

Your Special Report Wedding Planning Tips From A Professional Wedding Planner & Event Designer



5 Simple Steps For An Absolutely Stunning Wedding!

By: Debbie Rivera

As you no doubt are already aware, weddings are as much about your sense of style and tastes as they are about the personalities that you and your fiancé bring into the actual wedding planning. Your wedding is also about the experience you desire for your guests as they attend the each event before the wedding and the wedding day itself. There are so many choices and options that you have in order to create the perfect wedding day that you have dreamed of, thought about, envisioned, and even started planning by putting all your wedding ideas into a wedding planning binder. However there is only so much money and time. Even movie stars and billionaires have to say “no” to some high - end features. I even had the opportunity to spend some personal one-on-one time with Colin Cowie at a speaking event where I had the honor of being his onsite handler in the Green Room and had access to him personally. We had down time before his presentation and we discussed how even the movie stars and celebrities have a budget for their weddings. Many times he has had to pare down the linens, décor, or lighting. I just wanted to point out that every bride and groom has parameters that control not only the cost of the wedding, but the time spent working on wedding plans as well.

There is another factor to consider when planning your wedding and creating the look you want . . . you will be given advice from your friends, family, and even total strangers - once they know you are getting married, and almost every one of them will have something to say to pull you in another direction, get you off course - and even make you doubt your own ideas and the way you really want to do things on your wedding day. This alone can get you way off track and cause more stress and worry than you already have. Remember that this is a once in a lifetime event for you and your fiancé, and it is only fitting that it turns out the way you want. It is hard to see brides who, when reflecting back

on their wedding day, feel that while they did everything they could to please everyone else, they feel sadness and regret that they changed their ideas for the sake of others and did not have the wedding they truly wanted. Everyone means well, but this will confuse the clarity that you already have about what you want for your wedding day. Make it the dream celebration that you want!

Table Of Contents

Step # 1: How A Date Can Make A Difference ...

Step # 2: Decide What Is Most Important To You...

Step # 3: Designing Your Own Look

Step # 4: Best Ways To Create The Right Atmosphere

Step # 5: A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words...

So let's get started and get you on the road to planning your own absolutely stunning wedding!

Tip # 1: How A Date Can Make A Difference....

One of the first major decisions you'll have to make is choosing your actual wedding date. Consider what the date will actually mean to you in the future. It will always be your anniversary. It will also be a time that your family and friends celebrate your union with the one you love. Will this be a Destination Wedding? Will your guests have to travel quite a distance to get to the wedding? Will it be in the summer? What are the historical weather conditions at that time of year? Will it be too hot or too cold for an outside ceremony? Does it matter to you if it is on a Saturday? Perhaps you could think about a Friday or Sunday? You could wind up paying a premium or not getting the date you want at a certain venue if you choose a Saturday, which is the most popular day of the week for weddings. If you choose a holiday, will guests be available? What date works for you? Can you get time off work for the week leading up to your wedding day? Can you have additional time off for your Honeymoon? Is there an event in either one of your families that may conflict with your wedding day?

These are some of the questions to help you choose the right date that will make the most sense for the two of you. Make sure you weigh out all the options and come up with the perfect date. The time of day matters as well since the time dictates how your day will flow, your guests will dress for the wedding, whether you want a formal or informal wedding, and still allow ample time for you to capture those beautiful romantic sunset pictures. Sunset Pictures make the most stunning wedding photographs by using the natural lighting transitions from sunlight to twilight to night time which all happens about an hour before sunset.

Tip: Consider the date and time of your wedding!

Tip # 2: Decide What Is Most Important To You...

There are so many choices and ideas that you will consider incorporating into your wedding day. Every time you look online or read a bridal magazine you see more and more ways to make your wedding spectacular. Actually that is part of the problem – there are simply too many choices, and it's easy to get overwhelmed. Here's a great way to keep you focused and prevent you from doubting yourself when you see a different idea come your way. Think about all the components of a wedding from your wedding dress to the Honeymoon. Start with this sample list below of wedding topics and add to it by putting your own personal spin on it.

Top 5 Wedding List:

Wedding Dress and Accessories

Music: Live Band, DJ, Other

Flowers: Bouquets and Centerpieces

Ceremony

Reception

Transportation

Photography

Favors, Gifts For Bridal Party

Invitations, Thank You's, and Save-The-Dates, Programs, Place Cards

Wedding Venue (Location)

Honeymoon

Food, Bar, Extras

Cake

Décor and Lighting

Rentals: Chair Covers, Linens, Specialty China, Chivari Chairs, Etc

Top 5 Wedding List Continued . . .

Rehearsal Dinner
Wedding Rings/Bands
After Party

Now choose 5 topics from the above that are most important to you. These Top 5 will become the major focus for your wedding day to concentrate your efforts to make your wedding outstandingly stunning and unique!

Take that top 5 and write everything that you can think of that you want under that topic. That way you can make those 5 topics be the more stunning aspects of your wedding day. There are no right or wrong choices. Let's say that you select Honeymoon as one of the topics to focus on. This is a great topic. You will need the rest and time together before you have to throw yourselves back into life and balancing everything you have to do after the wedding. You will get to travel to a once in a lifetime romantic destination. You will be able to enjoy each other and some well needed alone time. So you will want a Honeymoon that is extravagant and compliments your sense of adventure – travel to Tahiti or go on Safari. Decide the travel experience. Find ways to make this the best experience possible. If this is an area that is important to you, just go for it. What you want to do next is to comprise a list of all you need for a Honeymoon: Cruise Reservation, Airline Tickets, The Destination, Hotel or Resort Reservations, Luggage, Passports, New Wardrobe, Sightseeing Activities, Camera, Etc. Be sure to list everything that would make it over the top for you. Does what I am saying make sense to you? Maybe the live band is one of the topics you selected, and you want everyone to remember that aspect of your wedding day. So you concentrate your efforts that way.

So let's say that food was not a topic you selected. This is just an example. It could be any of the above topics that you chose from above or added on your own. If you did select food - You would have the food be less stunning than the rest of the wedding. Perhaps you have decided to have an After Party with a lounge look and you want that to be more stunning than the food - Hotels, Spas, Caterer's, and Resorts all charge a per person amount for selected food choices. Keeping that in mind you could decide to serve something different and unique from most weddings you have attended while not making the food the focal point. In other words you want your guests to treasure and remember other components of your wedding – like the After Party.

By selecting the 5 topics that matter most to you, this provides you an opportunity to see where most of the money will go and then you can streamline what is left in the other topics. I use this method with all my brides to help them get the most of their wedding dollars and still have an absolutely stunning wedding day.

Tip: Decide what is most important to you!

Tip # 3: Designing Your Own Look ...

You have your very own sense of style and taste in everything from your home to the shoes you wear. For me, there is no one look that fits for every single bride. Part of the fun in planning a wedding is to decide what you want it to look like. You could want an elegant look, or you may define the look you want as simple elegance. You might want your wedding to be modern and chic. Maybe you prefer vibrant colors or soft pastels. You might like trendy, current wedding themes or want a Green Wedding to help save the planet. Some brides are traditional; and some brides want all the glitz and glamour they can have. I have worked on weddings where the bride and groom were the only ones there – such as a Destination Beach Wedding, and then I have helped design and plan weddings in which it was a lavish affair with over 500 guests in attendance.

The whole point is that you can design your own look, from what you select as a wedding dress and by the choices you make for the center pieces and your wedding bouquet. The wedding bouquet itself says a lot about your style. A good place to start in developing your wedding design is to think about all of bouquets that you have seen in magazines, at weddings, bridal shows, web sites, and so on. Ask yourself what it is about the bouquet that peaks your interest. Is it the shape of the bouquet? The flowers in the bouquet? The size of the bouquet? The ribbon used on the bouquet? Is it the type of bouquet – Handheld, Cascade, a Single Rose, Nosegay, Tussy Mussy, Ballerina, Tropical, etc. The bouquet that catches your eye will tell you so much about your style and tastes as far as color and texture.

Take note of all the reasons, and then think about your day to day life and how that relates. Do you like traditional or Non-Traditional looks?

Do you like patterns or clean lines where everything is uniform and in order? Do you like texture and interesting details added along with the main theme? Keep building this list of tastes and likes from magazines, web sites, books, and other weddings you have attended. Get a Wedding Planning Binder or notebook. Start saving pictures and ideas that you see along the way and add to your wedding planning binder/notebook. That way everything is in the same place when you need it. Stay focused on color, texture, and design until you see the wedding in your mind completely decorated. Then you just keep refining that look into all elements of your wedding day from the ceremony to the after party – that is actually more fun to have an after party where you can enjoy a few friends, or you can include everyone to keep the celebration going for a while after the wedding reception. You could create a lounge look with up-lighting and fabric. The point is to have a crystal clear vision so that you have one direction you take and a direct path for your wedding look. This will clear up so much confusion and stop you from getting mired down with all the decisions and details.

You will really know what you want your wedding to look like.

Tip: Create Your Own Look With A Crystal Clear Vision.

Tip # 4: Best Ways To Create The Right Atmosphere ...

In order to achieve creating the atmosphere you want, you must first decide on the atmosphere you desire to create. I know that goes without saying but by thinking about what the ambiance will be at the ceremony site, cocktail hour, reception, or after party, you will make choices to create the right atmosphere. It is very helpful to make this decision by first deciding on an overall theme for the wedding and/or reception. Themes range from casual to elegant, fun to formal, and everything in between.

To get your imagination started, consider fashion trends as well as the venue locale, and even the season in which your wedding will be. Browsing wedding magazines for current fashion trends will help you make decisions about color, patterns, and styles for table centerpieces, flowers, and wedding favors, that will all contribute to creating the atmosphere you want. Considering the season in which the wedding will be, may help you decide more about the atmosphere you want. Maybe you are having a summer wedding and would like to incorporate bright yellow fabrics and flowers, or maybe your wedding will be in the winter and white and silver decor such as snowflakes and confetti will help achieve a wintery atmosphere. Finally, consider the locale of the big event. For example, if you're having a beach wedding, you may want to have your guests be barefoot to enjoy the sand, and you can even incorporate seashells by having a shell for each guest labeled with your initials and wedding date, as the wedding favor.

The best way to create the atmosphere is with lighting. If you are having an outdoor ceremony on the beach think about creating the right atmosphere for your guests. You will so busy getting ready. Your guests need to know where to go first. They need to be kept cool especially if it is in the middle of the summer. There needs to be ample seating. Perhaps overhead fans in a holding area. Consider providing water. As you know some guests arrive extremely early and others arrive extremely late. If there is a seat for everyone, as each guests arrive they will be able to be seated causing less commotion and distraction on the biggest day of your life. Have your wedding planner/coordinator and ushers direct your guest, know where to put gifts, find the restrooms, etc. Then use the outdoor setting to create the atmosphere with the natural lighting and beautiful sunsets. Make the ceremony site more intimate by changing up the usual placement of chairs being in a straight line to a semi-circle or variation of a U shape. Guide the guests from the ceremony to the cocktail location with a flower petal path, signs, or other creative ideas. This makes for less confusion and creates an organized atmosphere while making sure your guests know where to go. Make sure there are plenty of refreshments and a variety of choices other than alcoholic beverages. Create the atmosphere with music and colorful fabric that is sheer and moves gently with the wind. Bring colors and a unique way for guests to mingle and enjoy themselves by making them feel comfortable. You will be busy taking those first photos as husband and wife and by thinking about what atmosphere you want to create, it causes you to see the experience from your guests perspective while allowing you the time you need to take pictures and enjoy this time with your new spouse.

Also consider those finishing touches to your venue that can make or break your atmosphere. Go to any wedding venue and chances are they will have several photographs of how a room looks when decorated for a wedding. What I want you to notice in these photographs is the atmosphere the same room created with not only the décor but with

the way the tables were setup and the lighting used. Just the room layout and lighting can make all the difference.

Lighting is a huge area that gets overlooked. Especially in a large ballroom when there is so much space. In order to create a stunning look for your wedding use lots of types of lighting. The more candles the better. Try different candle heights with votives, candle holders, tapers, and so on. Mix and match your wedding color with candles – amber creates a warm, romantic glow. Try it out at home. You will see what I mean. Candlelight creates a stunning atmosphere and is my favorite. I have a whole system for decorating with candlelight. Now consider up-lighting with a pink blue, or purple. It creates a stunning affect and can transform any room. You could also use up-lighting in Palms or Ficus Trees with lights shining from underneath that casts a beautiful glow in the room. You can rent the plants and the lights are included – sometimes without an additional charge depending on the rental company. There are still other ways with specialty lighting in the form of Pin Lights. Often I add the lighting into the centerpiece to make the tables look stunning and create a unique atmosphere.

Fabric is another way to create a stunning look and an elegant atmosphere. You would be amazed at what I have done with fabric. Fabric and lighting can be combined together draping them from the ceiling. Fabric can be used to accent an area, block an area, or create a special effect at the reception like in an entry way. There are so many ways to create an atmosphere through the use of a theme, colors, location, time of day, fabric, and lighting so that your wedding is nothing but stunning. What will you create?

Tip: Create an atmosphere that will be enjoyed and remembered.

Tip # 5: A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words...

At the end of your wedding day, long after the guests have gone and you are on your well deserved Honeymoon, your photographer will be working hard to get your photographs ready for you and your new husband. You will have these photographs in your home and share them with your family and friends. They will last a lifetime and be an important milestone to you and your fiancé.

Photography is one area that requires a great deal of thought. Find a photographer that will take photographs that you want. For example, if you want all posed shots, then you want to make sure the photographer specializes in that type of photography. If you want photojournalism and candid shots then you should find a photographer that whose photo images catch people as they are instead of posing them. Perhaps you want a combination of posed and candid. Make sure that select someone that is versatile and accommodating. Another way is to select a photographer who captures not only all the details but all the emotion and fun at your wedding. Try to think about what you are looking for as far as photography. Someone that takes unusual photographs of you running into the ocean with your wedding dress right after the ceremony. Someone that takes pictures like the ones you see in the magazines. Do you want black and white, artistic, all –color? The point is to be clear enough about what you want let any photographer know what you want to see when you get your photographs back. All the photographers I work with care so much about capturing all they can about your wedding day. They take many more shots than you actually pay for with their packages. They want you to be happy with your photographs so spend the time knowing what your expectations are ahead of time. Put a few samples in your wedding planning binder. Find ways to communicate your needs.

Once you make that distinction, start looking. Visit photographers in their studios, and look at their pictures. Make sure you are looking at pictures they have taken, and only look at wedding pictures. Some photographers are very talented at shooting babies and children, but may not be as successful with weddings. Make sure that you feel captivated or moved by the photographer's work. A good photographer will be able to capture the mood and emotion of the bride, groom, wedding party, and guests.

In addition to viewing the photographer's work, also find out how many weddings he has done. You want to make sure your photographer is professional and reliable. Also, it is important that a photographer knows how to capture all the important moments of a wedding, without being a distraction. Is he/she easy to talk to? Do you feel comfortable around them? Remember that they will be everywhere you are on your wedding day. Ask if they bring an assistant and what types of photographs do they see taking of you. Let them show you examples of moments that they captured at other weddings that would fit your style. Ask about taking photographs in all types of lighting from bright sun to candlelight. Do they like to have you complete a form with all the important photographs you want such as one with you and your Mom as you places your veil your dad showing emotion right before he walks you down the aisle, your husband– to –be as he sees you for the first time that day, your special aunt or Grandma. The thing to remember is that all the people you care about are all gathered together. This is the best time to get those photographs because they will last you a lifetime. The opportunity may never come again. Get a feel for how your photographer feels about all the above. Then make the right choice for you.

The best advice I can give you is that photography is one of the areas of your budget where you do not want to skimp. After all the planning and

anticipation that goes into the big day, and all the excitement and happiness experienced on that day, once the guests leave it is all over. So make sure to spend the time and money it takes to get the right photographer, who will help capture all the memories of your wedding day so that they live on in your marriage forever. A picture really is worth a thousand words. It will recreate the moments, feelings, and thoughts of your wedding day each and every time you look at them.

Tip: Do your research, and find a great photographer!

Bonus Secrets

Wedding Planning Secrets

Secret Tip # 1:

I really want you to have a fantastic wedding, and this is my best tip that I give to all brides that I work with on planning and designing a wedding day just for them. It is a way that I can contribute to relieving the stress and ensuring that it is a perfect day. I am about to show you one super tip that you can use for the biggest impact in your wedding planning. This will get you thinking about what matters most as far as your wedding is concerned. This will help you with your wedding budget and ensure that you can cover all the expenses for your wedding day.

Here is the initial tip that I give all the brides that I work with: Pick four things that you must have for your wedding. These are your choices. Not mine They can include an extravagant location, Destination Wedding, the best high-end wedding photographer, exceptional lighting and décor, romantic honeymoon, rockin live band, couture wedding dress, famous chef, amazing bouquet and floral designs, and so on.

Think about all the components of your wedding like you did above, such as venue, food and beverages for your guest, wedding day make-up, rental items, ceremony décor, invitations and save - the - dates, bridal party gifts, the cake, favors, Valentino Shoes, Wedding Day Jewelry, and so on. Start and complete your list of must haves. Start

and complete your list of things that are not as important to you. Now look at the list of things you “Must Have” and pick out four components of your wedding. The choice is yours alone. There are no right or wrong choices. Once you come up with the four items, then decide to get the very best in these four areas. Estimate how much each topic will cost. Then add all 4 topics together to give you an idea of where to focus your efforts. All other items will either not be as big of a focus or no longer an option.

Food is one of the more costly items for your wedding dollars. Mostly because there is a cost per person. If you choose to not select food as one of your 4 or 5 items, here are some ideas to spend less of your wedding dollars.

To save money on your catering you could skip the professional caterer and go with a small local restaurant instead. This also means selecting a venue that allows outside catering. Many restaurants offer catering for parties and weddings and will cost much less than a Professional Caterer.

Another popular option for wedding food is to have an early afternoon wedding or even one that is later at night and serve finger foods, fancy sandwiches, unusual pasta salads, or a dessert and coffee reception instead of a full meal. Visit a wholesale store such as Sam’s or Costco or your local grocery store and price the specialty platters.

Check out wedding venues that offer extras like the cake, ceremony setup, linens, etc. That way you receive great benefits from having your wedding at that location instead of one that does not offer extras.

Another way would be to have your reception at a location that allows you to bring in an outside caterer but supplies everything else such as

linens, tables and chairs. That way you are not renting everything plus paying the caterer but reducing the overall food costs so your wedding dollars can go to your other topics.

This one tip will remove a lot of pressure from you. It gives you a real place to start and is my best planning tip for brides.

Secret Tip # 2:

The best tip is to stay organized when you're planning a wedding. It sounds like a no brainer, but many brides get caught up in the stress of planning their wedding that all attempts at organization go out the window as the wedding day draws closer. There are so many lists, details, contracts, information, and phone numbers to keep up with. This is how I start each of the brides I work with off – I give them a Wedding Planning Binder. You can do this too. Get yourself a 3 ring notebook and besides notebook paper put a pad of paper in there for notes. Add a couple of pocket dividers and clear page protectors to insert fabric swatches and invitation samples. Have a divider for each component of your wedding. For example one for the ceremony, reception, cake, flowers, DJ, photographer, and so on. Be sure to track everything from payments, due dates, and vendor contracts.

Then have a special section for notes from bridal showers, for your thank you notes, and other friend and family info. You need one section just for contact phone numbers and email addresses from everyone in your bridal party to vendors. Start working on an ongoing guest list and have a section in your wedding planning binder just for that. This way you can keep adding to it as you talk to someone or are reminded that you need to invite another acquaintance. Have a section for your gift registries so that you can give that info easily to your shower hostess and others. Keeping your book up to date will help you stay on track AND will save you a ton of time and stress as your wedding day approaches!

Please let me know if you need suggestions for additional planning tools, design and decorating tips, or purchasing a great wedding planner book. I am just a phone call away to help you right now.

You can always reach me by email at:

Debbie@achampagnewish.com

By phone: 813 690-4448

Skype: DebbieRivera

(Skype is a free phone service where we can connect over the internet and is great for its ability to share pictures and worksheets for budgets and planning to discuss your wedding – no matter where you live – even outside the US – www.skype.com)

Visit the Website:

<http://www.achampagnewish.com>

Twitter: www.twitter.com/debbierivera

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/AChampagneWish>

For now, relax and enjoy the excitement of being a bride!

Wishing you and absolutely happy and stunning wedding day,

Debbie Rivera

Champagne Wishes

Giving you the ideas & tips you need for the perfect wedding.

P.S. This is just the beginning basics for planning your own stunning wedding.

Debbie Rivera
Champagne Wishes
Wedding Planning & Design
Amazing Decor Rentals . . . Ceremony Décor too!
Tampa, Florida
<http://www.achampagnewish.com>
813 690-4448
Debbie@achampagnewish.com

Helping You Find Ways To Celebrate the Love, Excitement, Joy,
& Fun That You've Looking To Share With Your Family and Friends
On Your Wedding Day
Visit: <http://www.achampagnewish.com>