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WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE

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from our partners

the
**prettiest
palettes**

for dresses, invites & decor

advice from

VERA WANG

ZAC POSEN

JENNY PACKHAM

JOSEPH ABOUD

what's inside

CONTRIBUTORS



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*Our new designer
collaboration, unveiled!*
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modern brides.*
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*Chief creative director
for Men's Wearhouse.*
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ANDREA ANCEL
*Lead floral designer
for FTD with a passion
for seasonal flowers.*
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MELISSA SWEET DRESS MS251136 \$1,358

(On the cover)

GALINA DRESS WG3817 \$499 VEIL WPD16266 \$199.95



“A bride can save a ton if she uses a long engagement to research good deals or DIY a lot of the details.”

—EMILY NORTON

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HOW NOT TO BLOW your budget

*Money can be a touchy subject, particularly when it comes to wedding planning. Who's paying? What can we afford? A three-tier cake costs how much?! David's Bridal reached out to wedding planner **EMILY NORTON** from *The Main Event in Smithfield, Virginia*, because she's a genius at making every dollar count. Here's her advice for getting your dream day at a cost that's actually doable.*

ASK FOR HELP

This is what friends are for! Enlist a steady-handed pal for calligraphy duties and your most socially skilled bud for seating charts. *"Those are hours of work that many vendors would charge you to do,"* says Norton.

PRE-CHOOSE THE BOOZE

Instead of a pricey full bar, offer beer and wine—Norton suggests two types of each. And, for an extra option, serve a signature cocktail made with just a couple types of liquor. Share your all-time favorite sip, or pick one that relates to the wedding theme.

START WITH THE SPEECHES

"Do the toasts when you first sit down for dinner, not later when you cut the cake," says Norton, because you can forgo costly champagne as everyone raises a glass of whatever they're already drinking. Plus, speakers aren't tipsy yet, so spiels will be shorter—and you'll get more time to dance.

BE A WEEKDAY WARRIOR

Weekday venue bookings generally cost less than Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays. Try this tactic if most attendees live nearby, or snag a pre-holiday date—say,

December 23 or July 3—when folks are likely to have off work the next day.

BEAT THE CROWDS

Instead of a prime-time event, how about a morning wedding? You'll slash costs—not necessarily on the venue, but on the food and drinks, says Norton. *"You can host a brunch or a luncheon with lighter and less expensive fare."*

TAKE IT SLOW

"A bride can save a ton if she uses a long engagement to research good deals or DIY a lot of the details," Norton says. If your timeline is short, vendors' availability may be limited, leaving you stuck with higher rates.

CONSIDER HIDDEN COSTS

Outdoor venues like local parks often come with low, if any, fees. But be careful, says Norton: *"You still have to rent a tent, tables, chairs, and linens, which can run up to \$4,000."* Translation: These aren't automatically more wallet-friendly than a traditional venue.

SKIP THE PLATED DINNER

"The number of staff required for a seated, plated meal means it's always going to cost more, no matter what entrees you choose,"

says Norton. But there is middle ground between five-star dining and a self-serve spread, such as passed hors d'oeuvres before dinner or a manned meat-carving station beside the buffet.

...OR SKIP SUPPER ALTOGETHER

Who wouldn't love a wine-tasting reception? Or a dessert and coffee bar? Hold a candlelight ceremony around 7 p.m. that gives way to a late-night celebration. *"Just be sure it's clear that guests should eat dinner before they come,"* says Norton. *"Otherwise, people will leave early when they get hungry."*

PRIORITIZE!

More than anything, Norton says, *"focus on what's important to you."* (An amazing deal on an ice sculpture isn't amazing if you don't care about having an ice sculpture.) *"Make a numbered list of what matters to you and your fiancé,"* she advises. Take care of those top items first, because when you hit your last budgeted dollar, you won't miss what's left. *"Have you ever left a wedding and thought, 'Oh my, can you believe that couple didn't have monogrammed napkins?'"* she says. *"Didn't think so."*

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IN EVERY PHOTO

You'll be smiling—all. day. long. But there's no need to fret, because we called up a few in-the-know friends for tricks to a wedding album that does you justice.

ZAC POSEN

designer, Truly Zac Posen

What's the most flattering, red-carpet-worthy pose? It might not even be a pose, says the designer, who suggests always standing in a way that's natural to you. "I love seeing candid photos," he says. "Those usually turn out to be the best ones."

The gown makes the day—and your pictures. "A great alterations person will ensure your dress fits impeccably," says Posen, "and you'll feel at ease and comfortable in your photos."



NICOLE PURDOM

national director of aesthetics training, Hand & Stone

Think ahead. For the most radiant skin on your wedding day, start using at-home exfoliators (or even better, getting monthly facials) about six months prior, says Purdom. "You'll see an improvement in the tone, texture, moisture level, and evenness of your skin," she says, which all make a difference on camera.

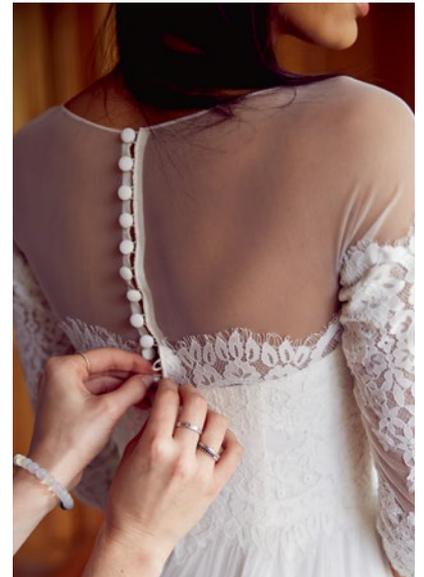
On the morning of the wedding, prep your face with a moisturizer containing hyaluronic acid. "It holds a thousand times its weight in water, making your skin look more plump and hydrated," Purdom says. "It's like a big drink of water for the skin."

HUGH RILEY

photographer & VP of production, The Pros Weddings

Try to plan your main photo session for the early evening, in the few hours before sunset. "That's when you get the most romantic light," says Riley. For midday shots, he advises standing in the shade. "The light is more even, and you won't be squinting!"

If you lean just a little bit forward, it'll stretch out your neckline, says Riley—and prevent the dreaded illusion of a double chin. "Instead of looking downward, tilt your head up slightly."



AMY KLINE

director of alterations, David's Bridal

Wedding gowns are heavy (often six or seven pounds or more, says Kline), and nobody wants photos to capture a drooping dress. A longline bra—the kind that extends down your torso—can actually help bear the garment's weight. "You're also forced to sit or stand straighter," Kline says. Instant posture boost!

It's important to wear the correct slip under your dress—luckily, your stylist can pinpoint the right one for you. That extra layer holds the skirt up and out so you don't get a crease at the legs, says Kline. "When you walk down the aisle, you'll see that nice, smooth gown finish."



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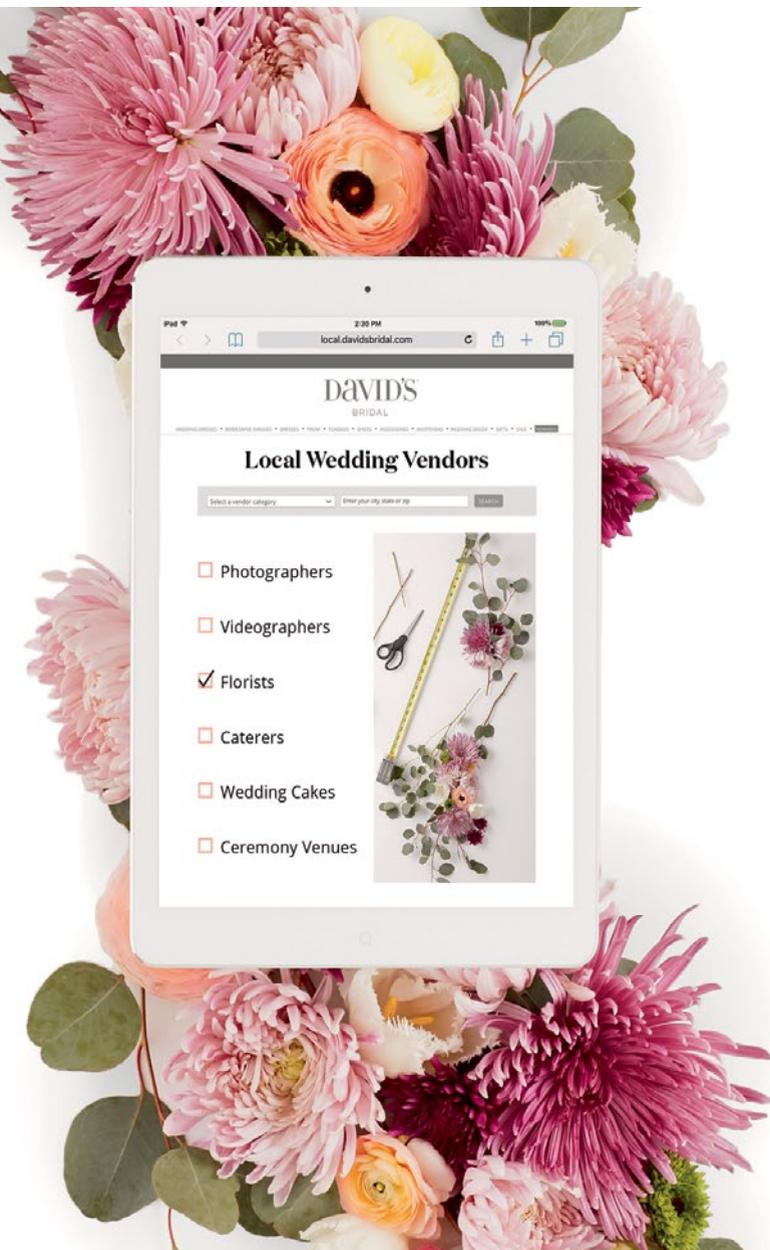
SHOES CALLIE \$59.95

TOTAL: \$1,267.75

good to know

ABOUT YOUR VENDORS

Pop these questions—and make sure you like the answers—before sealing the deal with your wedding pros.



ASK YOUR VENUE

What can't we bring? Sites can ban anything from types of alcohol (stain-prone red wine, for example) to dangerous decorations. Heart set on candlelight? Some venues allow open flames, but others say no, says Nicole Kingery of the Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham in Champaign, Illinois.

ASK YOUR FLORIST

Do you have a signature style? "Some florists are known for a particular type of design," says Chuck Kelly, co-owner of Flowers by Webster in Springfield and Westfield, Massachusetts. "Make sure it's compatible with your wedding theme."

ASK YOUR MAKEUP ARTIST

How can we work with my sensitive skin? "Ask if the makeup artist uses all-natural products and has options that are sulfate- and paraben-free," says Zsuzsi Evans, co-founder of Joli Beauty Bar in Manhattan. Those tend to be gentlest, and the last thing you want on your big day is a facial flare-up.

ASK YOUR CATERER

Are you health-department licensed and inspected? "This might be one of the most overlooked but most important questions," says Lanae Workman, owner of Paisley Cakes in Blackfoot, Idaho. Food handling rules apply to caterers, restaurants, and yes, bakeries. "It ensures the safety of you and your guests," Workman says. Food poisoning is not a good wedding favor!

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W10888 \$179.95 F15208 \$139.95 F16007 \$129.95 F15933 \$159.95 F19072 \$129.95 F19073 \$129.95 F15927 \$159.95 F19217 \$149.95 F15741 \$169.95 F15782 \$179.95 W10941 \$99.95 F18076 \$169.95 W10329 \$189.95 F15555 \$139.99



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YOUR post wedding TO-DO LIST

What to put on your calendar for after the after-party.

DAY AFTER: RETURN TUXES

It's time for the penguin suit to go back to its natural habitat. You should return formal duds rented from Men's Wearhouse within 24 hours, but you can do so at any of the retailer's more than 900 locations. If a day-after return isn't possible, arrange an alternate date ahead of time. "And check pockets first to make sure you have all your belongings," says Bruce Graber, director of formalwear at Men's Wearhouse.

1 WEEK AFTER: PRESERVE YOUR DRESS

With our gown preservation kit, you just pack your dress in the box provided and drop it off at a UPS-authorized shipper. No need to get your look cleaned first—that's included. Within weeks, the ensemble will be back in your hands, protected inside a display box. (Consider delegating this task to your mom or maid of honor to handle while you're on your honeymoon.)

4 WEEKS AFTER: CHANGE YOUR NAME

If you're changing your name, it might be exciting to go by Mrs. Newlywed ASAP. "But when you book honeymoon travel, use the name that currently appears on your IDs and credit cards," says Genevieve Dennis of Easy Name Change. After you return home, start the switch by ordering your certified marriage license and updating the Social Security Administration. There's no deadline (and no hurry), says Dennis.

6 WEEKS AFTER: COMBINE INSURANCE POLICIES

"When it comes to insurance, it can make sense to put all your eggs in one basket," says Natalie Stollar, marketing

consultant at Nationwide. For example, Nationwide offers a special multi-car discount when you insure both your car and your spouse's car.

2 MONTHS AFTER: TREAT YOURSELF

Many registries have completion programs to help make sure you get everything you need. "After they say 'I do,' our couples get 10 percent off in-store and online, up to three months after the wedding, to buy remaining registry items," says Audrey Stavish, director of customer service and gift registry at Bed Bath & Beyond. Get the details from each store on your registry, and leave no blender behind.

3 MONTHS AFTER: ORDER PHOTOS

Professional photos usually arrive within three months. But in the meantime, you can have fun with the shots you and your guests snapped. "Casual pictures make great content for books that couples can create for their families or to thank bridesmaids and groomsmen," says Stootie Parikh, marketing manager for Shutterfly.

6 MONTHS AFTER: CLEAN YOUR RINGS

Chris Steyer, director of jewelry repair services at Helzberg Diamonds, advises getting your rings professionally cared for every six months. "You should also inspect your jewelry between visits," says Steyer. "Look out for loose or missing stones, damaged or missing prongs, visible breaks, and uneven wear."



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ask the experts

David's Bridal assembled a panel of pros to answer your most pressing questions.

IS MY WEDDING BAND SUPPOSED TO MATCH MY HUSBAND'S? I'M CLUELESS HERE.

Don't worry, there's no wrong choice when it comes to jewelry! Traditionally, a couple's wedding bands used to match. But the rules are changing, says **JACQUELINE CASSAWAY**, *divisional VP at Helzberg Diamonds*. Today, it's common for a bride to choose any band she loves, or one that coordinates with her engagement ring.

QUICK TIP:

If you're insuring your engagement bling and bands (a good move, since renters or homeowners policies often cover only minimal jewelry losses), save your sales receipts or get the pieces appraised first. That way, you'll be sure your rings' full value is covered, according to Trina Woldt, CMO at Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company.

HOW MUCH DO I PUT ON MY REGISTRY?

"Register for at least two times as many gifts as givers," says **AUDREY STAVISH**, *director of customer service and gift registry at Bed Bath & Beyond*. (Count couples as one giver, she says.) "Guests will appreciate having plenty of choices when they shop for you. The last thing you want is for them to get discouraged because everything is already purchased and then have to guess what to buy you!"

QUICK TIP:

Start your registry as soon as you're engaged. (You can always change it along the way.) Friends and family can use it for the engagement party and shower.

IS IT OK TO GIVE THE DJ A "DO NOT PLAY" LIST?

Yes—and no, says **DORI OTTOLINI**, *owner of Allegro Entertainment in St. Louis*. The caveat is that some couples go overboard and include dozens of songs (aka, way too many). "That makes your DJ do more reading than actual mixing. He

should be playing songs according to the vibe of the dance floor," says Ottolini. So if you truly can't suffer through the chicken dance on your day, by all means, discuss it beforehand. But be sure to chat about the tunes you do like, too, so the DJ can build a playlist that makes everyone want to bust a move.

QUICK TIP:

To say thanks for as many as 12 hours (!) of work, why not offer your DJ—and other vendors—dinner? It's never expected, says Ottolini, but many venues even have a lower-priced meal option.

AT THE RECEPTION, HOW MANY DIFFERENT APPETIZERS DO WE NEED TO OFFER?

That depends on the time of your celebration, says **SHIRLEY BARNES**, *general manager for Kimble's Food by Design in LaGrange, Georgia*. For early afternoon, she suggests six to seven choices; before serving dinner, three to four; and if the apps are standing in for the meal at an evening reception, offer 10 to 12 types.

QUICK TIP:

Find out if your venue lets you bring your own alcohol—it can majorly cut down on costs.

HOW SOON DO WE HAVE TO BOOK THE HONEYMOON?

Procrastinators, take note: To snag your top flight and hotel picks, six months out is a good starting point. "Most resorts offer special suites for honeymooners," says **MARILYN CAIRO** of *Melia Resorts*. The catch? There are only so many, and when they're gone, they're gone. So book early and enjoy!

QUICK TIP:

An all-inclusive resort doesn't mean you should leave your wallet at home. Cash, especially small bills, will still come in handy for tips and snacks.



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