striped or a small patterned tie, with black dress socks and oxfords.

GENERAL TIPS

- Ties and pocket squares are not meant to match;
- Suspenders or braces are used to hold up the trousers when a cummerbund is worn;
- Cummerbund is a pleated waist cover which is worn instead of a vest. It usually matches a bow tie and come in plain colors, tartans or prints. Pleats of the cummerbund always point up;
- A double-breasted tuxedo jacket is kept buttoned (worn without a cummerbund);
- Traditionally, evening attire is not worn during the daytime, but today Grooms have choices just like Brides and they wear what they want.
- Usually only the Ushers wear gloves;
- Shoes may be rented with tuxedos;
- For out-of-town Groomsmen, most formal rental stores issue written instructions and a self-addressed measurement form. If the store is part of a chain, usually fittings can be arranged at no charge. - **G**

PARTIES from 11

In some cases this traditional "guy's night out" is spent at a sporting event or race track, or sometimes it becomes a weekend away. It is the one time when all the attention is on the Groom. As the guest of honor, he should have a great time and do something he really enjoys. In some cases, the father of the Groom hosts or co-hosts the event with the Best Man.

The main ingredients are fun and food. If the night is spent in a restaurant or hotel, the food menu will probably take

of the food if the event is being held in a home. But they never stay! Accompanied by her Maid of Honor and/or Attendants, the Bride might just "bring" in the food and stay long enough to make sure everything is "just perfect!"

Some couples prefer a joint bridal shower and bachelor party. When this happens the spin is different. The couple use this opportunity to present their gifts to their Attendants and they in turn give the couple their gifts which are often group-gifts (when everyone has chipped in to purchase one large gift). - **G**

TOAST TIPS from 14

- The Groom toasts his Bride and the parents. He may also toast his grandparents, the guests and the wedding party.
- The Bride offers the next toasts to her parents, grandparents, new in-laws, wedding party, and her new husband (but only if he has toasted her first).
- The Best Man can propose a thank-you toast to the wedding party on behalf of the Bride and Groom (unless the Groom proposes this toast himself).
- Family and friends follow, usually jump-up as inspiration strikes.

Do

- Take your time and practice your toast before the wedding until you have memorized it. You may use recipe cards.
- Tell jokes only if you are good at them.
- Stand to make your toast. If the guests are talking, the Master of Ceremonies or the DJ or orchestra leader should quieten them by some musical device.
- Test the microphone before you speak. If there isn't one, talk slowly and loudly.
- Look at the person you are toasting and raise your glass.

Don't

- Bring up embarrassing memories.
- Mention first time marriages if either of the couple has been married before.
- Tell ethnic, religious, or off-color jokes or use offensive language.
- Discuss anything that is depressing.
- Bang your glass with a utensil to get the guests' attention.
- Go over three minutes.

Read more in the *Wines for Weddings* section and online magazine on www.weddingsHoneymoons.com - **G**

Choosing your honeymoon

You both may have dream places to go to, but it's important that when you finally choose your destination, you both agree that it's the best choice.

Start planning your honeymoon when you have set your wedding date. If the honeymoon of your dreams is not affordable when you get married, you can save it for a holiday or an anniversary.

Creating your Honeymoon Profile

You can start by putting together a list of questions that should be answered by the both of you. This will create a profile to help you make the right decision on where the both of you want to go.

1. How long your honeymoon will be?
2. What is your budget for the honeymoon, including travelling, spending and sight seeing?
3. How do you want to spend your days -playing sports, shopping, sight-seeing or being alone together?
4. How do you want to spend your nights - dinners, seeing shows, visiting casinos, alone together?
5. What type of accommodations do you want?
6. What type of weather do you want?
7. How do you want to get to your destination - fly, drive, train, etc.?
8. Do you want to go somewhere unique such as a heritage spot where you or your family were born, or go to something different such as a mansion, a ranch or on an eco-trip?
9. Do you want to go to a place where

most honeymooners go?

10. Do you have a handicap or a medical problem that should be taken into consideration?

Once you've both had a chance to answer and study each other's answers to the above questions, you'll have a better understanding on where you want to go, for how long, what you want to do and how much money you want to spend.

Now you can start gathering information on possible destinations. Check out travel websites and magazines, get videos from tourist boards, travel agencies or libraries, attend travel shows, and follow up on other couple's recommendations.

Budget for Your Honeymoon

The average couple spends around \$4,500 for their honeymoon. The travelling and duration of the stay are the biggest cost factors. There are, of course, ways to spend less.

- Take advantage of package deals.
- Travel off-peak and off-season.
- Steer clear of major cities.
- Consider a destination within driving distance.
- Look into condominium rental where you can prepare some of your own meals.
- Fly charter - but, watch the fine print.

- Watch for seat sales.
- Use air mileage points.

Finding a Travel Agent or Booking Yourself.

If you or your fiancée don't have a travel agent, find one who you feel will suit your needs. If you know the destination where you want to go to, check with the appropriate tourist office for a list of agents in your area who specialize in that destination. Often specialized travel agents get discounts that can be passed on to their clients.

Making actual arrangement for the honeymoon is traditionally the Groom's task. If you are booking your own honeymoon because you feel it is more cost-effective or you are used to handling your own travel arrangements, also check discount or travel clubs. Be sure to examine any restrictions which apply to the discounts before joining. Last minute discounts are usually "first come, first severed" to any places that have openings. It's a stressful way to plan a honeymoon - but you never know, you might get lucky and have the time of your life! -

G

Read more in ROMANCE TRAVEL free on WeddingsHoneymoons.com

Getting Married on Your Honeymoon

Destination weddings offer romantic, practical solutions for couples on a tight schedule; for second time marriages; for dealing with family difficulties or limited budgets; for interfaith or interracial situations; or those who just want to do something different. Couples sometimes invite friends or family members to be their witnesses and to share their wedding and holiday.

Many facilities cater to destination weddings, several of which have wedding consultants or planners. They offer packages that include everything you might need for your wedding. It is a good idea to arrive two to three days before your wedding to make sure everything is in order.

Many Brides-to-be buy their dress where they live so they can take time selecting the right one. The Groom takes the rings with him or he buys them when they arrive at the destination. He can also rent a tux at most location venues.

Some venues offer marriage ceremony services at little or no charge if you have confirmed bookings for lodging and related-wedding activities such as your reception. - **G**

Read more in ROMANCE TRAVEL free magazine on www.WeddingsHoneymoons.com

Calendar Countdown

GROOM Planning Guide

BY ANTHONY VEROMBECK

Depending on the size of your wedding, the longer advance time you give yourself to work on your wedding plans, the better it will turn out. As soon as you have completed your preliminary budget, set your time lines to correspond to each item. Remember to delegate items to people who can carry them out including deadlines and follow up for their results. Give yourself plenty of time to work on your To Do List.

Your Bride-to-be will probably decide on the type, color theme and style of your wedding. If you don't like what she is planning, express your concerns in the beginning so she knows your feelings. That way the both of you can work on a compromise, the key ingredient of every marriage.

Several of the items also appear on the Bride's Countdown list that is in her Planning Guide on the Main Menu at www.WeddingsHoneymoons.com, as many of them concern the both of you.

ONE YEAR TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING (not necessarily in order)

- Choose an engagement ring and perhaps wedding band[s].
- Arrange a social get-together to meet the prospective in-laws.
- If you're placing an announcement in the newspaper, have your picture taken with your fiancée.
- Attend your engagement party.
- Make an appointment with the clergyman, rabbi or officiant and confirm the date, time and place of your wedding and your rehearsal. Discuss pre-wedding counselling and ask for their guidelines for dress, photography, videography, music, flowers and any other matters of concern.
- Work with your fiancée in planning and budgeting your wedding.
- Accompany your fiancée, if she needs your help, when she is meeting with suppliers.
- Choose your reception venue.
- Choose your Best Man. He is the person who will assist you and see that everything runs smoothly
- Confirm members of your wedding party - Best Man, Groomsmen and if you are having one, the Ring Bearer.
- Help your fiancée to select bridal gift registry locations. When you know your travel plans add them to your honeymoon registry so that guests can assist in paying for your honeymoon. Let your mother, Best Man and Groomsmen know what you need.
- Prepare your guest list. If you are inviting people from out of town and know they will be staying in a hotel or motel, you and your fiancée or either of your parents will need to make an arrangement with local hotels or inns, which will send out information packages including room rates, city maps, transportation schedules, brochures, restaurants and sightseeing tour information.
- Assist your parents with any wedding responsibilities they have assumed.
- Prepare a To Do List for your Best Man, Groomsmen and Ring Bearer.

- If someone gives you a wedding present, give it to your Bride and she will send a thank-you note.

SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Take part in deciding upon the wedding reception menu.
- Complete your guest list. Be careful about the spelling of their names.
- Confirm your photographer and videographer.
- When your fiancée's mother has bought her dress for the wedding, she will let your mother know the color and style [they don't want to be in the same color].
- Once you've selected your wedding attire, advise your Best Man on how you want him and the Groomsmen to be dressed.
- Develop a list of friends who will assist in decorating the ceremony location or the reception venue, if you aren't hiring professionals.
- Make a list of friends who will have cars available on your wedding day.
- Start looking into honeymoon destinations. Be in touch with travel agents and go to local travel shows. The earlier you look for deals the better.
- If you are flying out the day after your wedding to a destination, book a hotel close to the airport.
- If you are having a printed wedding program, work with your fiancée on the format and wording.
- Start to discuss where you want to live after you're married with your fiancée
- You and your fiancée may want to open a joint bank account for your wedding expenses. Arrange to have your cheques sent to you with your monthly statements. This will help you to keep a better cash flow and provide proof if you need to make any claims against suppliers. - **G**

For the complete Calendar Countdown visit www.weddingshoneymoons.com/groom_calendar_countdown.

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