

Take

FALL/WINTER 2017

Your guide to planning a beautiful
Lancaster County wedding



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I DO *The Essentials*

Bride's

CHECKLIST

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

9 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

6 to 9 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

4 to 6 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

3 months before

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

2 months before

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

2 to 4 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.

1 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



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Groom's CHECKLIST

9 months before

- ☐ Set wedding date
- ☐ Draw up a guest list

6 to 9 months before

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

4 to 6 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

2 to 3 months before

- ☐ Firm up honeymoon plans, final payments

4 to 6 weeks before

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

2 to 4 weeks before

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

1 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

- ☐ 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

A full-page background photograph of a wedding couple, Calvin and Jeana Stoltzfus, standing in a cornfield. The man is on the left, wearing a grey suit and a red tie, with a beard and short hair. The woman is on the right, wearing a white lace wedding dress, with her hair styled in a braid. They are facing each other, smiling, and about to kiss. The corn stalks are tall and golden-brown, suggesting a late autumn or early winter setting. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a romantic atmosphere.

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ON THE COVER: This photo of Calvin and Jeana Stoltzfus taken by Deb Kepiro of Annie Sharp Photography was the winner of LNP's first I DO cover photo contest. For contest details, see page 6. For more photos from Calvin and Jeana's wedding, see page 16. Photos from our other four finalists can be found throughout this magazine, wherever you see a Featured Wedding with an I DO photo contest logo.

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For this edition of I Do, we let our readers choose the cover photo!

We asked local wedding photographers to submit photos, then narrowed it down to our five favorites for voting on LancasterOnline.

The photo you see on the cover, by Deb Kepiro of Annie Sharp Photography, garnered the most votes of the more than 800 cast.

A special thanks to our other four finalists. ▼



Creative Interpretations
Photography



Jeremy Bischoff
Photography



April & Bryan
Photography



Cindy Frey Photography

Look for the photo contest logo throughout this issue to see more wedding images from these finalists. ►



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Ask the expert

By **Duffy Johnson**, partner and consultant, The Etiquette School of Central Pennsylvania

Q. Am I expected to invite my boss and co-workers to my wedding?

A. There is not one “right” answer to the question. What is right for one may be not right for another. The answer depends on your relationship and other considerations.

Do you socialize with your boss or co-workers? Do you like your boss? Do you feel like you “should” invite your boss for political reasons? Would you be comfortable with your boss or co-workers at your very special event? How many people are in your office or workplace? The answers to these questions will help determine what is right for you.

If you have a small workplace, it might feel insulting to invite most, and exclude one or two. Perhaps it is better to invite all or none in this case. If you do invite just some people from your office, use discretion in talking about your upcoming celebration, and ask those you do invite to please refrain from talking in front of others. The last thing you want is to insult your boss or others. Keep in mind the consequences of your decision. Sometimes, if an exclusion is going to cause trouble, the price of adding another person may be well worth the peace and happy relationship it buys you in the long run. The same goes for family and friends.

If you do socialize with your boss and/or co-workers outside of the office and enjoy their company, then by all means, include them in your special day. However, if you have a strictly business relationship with your boss or others, there is no obligation to invite him or her, especially if the work relationships are not comfortable and friendly. It is your day after all, and you want to really enjoy yourself and spend it with the special people in your life.

Q. Should thank-you notes be handwritten, and how long after the wedding do we have to send them?

A. Yes, thank-you notes for wedding gifts should be handwritten, and sent in a timely manner. A handwritten note is expected in order to express gratitude and appreciation to the friend or loved one for their generosity, and perhaps to let a gift-giver know that the gift was, in fact, received.

A handwritten note is a bit of a novelty to many in today's electronic world of emails and social media. I suggest ordering notecards when buying the invitations, and keeping an accurate list of gifts received. The handwriting is really quite simple and need not be more than four sentences. A sincere expression of gratitude is what matters. Begin with a greeting, the thanks, a mention of the gift, what you like about it, a reference to the gift-giver and perhaps that you so enjoyed seeing them or you look forward to the holidays together, or whatever the case may be. Then simply close the note with another thank-you and a warm salutation fitting your relationship with that person.

It is a widely held viewpoint that a thank-you note be sent within a year. Others insist that a three-month time frame is more acceptable. Of course, the sooner the better when sending a thank-you note, but even a late expression of thanks is better than never.



PICTURE THIS

When it comes to wedding photography, anything goes

— LIS KING // LNP CUSTOM CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

Yes, technological advancements have been hugely responsible for the way we now preserve cherished memories, but couples about to tie the knot should know that there are also lots of style trends affecting wedding photography.

For example, with the flexibility of the digital medium, there is no limit to the number of shots that can be captured. This means that there's no need to carefully pose a crowd and the bridal couple for those few perfect shots. Instead photos can be plentiful and capture not only the bridal couple's expressions and emotion throughout their big day, but also the action of the guests.

You won't realize just how creative wedding albums have become before you peruse the portfolio of a photographer like Deb Kepiro of Annie Sharp Photography, Lancaster. She records a wedding in such a way that the bride and groom, even years hence, will be able to relive the big day, right down to the smell of the bridal bouquet and the taste of the macaroons on the dessert table.

Kepiro acknowledges spending a lot of time getting to know couples as they plan their weddings. In fact, she is often asked to record the proposal.

"I'll get a call from a guy, who's going to propose to his girlfriend," she says. "I love that. We will then decide on a location, and there I'll be, surprising the girlfriend. This makes for some terrific shots, plus I get to know the couple a lot better, which comes in handy for the wedding."

PHOTO COURTESY OF
ANNIE SHARP PHOTOGRAPHY

A bride and groom are underwater, looking at each other. The bride is wearing a white wedding dress with a dark belt and a tiara. The groom is wearing a white shirt and a striped tie. They are surrounded by bubbles and the reflection of their faces is visible on the water's surface.

Erin and Billy Josephian of Erin Lyn Photography in a “trash the dress” photo from their own wedding.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBRA OF DEL SOL PHOTOGRAPHY, RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO

LOCATION, LOCATION

Kent and Ashleigh Mast, a Lancaster husband-wife team of videographers, also strive to get to know the bridal couple before the big day.

“We actually ask couples to fill in a questionnaire,” Kent says, “because our approach isn’t for everybody. Our music, for example, might be a bit upbeat for some couples.”

“One of our favorite weddings was actually a two-day event. First, there was a traditional ceremony, but then the next day they had a Hindu ceremony. The groom arrived by helicopter, got into a car, and when he exited from that, the guests crowded around him and everybody danced with him to the second ceremony. This was a six-hour extravaganza, absolutely a photographer’s dream.”

Unconventional locations are very much in vogue. The Masts tell of photographing in places like the Florida Keys and Colorado, and Kepiro says she always tries to find additional sites beyond the wedding location itself.

“I love to whisk the bridal couple off to an abandoned milk house or a tobacco farm, that sort of thing,” she says. “At one recent wedding, we saw a rowboat in a pond, and the newlyweds were good sports, got into it and pushed off from shore. The environment of a new location can play a key role in setting the mood and getting amazing photos, so I urge couples and their photographers to be open to wandering off before or after the ceremony and reception.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN LYN PHOTOGRAPHY

TRENDING SHOTS

Smoke bombs are another technique trending for weddings. They are mostly used for exit shots of the event and are especially amazing when the smoke is backlit with color.

And there's a new wrinkle to wedding photo booths. Now they feature social media integration, so guests can upload their photos directly and instantly to their Facebook and other social media accounts.

Underwater photography? Yes, underwater shots are said to be gaining ground worldwide, and underwater marriage shots are predicted to become a trend in the near future.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THINKSTOCK.COM



PHOTO COURTESY OF APRIL AND BRYAN PHOTOGRAPHY

CANDID TIPS

But are there any special posing techniques professionals use to get such expressive photos? Absolutely.

Smell their ears — or temples. That's what a pro might tell a groom and bride, and one of them will turn and smile at the photographer, while the other will appear to be nuzzling the other's head.

Kissing and smiling at the same time creates a spontaneous pose. Or try the kissing game. Here, the bride and groom are asked to face each other but not move their feet. Then the groom is asked to kiss the bride, who in turn is asked to avoid his kisses. Again, fun poses and expressions are the result.

Ken Mast's advice to couples is to relax and enjoy the day.

"It's unlikely that everything will go without the slightest glitch," he says. "Don't worry about it. This is not about a flawless event. It's about love and family and a great time. When that happens, all the memories we photographers catch are sure to be great."

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YOU CAN HAVE COMFORT AND LOOK GOOD, TOO

Many brides-to-be visit bridal shops with specific goals in mind for the style of their wedding gowns.

Some women come equipped with magazine tear-outs or pull up images on their smartphones. Others may have an entire scrapbook filled with ideas they've been compiling for years.

Much consideration is given to wedding gowns. The cost and silhouette of the dress may garner the bulk of that consideration, but brides might want to spend more time considering comfort.

Depending on the time of day their ceremony takes place, brides can spend 12 hours or more in their gowns on their wedding day. However, when shopping for their gowns, brides may prioritize beauty over comfort, even though it's entirely possible to find a gown that's both stunning and comfortable. When staff and friends or family who have come along to offer advice start to blush over wedding gowns, brides-to-be may feel pressured to downplay any discomfort they feel.

PHOTO COURTESY OF M. SWINEHART PHOTOGRAPHY

To make sure brides look flawless and elegant but are still comfortable in their wedding gowns, consider the following tips.

1 KNOW WHAT TO HIGHLIGHT AND WHAT TO COVER UP.

No two body types are the same, and many women feel certain parts of their bodies are their best assets while they want to downplay others. Try on gowns that play up your best features. If you have shapely legs, consider a dramatic gown with a slit to show them off. Certain gowns can enhance the décolleté or show off an hourglass shape.

Remember, many gowns can be modified so that you feel secure and confident. Sleeves can be added or fabric placed to cover up any perceived flaws. Confidence and pride are important parts of the comfort factor.

2 GET SIZED CORRECTLY.

Bridal gown sizes do not coincide with street sizes. Depending on the manufacturer, brides may have to select gowns that are several sizes larger than they would normally wear. This should not be a cause for alarm. Brides should go by their measurements. Attempting to squeeze into a dress that is too small will only lead to discomfort on the wedding day.

3 PURCHASE THE RIGHT UNDERGARMENTS.

Improperly fitting bras, shapewear and other undergarments can lead to discomfort as well. Some seamstresses can sew in supportive cups to remove the need for separate bras. Brides can explore various options to reduce the visibility of certain accoutrements.

4 MOVE AROUND IN THE GOWN.

Brides should not just stand in front of the mirror and smile when trying on gowns. Put them through their paces. Try sitting, bending and even a little dancing. Make sure the dress is comfortable to move around in.

5 TRY DIFFERENT OPTIONS.

The gown brides have in mind may not be the one they ultimately go home with. Explore different styles and materials. Choose cooler, breezier fabrics and lightweight gowns, like crêpe, georgette or organza, for summer weddings. Heavier fabrics, such as brocade, may be more comfortable in the winter.

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— CATHY MOLITORIS // LNP CUSTOM CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

When their son, Eric, got married in June, Ruth and Bryan Hinerdeer were looking for something unique and affordable to serve as a beverage to guests at the reception.

The Lancaster couple decided to create their own wine for the festivities.

"We made a Merlot and Moscato," Bryan Hinerdeer says. "We had been making wine for a while, and we knew we could make something that was good quality and people would like. And, it helped keep the cost down."

Hinerdeer says the wine received great feedback from guests.

"Everyone really liked it," he says. "One couple told us they go to different wineries regularly, and the Merlot was better than a lot of the wines they've tried at wineries."

The Hinerdeers learned about making their own wine through a class offered at Lancaster Homebrew.

Mark Garber, owner of Lancaster Homebrew, has been offering the classes for about seven years, and says they continue to increase in popularity.

"It's a fun idea for a wedding," he says. "It makes a great choice for a one-time special event like a wedding because you can offer guests something special and unique that you wouldn't find at a regular liquor store."

According to 2015 statistics (the most recent available) from The Knot, an online wedding

marketplace, personalization is at an all-time high when it comes to weddings. Couples are spending more on personal touches that give guests a unique experience, with spending more than tripling in the category over the past decade.

Garber says his wine workshops offer hands-on instruction that allows even wine novices to create an exceptional product.

"The workshop is two classes," he says. "The first class, we start the wine and then there's a four- to five-week wait in between, and we bottle the wine at the second class."

At the first class, participants mix ingredients, start the fermentation process and design personalized labels for the bottles.

Each wine kit that Garber offers makes about 29 bottles of wine. Costs vary depending on the style of wine chosen, ranging from about \$175 to \$250.

"The sweet, fruity, lighter style of wine is the least expensive, then the table wine is the intermediate cost and the premium high-end wines are the most expensive," he says.

Garber also offers beer-making classes and says some couples choose to brew their own beer for their wedding, but that takes a little more finesse.

"Beer is more finicky than wine," he says. "For beer, I might suggest that you make one batch on your own before you make a batch for your wedding, just to be



“It’s really nice to serve a product that you made. It really comes down to serving something unique that you put your own personal touch on. At weddings, in general, people want little things that make the day unique and special, and this is perfect for that.”

- Mark Garber

sure you get it right.”

The juice kits he uses for the wine-making workshop come with a 100 percent satisfaction guarantee, he notes.

As for a timeline, Garber suggests starting wine for a wedding at least six months before the event.

"The sooner you can start, the better," he says. "The high-end kits age for several months before you serve them if you want them to be at their best. The sweet, fruity wines don't have to age quite as long and can be done about two months before the wedding."

Garber says he meets with the bride and groom to discuss their tastes and get a feel for who will be attending the wedding.

"I like to know where they're coming from, if they like dry wine, sweet wine, and so on," he says. "I've generally found that for weddings, the sweeter wines are the most popular."

Garber notes that he's received consistent positive feedback from customers who've made their own wine for weddings.

"It's really nice to serve a product that you made," he says. "It really comes down to serving something unique that you put your own personal touch on. At weddings, in general, people want little things that make the day unique and special, and this is perfect for that."

That was the appeal for the Hinerdeers, who say they'll most likely make their own wine for future events.

"It's not hard to do," Hinerdeer says. "At first, I was very intimidated and so afraid of every little thing, but once I did it, I realized it's easy. It's really just mixing ingredients at the right temperature and making sure the timing of all the steps is correct."

He says Garber provides excellent support during the wine-making process.

"Mark's great to work with," he says. "He's really knowledgeable and easygoing. He's helpful if you've never done it before."

And, he encourages anyone to give winemaking a try.

"Every time we've made wine, it's turned out great," he says. "We've never had a bad batch."

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"Letting everyone else
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involve myself."

- Jeana Stoltzfus





Calvin & Jeana Stoltzfus

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WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR NEW BRIDES-TO-BE?

“Go ahead and splurge on the things you really want for your wedding and cut back on the little things that tend to eat up your budget. Our biggest two things were flowers and the photographer, and they are definitely going to be the most memorable from our wedding.”

- Jeana Stoltzfus



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— LIS KING // LNP CUSTOM
CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

Throwing the bridal bouquet over one's shoulder at wedding's end could be a problem these days. Huge, wildly imaginative bouquets are the newest fashion, and they're often so heavy — 30 pounds or more — that throwing them might knock somebody out.



FLOWERS BY SPLINTS AND DAISIES



FLOWERS BY WEDDING FLOWERS BY CYNDI
PHOTOS COURTESY OF HARPER PARKER PHOTOGRAPHY

“Brides are looking for that show-stopper moment. And it isn't just the size that matters. They also want unusual ingredients. I may incorporate pussy willows, eucalyptus, ferns, Israeli rushes and lemon leaves with flowers. I may use as many as 80 stems in a bouquet, and it has happened that my hands hurt after I've finished.”

— CYNDI BRASSARD

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

Cyndi Brassard of Wedding Flowers by Cyndi in Willow Street blames — or credits, depending on what side you're on — Pinterest for this new look. “This is where today's brides go for inspiration,” she says

And a Pinterest photo of a bride carrying a humongous bouquet did start the trend. It went viral, and brides-to-be began besieging florists across the country with requests for similar statement pieces. Never mind that the bride in the photo was actually a model that a photographer had posed for maximum drama, namely with a 3-foot-wide table centerpiece consisting of garden roses, pepper berry vines, jasmine and amaryllis, plus branches and greenery trailing down to the ground.

“Brides are looking for that show-stopper moment,” says Brassard. “And it isn't just the size that matters. They also want unusual ingredients. I may incorporate pussy willows, eucalyptus, ferns, Israeli rushes and lemon leaves with flowers. I may use as many as 80 stems in a bouquet, and it has happened that my hands hurt after I've finished.”

LOCAL SOURCING

The green movement has influenced the bridal bouquet, too. Frowning on flying blooms thousands of miles, eco-conscious brides seek out florists promising local sourcing and even foraging. It's the urban restaurant scene gone bridal.

Tara Folker of Splints and Daisies, Lancaster, is such a florist. A self-described plant geek since childhood, she strives mightily to use only local blooms and also loves foraging for finds.

She absolutely welcomes brides' new affinity for the free-form, natural style of the larger bouquets.

“I include all sorts of things in bridal bouquets,” she says. “Flowers and foliage are prime, of course, but I have also used artichokes and other veggies, berries, twigs, moss and lichen, cotton, branches and even paper flowers.”

And Folker's experimentation goes further than the bouquet. Some of her brides go for a floral/greenery headdress rather than a bouquet, and she even fashioned

an entire floral dress for her niece. “It was a concept I wanted to try,” she says. “And, wow, was that fun.”

A SECOND BOUQUET

Understandably, maids and matrons of honor have complained about the weight of those enormous bouquets, and Folker admits that she has experienced cramps while creating some of her masterpieces.

“However, it's not necessarily the size that equates to the weight,” she notes. “It's the density. I can actually create a massive bouquet trailing to the floor, but it weighs less than a compact, dense version.”

Now, how about the beloved custom of throwing that bouquet into the crowd just before the bridal couple leaves for the honeymoon?

That's an easy one, say florists. They simply create a second, lighter bouquet that's perfect for throwing — and catching.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT AND NAT PHOTOGRAPHY / FLOWERS BY SPLINTS AND DAISIES

I DO *Featured Wedding*



Meghan & Arthur Jackson

Sept. 4, 2016

CEREMONY + RECEPTION:
Moonstone Manor, Elizabethtown



PHOTOGRAPHER: April and Bryan Photography // **CAKE:** The Cake Creators, Lancaster
FLOWERS: Petals with Style, Lancaster // **HAIR + MAKEUP:** Carmina Cristina, Camp Hill



"Trey and I live in Washington, D.C., and one of the things that brought us together was our love of food! Because we often eat our way through the city, we wanted to share our passion for different cuisines with our guests by offering a mix of fresh seafood, BBQ and Mediterranean options in the form of stations. We also love to travel to exotic places, and so we gifted our guests with handmade luggage tags in my favorite color... green!"

- Meghan Jackson

THEME *Our Favorite Things*





**WHAT WAS THE
BIGGEST CHALLENGE
IN PLANNING YOUR
WEDDING?**

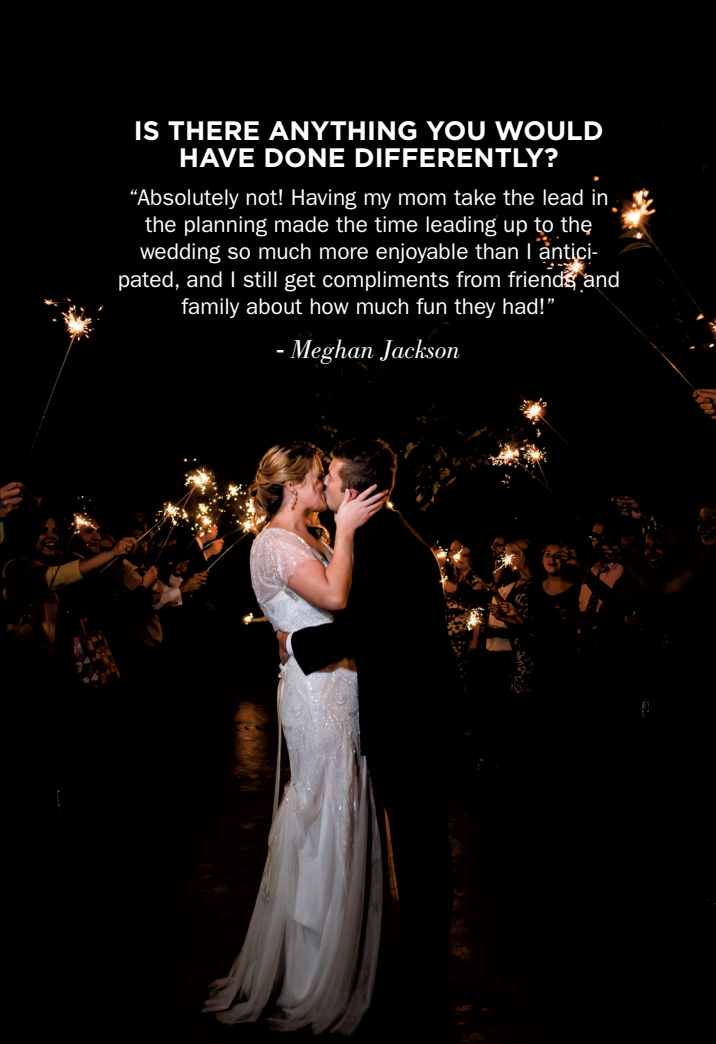
"My mother graciously planned the entire wedding, so I really can't say I had any major challenges! It was pretty difficult to drive back and forth from D.C. to Lancaster with a full-time job, so I have to admit that my mom was a lifesaver! We were initially concerned about finding a venue that would allow my mini-dachshund to be a ring bearer, but Moonstone Manor was more than accommodating."

- Meghan Jackson

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

"Absolutely not! Having my mom take the lead in the planning made the time leading up to the wedding so much more enjoyable than I anticipated, and I still get compliments from friends and family about how much fun they had!"

- Meghan Jackson



WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR NEW BRIDES-TO-BE?

"Time moves so quickly! Enjoy yourself leading up to the wedding and when the special day arrives, let the little things roll off your back. You'll be so full of happiness walking down the aisle toward your soulmate that it won't even matter if a flower is misplaced or if the DJ forgets to play one of your favorite songs. Trey and I screwed up our first dance because we were so nervous but excited, and it's the best part of our wedding video!"

- Meghan Jackson





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Tying the financial knot

Why every couple should talk about money **before** the wedding



— LIS KING // LNP CUSTOM CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

You've no doubt heard that struggles and arguments about finances can spell disaster for a marriage. So what can you do to prevent this from happening to you?

"Communication is key," says financial planner Timothy Reed of Kimber Group, Lancaster. "Love is wonderful, but we're talking about two personalities getting together.

"Remember, there's a practical side to marriage," says Reed, who advises couples to settle on some basic money questions before heading down the aisle.

This could seem awkward and cold to many starry-eyed lovebirds, but financial experts like Reed, marital therapists and authors of relationship books all agree that you should certainly know your beloved's credit rating. If either of you has a poor credit record, it could prevent both of you from qualifying for a mortgage or getting a low interest rate on a joint credit card, for example.

"The two of you need to have an absolutely honest discussion about your current financial situation and your biggest money worries," Reed says. "You also need to come to terms about your approach to handling debt. Often, in a marriage, one is a spender, and the other is a saver.

"In my own marriage, I'm the spender, and my wife is the saver. We handle that with communication. If an expenditure would exceed a certain amount, we talk it out."

Important questions

There are quite a few financial questions couples should ask each other before they tie the knot, say the pros.

- **How will we pay the bills?**
- **What are our financial goals?**
- **How will we spend or save money?**
- **How will we protect our financial future?**

Under those questions come other questions that you should discuss sooner rather than later.

Will you have joint or separate bank accounts? What about discretionary spending? Do you want to have personal money to spend as you choose? How will you pay down pre-existing debt, if there is any? How much can each of you spend before you have to alert one another?

A big question might be continuing education.

"If your partner has career goals that have yet to be satisfied, he or she might plan to return to school," says Nicole Mayer, a nationally recognized life transition specialist based in Chicago. "This could become a significant burden. In some cases, partners end up divorced after they worked for years while supporting their collegiate partner. You need to consider scenarios like this before tying the knot. Would you be comfortable working while your partner heads to law school, for example?"

Helping family can be another stumbling block, Mayer says.

"If your partner loaned \$500 to his brother, would that be a big deal? And what if your mother-in-law is ill and needs thousands of dollars in medical care? How would you handle these financial pressures as a family?"

She also wants couples to think about retirement. "This may sound premature right now," she says, "but if you don't plan for the future you could be in serious trouble. Don't just ask when your partner wants to retire, but also in what style. Do we want to travel? Do we want to buy a fishing boat or move to a warm climate? If so, what steps do we need to take to make that goal a reality?"

Emergency warnings

Once you agree, it's a good idea to write down the goals and schedule time to revisit them regularly. The next step might include closing redundant accounts, updating insurance policies, synchronizing investment plans and making new wills.

"And prepare for emergencies," Reed warns. "They always happen. A promotion or a new baby can be exciting, but a serious illness, an injury or an unexpected disaster can throw a wrench in your plans. Your financial plan needs to keep pace with your life. As your life changes, so should your plan."

Finally, Reed thinks young couples should seek advice, not just from a financial planner, but also from some older couples, whose marriage they admire.

"If you know such a couple, invite them out for dinner and let them be your mentors," he says. "This is about life, not just numbers."



I DO *Featured Wedding*

Laura & Regi Huc

June 9, 2017

CEREMONY AND RECEPTION:
Excelsior, Lancaster

THEME:

"We wanted it to be modern, unique, romantic and classy. We met while living in New York City and wanted a slightly industrial, creative, modern venue to remind us of New York. Excelsior was perfect and the venue has so much history and character, along with the catacombs, green wall and terrace, that made it simply gorgeous and one-of-a-kind."

- Laura Huc





PHOTOGRAPHER: Jeremy Bischoff Photography // **CAKE:** Rosie's Creative Cakes, Manheim // **FLOWERS:** Splints and Daisies, Lancaster
HAIR: Bristle and Prim, Lancaster // **MAKEUP:** MKUP The Beauty Studio, York



WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

"Our biggest challenge was probably choosing the perfect menu. We went to three or four tastings to get it right. We also had to purchase our own liquor, so coming up with the correct amounts was a little difficult."

- Laura Huc

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

"Set a proper budget, as spending does get out of control."

- Laura Huc



A full-page photograph of a wedding couple standing in a narrow, brick-paved alleyway. The bride is wearing a white, sleeveless, floor-length gown with a high slit and is holding a large bouquet of white flowers. The groom is wearing a dark suit and is leaning in to kiss the bride on the cheek. The alleyway is flanked by tall, ivy-covered brick buildings. In the background, there are black street lamps and benches. The lighting is soft, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR NEW BRIDES-TO-BE?

“Everyone says this, but do try to enjoy the process. It definitely becomes extremely stressful at times making a ton of decisions that you believe will have major repercussions if chosen incorrectly. It will all come together. And on the day of, do let go of control. You’ve done all you can do. Enjoy the people that love you and came and the beautiful wedding you spent so much time and money planning together. Oh and eat! We both missed our cheese and seafood tables.”

- *Laura Huc*



I DO *Featured Wedding*

LAUREN & SEAN RODE

Oct. 29, 2016

CEREMONY:

First United Methodist Church of Lancaster

RECEPTION:

The Country Barn, Lancaster



WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

“Dance lessons! My husband wanted us to look good for our first dance, so we took dance lessons. It was quite the challenge with me being uncoordinated but turned out to be a lot of fun.”- *Lauren Rode*



THEME:

Fall



WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

“I wouldn’t change a thing. While there were a few bumps along the road as everything came together, I wouldn’t go back and change anything. It was an unforgettable day full of love, family and friends, so I could not ask for more.”

- *Lauren Rode*





WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR NEW BRIDES-TO-BE?

“Don’t lose sight about what that day is truly about. At the center of everything is the commitment you are making to love, cherish and support your soon-to-be spouse. It is easy to get caught up in the wedding frenzy, but remember that the day is to celebrate the love the two of you hold for each other. Don’t let anything get in the way of cherishing that moment.”

- Lauren Rode



PHOTOGRAPHER: Creative Interpretations Photography/Paul Joseph Lorio III and Kylee Lorio

CAKE: Bakers of Buffington, Downingtown // **FLOWERS:** Flowers by Jay (through Country Barn)

HAIR : Melissa McHugh, Willow Street // **MAKEUP:** Andrea McCardell of Shades of Blush Studio, Nottingham

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GOING CASUAL

MORE COUPLES FORGOING SOME OF THE FRILLS

— LIS KING // LNP CUSTOM CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

Casual weddings are on trend, and not necessarily for budgetary reasons. Many couples simply find the traditional pomp and pageantry of weddings to be too much.

“This is not to say that brides are turning their backs on elegant and memorable events,” says wedding planner Melissa Herr of Willow Street. “It’s just that they prefer personal style and wit to cookie-cutter conventions. For example, I’ve just met with a couple who want a pizza wedding. They will have a food truck with a pizza oven and a chef creating custom pizzas. This will be a lot of fun, an event that guests won’t soon forget.”

INTERPRETING

CASUAL

But exactly how do you do a cool, casual wedding? You should probably first ask yourself if this is what you really want, wedding planners warn.

Herr says that to some couples, casual just means a smaller, more intimate wedding, where only family and the closest friends are invited, leaving out business associates, for example.

For others, it means going for a free-spirited celebration rather than the frou-frou gown, the fancy buffet, and over-the-top centerpieces and ice sculptures.

“However, you shouldn’t forego some tradition or concept that you love just to appear stylish,” she says. “Remember, this is your day. Have the wedding that will make you happy. Don’t lose sight of what got the two of you here in the first place.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN LYN PHOTOGRAPHY

THE LOCATION

Fewer weddings take place in a church, and considering the beauty of the Lancaster area, it's not surprising that many couples head for the outdoors to exchange their vows. Scott Rhoades of New Traditions, a secular wedding officiant, says he performs about a hundred weddings a year and many of them take place in a pavilion in a park or a simple archway in a field, often with a pond in the background.

"With us, it's always the love story that counts, not the frills," he says. "At one recent wedding, everybody brought Crockpots. Sometimes I see food trucks back up to serve guests at the reception following the ceremony."

In general, planners recommend that anybody who wants a casual wedding go for a location that lends itself to unpretentious partying. Look for a place where kids can picnic on the grass and grownups can sample food, dance or even throw around a Frisbee. And by all means, let the dogs in on the festivities.

Herr describes this kind of wedding as rustic, but refined. "When our daughter married, we held the wedding right here on our family farm, in a hay field. It was a wonderful day in May, and it was the kind of wedding that keeps me loving this business. Seeing the extended family celebrating a new couple settling down, grandparents and little kids all together at a party, that's what makes a wedding special, and, it's a reminder that marriage is hard work. It deserves a good send-off."

THE LOOK

Even if the wedding takes place in an informal setting, don't be too informal. For table linens, do go for antique lace tablecloths, plaids, toiles or gingham, but leave the formal damask behind.

The flowers could be sunflowers, daisies or

wildflowers, gathered in informal pitchers and jars. And make the lighting as natural as possible. Clean, white candles work, as do antique chandeliers and even rustic metal lanterns,

Now, about the food. Herr says some couples opt for hors d'oeuvres rather than dinner; others opt for a luncheon reception. Or a bride might decide to offer only desserts. Or cupcakes. Or oysters.

For the casual wedding, any kind of finger food is really appropriate. How about olives, imported cheeses, raspberries, rustic loaves of bread, homemade preserves? And serve it with carafes of local wine?

THOUGHTFUL GESTURES

Both the invitations and favors should suit the mood of the wedding. Use your own handwriting for those invitations, choosing the kind of words you'd use writing a letter to a friend, and think of using fun-colored ink. Green and raspberry, perhaps. Or burgundy for fall. And, by all means, incorporate imagery, such as flowers and butterflies.

Handing out favors to guests is another time-honored tradition that needs to be revised at an informal wedding. Forget about presenting them in expensive silk and tulle pouches. Instead, opt for unexpected materials like burlap or raffia or a bit of antique cloth, even an heirloom handkerchief.

Choose a modest, but thoughtful favor. Perhaps a jar of honey from a local farm. Or a perfect white peach or pear? Or you could make a donation to a charity or historic local property. All would testify to your good taste. And isn't that one of the things you want guests to remember about your wedding, even if it is a fun and informal event taking place in a grassy field?



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I DO *Featured Wedding*

John & Emily Hostettler

May 21, 2016



CEREMONY + RECEPTION:
Smoker Farm, New Providence



PHOTOGRAPHER: Cindy Frey Photography

CAKE: Katie Miller, Emily's best friend's little sister

FLOWERS: Margie Hess, Conestoga

HAIR + MAKEUP: Emily's cousin

THEME: COUNTRY



WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

"Finding the photographer. We had one lined up and it fell through a couple of months before our wedding. Cindy was really great fitting us in." - Emily Hostettler



**WOULD YOU HAVE DONE
ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY?**

"I don't think so. It was
pretty perfect."

- Emily Hostettler

**WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR
NEW BRIDES-TO-BE?**

"Don't stress and just have fun
with it, because at the end of the
day you get married to your best
friend. It's all worth it."

- Emily Hostettler



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Gifts for the groomsmen

Weddings are steeped in tradition, and one of the more enjoyable ones is the custom of gifting members of the bridal party.

With regard to picking out tuxedos and planning the wedding, grooms may not spend as much time with their groomsmen as brides do with their bridesmaids. But that does not mean grooms don't want to go above and beyond when gifting their groomsmen. The following are a handful of unique groomsmen gift ideas.



PHOTO COURTESY
OF CREATIVE
INTERPRETATIONS
PHOTOGRAPHY/ PAUL
JOSEPH LORIO III
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COMMEMORATIVE BEER

Many grooms and groomsmen bond over beer, so grooms who have raised many a pint with their groomsmen might want to create their own commemorative beers to show their love and appreciation for their best guy friends. Many craft breweries offer brewing classes that teach beer aficionados the finer points of making beer. Grooms can attend such classes on their own and create their own batch specifically for their groomsmen or pay for the whole group to attend the class together.

MOVIE POSTER

Grooms with a creative side and a love of movies can create movie posters that mimic those of iconic guy films like "Goodfellas" or "Animal House," swapping out images of the film's stars with likenesses of themselves and their groomsmen. Have the finished products framed before presenting one to each groomsman.

CONTENT PROVIDED BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

GUYS' DAY OUT

While it's customary to gift groomsmen with mementos of the wedding that they can keep for years to come, there's no law forbidding grooms from gifting an experience. Grooms can book a guys' day or night out for after the wedding, buying each groomsmen a ticket to a ballgame and paying for dinner for the whole crew. Or consider a more adventurous outing, such as a group bungee jump or whitewater rafting trip. Provide a memento by ordering a handful of specially designed commemorative T-shirts.

COMMEMORATIVE PHOTO

Many grooms ask relatives and friends they have known for much of their lives to be their groomsmen. So it's not uncommon for groomsmen to know each other very well. If each member of the party has known one another for years, grooms can try to find a photo of all of them together when they were much younger. Have the photo professionally framed, noting the date of the wedding with an engraving on the frame. If each groomsman is from a different period in the groom's life, then the groom can find a photo from early in each relationship to present as a gift.



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www.bonvoyagetravelagency.com

INVITATIONS

- 1 | **Carpenter Invitations and Design**
www.carpenterinvitationsanddesign.com
- 2 | **Details**
www.detailslancaster.com
- 3 | **Designs by Renee**
www.designsbyrenee.biz

MAKE-UP

- 1 | **Luxe Salon & Spa**
www.luxelancaster.com
- 1 | **Visage a' Visage**
www.visagevisage.com
- 2 | **Alure Salon**
www.alurelancastersalon.com
- 3 | **Envy Studio**
www.bnvied.net

MOTHER-OF-THE-BRIDE DRESS

- 1 | **David's Bridal**
www.davidsbridal.com
- 2 | **Bon-Ton**
www.bonton.com
- 2 | **Blush Bridal, formerly known as The Bridal Emporium**
www.blushbridalpa.com
- 3 | **Country Threads by Gail**
www.countrythreadsbygail.com

REHEARSAL DINNER

- 1 | **The Pressroom Restaurant**
www.pressroomrestaurant.com
- 2 | **Cork & Cap Restaurant**
www.corkandcaprestaurant.com
- 3 | **The Greenfield Restaurant & Bar**
www.thegreenfieldrestaurant.com

TUXEDO RENTAL

- 1 | **Men's Wearhouse**
www.menswearhouse.com
- 2 | **Central PA Tuxedo**
www.centralpatux.com
- 3 | **Filling's**
www.fillingsclothing.com

WEDDING BAND

- 1 | **Brent L. Miller Jewelers & Goldsmiths**
www.brentlmiller.com
- 2 | **Finch Jewelers**
www.finchjewelers.com
- 2 | **Koser Jewelers**
www.koserjewelers.com
- 3 | **Ream Jewelers**
www.reamjewelers.com

WEDDING CAKES

- 1 | **Oregon Dairy**
www.oregondairy.com
- 2 | **Achenbach's Pastries Inc.**
www.achenbachs.com
- 2 | **The Flour Child**
www.theflourchild.com
- 3 | **Byers Butterflake Bakery**
www.byersbakery.com

WEDDING CATERER

- 1 | **Enck's Custom Catering**
www.enckscatering.com
- 1 | **Hess's Barbecue Catering**
www.hessbbq.com
- 2 | **Thyme and Seasons**
www.thymeseasons.com
- 3 | **Rettew's Catering**
www.rettewscatering.com

WEDDING DRESS

- 1 | **In White**
www.inwhite.com/lancaster
- 2 | **Posh Bridal**
www.poshbridal.com
- 3 | **Country Threads by Gail**
www.countrythreadsbygail.com

WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER

- 1 | **R.L. Heller Photography**
www.rlhellerphotography.com
- 2 | **Leslie Ann Photography**
www.leslieannphotos.com
- 3 | **PhotOlé Photography**
www.photole.com

WEDDING PLANNER

- 1 | **Stylish Occasions**
www.stylisho.com
- 2 | **Planned Perfection**
www.plannedperfectionpa.com
- 3 | **Simply Events**
www.simplyeventsinc.com

WEDDING RENTALS

- 1 | **Eagle Rental**
www.eventsbyeagle.com
- 2 | **Ace the Party Place**
www.acethepartyplace.com
- 2 | **Treasured Rentals & Events**
www.treasuredrentals.com
- 3 | **Hess Tent Rental**
www.hesstentrental.com
- 3 | **Tents & Events LLC**
www.tentsandevents.net

WEDDING SHOES

- 1 | **David's Bridal**
www.davidsbridal.com
- 1 | **DSW Designer Shoe Warehouse**
www.dsw.com
- 2 | **Boscov's**
www.boscovs.com

WEDDING TRANSPORTATION

- 1 | **Expressions Limousine of Lancaster**
www.expressionslimo.com
- 2 | **Superior VIP Limousine**
www.superiorviplimousines.com
- 3 | **Infinity Transportation**
www.infinitytransportationservices.com

WEDDING VENUE

- 1 | **Cork Factory Hotel**
www.corkfactoryhotel.com
- 2 | **Riverdale Manor**
www.riverdalemanor.com
- 2 | **Eden Resort**
www.edenresort.com
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717-435-9343

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