



Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment Wedding Planning Newsletter #7

Special Hints for Making Wedding Choices



There are a variety of post-ceremony celebration options available to the newlyweds. The most popular choice is a lunch or dinner reception, the sites for which are virtually unlimited. It is important to keep in mind that this is your day . . . plan the reception to satisfy your own style.

Since cost is always a consideration, investigation of the reception packages available in your immediate area is in order. The charges for an all inclusive sit-down dinner reception at a suitable restaurant or hotel, or privately catered at a location which does not offer food services, can range from approximately \$15 per person to \$150 per person, including tax, tips and liquor. The package price will vary, depending on such factors as day of the week, time of the year, style of the party and the menu selection.

If you are planning a large reception, it is important that you start the planning process early, since there are a limited number of sites that can accommodate such a gathering. Investigate the available locations and arrange appointments to explore all of the sites that appear intriguing. Make your reservations well in advance of your wedding date. If you plan to be married during the wedding high season, it is suggested that you book your location as early as one year in advance of the intended date of the celebration.

A private catering service can provide reception services at a variety of locations, including vineyards, boats, golf courses, hotels or at your home. You can either locate a reception site which does not provide catering services and then employ an off-site catering service, or you can first choose an off-site caterer and then seek the caterer's recommendation with regard to a suitable site.

As with the other wedding related services, do not allow for any surprises on the day of the event. Make sure that the terms of the package purchased by you are set out in a writing which clearly sets out the menu, the maximum seating, the room decorations, any catered services, number of waiters and bartenders, quality of silverware and chinaware, dance facilities, parking, after event janitorial services, etc.

The events and procedures at the reception are matters of your preference and choice. There are no hard and fast rules. Usually, following the ceremony a receiving line is set up at the reception site, at which time the bride and groom are allowed an opportunity to meet and speak with their wedding guests. The newlyweds are commonly joined in the reception line by their parents, the best man and maid of honor, and any special guests who attended the proceedings. Either before or after the wedding guests are received, the bride and groom should retire to an adjoining room, together with the wedding party, family members and special guests, for the formal

wedding portraits. Plan on 3-5 minutes for each person in the official wedding party, parents, & grandparents for the entire portrait session timeline.

Reception Lines are not as popular in some areas as others. Many couples today elect to have a Grand Entrance rather than the formal receiving line. This is less formal and takes less time. Since the bride/groom and family may stay at the church for pictures while most of the guests will leave for the reception site, the Grand Entrance will allow the bride/groom and wedding party to be introduced to the guests who will be waiting at the reception site.

Typical proceedings thereafter include, in order:

1. Introduction of the new couple by the Disc Jockey / Master of Ceremonies or the best man.
2. Service of the buffet or sit down lunch or dinner.
 1. a.) If a sit down, the bridal party's table is situated where it can best be viewed by the guests with the bridal couple in the middle, maid of honor to the groom's left, best man to the bride's right, and the other attendants alternating man/woman as space permits. Tapping of a crystal glass announces that the bride and groom should kiss.
 - b.) If a buffet, the food line should start with the bride, followed by the groom, the maid of honor, best man, attendants, parents and guests.
3. Service of the meal (background music by your DJ during meal).
4. Informal visits by the bride and groom to the guests' tables, if they are seated, or intermingling with the guests, if they are not.
5. Toast by the best man (and Maid/Matron of Honor) shortly before the wedding party is served (or before the cake cutting)
6. Any other toasts by persons present.
7. Cake cutting (directed by Photographer).
8. Bouquet toss followed by garter toss. Directed by the DJ.
9. First dance by bride and groom alone.
10. Second dance followed by dance of bride with groom's father and groom with bride's mother, later joined by wedding party, later joined by guests.
11. Open dancing for all guests.
12. More dancing if time allows.
13. Departure of the bride and groom under hail of rose petals or bird seed .

Your Professional Disc Jockey should arrange all these activities with you before the wedding day.



Additional Wedding Tips

Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment seeks to assist you in your wedding preparations, and to provide practical suggestions which, it is hoped, will help you avoid some of the pitfalls often encountered in the months and days leading up to the happy event.

You will find that, as the wedding date approaches, less and less time will be available for wedding preparations. The following are a few tips to assist and ensure that it will be what you always wanted.



Photography

Your wedding photography will provide a long-lasting remembrance of one of the happiest days of your life. The right professional photographer should deliver a complete selection of photographs that tell the full story of your day. To help select your professional photographer, keep these thoughts in mind: Hire a professional, don't trust your wedding memories to a friend with a camera. Interview as many photographers and review as many wedding albums as you can to find the style you like. Reserve your photographer as early as possible. The best photographers tend to be booked months in advance.

Ask the following questions:

- *What packages are offered?*
- *How many photos are included in each package?*
- *Are the "proofs" yours to keep?*
- *Are there a set number of reprints you must order?*
- *What is the cost for additional time or photos?*
- *How much is the deposit and when is it due?*
- *When is the balance due?*
- *Is there a travel charge?*
- *Are the negatives available to purchase? If so, do you have to wait a specified time before you can purchase them?*

Most importantly, view his or her photographs. See if you like the style of photography and book as early as possible.



Ring Bearer, Flower Girls and Trainbearers

- *Your attendants can add a nice touch to a wedding. They usually are close relatives or good friends of the couple. The ring bearer and the flower girls usually walk before the bride and her escort but behind the rest of the bridal party.*
- *Flower girls usually lay a bed of rose pedals for the bride to walk on.*
- *Trainbearers walk in pairs following the bride and her escort, holding the bride's train.*
- *Florist Weddings are costly, and everyone is interested in saving money if possible. Floral designs created from fresh and silk flowers may help you stay within your budget. Choose wedding flowers that either can serve more than one function or can be kept as a remembrance of the occasion.*

- *Standing baskets filled with sprays of fresh or silk flowers that decorate the ceremony can later be moved to the reception site, where they look elegant placed behind the head table or at the entrance to the room.*
- *An arch is useful at the site of the ceremony, in a garden wedding, or the bride may wish to make her entrance under a flower covered arch before being escorted down the aisle. Later, this same arch could showcase the cake table or the guest book table.*
- *Swag, placed at the top of such an arch, made of silk or dried materials, can be retained by the newlyweds, evoking fond memories of the wedding day.*
- *The head table can be highlighted by using swag or floral centerpiece made of permanent botanical. This later becomes a lovely addition to a first home.*
- *Perfect for a flower girl may be a silk head wreath made of ribbon, tulle and tiny flowers, which can be enjoyed by the wearer after the wedding as well as on the special day itself. This wreath is sometimes hung on a wall with the brim of a straw hat, to be worn or displayed in the home.*

These are just a few ideas for maximizing your floral budget. The most important thing to remember is that careful planning is essential if you hope to get the most for your money, without compromising the beautiful, romantic setting that flowers can add to your wedding day.



The Meaning of Flowers

- *Commitment - Rose*
- *Love - White Daisy*
- *Purity - Gardenia*
- *Joy - Orchard*
- *Beauty - Carnation*
- *Distinction - Blue Violet*
- *Constancy - Forget-me-not*
- *True Love - Red Chrysanthemum*
- *Sharing - Lily of the Valley*
- *Happiness - White Lilac*



Entertainment

*The music sets the tone for your wedding. Two sets of performers may be required, one for the ceremony and another for the reception. You may, for example, choose a live band, **[[your company]]**, solo singer, piano/organ, harpist or combination of two or more. Disc Jockeys now account for 85% of all weddings and are less expensive than bands. They will have a much larger selection of music to choose from. A good Professional DJ will be of great assistance to you during the planning stages of your wedding. They will also act as the MC at the Receptions and make sure everything goes according to your planned schedule. Wedding bands usually have audition nights at which you can hear them in person. If not, request an audio or videotape. Bridal shows often showcase bands. Your musician's personality can add much to the marriage*

ceremony and can make or break your reception. So it's important that you select your entertainment carefully.



Videographer

When interviewing a videographer, ask to see examples of his or her work. Examine the approach and style of the videographer as well as the sound quality and picture clarity. Of utmost importance is the quality of the editing. Keep these thoughts in mind:

What video format is offered? The formats in order of preference (lowest quality to highest) are VHS, 8mm, Hi8, SVHS, and Digital. You should insist that the video be shot at the highest available speed. Does the artist provide lighting, or does he rely on available light?

- What are the charges for extra time or extra tape?
- Will the videographer have available back-up equipment in the event difficulties are encountered?
- Can a photographic /videographic collage be provided?
- Is a choice of background music, where appropriate, available?
- Are title screens provided?
- How many cameras will be covering the events?
- Has the videographer had experience in conducting interviews?



Rings

The purchase of your wedding jewelry should be an exciting part of your engagement. Unfortunately, in today's marketplace, jewelry shopping can often times be a confusing experience. Since there is so much competition in the field, you can expect to receive conflicting information, most of it intended to sell you rather than assist you. Here are some basic tips that can help you cut through the technical jargon and sales tactics.

WHERE TO SHOP:

Your first stop should be a locally owned jewelry store which has established a good reputation over a number of years. It's also a good idea to look for a store with an in-house jeweler so any sizing or custom work can be performed on the premises. A jeweler that's rooted in the community has a vested interest in making you a satisfied customer because they typically advertise by "word of mouth."

DIAMONDS:

Most consumers have difficulty choosing a wedding ring because of the many variables involved in diamond quality and value. Diamond grading is broken down into "Four C's" carat, clarity, color and cut. All of these add up to a "Fifth C," cost. Ask how the "Four C's" apply to the ring or rings that you are considering.

AFTER THE DECISION:

Before reaching a final decision on your rings, there are several other considerations that you should take into account. How long will it take to have the ring sized? If the ring is being ordered from an outside jeweler or manufacturer, how much time will be required for delivery and size adjustments, if necessary? Allowance of sufficient time in advance of your wedding date is essential.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Ask questions? Good salespeople like to share their knowledge and experience. Visit a number of jewelry outlets. Take good notes and compare them as you shop. Don't make snap decisions. Think about it overnight. Are the financing terms competitive? Trust yourself and your own eye. If something doesn't look right it probably isn't. Make the choice that is right for you, not what someone else wants to sell you. Don't rush. Enjoy this special occasion.



Reception & Wedding Sites

As you visit possible wedding and/or reception sites, keep notes of your observations and the information you obtain. Ask whether the quoted price is all inclusive, or whether there will be additional charges, such as gratuities, overtime fees, and sales tax. Insist that all details be reduced to writing, including dates, times, prices, and descriptions of services provided. Inquire into the payment requirements. Most sites will require a down payment to reserve the facility, with the balance due approximately one week prior to the date of the event, when the final guest count is known.

Remember Saturday night is the most expensive time to schedule your wedding reception. To save money, consider another evening or a weekend afternoon. Morning or afternoon weddings also call for a lighter menu, so you will be able to save on the catering as well.



Professional Consulting Tips

[Note: A recent interview with one of the leading wedding consultants / coordinators in N. California was asked for her thoughts on the advantages of hiring a wedding coordinator. Her response follows.]

"So you've decided to plan your wedding. You feel slightly overwhelmed at the thought of planning an extravagant event, but are confident you can pull it off. However, many couples are at a loss when it comes to coordinating such an event. With little or no experience in event planning, a professional wedding consultant is definitely in order.

The decision to hire a consultant is based on several factors. For many, time is lacking. Full time jobs do not allow the phone calls and visits required. Major oversights often occur when time is limited and the ability to stay organized and focused misfires. If the

bride is new to the area, with few friends or family members close by, planning a wedding with little outside help could become a nightmare.

What about an out-of-town wedding, or a bride with a narrow budget? Whatever the reason, the wisest choice is to hire a professional. The goal of the wedding consultant is to offer the bride and her family peace of mind by keeping on top of the planning. A bride and her family should be able to enjoy the occasion, leaving the details and hassles to the consultant. My philosophy is that a bride and groom are deserving of anything and everything they want. I refer to them as my King and Queen. They are the ones in charge, and as such, are allowed to create their own rules and regulations.

Good rapport, communication, and a feeling that the bride can rely on her consultant is vital to the teamwork. A consultant will go the extra mile and resolve disputes that may arise between the bride and family members. The consultant acts as a couple's liaison, smoothing over rough spots, which will inevitably present themselves during the period leading up to, and on the wedding day. Stretching the dollar, while staying within a budget, a consultant will alleviate financial anxieties.

An established consultant will have a wide selection of vendors and valuable connections. She/he will assist the bride by knowing who to book and when, providing price comparisons, overseeing vendor contracts, avoiding overtime charges, saving on services when guests don't show, will collectively result in considerable savings to the couple. A good planner has developed relationships with many vendors, and because of the harmony that has developed, vendors may provide certain perks without charge. The couple benefits by getting the feeling of a more elaborate wedding.

*The extra pair of hands on the wedding day is priceless. A schedule will be orchestrated and distributed to ensure a smooth-running event. Details such as coordinating and overseeing vendors, supervising and cuing the wedding party and music or DJ, and assisting with seating arrangements are just a few of the duties a consultant will assume. **The reception entertainment and timeline planning can be provided by a Professional DJ Service with the right background and experience.** A bride can rest assured knowing the wedding day will be handled with care, while she relaxes and enjoys her glorious day. If you want a worry and headache free wedding day, consider hiring a professional wedding consultant."*

This guide is provided by Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment to assist new couples as they navigate their way through the year leading up to their wedding day. Included are only suggestions and ultimate decisions need to be made by the couple. Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment is not responsible for negative outcomes as a result of following guidelines.