

# I do

SPRING/SUMMER 2018

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I DO *The dress*

# SHOP SMART

— ROCHELLE A. SHENK // LNP CORRESPONDENT PHOTO COURTESY OF CINDY FREY PHOTOGRAPHY

## Follow these tips to find the gown that's just right for you



**M**ost brides-to-be have a “to-do” list to make their special day go off without a hitch. One of those key elements is selecting the perfect dress, but along with that there can be a litany of questions.

### *How soon should I pick my dress?*

“When you get engaged, start looking for the dress. Wedding gowns can take four to 10 months to come in, and then you’ll need about a month for fittings and alterations,” advises Vicki Deal, manager at Weddings by Paulette, Lancaster. “If a bride-to-be has a shorter window, we can find a dress off the rack, and then work with a seamstress for fittings or alterations.”

Alissa Hooper-Smay, co-owner of Blush Bridal, Lancaster, agrees that brides should

start shopping as soon as possible. She says dresses from the designers in her salon may take six to 9 months to arrive, with fittings starting about 10 weeks prior to the wedding. She advises brides to schedule fittings as soon as the dress comes in.

“It’s important to remember that a seamstress will be working on dresses for other brides and members of the bridal party or for proms, so don’t put fittings off until the last minute,” she says.

Both bridal salons work with outside seamstresses.

### *Who should I take shopping with me?*

Most often a bride takes her mom and/or grandmother with her when shopping for her wedding gown. “Our best appointments are with the bride and her mom; it’s a wonderful moment for the two

of them together,” Deal says.

She strongly advises brides not to bring a large entourage. “The more people you have to please, the less likely you’ll walk out with a dress. It’s the bride’s day, and it’s important that her attendants be supportive even if she comes out in a potato sack with pink posies and loves it. We become the bride’s advocate in the fitting room,” she says.

Hooper-Smay recommends the bride bring two to three people at the most, and often those people are her mom, future mother-in-law, sister or best friend, with an aunt or grandmother filling in if her mom has passed away.

“They’ll have opinions, but most of the time, we find they want to be supportive. They know this is a big decision for the bride,” says Mary Ann Hooper, Blush Bridal’s other owner and Alissa’s mom.

PHOTO COURTESY OF  
APRIL AND BRYAN PHOTOGRAPHY

## How much should I spend?

Budget plays a key role in dress selection. Linda Frazier, assistant manager of Weddings by Paulette, says wedding dresses at the salon range from \$350 to \$2,300, with the average price of a bride's gown in the Lancaster market ranging from \$1,400 to \$2,000. Alterations are in addition to those figures. Every wedding dress in the store carries a price tag, so "the brides can make sure it's in their price range." Blush Bridal also places price tags on all dresses, which Hooper-Smay says range from \$500 to \$2,700.

"Surprisingly, I've found that if the bride and groom are paying for the wedding themselves, the bride is more likely to slightly over-budget and then cut back in other areas like flowers," she says. "With parents paying, the girls tend to be more respectful of the budget; they appreciate mom and dad paying for the wedding and will either stick to the budget or pick something a little less expensive."

Says Deal, "If the dress is a bit over budget and both the bride and her mom are in tears when they see it on, they'll stretch the budget a bit."

Additionally, she says, today's brides are pretty savvy. "They've done their research on both dress styles and pricing. They often come in with a picture of a dress on their phone and tell us this is the dress they want and this is how much they want to pay for it."

## What style should I choose?

With regard to dress styles, Frazier says sometimes she or Deal will suggest a style, and often styles work hand-in-hand with venues. "We'll let them try on whatever they select, but sometimes we'll suggest if they have a bit of extra time they may want to try on some-

thing that we know looks great on girls with their body type," she says. "We've had some fuller-figure girls come in and try on mainly ball gowns (the poufy Cinderella-style dresses). We'll suggest something with more of a 'fit-and-flare' style, and they often find they really look great in something they never thought they could wear."

Deal adds, "When a bride walks in the door, I'm thinking about the styles she would look good in."

Hooper-Smay and Hooper say they'll show a bride alternate styles if they request it. "It's their day; they have to feel right with the dress," Hooper-Smay says.

Most designers use a different sizing system, and sizing can differ from designer to designer.

"As women, we're conscious about dress sizes and may be taken aback if we need a bigger size than we usually wear, but it's the way this industry works," Deal says. "Brides are often more accepting of the sizing than the moms are when they're shopping for their dresses."

The perfect dress should also be comfortable, since the bride is in her dress for 10 to 12 hours on the wedding day. "It's important that the bride be able to sit and dance in the dress. I'll have her move around the shop to make sure it's comfortable," Hooper-Smay says.

Frazier adds that the fabric itself can play a role in comfort. She cautions that some laces and tulle can chafe skin on areas such as the bodice or underarms, especially if the material is fitted tightly.

Strapless dresses should fit properly, Deal says. "The bride should not be constantly hiking up the bodice; a seamstress can ensure it fits properly. Detachable shoulder straps can also be added for additional comfort," she says.

Heel height should also be comfortable and similar to what a bride is accustomed to wearing. Like the dress, a bride will be in those shoes for many hours.

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# From classic to country, here's how to cover up with style

— LAURA KNOWLES // LNP CORRESPONDENT

**Y**ou have the perfect dress. You have the perfect shoes, accessories and headwear, too. But there is one missing piece that completes your wedding look.

BELOW PHOTO COURTESY OF APRIL AND BRYAN PHOTOGRAPHY



THINKSTOCK PHOTO

*Capes can be very romantic. We had one bride who had a custom-made white velvet wedding cape with a hood. It was stunning.*

— Paula Pryor of Weddings by Paulette.



What do you wear if it's cool or even cold outside for a fall or winter wedding? Even if it's a spring or summer wedding, the air conditioning might be too much for your strapless gown. You need a cape or cover-up to chase away the chill.

You don't want to ruin the perfect wedding look with some last-minute cover-up. Luckily for you, there are many options that can be traditional or even a bit edgy, depending on your style.

"Capes can be very romantic," says Paula Pryer of Weddings by Paulette. "We had one bride who had a custom-made white velvet wedding cape with a hood. It was stunning."

A long white cape can make you feel like a princess on your wedding day. Think of Cinderella when she arrives for her wedding with Prince Charming.

"Usually capes have to be custom-made," Pryer says. "They are not readily available at many bridal shops and brides like a cape that goes nicely with their dress."

If a long, flowy cape isn't quite your style, there are many other options, ranging from capelets, which are shorter versions of capes, to stoles and wraps.

"We have a nice selection of vintage mink stoles and furs," says Ali Witman of Ali Witman Consignment.

Real fur stoles and capelets are rarely worn anymore, so you can buy the real thing at a vintage shop at a very reasonable price. Or you could go with faux fur, in a soft white, brown, tan or black stole that looks real. A furry faux fur jacket is another option, with no harm to animals.

"Faux fur wraps and jackets are wonderful for a winter wedding," says Gail Mendenhall of Country Threads by Gail. "They look so pretty, with shimmering jewelry, and they are so soft and luxurious-feeling."

Mendenhall has seen a wide range of wedding cover-ups, depending on the season and the style of the wedding.

"I have seen brides who wore a classic wool navy peacoat or a plaid wool short jacket," she says, noting that it offers a British feel to the wedding.

Likewise, the bride might wear a thick, creamy wool Irish knit sweater or a pretty cashmere sweater adorned with sparkly sequins or lace.

Cashmere wraps are another option in soft white or cream. They feel wonderful to the touch and add subtle glamour to the look. Velvet burnout, regular velvet and lace are other materials for wraps and shawls. You can go for white, light pastels or even rich jewel tones when it comes to velvet.

If your style is very avant-garde and bold, you could opt for a dramatic white feather boa or a feathery capelet that speaks of the Jazz Age. Romantic brides might consider a lace blouse or jacket with their satiny wedding dress. Be careful to not mix up too many different kinds of lace. Lace looks best with a smoother fabric.

"Barn weddings are very popular and for a casual country style, some brides are wearing denim jackets," Mendenhall says.

They can pair nicely with a romantic lace dress, a bouquet of daisies and maybe even cowboy boots. If you're the kind of bride who loves country meadows and a more casual wedding style, you might just find that your perfect cover-up is already in your closet. You can also have your favorite denim jacket customized with lace and embroidery.

Taking that a step further, some brides might love the wide open road on a motorcycle, making a sleek leather or moto jacket the ideal accent to their romantic lace or silk dress. With sparkling jewelry and sophisticated accessories, the leather look doesn't have to look tough.



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I DO *Featured Wedding*

# Julie & Benjamin Sabran

Oct. 7, 2017 Ceremony + Reception: Rockford Plantation, Lancaster



## *What was the biggest challenge?*

We did everything ourselves — planning, set up, take down and everything in between! It was certainly fun yet challenging to find a place for all of our decor, but after many long days of prepping we made it all work!

## *Is there anything you would have done differently?*

My only wish would have been to have a shorter train on my gown at the reception so I could continue to dance the night away without the stress of the bustle coming undone!

### Photographer

Annie Sharp Photography

### Cake

Caitlin Mumma

### Flowers

Shayla Henry - Tulips and Twine

### Hair + Makeup

Studio 8 of Lancaster



## *Was there a theme?*

Rustic chic with eclectic personal touches showing our love of travel, craft beer and each other!



## *What is your advice for new brides-to-be?*

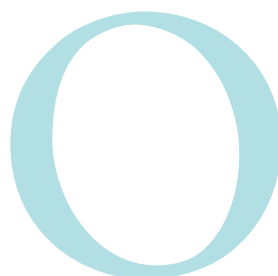
Enjoy every moment of the engagement and planning. Don't let the stress get to you. It's your day so envision it exactly as you have envisioned it your entire life! Follow your heart and make the day as special as your love between you, your spouse, your friends and family!



# Paint your wedding palette with fresh color



— LAURA KNOWLES  
LNP CORRESPONDENT



One of the best ways to make your wedding standout is with gorgeous color. It might be color inspired by your favorite flower. Maybe it's your birthstone, whether it's an emerald or a ruby. Perhaps you have always had a passion for pink or you love lavender. You can choose a color scheme that breaks all the rules, even if it's black and white, or maybe yellow and gray.

Here are a few ideas to inspire you to create your own special color palette for your wedding:

LEFT PHOTO COURTESY OF SPECIAL OCCASIONS | BOTTOM PHOTO COURTESY OF LIPS "TU" LIPS FLOWERS



## THINK PINK

Pink is always a popular choice, but it doesn't have to be typical pink. It can be the palest blush pink or brilliant hot pink.

"One bride centered her wedding on a flower, and it was just stunning," says Michelle Hess of Lips "Tu" Lips Flowers in Lititz.

That flower was the exotic King Protea flower, which has a white center framed by huge peachy pink petals. The bride's bouquet featured this unique bloom, along with soft cream roses and dusky greens. The rest of the wedding palette followed suit.

"Many brides love the soft, organic feel, with lots of greens and soft color," Hess says.



## AU NATUREL GREENS

"Many of my brides are looking for natural wedding colors with all shades of green," McComsey says.

Greens can range from dusky greens to bright emerald green. You can pair them with creamy white, gold or any other flower shade, such as bold red or soft coral. Green goes with lemon yellow or palest pink.

"Greens are very organic and drawn from nature. They look especially nice in spring, when everything is turning green," Hess says.

## DOWN BY THE SEA

Think of the deep shimmering sea with shades of aquamarine, seaglass, soft turquoise, dove gray and sandy tan. These blues are soft and muted and offer a soothing restful appeal.

You can add extra zing with accents like gold or silver. Stacia McComsey of Petals with Style likes the combination of aquamarine with khaki, which offsets the sea shades with a strong neutral.

"I love aquamarine or turquoise with gold. It is an enchanting combination," says Claudia Himes of Special Occasions.

At Weddings by Paulette, there are bridesmaids dresses in the soft shades of the sea, so that everyone can wear a slightly different shade of sea blue. The bride can call on her inner mermaid in gowns with a watery feel of turquoise and silvery gray or coral, aquamarine and deep slate.

## MELLOW IN YELLOW

One of the most unusual color combinations Pryer has seen in her many years in the bridal business is yellow paired with gray.

"I had never seen that before, and the bride carried it off beautifully. She even had a yellow parasol. The bridesmaids had yellow bouquets, which looked lovely next to the soft gray," Pryer says.

Yellow is an up-and-coming shade for this season, and while yellow can be a difficult color to pull off, it works nicely against a neutral like gray or khaki. Think of bouquets of giant sunflowers, or tables decorated with sunny yellow tulips, roses, lilies and other brilliant blooms.



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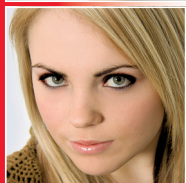
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## PEACHES AND TANGERINES

Orange isn't just for pumpkins in a fall wedding. You can create unique combinations that are soft like peach and apricot, or bold like tangerine and sunset orange.

"We have a wedding gown that has a lining in soft peach for an extra special look," says Pryer, adding that the soft cream lace creates a layered look of color that hints of the peach.

With peach or apricot bridesmaids dresses and a table setting with peach and melon blooms, the effect is fresh and luscious.

You can also go bold with orange, persimmon and pumpkin hues, which look nice with a neutral like gray or celadon green. Some brides like to mix up all sorts of orange hues for a dramatic look.



### A BOUQUET OF BLOOMS

Some brides take their inspiration from seasonal flowers, like hydrangeas or peonies. These flowers come in many hues, such as soft lavender, blue, rose, pink, white and green.

One bride wore a white lace dress, carrying a huge bouquet of hydrangeas in lilac, dusky blue and lavender pink. Her three bridesmaids wore dresses in those shades for a romantic seaside wedding.

"Peonies are another romantic flower with large blooms in colors like pale pink and deep rose pink," Hess says.

Not only that, but they have a wonderful scent and bridesmaids can wear dresses that pick up the tones of the peonies. Set against white and green, the look is ethereal.

## BERRY BEAUTY

Fresh berries in shades of wine, raspberry, burgundy, marsala and cherry are favorites for a fall wedding. They look especially nice with greens and maybe a pop of red. You can decorate the wedding cake with real fresh berries to complete the look.

"The berry shades are often jewel tones, like rubies and garnets, which can be very beautiful in the fall and winter," says Paula Pryer, co-owner with Ethel Lawrence of Weddings by Paulette.

## GO FOR MAGENTA

On the other hand, you could take another approach to pink with vibrant magenta. Add bold red hues and crisp greens to make your color scheme a standout.

"I've seen brides who do magenta with gold, and that's very striking," Hess says. "It also looks great with lots of lush greens."

Another striking look is magenta with black and white for a sophisticated trio of color.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SPECIAL OCCASIONS

I DO *Featured Wedding*

# Kelsey & Brandon Pile



*Dec. 30, 2017*

**CEREMONY:**

St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church

**RECEPTION**

Country Barn Weddings, Lancaster





THEME:

# Winter Wonderland

(which was tied together perfectly with the snowstorm on the day of our wedding)



## *What was the biggest challenge?*

The biggest challenge would be the last-minute time changes we had to make to our plans because of the 5 inches of snow we got on the morning of our wedding. Planning everything out to specific times was hard enough so the snow added some extra stress.





*Is there anything you would have done differently?*

I was happy with all of the vendors and how the day happened. I wouldn't change a thing and already wish we could relive the day again!



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A close-up portrait of a bride with blonde hair, wearing a white lace wedding dress and a sheer veil. She is looking down and holding a bouquet of white and red roses. The background is dark.

*What is your advice  
for new brides-to-be?*

My advice for new a bride-to-be is to think out everything even to the minor details. A lot of planning goes into making the day successful, but if you have planned everything out prior to the wedding day it makes the day go that much smoother.

# LESS IS MORE

## Memorable weddings don't have to break the bank

— LIS KING // LNP CORRESPONDENT

The day Alyssa Hannigan got engaged, she broke into tears. That's how much the cost of a wedding concerned her. After all, she and her fiancé had student loans to pay off and they were trying to save up for their first home.

But in the end they came up with a budget-friendly plan for their wedding.

"We got married at Camp Nawakwa in Adams County," she says. "It's a church camp where my husband was a counselor for years. Surrounded by vineyard and orchards, it was a spectacular setting. The ceremony was in the peaceful woods, followed by a reception in the pavilion. The camp cook catered the dinner, which was served at picnic tables decorated with fern fronds, herbs and tea lights. Market lights were strung throughout the pavilion and more fern fronds were hung from the ceiling.

"A friend DJed the reception, boxes of wine were our drinks, and a friend's mother made meadow tea. We had fun making wine and meadow tea cocktails at the reception. My husband, a graphic designer, created a wedding day logo, which we put on the table cards, invitations, and the favors, which were packets of sage seeds."

It was a lovely, memorable occasion, and Hannigan realized that she would like to become a wedding photographer and also help young couples create more personal and affordable celebrations. Alyssa Christine Photography of Lancaster was born.



Kim Paraschos helped make her daughter's destination wedding at Kiawah Island affordable by enlisting family and friends to make it a do-it-yourself event.

### A DIY WEDDING

A very personal experience, namely planning her daughter's wedding, also inspired Kimberly Paraschos to want to help couples keep costs within reason.

"My daughter wanted to get married on the beach at Kiawah Island, a place that means a lot to our family," Paraschos says. "Destination weddings always cost more than local venues, so we endeavored to save money on everything else. Call this the ultimate do-it-yourself wedding.

"For example, my mother made the cake and cupcakes, and I found out that buying things like lanterns and chalkboards was cheaper than renting, and now I own them and can loan them to other brides.

"Many brides want a more

pared-down wedding and, in fact, a smaller wedding and creative decor can leave guests feeling that they attended a very personal, intimate party rather than a large impersonal event."

One of the ways she helps brides keep budgets within reason is by offering her services for just the day of the wedding or for certain parts of the planning.

### MICRO-WEDDINGS ARE TRENDING

The average Pennsylvania wedding comes in at \$35,000, says Lori Hemphill, owner of The Perfect Plan, and often that's just the starting point. So it's hardly surprising that smaller, more modest weddings are trending.

"Many young couples have oth-

er priorities than a huge wedding," she says. "In fact, last year we saw an extraordinary amount of canceled or postponed weddings, even when a nonrefundable deposit had been submitted.

"The obvious way to reduce wedding costs is inviting fewer guests. Of course, sometimes that just isn't possible. Right now I am working with a bride who wants to reduce costs, but she doesn't see how she can invite fewer people. She says the people from work are musts because she was invited to their weddings. And then there are all her parents' friends and, of course, his and her families and friends. She has a point. She comes from a socially active family, and not inviting somebody from their circle could be awkward."



Kristen Rost's pretty floral was created by her mom.

ALYSSA CHRISTINE PHOTOGRAPHY

### The flowers:

Using one kind of flower is another budget idea, which actually brings a chic look to the event.

Or choose seasonal and local flowers. Some florists, like Duet Florals, will help do-it-yourselfers, and others, like Costco, offer special wedding packages.

### The favors:

Make your own favors, perhaps your mom's famous macaroons or chocolate-covered almonds. Any edibles will surely be gone before the guests even get to their cars.

### The dress:

And, yes, you can save on the wedding gown as well. Hannigan suggests checking out second-hand shops or shop designer and sample sales. EBay is another possibility. Often, if a bride changes her mind about her dress, it has never even been worn. Or, if you really want to be practical, you might just choose something you can wear over and over.

## CUTTING COSTS

However, all three wedding planners agree that there are many ways to bring down costs and yet enjoy the day.

### The venue:

Hannigan and Paraschos are both fans of free and inexpensive venues, such as a park, a field, a coffee shop or a backyard.

"If you don't have a backyard, ask to use a friend's," Paraschos says. "And you'll find that many friends and family members would love to participate. Think of the special talents among them. Somebody might be good with crafts. Still another may be a great baker, or a musician."

Hannigan agrees. "When you invite a creative person to

make what they love, you get awesome results," she says.

### The food:

Hemphill suggests a brunch, luncheon, afternoon tea or cocktail party where you might serve just desserts, cheese and crudité or fruit, or even pizza. And if you do decide on a sit-down dinner, eliminate a choice of entree. This cuts costs since the chef needn't buy enough to produce different entrees. Or you might serve an inexpensive dish like chicken and pasta and let the chef create some great sauces.

### The drinks:

An open bar is costly, so consider going for a signature cocktail. Or serve just beer, wine and enough champagne for toasts.



Homemade cakes reduce wedding reception costs, says Kim Paraschos of Inspired Design, Lancaster.

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&  
Marco  
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CEREMONY + RECEPTION

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# Bohemian

## WEDDING THEME

*What was the biggest challenge?*

The biggest challenge was being organized with time on the actual day. Time flies and it's easy to get behind, but with lots of help and taking that day one step at a time things go smoothly!



**PHOTOGRAPHER:** CREATIVE INTERPRETATIONS PHOTOGRAPHY | MICHELLE SMITH AND KYLEE LORIO

**CAKE:** ABOUT WEDDINGS, CAMP HILL **FLOWERS:** HAMMAKER'S FLOWER SHOP, LEMOYNE

**HAIR • MAKEUP:** BRITNY CANTRELL & KATIE LOMBARDO



A bride and groom are standing behind a rustic, white-painted wooden table outdoors. The groom, on the left, is wearing a white shirt and a dark vest. The bride, on the right, is wearing a white lace wedding dress and a floral headband. They are both smiling and looking down at two lit candles on the table. In the background, guests are seated on wooden chairs on a grassy lawn, and trees are visible.

*Is there anything you  
would have done  
differently?*

That was the best day of my life!  
I wouldn't have done a single  
thing differently. I had so much  
help from family, the staff from  
Ironstone and my girls,  
everything went great.



*What is your advice for new  
brides-to-be?*

Don't rush to plan your wedding. I was engaged for two years before my big day and it made everything run so smoothly. It gave me more than enough time to plan. Most of all, have fun with it! Do not stress the small stuff; leave all that stress behind. Your day goes so quickly, soak up as much as you can and make the best of it!





# To-do list

Make sure you've got  
all the major wedding day  
elements covered with our  
at-a-glance checklists

# Bride

## Nine Months Before

- Set a date
- Prepare a budget
- Determine the time and place of the wedding and reception
- Draw up a guest list
- Choose members of the wedding party
- Buy a wedding gown
- Shop for bridesmaids' dresses
- Interview photographers, videographers, florists, musicians, caterers and bakers

## Six to Nine Months Before

- Shop for wedding invitations
- Decide on attire for groom and groomsmen
- Start planning honeymoon
- Decide on florist, caterer, bakery, photographer, videographer and entertainment

## Four to Six Months Before

- Register with a bridal gift registry
- Reserve rehearsal dinner location
- Arrange accommodations for out-of-town attendants and book a block of rooms for other out-of-town guests
- Select a wedding ring for the groom

## Three Months Before

- Address invitations
- Meet with caterer
- Firm up honeymoon plans
- Shop for attendants' gifts
- Make appointment with a hairstylist

## Two Months Before

- Mail wedding invitations
- Meet with musicians
- Get together documents for marriage license

## Two to Four Weeks Before

- Set time for wedding rehearsal
- Get marriage license
- Have a final gown fitting
- Keep track of invitation responses
- Give caterer solid estimate of number of guests
- Draw up a seating arrangement for rehearsal dinner and reception and make place cards
- Make name and address changes on bank accounts, credit cards, driver's license, etc.

## One Week Before

- Make final checks with officiant, florist, caterer, photographer, videographer, bakery, musicians, etc.

## The Day of The Wedding

- Pamper yourself
- Rehearse ceremony with wedding party
- Get a good night's sleep

# Groom

## Nine Months Before

- Set wedding date
- Draw up a guest list

## Six to Nine Months Before

- Ask family/friends to be in the wedding
- Decide on wedding attire
- Start planning the honeymoon

## Four to Six Months Before

- Select wedding ring for the bride
- Reserve site for rehearsal dinner
- Arrange accommodations for attendants
- Help bride with bridal registry selections
- Shop for attendants' gifts
- Apply for passports if needed for honeymoon

## Two to Three Months Before

- Firm up honeymoon plans, final payments

## Four to Six Weeks Before

- Be sure to have all blood tests & paperwork needed for obtaining marriage license
- Make necessary changes to insurance

## Two to Four Weeks Before

- Apply for marriage license
- Give wedding party, close friends & family all information regarding rehearsal/rehearsal dinner

## One Week Before

- Give restaurant or caterer firm number for rehearsal dinner attendees
- Double check honeymoon plans
- Begin packing for honeymoon
- Attend your bachelor's dinner

## The Day Before

- Rehearse your ceremony with bridal party & enjoy rehearsal dinner

## The Day of the Wedding

- Bring the marriage license to be signed
- Give your best man the officiant's check to handle
- Remember to bring your bride's ring
- Arrive an hour before the ceremony
- Have fun & congratulations



# 5

# MUST-HAVE ITEMS *for your* WISH LIST

— CATHY MOLITORIS // LNP CORRESPONDENT



**W**hen you set up a gift registry for your wedding, you're really giving a gift to your guests, says Jim Radel, a partner with Radel & Stauffer in Lancaster.

"A registry list makes it easy for your guests," he says. "They don't have to overthink it. Even if guests don't get something off the registry, you're at least giving them a hint of your tastes and what you'd like."

Not only does a registry help guests narrow down their choices for gifts, but it also helps couples get exactly what they want, says Beth Ann Ages, director of The Registry at Boscov's. And, couples shouldn't feel nervous about creating a registry.

"Some couples are hesitant at first to create a gift registry because they feel funny about asking guests to buy them specific things," Ages says. "However, most guests actually prefer that a couple sets up a registry and tells them exactly what they'd like. It takes the stress and guesswork out

of gift giving, and the guest feels good knowing that the gift they choose is something the couple truly wants and needs."

Says Leah Drill, spokesperson for Bed Bath & Beyond Inc., registries offer more than just gifts — they provide a guide for how the couple will live their married life.

"Registries are personal and tailored to all the small details of how a couple will live their lives, from how they like their coffee in the morning to the types of sheets they prefer," she says.

Both Radel and Ages say bridal

gift registries can also extend well beyond the wedding, providing a go-to resource for gifts on other occasions, such as anniversaries or birthdays.

"We have lists going back 25 years," Radel says. "We keep them on file and friends and family can call in and ask what's on the list if they need ideas for Christmas, or birthdays, or anything long after the wedding."

So if you're looking to set up a registry, where do you start? Consider these "must have" ideas from Radel, Ages and Drill.

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“A few pieces of better quality cookware adds a lot to your registry.”

Jim Radel,  
Radel & Stauffer

## 1. COOKWARE AND DINNERWARE

“A few pieces of better quality cookware adds a lot to your registry,” says Radel, although he notes a trend toward more casual serving pieces in porcelain and stoneware. “These are useable, microwaveable pieces, not fine china. Lifestyles have changed and people don’t do formal entertaining anymore like they did at one point in history.” Ages says her favorite new casual dinnerware is Lenox ID Dinnerware. “Each piece comes personalized with a single initial, giving couples a unique, yet on-trend dinnerware set,” she explains, noting that each piece can be purchased individually rather than by place setting, allowing couples to pick and choose their configuration. Drill says when it comes to serveware, a classic choice combines a variety of materials. “Showcase the beauty of wood, stone and stainless steel at your dining table with the Artisanal Kitchen Supply Serveware Collection,” she says. “Each piece features an elegant, earthy look and gives your table chic, modern style.” Pieces in the collection range from \$7.99 to \$64.99.

## 2. BARWARE

Radel says trends are moving away from fine crystal and toward practical yet elegant glassware. “We’re selling a lot of wine glasses in sets of four between \$30 and \$50,” he says. “This is becoming more and more popular as people aren’t wanting to set out a \$65 crystal glass and then have guests feeling awful if something happened to it at a dinner party.” Old-fashioned glasses, decanters and craft beer glasses are also popular, he says. “Beer is the new wine when it comes to how you serve it, to enhance the experience,” he says, noting that glasses for IPAs, stouts and other craft beers are especially on trend.



## 3. KITCHENWARE

“The most timeless registry item still remains the KitchenAid stand mixer,” Ages says. “It’s a true statement piece for any kitchen as it comes in a variety of colors and sizes now. It’s also a versatile item with many uses and an item that wedding guests love to gift.” Drill agrees about the mixer and adds that coffee and espresso makers also make popular gifts. “The Nespresso by Breville VertuoPlus Coffee and Espresso Maker Deluxe Bundle features Centrifusion technology that automatically adjusts brewing parameters, creating the perfect cup of espresso, latte, cappuccino or coffee with the push of a button,” she says. It retails for \$269.99.

## 4. SHEETS AND TOWELS

Both sheets and towels are classic wedding gifts, and make not only practical choices, but luxurious ones, too, Drill says. She recommends the Wamsutta PimaCott Towel Collection (\$8.99 to \$39.99) and the Wamsutta Dream Zone 1000-Thread-Count PimaCott Sheet Set (\$139.99 to \$249.99) for their softness and durability.

## 5. ELECTRONICS

Smart devices are currently very popular, Drill says, and make a great addition to a wedding registry. She suggests Google Home (\$129), which delivers all the functionality of the Google Assistant app. “It answers questions, provides current news, plays music, manages everyday tasks, streams video to your TV and much more,” she says. “Just speak and it responds.” And, don’t overlook practical household items, she says, mentioning The Nest Learning Third Generation Thermostat (\$249.99), which adapts to the homeowner and works with Alexa for control by voice. “The thermostat may also be controlled remotely,” she says, “via your Wi-Fi connection with internet access.”



# Ask the expert



*By Duffy Johnson,*  
**Partner and  
Consultant,  
The Etiquette  
School of Central**

**If I was a bridesmaid in someone's wedding, am I obligated to ask that person to be a bridesmaid in my wedding?**

The simple answer is no, you are not obligated. The decision to reciprocate or not can be based on a number of factors. If the friend's wedding was quite some time ago, there is less reason to reciprocate. The size of your wedding is another consideration. Perhaps your friend had a large wedding, and yours is a more intimate affair with a smaller wedding party. Also, the nature of your relationship with that person is an important factor. Are you still close with the friend, or less so now? Perhaps you were close to the person at one time, and not so much anymore, in which case it could be uncomfortable to have her in your wedding. Perhaps the person asked you for other reasons, and you served her well in the role, but it is not necessary to reciprocate such an arrangement. Most brides have certain people that they will definitely include in their wedding party, such as sisters or a best friend. Beyond the obvious and definite choices of the people closest to you, most people would understand if they are not included. However, if you're having a huge, lavish wedding, complete with a large wedding party, maybe adding one more person could prevent hurt relationships and be a good choice in the long run.

**Our parents want to invite friends and business acquaintances that my fiancé and I don't really know. Is that really necessary, and how can we limit the guest list without hurting anyone's feelings?**

This is a very contentious issue, with as many opinions as brides. Of course, the right answer is up to each couple. A major consideration is how large the wedding will be, which might be defined by the venue or the caterer or the wishes of the couple. Of course another important part of the decision is who is paying for the wedding. Certainly, paying for the lovely affair should come with some privilege, such as including particular guests. But the main thing to remember is that a wedding is a joyous celebration, and a gathering of family and friends. There are a lot of reasons to include people important to your parents as well as your own chosen guests. It's the generous thing to do. Maybe your parents would really enjoy those guests, to share the joy and stories, and offer support to them and to you. The celebration is also about the joining of families. Start the collaboration on a positive note, rather than causing conflict about something unimportant in the big scheme of things. The gathering of people at your wedding becomes a community of loved ones to support you, your union and your newly created family throughout your lives. Celebrate and embrace the love, the support, your new family and friends!

A quick Facebook survey of favorite wedding gifts revealed that personal items that have a family history make the most memorable presents.

## What was your favorite wedding gift?

"Our favorite gift, which we still cherish 30 years later, was a nativity set given by a group of coworkers." — *Bonnie, Conestoga*

"My uncle, a farmer, gave us a steer, which we raised on our farmette. We eventually butchered it, providing us with a lot of beef! However, my uncle named it Little Loren (after my husband); we did not really appreciate that."  
— *Maureen, Holtwood*

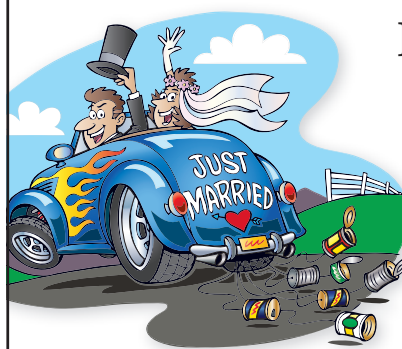
"My husband says, 'My wife.' I loved everyone (other than my brother) being there and getting along despite their differences. For actual gifts, my grandfather gave us some money, and we bought astronomical binoculars which we have used to see many amazing things and share the universe with each other, our kids and many other people."  
— *Beth, Washington Boro*

"My favorite gift was a grandfather clock given to us by my parents. It will be something that gets passed down to the kids for sure."  
— *Wendy, Lancaster*

"My husband gave me a mountain bike. Twenty-five years later I still ride it (just not as often as I should)." — *Tracy, Akron*

"My mother gave us my grandparents' little home and block of land it sat on in Greece. It was in ruins but we tore it down and rebuilt. We enjoy it every summer now. I love that my grandparents raised my mother in our holiday house."  
— *Asimina, Lancaster*

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**I DO** *The reception*

# How to choose a menu your guests will love

— CATHY MOLITORIS  
LNP CORRESPONDENT

**P**lanning a wedding menu takes a bit of finesse, says Maureen Raezer, owner and president of Thyme and Seasons Catering and Riverdale Manor.

“Menus have to be visually appealing, but also have to have universal appeal to all the guests,” she says. “You can’t get too esoteric with the menu. You have to come up with things that will be crowd-pleasers, because every wedding has guests from age 5 to 95.”

To accomplish this, Raezer suggests getting creative with classics.

“It can be taking classic dishes and putting our own twist on it,” she says.

Favorites for Raezer include Pomodoro Pollo (twin breasts of chicken with chevre, sautéed spinach and sun-dried tomatoes).

“This is a great choice because if someone doesn’t want the toppings on the chicken, they can just push it off,” she says. “You want to make sure food on the menu has familiarity to it but is still interesting. We’re really walking that very fine line. You can’t get too crazy with your options.”

“Our clients and guests are definitely enjoying more live cooking and interactive stations from grilled homemade pizza and taco stations. The ideal menu allows guests to customize their food selections as much as possible. We have many menu offerings such as make-your-own bruschetta bar that allows guest to make their hors d’oeuvres exactly the way they want.”

**MAUREEN RAEZER, OWNER AND PRESIDENT OF THYME AND SEASONS CATERING AND RIVERDALE MANOR.**

At Riverdale Manor, the majority (about 80 percent) of clients come from outside the Lancaster area, Raezer says.

“Our clients are looking for food that is carefully sourced and well prepared,” she says. “Our chefs make everything in-house from scratch and they even grow several foods on site.”

Using local and seasonal ingredients allows chefs to prepare dishes when ingredients are at their freshest, she says, and when they are seasonally appropriate.



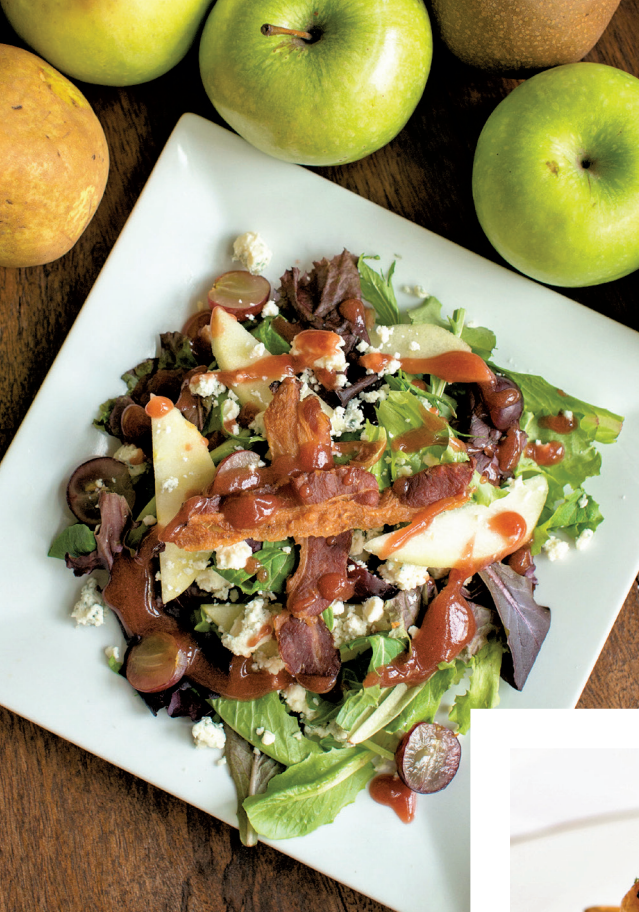
John Moeller, chef and owner of State of Affairs Catering, says seasonal ingredients make the best choices for wedding menus.

“Seasonal is always best but I can work with what I have to create the best meal possible,” he says, “But I have to say that I spend a lot of time searching for the best ingredients. This is the most important part of what I do. An unripe fruit or vegetable will not do justice to the final product.”

Moeller’s favorite dishes to serve vary depending on the time of year and the type of wedding.

“In December, we catered a wedding on the first real snowfall of the season and it was very special,” he says. “The bride and groom loved the snow falling during the ceremony and photos came out great. We started with a hot chocolate and warm cider station spiked if you wish. A butternut squash soup to start with a braised beef bourguignon were all a big hit.”

For warmer weather, he says, clients enjoy his roasted vegetable platter with Herbs de Provence for appetizers followed by a Canadian grilled salmon with a sun-dried tomato and pesto white wine butter sauce



or grilled marinated beef kebabs with a Middle Eastern spice blend served with chimichurri sauce.

“Living and working in the Lancaster area you would be foolish not to use all of the local ingredients that are available to you,” he says. “I do get spoiled as a chef in this area and having all of these great products at your disposal.”

Along with the chicken dish, other favorite choices for Raezer include whole grilled salmon with an herb vinaigrette sauce, grilling stations of kebabs and fresh fish.

“Our clients and guests are definitely enjoying more live cooking and interactive stations from grilled homemade pizza and taco stations,” she says. “The ideal menu allows guests to customize

have Summer Salad of mixed greens with strawberries and blueberries with a strawberry poppy seed dressing that is eye-popping. Our Autumn Salad is made with Bosc pears, Granny Smith apples, blue cheese, and bacon that is caramelized with pecans and maple syrup served with a cranberry vinaigrette.”

It’s important for brides- and grooms-to-be to take time to thoughtfully consider a menu, because food is an integral part of a wedding celebration, Raezer says.

“When choosing a menu, wedding couples should consider their guests and the primary goal should be hospitality and to make people feel welcome,” she says. “I like to tell my clients that although they are the bride and

groom, they are also the hosts of an event and that is far more memorable.”

Moeller says it’s important for couples to communicate preferences for favorite foods or ones that may hold special memories for them.

“Recently I did a reception where they wanted foods from the various places that they had traveled together, so that type of ethnic influence made a fun menu,” he says. “I

had a bride say to me once at our first meeting that she would rather come to her wedding in her pajamas and have everyone eat on a sheet on the lawn versus taking anything away from the food. That is how important food was to them.”

Food, Raezer says, is a big part of making people feel comfortable and relaxed at the reception.

“The food really has to be about your guests,” she says. “It’s about making everyone feel really welcomed to the event. Food is what brings people together.”

“A wedding reception really becomes an extension of a getting together for a family meal.”



their food selections as much as possible. We have many menu offerings such as make-your-own bruschetta bar that allows guest to make their hors d’oeuvres exactly the way they want.”

Almost all of the menus served at Riverdale Manor are seasonal, she says, noting, “For one of our upcoming winter clients, we are preparing a homemade butternut squash ravioli with a white wine butternut sage and pecans sauce paired with winter vegetables of roasted Brussels sprouts, with honey crisp apples and shallot and a balsamic reduction.”

Even the salads are seasonal, she says.

“We have salads and side dishes for every time of the year,” she says. “We

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THYME AND SEASONS

# Destination unknown?

*Options abound  
to fit your budget  
and interests*



— ROCHELLE A. SHENK // LNP CORRESPONDENT

**W**eddings are about love, romance and starting a life together. The day is often filled with lots of activity and, sometimes, a bit of nerves. It's also a day filled with family and friends.

The honeymoon, on the other hand, offers a time for the couple to simply enjoy being together.

"In the past, couples left for the honeymoon the day after the wedding," says Amy Stambaugh, vacation travel consultant with Travel Time, Lancaster. "Today, there's no mad dash for the airport; they may wait a day or a week, and spend that time with friends or family."

When couples come in to discuss the honeymoon, they'll often have a good idea of the general region they'd like to visit, Stambaugh says.

Chelsea Hammon, a travel consultant with AAA Central Penn Travel, says the couple will often indicate they want to go somewhere warm. "I'll ask them what their interests are and if they're looking for adventure or just want to relax," she says.

## ALL-INCLUSIVE

Both Stambaugh and Hammon say all-inclusive resorts tend to be popular with honeymoon couples. Since dining, alcoholic beverages, activities such as water sports and fitness are included,

they're a good value.

"You pay for everything upfront, which is something honeymoon couples really like; there are no surprises," Stambaugh says.

"They're ideal for relaxing," Hammon adds.

All-inclusive resorts may also offer a honeymoon package good up to three months after the wedding date that may include room upgrades, discounts on spa treatments, and romantic touches such as breakfast in bed or a rose petal turn-down



service. There also may be resort credits, concierge services or VIP treatment options.

And, as one might guess, adult-only all-inclusives, such as Couples, Sandals or El Dorado, are popular with honeymooners.

Top destinations include the Caribbean and Bahamas, and the warm weather, beaches and clear blue water make them popular honeymoon spots year-round.

"A lot of honeymooners have taken advantage of the daily nonstop flights on Southwest Airlines from Baltimore to Cancun, Mexico; Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; and Montego Bay, Jamaica," Stambaugh says. "They're not only nonstop flights, but on Southwest bags fly free, so there is a bit of a cost savings."

## THE BIG QUESTION

When helping couples select a specific destination, Stambaugh says, "I always ask if there's a 'must see' or 'must do' on the trip, and we base our discussion on that."

For example, if a couple wishes to visit Mayan ruins, an all-inclusive in Cancun or Riviera Maya may be a good choice. If it's a climb up Dunn's River Falls, Montego Bay is the spot.

Other "must dos" may include zip lining or a swim with dolphins, which Stambaugh says is offered at a number of destinations. She adds that all-inclusives in St. Lucia or Aruba are also popular destinations for honeymoon couples.

Another thing to consider when selecting a honeymoon destination is the length of the stay.

"If they only have three or four days and they want to go to an island, we'll want to select a destination that's served by a larger airport so they don't have to fly into a larger airport and then take a commuter to the island," Stambaugh says. "The travel day can be wearing."

## LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE

Hammon says a trend she's seen in the past year is honeymooners looking for adventure.

"They want their honeymoon to be different than what their friends have done," she says.

Some popular destinations for the adventurous:

**Hawaii:** It offers a lot to see and do outdoors and has a wide range of resorts to fit any budget.

**Iceland:** The Northern Lights can be romantic. (The best season to view them in Iceland is September to April).

**Croatia:** "People will tour Dubrovnik on the Adriatic Sea (a portion of the Old City's walls date to the 11th century) and then board a small boat or yacht to tour the small islands nearby," Hammon says.

Other destinations that seem to be on the rise among honeymoon couples:

**Costa Rica:** The Central American country offers a lot of opportunities for ecotourism, such as the rain forest, several volcanoes, and beaches on the west coast.

### London and Paris:

A semi-guided tour includes three days in London and three days in Paris.

Semi-guided tours provide hotels, transfers and some tours, but there's a lot of time for people to explore on their own. They'll also offer VIP entry into popular sites, so there's less time spent waiting in line for admission.

"London is great for people traveling overseas for the first time; they feel comfortable with the language," Hammon says. "Paris is a wonderfully romantic city — there's the Eiffel Tower, art, history, cafes."

- continued on page 36

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- continued from page 35

## SETTING SAIL

Cruises continue to be popular honeymoon getaways.

Caribbean ports and Bermuda, with its pink sand beaches and British flair, are popular, Stambaugh says. Alaska and Canada/New England cruises are popular anniversary cruises.

"Although you can sail from the Northeast (Baltimore, New York, Bayonne, New Jersey) year-round, most honeymoon couples fly to Florida, especially during the cooler months of the year," she says.

## GIFT THE TRIP

Both Hammon and Stambaugh say honeymoon registries, where friends and family help pay for the honeymoon as their wedding gift, are trending.

"I've seen it more and more the past two years, especially with second marriages or couples who are entering a first marriage but may be in their late 20s or 30s and already have a home and the traditional wedding gift items," Hammon says.





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