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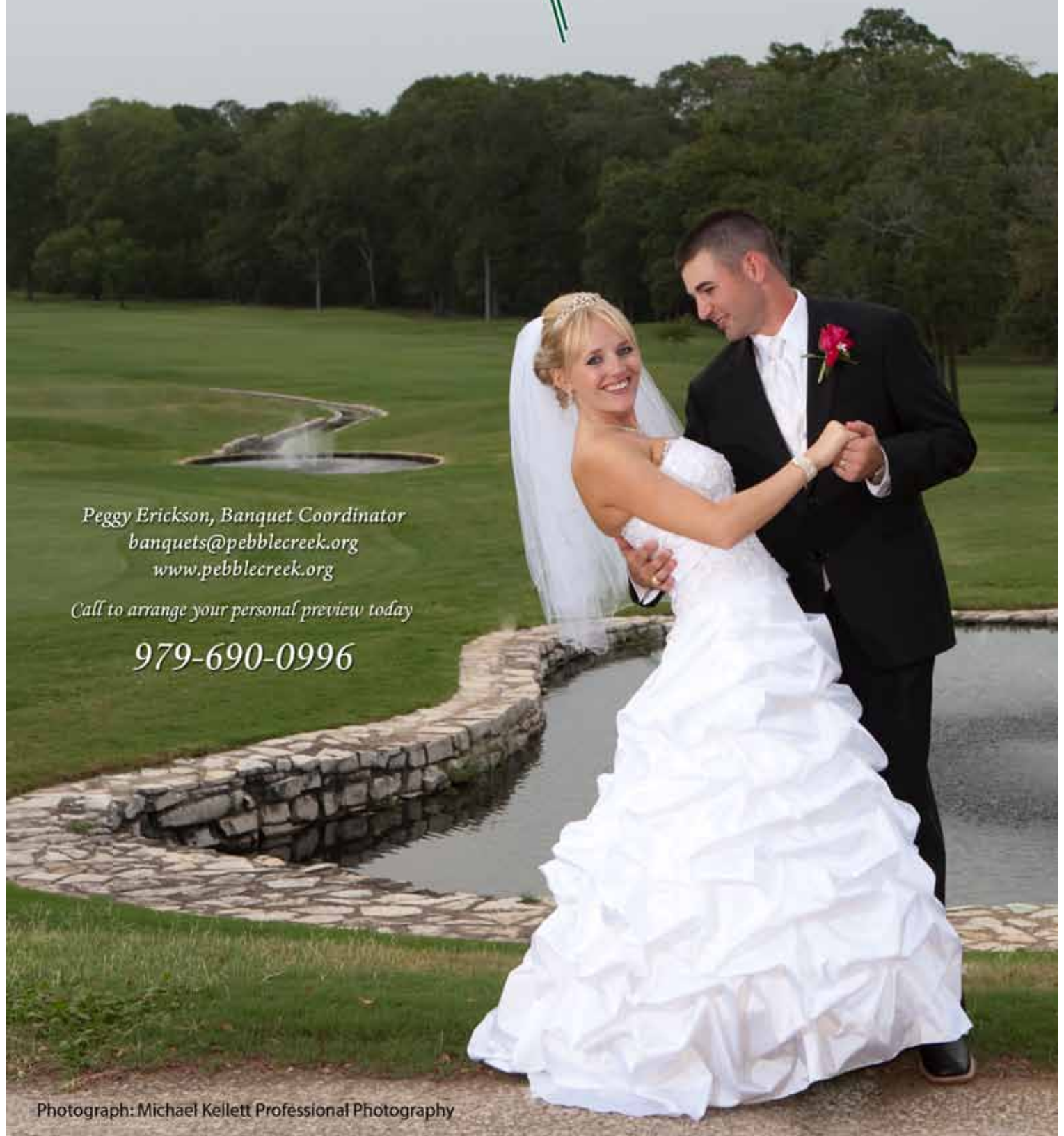
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WEDDING PLANNING TIMELINE

Congratulations on your engagement! Wondering what to do now, and how to start planning? Here is a general checklist to help get you and your planning entourage started with the arrangements for your upcoming wedding. Enjoy the planning process, and the staff at *Brazos Valley Bride* wish you and your fiancé every happiness.

12-15 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Announce your engagement** to your family and friends if you haven't done so yet. Make sure to tell your parents first, and do it together in-person if possible, then spread the good news as you see fit.
- Start your **planning file**. Online and on paper (it is always good to have a paper trail for contacts and contracts). This will serve as your go-to places to save color ideas and swatches, detail ideas, samples, dress photos, lists of potential vendors to call, etc.
- **Have your engagement portraits taken**. Some photographers will offer a discount to couples who book them for engagement, bridal and wedding day photos.
- **Create a wedding website** to share your love story with your guests, friends and family. Check out *TheKnot.com*, *WeddingChannel.com*, and *ewedding.com* for lots of free wedding website templates to choose from. You could also start a wedding blog if you are tech-savvy and want to journal the experience.
- **Select your wedding date**. Most wedding planners suggest that brides plan their wedding at least a year in advance, but thousands of weddings are planned in less time. However, keep in mind that many popular venues and photographers are booked at least a year ahead -- be flexible with your date to accommodate a special vendor or venue.
- Set the desired **tone of your wedding**. Think about what you want your wedding to feel like. Formal, casual, evening, day, religious, special themes, etc.

- Set the **wedding budget**. Talk to the parties who will be financially assisting you in paying for the wedding. Ask them how much they are willing to give, and towards which items/services. Be willing to hear out any special ideas they may have to contribute. For couples planning their own weddings, discuss loans and saving. Talk about how much debt you are able and willing to handle, and how much to use towards wedding costs each month.
- **Interview wedding planners**. The best way to save money on your wedding is with the help of a wedding planner. Due to business relationships with other vendors, planners have the unique ability to negotiate pricing with vendors and venues, and in most cases, will get a better price for you. Many work their fee into your budget, so even if you think you can't afford to hire one, interview a few anyway and see how they can help.
- **Select ceremony and reception locations**. Once your planner is hired, talk about where you would like to be married. Church? At Home? Under a 100-year-old oak tree? A little bit of research by you or your planner of local venues will locate several to choose from. Place a deposit on your venues to hold them for your wedding date.
- **Attend a Bridal Show**. Get great ideas, discounts, samples, brochures, talk to vendors, look at photos, check out fashion and more at area bridal shows.
- **Publicize your engagement** if you wish. The Bryan-College Station Eagle would be delighted to announce your engagement, call (979) 731-4737 for pricing information.

9-12 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Select your attendants**. As a couple, decide how large of a wedding party you want. Will you have an even number of attendants for each side? Make your selections and ask the people to participate.
- **Host an engagement party**. Kick off the wedding planning with a celebration of your engagement with attendants, friends and family.
- **Choose your wedding colors and/or theme**.
- **Start compiling a preliminary guest list**. Discuss the size of wedding that can be afforded, and other important items such as including spouses and dates of guests, and children.
- **Hire your wedding officiant**. If you'll be married at a church, sign up for any mandatory couples' classes or pre-marital counseling courses. Some churches require these in order to perform the wedding ceremony.
- **Start shopping for a wedding gown**. Try on lots of different styles -- even ones you think you won't like -- you may be surprised at what you end up liking best! Take photos of your favorite gowns from designers into bridal shops and solicit suggestions from friends and family. Shop locally! Many of our local shops carry designers like Alfred Angelo, Mori Lee, Allure, Maggie Sottero, Demetrios, Mon Cheri, Casablanca, Eden Bridals, Enzoani, Jasmine, Sottero & Midgley, Venus and more, and many at a lower price than those in large boutique shops in Houston, Austin, San Antonio and Dallas.
- **Schedule cosmetic or beauty treatments** that require healing time. If you will be having laser, chemical or surgical treatments, discuss recovery time with your physician. Some cosmetic procedures take as long as a year for swelling to subside (ex. breast enhancements/reductions, tummy tucks, rhinoplasty).

7-9 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Interview and book caterer(s)**. Decide on a menu with your fiancé and caterer. You'll need to give them an estimated number of guests for an accurate price quote.
- **Order your wedding gown and accessories**. Not many brides can purchase their wedding gown "off the rack." Ordered gowns made to fit can take up to six months to make and ship. Give yourself enough time for alterations and other revisions that will need to be made by a local tailor. Also, order your veil, gloves, shoes, undergarments and hosiery.
- Consult with and **book wedding florist**. Select your bouquet, attendants flowers, ceremony and reception arrangements, and any flowers for family members.
- Consult with and **book musicians and/or DJ** for ceremony and reception. Select any special songs or activities that you and your fiancé would like to be played at the event.
- Shop for and order **bridesmaid dresses and accessories**. Bridesmaid gowns generally take 4-6 months to make and ship, give enough time for alterations after they arrive.
- **Start planning the honeymoon**. Research different locations online and then make an appointment with a local travel agent. They will be able to make recommendations for lodging and activities, and in many cases, offer discounts.
- Meet with and book a bakery for **cakes and desserts**. Ask for samples of their work as well as photos of other cakes they've done recently.

continued on the next page

Many couples go straight from the “Yes!” to planning the wedding. If you aren’t quite ready to jump into it full-steam ahead, start with these small and fun tasks to just enjoy your engagement without the pressure of wedding deadlines.

1,000 KISSES - No wedding planning until you and your groom have shared 1,000 kisses.

ENGAGEMENT PORTRAITS - have fun by taking some great shots before you start planning.

START SAVING - Save \$1 for every kiss towards your wedding. Then you’ll have at least \$1,000 cash to put toward your wedding day or honeymoon (if you follow the 1,000 kisses rule).

PRE-MARITAL CLASSES - really get to know your partner and their expectations for marriage in a course designed for engaged couples.

ENGAGEMENT PARTY - celebrate your upcoming nuptials with a casual, fun party with friends and family.

5-7 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Send save-the-date announcements.** Whether you send an e-mail or order special cards, these are primarily for out-of-town guests who will have to make travel arrangements.
- **Purchase or make wedding favors.** If you are the crafty sort and will be making your own, it’s better to start early and spread the work out over a few weeks or months. If you are ordering personalized favors, give enough time for ordering without a rush fee.
- **Begin to plan the rehearsal dinner.** The groom’s family is traditionally responsible for this event, so give them a heads up to find out if this will be true in your case.
- **Book the honeymoon.** Pay for your tickets and any deposits for the big trip. Research your destination, and follow any CDC travel recommendations.
- **Meet with and book a bakery for cakes and desserts.** Ask for samples of their work as well as photos of other cakes they’ve done recently.
- **Reserve any rental equipment/supplies** that aren’t provided by the

ceremony, reception venue, or caterer.

- **Register for wedding gifts** at your favorite stores. You can register for items in-store as well as online. Some brides have even registered for honeymoon items as part of their gift registries.
- **Arrange for transportation** on your wedding day for you and the wedding party.
- **Order wedding invitations and other stationery.**
- Shop for and order the **groom’s and groomsmen’s tuxedos/suits** and other attire.
- Shop for and **order wedding ring sets.** If your engagement ring came as a set with a wedding band, take it with you to shop for your groom’s ring, to find something in a similar design if wished.
- **Pre-book accommodations** for out-of-town family, wedding party members and other guests. Many hotels will give a group discount for blocks of rooms reserved.
- **Purchase gifts for the wedding party and each other.**
- **Help plan any pre-wedding parties or showers.**
- Book other vendors/services that you require.

3-5 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Get your bridal portraits taken** and order any prints you’ll want on display at your wedding and/or reception.
- **Select your menu** with the caterer. Give an estimate of the number of guests.
- **Order any alcohol** not provided by caterer. If you are hosting a full bar, you’ll need certified bartenders to serve drinks. Ask your venue if they provide this service or if you will need to hire them yourself.
- **Attend any bridal showers or pre-wedding parties.**
- **Finalize your guest list and mail out invitations.** You might create an evite as well - and encourage guests to RSVP through the evite, it’s less personal, but more people are apt to RSVP sooner this way.
- **Book your stylist and makeup artist for your wedding day,** as well as any pre-wedding haircuts, and “practice runs.”
- **Schedule your wedding rehearsal and rehearsal dinner.**
- **Apply for a passport** if you don’t currently have one. You will need to travel under your maiden name since name change information won’t occur until after you are married. Passports usually take 4-6 weeks to receive.

1-2 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Structure your wedding ceremony** with your officiant, and order wedding programs.
- **Contact all of your vendors** to confirm time and date of delivery of services/products. Pay any remaining balances necessary to retain services.
- **Keep note of wedding gifts received** and compile a list of those to send thank-you notes to after the wedding.
- **Begin collecting RSVPs.** Task an attendant or family member with contacting people who haven’t responded about a month from the wedding day.
- **Schedule gown fitting for yourself and bridesmaids** after alterations have been completed. Learn how to bustle your gown and fasten any difficult buttons or hidden snaps.
- **Try out hairstyles and makeup** with your attendants at the salon. Decide with your stylist and aesthetician on any color treatments, facials, microdermabrasion, etc., that should be done before the week of the wedding.
- **Apply for your marriage license** no more than thirty days prior to the wedding, but no less than 72 hours before.

1-2 WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Arrange the **seating plan** and write place cards.
- **Give a final head count to the caterer** and confirm any final details.
- **Write toasts** for the rehearsal dinner and reception.
- **Wear-in your wedding shoes** around the house to avoid painful wedding day blisters.
- **Pick up your wedding dress** from the tailor/seamstress and try it on to make sure all alterations have been made to your liking.
- **Send your honeymoon travel itinerary and plans to a family member** (for emergencies).
- **Finalize wedding vows** with officiant.
- **Schedule any pre-wedding relaxation treatments** -- massages, body wraps, facials, etc.

1-3 DAYS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Attend your rehearsal and rehearsal dinner.**
- **Organize your wedding attire,** accessories, lingerie, beauty products, etc.
- **Pick up Groom’s and Groomsmen’s attire and accessories.**
- **Pack for the honeymoon.** Don’t forget any necessary travel documents.
- **Pack a wedding day “emergency” kit.**
- Treat yourself to a **manicure and pedicure.**
- Get lots of sleep!

ON YOUR WEDDING DAY

- **Have your hair and makeup done** -- remember to wear a button-up shirt!
- Have someone check on the reception site to make sure all items have arrived.
- **Don’t forget to eat,** and have fun! Congratulations!



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Brides: Get Out Your Notebooks!

2011 Spring Bridal Show and Benefit on Sunday, February 20th from
11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Brazos County Expo Center in Bryan

Brides, grooms, parents, and the wedding party members who attend The Bridal Association of the Brazos Valley's (BABV) local bridal shows will find an excellent way to get a handle on the wonderful world of wedding planning.

The average engagement in the United States is between 12-15 months with an average cost of \$29,000 (in Texas, the average cost is less at about \$24,000). So, the sooner after your engagement you attend a bridal show, the greater the benefit will be for those attending.

Couples who are in the early- to mid-stages of planning a wedding can meet and speak directly with many local wedding event professionals - all in one place. The Bridal Association of the Brazos Valley's Bridal Show and Benefit feature the latest trends from cakes to limos and photography to entertainment. The show also features live performances by musicians, bands, and other performers.

Attending a BABV Bridal Show and Benefit is a couple's opportunity to get ideas, gather information, compare services and prices, and, sometimes, even book your vendors.

The BABV Bridal Show and Benefit offer all kinds of freebies, and prizes. The Spring 2011 Show boasts thousands of dollars worth of prizes. All you have to do to win, is register either at the show or online at www.ido-ido.org. Individual vendors may also offer discounts exclusively to bridal show attendees. Brides must be present at the show to win.

Tickets to the 2011 Spring Bridal Show and Benefit are available for \$20 at the door or \$15 if you register for entry online at www.ido-ido.org. Proceeds from the show will benefit the Brazos Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Going to a bridal show can be a lot of fun! Make a girls' day out with the attendants or moms, or even make it a date with your fiancé -- with all the food and cake samples, it'll be like dining out! It's a great way to start your planning and get to know your local bridal vendors.

The following tips will help make your bridal show experience both productive and enjoyable.

Be prepared to wait in line to register.

Your registration enters you to win door prizes and allows vendors to send you mailers and information after the show. Pre-registration online is offered by the Bridal Association of the Brazos Valley at www.ido-ido.org -- and it also offers a discounted ticket price pre-show.

Ask your fiancé to come along.

About 30% of grooms accompany their brides to wedding shows. Recent statistics also show grooms becoming more active in the decision making process, so invite your fiancé to come along!

"I'm the Bride!"

Be prepared to wear a "Bride" or "Groom" sticker to receive special attention from the vendors.

Take notes!

Bring a pen and notebook to take notes. If there is room, the best place to write notes about a vendor is right on the materials they give you. It will help you after the show to keep from confusing the vendors.

Get organized.

If organization is your thing, bring a wedding binder with envelopes and file tabs for each kind of vendor. A tote bag to hold all the coupons and cards is also a good idea.

Come with an open mind.

One of the best things about a bridal show is that it gives you an opportunity to see what's new and exciting. New trends, color schemes, technology, and ideas will be featured that you may have not thought of.

Ask questions of your favorite vendors.

Like a particular photographer's portfolio? Find out if he's got your date available right at the show. Set up an appointment while you're there!

Bring pre-printed address labels.

You will be asked for your name, address, phone number and wedding date countless times before the show is over. This will save you time and it will allow you to sign up for many of the prizes that will be given away.

Congratulations and enjoy!



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article by Ashley McCollum
photos courtesy of David Gardner's Jewelers

Ritani ring photo for illustration purposes only

Dashing for Diamonds

Over 463 local couples recently competed for \$15,000 Ritani engagement ring from David Gardner's Jewelers.

More than 463 couples recently dashed through the streets of Bryan-College Station in hopes of winning a \$15,000 Ritani engagement ring. The first ever **Diamond Dash**, hosted by David Gardner's Jewelers, was a high-tech treasure hunt, with all of the challenges and locations delivered via iPhone/Android app or text message.

"We loved the idea of a Scavenger hunt for an engagement ring, but the logistics were overwhelming," said Julia Gardner, "We can't take credit for creating the 'geogaming' version - it's the brainchild of ScvngR. They created the idea about two years ago, and I loved it when I first heard about it. David has always believed that a jewelry store should be a fun (not stuffy or intimidating) place to shop. This was a great fit for us because we are always looking for fun and innovative ways to get to know couples that might be in the engagement ring market. Being relevant is also a priority, and getting to meet couples and hear their stories was a highlight for the whole DG team."

Samantha "Sam" Specchio and Paul Searle were the lucky winning couple of the Diamond Dash.

"I heard about the contest first on the radio and showed Sam the web page as I started filling out the contestant information," said Searle. "She was instantly excited about the challenge, and even more so when we were accepted as contestants. Since we've been together over a year now and I know she is 'the one,' I thought this would be the perfect way to not only win her a beautiful engagement ring, but have a blast competing against all the other couples."

Searle said when the emcee started reading the winner's relationship story at the end, it took only two sentences to realize that the story being read was theirs.

"I looked over and saw that both Sam and I were wearing the same expression

of disbelief," he said. "As the story finished and we were called up to the stage, I couldn't stop smiling, and Sam started to cry from happiness. At the time, the presentation and congratulations seemed surreal, like it was too good to be true.

While we are not yet 'officially' engaged, Sam and I have talks about our wedding plans pretty regularly. Since we are both in the same five-year Master's program, we are planning to wait until we graduate, in May of 2013, to get married."

He joked, "This hasn't stopped her, however, from bugging me constantly about proposing and trying on the ring that is 'half hers.'"

In addition to inspiring couples in love, Gardner says Diamond Dash was an innovative and interactive way to raise money and awareness for multiple sclerosis research. Proceeds from the Diamond Dash raffle were donated to the Lonestar Chapter of the MS Society.

This is a personal cause for David and Julia Gardner due to the fact that one of their long-time employees, Nicole Davenport, recently lost her mother to multiple sclerosis. Davenport is a freshman at Texas A&M University.

"Her mother was diagnosed with MS, an autoimmune disease that affects the brain and spinal cord ten years ago when Nicole was just nine years old," Gardner said. "Since the diagnosis, Nicole has cared for her mother with the help of her sister and close family friends. She graduated from A&M Consolidated High School, where she was an officer in the Bengal Belles, all while her mother

was battling this disease. Nicole is mature beyond her years and carries herself with absolute grace that both David and I admire. Nicole is a true hero, which is why the entire DG family wanted to share her story with the community and raise awareness for multiple sclerosis through the Diamond Dash."

For more information on the Diamond Dash event, log on to www.dgdiamonddash.com



Lucky winners of the Ritani engagement ring, Paul Searle and Samantha Specchio



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A graduate of Texas A & M University with a Bachelor's in Floriculture and a Master's in Horticulture, Tricia is also a Texas Master Florist and a member of the Society of American Florists and Texas State Florists' Association.

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An Aggie Photographer for Aggie Brides

AGGIE BRIDES CHOOSE
MICHAEL KELLETT (CLASS OF '91)



It's the natural order of things in Aggieland... Go to school in College Station, get married in College Station. With the abundance of wedding venues and vendors of wedding services in the Brazos Valley, it's no wonder that many Aggie grads choose to plan their weddings in the area.

And while Aggie brides have many great wedding options to choose from locally, the biggest reason most of them opt to have their weddings here is the proximity to their college friends and favorite hangouts. In fact, many will ultimately incorporate Aggie traditions into their weddings in various ways. From playing the Aggie War Hymn as the wedding recessional, to "sawing varsity's horns off" at the reception while enjoying a Northgate-inspired groom's cake, most Aggie brides want to make their cherished college years a part of their wedding celebration.

So, who better to have there to capture all of those memorable Aggie moments than a genuine Aggie photographer? That's why for over nineteen years, brides have entrusted **Michael Kellett Professional Photography** of Bryan to photograph their special memories.

A 1991 graduate of Texas A&M's Department of Journalism, Kellett has a rich history of photographing special events on and around the A&M campus and its surrounding communities. Kellett served as a staff photographer for Texas A&M University's commercial photography department for almost ten years, followed by two years as the staff photographer for the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum.

"It takes an Aggie to understand what all that tradition is really about."

Kellett says his knowledge of the area's history and geography gives him a tremendous advantage in knowing just the right location at the perfect time of day, and how to anticipate those meaningful moments before they happen.

"It takes an Aggie to understand what all that tradition is really about," Kellett says. "An Aggie bride's Aggie ring is almost as important to her as her engagement ring. You can't possibly understand that without having lived it."

Kellett often fulfills his clients' requests to be photographed on and around the A&M campus, and the area landmarks. "I still have many brides that want portraits taken on campus. Anyone can photograph a bride there, but there's an art to capturing the spirit of the place and creating a beautiful portrait at the same time," he says. "And it's not just on campus" he adds. "Northgate and the local Downtown Bryan area are really big, too."

Kellett's ability to capture the bride's "Aggie spirit" has been formally recognized, having been voted Bryan-College Station's Favorite Photographer by the Eagle's Readers Choice poll, and received The Knot's Best of Weddings award. "I love A&M, and I love working with Aggies," Kellett says. "There's no finer group of people, and no better place to have your wedding than right here in Aggieland with all your fellow Aggies."

To see more of Kellett's Aggie wedding images and more information about his photography services, visit his website www.tamuphoto.com.





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These splendid wedding cakes from local bakeries are pure artistry (*and they taste great, too!*)

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Cinderella Stories
photo by Butch Ireland Photography



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Heavenly Crumbs
by Mary Burkhalter



Fabulous Fare



Heavenly Crumbs
by Mary Burkhalter

THANKS TO REALITY TELEVISION SHOWS LIKE *Cake Boss*...

Wedding cakes and desserts will be taking center stage at weddings in 2011 and 2012. Bold use of colors and flavors along with complicated design layers and shapes will challenge bakeries to step up their game, and put their creativity to use! Brides watching reality TV shows like *Cake Boss*, *Top Chef: Just Desserts*, and *Amazing Cakes* are now becoming aware of how beautiful and unique wedding cakes can be, and will be inspired with ideas from these shows.

Brides watching these shows will also start to request more special desserts to accompany their wedding cakes. Delicious goodies like chocolate tarts, gourmet candy buffets, and handcrafted chocolates.



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BREAKING Tradition

Does your groom have his own unique sense of style and expression? Here are some groom's cakes that break from the chocolate-and-strawberries tradition which showcase "something different."



Cinderella Stories
photo by Butch Ireland Photography



Fabulous Fare



Cinderella Stories
photo by Butch Ireland Photography



Cakes by Blondie



Cake Junkie
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Cake Junkie
formerly Sweet Memories & Taste of Heaven



Fabulous Fare



Cakes by Blondie



Heavenly Crumbs
by Mary Burkhalter



Heavenly Crumbs
by Mary Burkhalter



Cinderella Stories

TREND SETTING GROOMS Groom's cakes were once thought to be a "Southern-only" tradition, and were scoffed at as ridiculous and unnecessary by couples in the non-South states... however, this trend has been catching on all over in past years, according to various blogs and wedding websites. So, take a bow, southern grooms, you are trendsetters!

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Invitations

WHAT WAS OLD IS NEW AGAIN... **VINTAGE** STYLES WITH A TWIST.



1- Art Deco styling appeared for the first time in the US during the mid 1920s. Opulent and angular, Art Deco is classic, sophisticated and perfect for a black-tie wedding invitation. 2- Hand-drawn flower graphics embossed or engraved on invitations give a contemporary look to a centuries-old design element. 3- Texture is back! Lace is a beautiful and interesting way to embellish a plain white invitation. 4 - This 1950's Tiffany-themed invitation is made more beautiful with pearl or opalescent card stock. Pearlized paper gives an instant sophisticated vintage look. 5 - Bold colors and patterns like those shown on this 1960's inspired invitation are still popular. Also growing in popularity is the use of bright and dark-colored cards with sleek, light-colored text. 6 - Custom invitations are more in demand now than ever. Brides want to show off the unique style of their wedding with a truly unique invitation. Get in touch with a local graphic artist or marketing company to come up with something that will be truly exclusive! 7- Polka dots and stripes bring a sense of 50's nostalgia to a standard white invitation. 8- Vintage floral-inspired patterns like the one above are seeing a rise in popularity. Your invitation designer can incorporate thousands of Victorian-inspired graphics like vines, lace, rosettes, flourishes and damask patterns. 9- Simplicity with style was the rage in the 1940s when being frugal was incredibly important during World War II. A simple cream card with one ink color can still be stylish and beautiful, and showcase your unique taste.



An example of thermography, a popular invitation printing style.

Printing Styles 101

A GUIDE TO INVITATION PRINTING STYLES

You can look at beautiful and unique wedding invitations all day long online and in retailers' books, but there are several things to consider before you set your heart on a specific design. Options such as **engraving, thermography, letterpress, embossing, and offset printing** are all things a bride should think about -- and each of these options can affect the price of your invitation. Are you thinking "What the heck is thermography and offset printing?" Fear not, here is a short course in printing styles.

ENGRAVED WEDDING INVITATIONS

Engraving is one of the most traditional forms of wedding invitation printing, and it's also one of the most expensive. The Queen of England herself is likely rethinking engraving on Kate and Wills invitation due to cost. (Traditionally, the royals all have engraved invitations.) To make engraved invitations, text is etched onto a copper plate, which is then coated with ink and wiped clean, leaving the ink only in the indentations. Soft, high-quality paper is pressed hard against the copper plate, causing it to change its form into the design or text that is etched. The end result is raised, crisp text. A true engraved invitation will have a "bruise" or dent on the back of the card.

THERMOGRAPHY

Developed as a less expensive alternative to engraving, thermography uses an ink and resin mixture processed with heat to mimic the raised lettering effect of engraving. Thermography gives the ink shape on top of the paper instead than changing the shape of the paper. The text has a shiny "puffy" finish, and is not quite as crisp as engraving. Many like the look of a traditionally engraved invitation, but don't have the budget for it, invitations made with thermography are a cheaper option.

LETTERPRESS

Letterpress (not to be confused with WordPress!) wedding invitations are becoming popular again due to the vintage-ish appearance. An old-fashioned technique in which a letterpress printer stamps or presses inked letters or designs into the paper, making an indented surface -- similar to engraving and thermography. However, by repeating the process, images with more than one color can be created.

EMBOSSING

Most often used for monograms and return addresses on envelopes, this process creates a raised impression on the paper by running it through two metal sheets. When no ink is used, it is called blind embossing. Although a printer can perform this service, brides can also buy a small embosser with the couple's monogram on the plate, which will allow them to create custom stationery for less money.

OFFSET PRINTING

Most modern printing is printed by a process called offset printing, or lithography. From postcards and casual invitations, this style is considered "flat" printing and is appropriate for an informal wedding or shower. The inked image is transferred from an inked plate, to a rubber "blanket," which is then passed over the paper. The quality of printing can vary greatly, so be sure to look for a printer who can deliver crisp quality and true-to-design colors.

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Trend-Setting Events

WEDDING PLANNER SUSAN KEOUGH DISCUSSES SOME GREAT TRENDS THAT YOU'LL WANT TO INCLUDE AT YOUR RECEPTION.



article by Susan Keough,
A Moment In Time, LLC

All eyes are upon you, and from somewhere in the background, a voice says "You may kiss your bride." The world stands still as you take that magical first kiss as husband and wife. When you open your eyes, there stand your friends and family, ready to celebrate this joyous occasion. You and your groom instantly turn into host and hostess as your guests eagerly anticipate the party that awaits.

So, how do you set your wedding reception apart from all the others? This is a dilemma that many brides face when planning their wedding. No couples want "just the basics" anymore. Each bride wants to add her personal flair to their big day, and this means getting creative.

A wedding planner is the best way to learn of the latest trends in wedding reception styles, but let's

face it, not every bride will hire a wedding planner. Keeping this in mind, I'll share with you some great trends that will give your party the "Wow" factor.

SWEETS AND TREATS

The chocolate fountain has seen its fair share of weddings, but many brides worry about the color of chocolate, and its potential for ruining their wedding dress during a chocolate fountain mishap. Here is an easy and beautiful alternative -- instead of milk or dark chocolate, use white chocolate instead!

Pretzels, fruit, cookies and graham crackers taste just as delicious dipped in white chocolate. White chocolate can also be dyed to match your wedding colors if you aren't afraid of the stain-factor. There are endless possibilities for treats utilizing white chocolate in your chocolate fountain.

Does your guest list include a lot of children? Or a bunch of adults with candy cravings? If so, you may opt for a **Candy Bar** or Buffet. Save some of that budget and put it into this unique idea that will serve double duty as dessert and table décor. Glass jars of varying sizes filled with your favorite candies. It is a self-serve candy heaven!

An **ice-cream sundae buffet** is also a sweet treat that is always loved -- remember all your childhood birthdays that included cake and ice cream? Why mess with a good thing? Give your guests the opportunity to make their own cool treat to accompany your cake selection. A cold, refreshing dessert is be much appreciated, especially during the summer months.

continued on page 89

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A single shoulder detachable beaded flower strap adds a modern sophisticated look to this simple Italian satin A-line gown with Tiffany train by Jasmine Bridal. Gown available at VIP Bridal. Pearls add a timeless elegance to the ensemble. Alyssa is wearing a rare Mikimoto Akoya pearl necklace wrapped around her wrist, beautiful pearl and diamond drop earrings, and a diamond engagement ring from David Gardner's Jewelers to complete the ensemble.



CONTEMPORARY

Vintage

THE RETURN OF OLD-FASHIONED ELEMENTS
IN CONTEMPORARY GOWNS AND ACCESSORIES

Photography by k. Norwood Portraiture | *Styling by* Chrome: A Salon Experience
Fashion & Accessories provided by Bea's Bridal, Nolen's Formal Apparel, Georgio's Bridal and VIP Bridal
Jewelry provided by David Gardner's Jewelers | *Floral design by* Unforgettable Floral
Shot on location at Brazos Cotton Exchange, Downtown Bryan



LEFT Casablanca Bridal's halter trumpet silhouette sparkles with a delicate beaded lace appliqué and a beautifully scalloped trimmed hemline. The appliqué was created using the finest Swarovski crystal beads and sequins. Gown available at Bea's Bridal. Amelia enhances the halter neckline with a Pavé Heart necklace from David Gardner's Couture Collection.

BELOW Hilary's gown by Alfred Angelo has several vintage elements creating the overall contemporary look. A satin organza over satin with rhinestones, crystal beading and sequins embellish just below the bust. Sometimes called a "crumb catcher" this bustline was featured on fashion back as far as medieval and renaissance time periods. Gown available at Bea's Bridal. Her jewelry is all "something new." Diamond eternity bangles in white, yellow and rose gold by Katie Decker, a breathtaking three-carat round engagement ring, and Hearts on Fire diamond earrings from the Reflection collection; all available at David Gardner's Jewelers.





This strapless empire A-line silhouette's bodice is accented with beaded flower appliques sewn on to a soft netting with a ribbon and tails streaming down the back of the skirt. The skirt has same beaded flower appliques sewn on to netting over sheer organza and satin lining. Gown by Casablanca Bridal, available at Georgio's Bridal.

Christine's unique gown must be accessorized uniquely, and David Gardner's Jewelers has done so here with a necklace and bracelet suite of yellow gold and diamond sautoirs layered with pendants from Gumuchian's Lady G collection. She also wears Roberto Coin diamond hoop earrings with the coveted signature ruby.



Reminiscent of the simple satin ball gowns of the 1950s, this opulent Royal Duchess satin and organza ball gown by Eden Bridals features the modern addition of a sheer illusion boat neck, drop waist bodice, and the full ball skirt has been made from alternating layers of satin and organza leading into a chapel length train adorned with small satin bows. Hilary adds to the bridal look with short satin gloves, an embellished bow headband; all available at Nolen's Formal Apparel. She won't be late to the altar with this classic white watch from David Yurman's timepiece collection. She is also wearing a vibrant tanzanite ring set in 18 karat gold and diamonds from David Gardner's Couture collection and Roberto Coin 10 carat diamond hoops.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Top left: Alyssa is stunning in this Maggie Sottero gown "Isadora" from Georgio's Bridal. A full A-line gown with a sweetheart neckline and corset closure. This style features a heavily pleated, soft shimmer satin bodice with a self fabric waistband. Embellished lace with floral petal accents flourish at the side waist, and atop the billowing tulle skirt finished with delicate scalloped edging. Completing the splendor of this look is a chic tulle headpiece. She is bedazzled with a breathtaking Roberto Coin Pearl L'Amore necklace, Mikimoto black south sea pearl and diamond earrings, two gold Roberto Coin Primavera bracelets, and a diamond engagement ring; all available at David Gardner's Jewelers.

Bottom left: Christine looks chic and sophisticated in this strapless sweetheart extended torso gown by Venus Bridal. Features crystal beads with an alternating ruche bodice, a tiered organza skirt with a corset back. Dress and headpiece available at Nolen's Formal Apparel in Bryan.

Alyssa makes a beautiful bridesmaid in this Alexia Designs strapless bridesmaid gown made from prima satin with tiered pleating on the bodice. Flattering on all body types and available in dozens of different color combinations. Available at Bea's Bridal. Completing the look is a jewelry suite from Marco Bicego's Paradise Pearl collection.

Far right: Amelia is at the height of vintage-inspired style with this gown by Blue by Enzoani, but with a modern element -- the bolero jacket. A strapless mermaid silhouette with a soft scoop scalloped neckline. Overlaid in lace, the gown is available with and without the matching bolero jacket - which is available in tulle or lace. A matching belt is also available. Gown available at Georgio's Bridal.

David Gardner's Jewelers enhanced this sleek look with Hearts on Fire diamond earrings from the Reflection collection; a diamond engagement ring from David Gardner's Couture collection, and a rare Mikimoto black south sea pearl necklace wrapped as a bracelet.





LEFT Christine plays up her simply elegant strapless satin gown with a necklace and bracelet suite from Roberto Coin's Ipanema collection - a brilliant color statement suite featuring amethysts, citrines, and lemon quartz. Her lemon and olive citrine cushion cut dangle earrings match perfectly, and the Roberto Coin Martellao Square ring with hammered texture in 18kt yellow gold. She is also wearing a pear-shaped diamond and platinum engagement ring from David Gardner's Couture collection.

TOP RIGHT Amelia plays up this flapper-inspired chiffon bridesmaid gown by Mori Lee's Ava Collection available at Bea's Bridal. Any 20's inspired look isn't complete without a long necklace. This 18 karat yellow gold and diamond sautoir from Gumuchian's Lady G collection pairs beautifully with her Marco Bicego stacking bangles from their Jaipur collection.

BOTTOM RIGHT Hilary wears a classic traditional sweetheart ball gown, but with a modern twist. This Mori Lee gown's tulle skirt overlay is covered with handmade tulle and organza flower embellishments. Available at Bea's Bridal. To bring the sparkle out in the bride's eyes, David Gardner's adorned her with a simple strand of Mikimoto pearls and a Roberto Coin 33 carat Kunzite and diamond ring.



BELOW Alyssa looks like a queen in this simple, yet stunning gown from Nolen's Formal Apparel. An A-line empire silhouette, this gown features a deep V-neckline with crystal and rhinestones embellishing the waistline. A daring bridal look isn't complete without a little more embellishment -- and Alyssa has taken advantage of the open neckline by showcasing layers of diamonds and pearls. Roberto Coin's classic diamonds-by-the-inch chain with over four carats of bezel set diamonds; Mikimoto's most versatile necklace from the Pearls in Motion collection; a David Yurman two-tone chain with baroque pearls framed in diamonds; and last a classic strand of Mikimoto Akoya pearls.

TOP RIGHT Hilary wears beautiful modern elements on in a soft organza two-tone bridesmaid gown with a soft A-line skirt, a scooped high-neck with a floral embellishment on the strap, and a tie back. A soft gown like this without lots of embellishment can be dressed up with unique floral balls (as shown), and delicate jewelry. David Gardner's Jewelers provided David Yurman designs -- a diamond confetti ball with tassel necklace, and a two-tone chain with baroque pearls and diamonds. On her wrist are two classic cable bracelets, also by David Yurman.



BELOW Taffeta, popular in the 70s and 80s had made a comeback for its sturdy structure when partnered with other fabrics. Shown below, this Venus Bridals gown offers Royal Taffeta with organza in a unique asymmetrical mermaid silhouette with a dropped waist and corset closure. Gown and hair comb available at Nolen's Formal Apparel.



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-Jana & Brent-



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Wedding Boss



article by Ashley Brockman
An Affair to Remember
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WEDDING PLANNER ASHLEY BROCKMAN ANSWERS COMMON QUESTIONS AND TELLS BRIDES WHAT TO DO IN STICKY SITUATIONS.

photos by Ryan Price Photography



DEAR ASHLEY,

My fiancé and I sent out invitations and RSVP cards last month, and now the wedding is just three weeks away, and we have only like a dozen RSVPs! Should I contact the guests or should I just assume they aren't coming? I need to get a head count to the caterer soon, and I'm not sure what to do! Help!

It is very common to have guests wait until the very last minute for one reason or another when responding, and yes, it is okay to start contacting your guests when you haven't heard from them close to the wedding. When placing your order for your invitations and response cards, make sure you select a date to reply by that will be early enough for you to deal with a situation like this. Three to four weeks before the wedding is a good time to gather RSVP's and start your "contact these" list.

Divide the list up so that it doesn't overload you, as the bride, and enlist the help of your fiancé, parents and future in-laws to touch base with those who were on their list. You will need a final count for several reasons when you're making your final plans – catering, floor diagrams and logistical questions, floral -arrangements, ceremony seating, etc. Don't assume one way for those who haven't RSVP'd because it could put more pressure on you when your guest count is +/-50 on the day of your wedding.

DEAR ASHLEY,

I've got a delicate situation on my hands. I have relatives with really annoying ill-behaved children, and I don't want them at my wedding. How do I let guests know that the wedding and reception is for adults only?

Having "Adult Only" receptions is becoming more common these days. When you are addressing your invitations include only the adult names on the outer and inner envelopes. Only those whose names are on the invitations are formally invited to the wedding. You can also add on the invitation, "Adult Reception to Follow," when including instructions following the ceremony. If you have a wedding website make sure to include it on there and feel free to spread the word by mouth as well.

DEAR ASHLEY,

I'm working with a small budget of less than \$10,000. How do I keep from going over my budget, when vendors won't know a final cost until I get them a head count? I don't really know how much I've spent! What are some ways to keep my spending down?

Not all vendors have to wait until you have the guest count to finalize your invoice. Items that could fluctuate are your flowers, cake, rentals and catering. Make sure you ask

a per person or per item charge for each category so that you can figure up a final bill using different scenarios. Then it is up to you to regulate your guest list. Set a goal number for your list and edit your main list to fit that and consider sending two sets of invitations when you get your first wave of RSVP's back if you can.

Before you start your vendor meetings make sure you compose a budget and place your vendors in order of importance to you and your fiancé. Then when you go meet with your vendors tell them the total number you have to spend with them. Be firm with that number and go over different guest numbers with them to see how it will fluctuate based on attendance.

Consider the time of day. If it is evening or night during your ceremony and/or reception use candles in place of all floral arrangements. This gives a very romantic feel and allows for decoration at a lower cost. Make sure you get double use out of any item you can. Use your bridesmaids' bouquets, pew markers and alter flowers in all places you can at the reception. Go over the costs of buffet vs. plated vs. hors d' oeuvres and displays with your caterer. Ask your baker if there is a price difference for fondant icing, 3-D cakes or a minimum order to make sure you are getting exactly what you for the price that best fits you. Get all charges from vendors up front so that there are no surprises at the end of your wedding.

DEAR ASHLEY,

I'd like to honor family members who have passed on at my wedding. How can I do this tastefully?

There are a few ways that you can do this during the ceremony and reception. At your ceremony, you can often have flowers "in memory of" on or near the alter. That will be printed in the program and you can have your officiate add a special passage in the ceremony to honor those who could not be with you. There can be seats left with the family that signify their presence missing with something from you. You can also have candle's burning on a table at the ceremony or reception with pictures of those who have passed away and dedicate an arrangement or single stemmed flower to their honor with a note from you and your fiancé.

DEAR ASHLEY,

Which of my vendors do I need to tip? There are so many, that I'm getting confused at who gets gratuity and who doesn't? Aren't I already paying for their services?

Yes, you are already paying for services and do not have to tip anyone, but you might feel that someone has gone above and beyond.

continued on opposite page



Feel free to ask the vendors if there is a gratuity included in their service charge and make notes of that for the day of the wedding. Most food service providers will include a gratuity if you have servers tending to the food and guests. The majority of transportation providers will require a gratuity of 10-20% depending on the situation. That should be in the contract.

If you feel that someone has really been your saving grace during the planning or day of the wedding or really gone beyond their professional duties show them your gratitude. A thank you note included with the tip will give that personal touch to show how much you appreciate the services.

Wait until after services have been rendered to distribute the tips. If you have a wedding planner, give your planner envelopes with the tips and instructions on when to deliver. If you don't have a planner, that responsibility is given to the best man.

DEAR ASHLEY,

Do I need to get wedding insurance? It sounds like a good idea, but I can't seem to find any details about available plans. What about my wedding should I cover?

Wedding insurance is more popular now among couples planning their weddings. This gives you the peace of mind of knowing that there is a cushion in case of circumstances that are out of your control. In most cases wedding insurance will range from \$100 to \$500 for your total policy. This should cover cancellation due to weather, postponement due to illness, vendors who are no shows or MIA, venues that experience bankruptcy/loss of property/mechanical problems and you can even add different riders to include the honeymoon, attendants' clothing, the wedding dress or general liability.

Many vendors carry insurance that could help during your wedding so make sure to ask them if their policies cover cancellation, loss of items, inclement weather, etc.

DEAR ASHLEY,

I know everyone says it's tacky to put registry information on the invitations, but every invitation I've received for friends has the registry enclosure or printed on the invitation itself. If it's so tacky, why is everyone doing it? I'm still debating on what I should do.

Putting your registry information directly on the invitation or in the invitation sends the message that the guests must buy you a present, which is not proper. It is proper to include registry on shower invitations. If you have a wedding website this is a great place to put the registry information and you can also use word of mouth. Traditional wedding

etiquette has changed a bit now and you know your guests better than anyone else. If you know that the best way to get information to your guests is by the invitations, sometimes that is what has to be done. Many of your guests may not be aware that this is not proper.

DEAR ASHLEY,

I just found out that one of my bridesmaids is pregnant. And she'll be nine months pregnant at the wedding.. and now I'm changing my mind about having her as a bridesmaid because she'll be so big and what if she can't fit into her dress? I've already picked out these super cute long satin gowns.. What should I do? Can I "unask" her to be a bridesmaid?

You may not have to "unask" her to be in your wedding party. Chances are she is feeling the same way. As a bride, you can appreciate this...most women would rather not be in a formal gown in front of a crowd of people at nine months pregnant. There is always the chance that she will have the baby close to the wedding and not be able to be in the wedding party, also. Start the conversation with her and see if she would be willing to be an "honorary bridesmaid" and wear what she is comfortable in but still be listed in the program and carry a nosegay or wear a floral bracelet or corsage. I bet you will be surprised at the end result.

DEAR ASHLEY,

I just got engaged, and my fiancé and I can't agree on the guest list. We have 300 people on our list and need to get it down to 200. Got any tips for paring down the list w/out insulting each other's friends and family?

This can be challenging! First put your lists together separately, including the lists from your parents, and make notes beside groups for will attend, probably will not, family, work friends, childhood friend, etc. Then come together with your lists and make one. Start with those who you both know must be invited and work your way down to be able to trim the list. It is okay to have notes with the names as to some who will get an invitation but will not be able to attend and consider that with your head count. Be careful not to hurt feelings during this process and remember that when one of you has a very strong opinion about something during the wedding planning it is probably very important and needs to be taken into consideration. This easily applies to the guest list. In the end when you are looking at your list, make sure it is even and not heavily weighted on your side or his.

Ashley Brockman is the owner of An Affair to Remember Premiere Event Planning, a Bryan-College Station wedding planning service. She is a member of the Bridal Association of the Brazos Valley.

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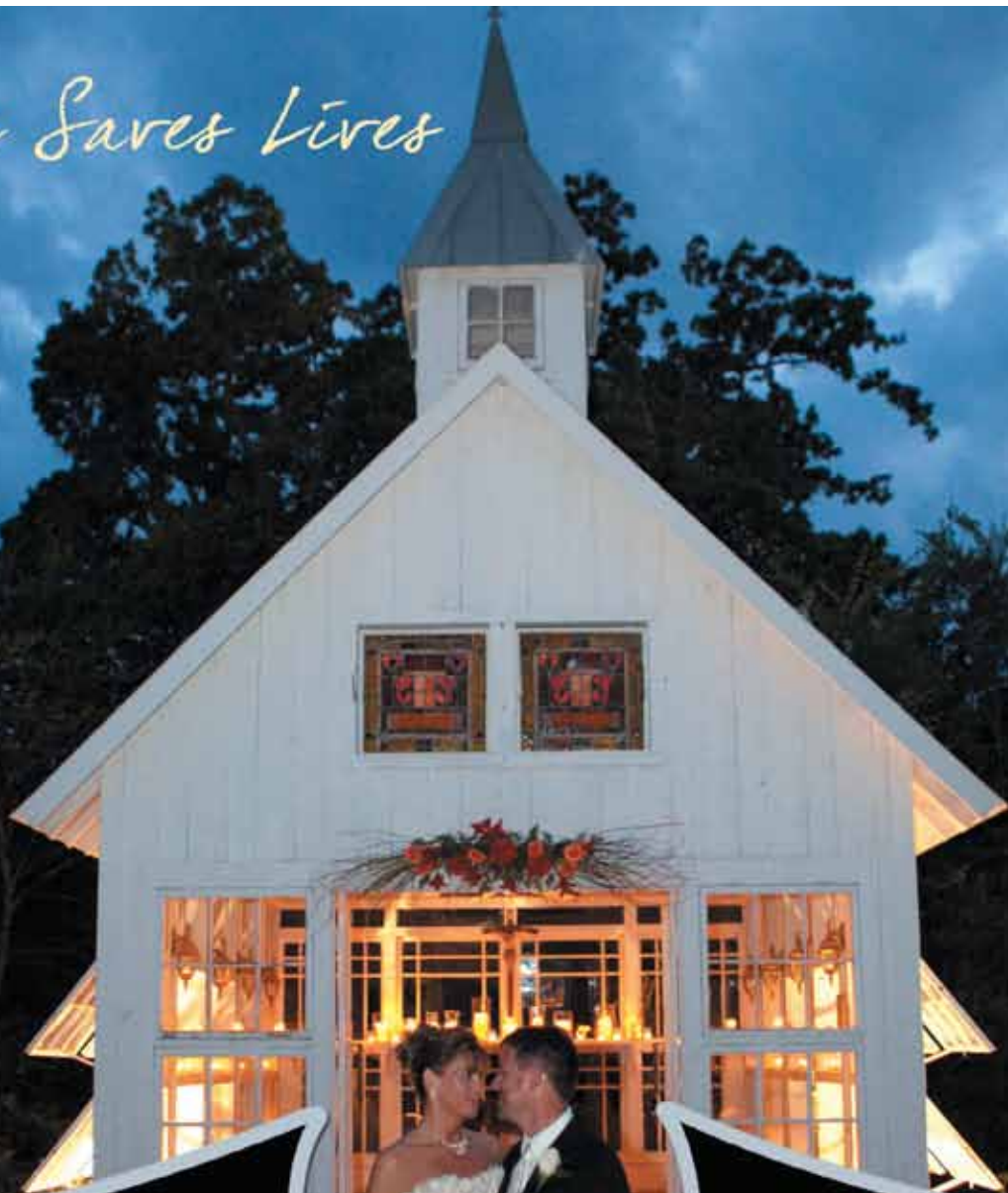
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Perfect Outdoor Events

BEAUTIFUL OUTDOOR WEDDINGS CAN BE ACHIEVED WITH A LITTLE BIT OF FORETHOUGHT, PLANNING, AND HELP FROM THE EXPERTS.

article by Sylvia Norton and Patricia Scarmardo of *Party Time Rentals*
photo courtesy of *Butch Ireland Photography*

Imagine saying your vows under hundred-year-old oak trees while a cool breeze blows softly through your hair. Candles lighting the altar, and the evening sounds of crickets chirping add to the romance of the event.

Everyone loves an outdoor wedding, but a wedding dream can turn into a guest's nightmare without the proper attention to details. The party planning professionals at Party Time Rentals have helped thousands brides avoid potential mishaps by bringing up some important things to their brides.

TERRAIN

Ideally, you'll want to select an area that is clear of objects, and most importantly, level. This is especially true if you are planning on using tents, a dance floor or staging. Guest tables and chairs also require a flat surface in order to achieve a safe and comfortable setting.

TIME OF DAY & YEAR

Make sure that you consider weather conditions with your guests in mind. Rain is the primary threat when entertaining in Texas, no matter what time of the year. It is crucial to have a backup plan in case heavy showers are forecasted. Many hostesses prefer to include a tent in their plan to ensure their outdoor venue is covered. Tents also provide shade from the sun and can be outfitted with walls if desired.

Temperatures in Texas can be extreme and can certainly affect the comfort of you and your guests. Heating and cooling options are available to help insure maximum comfort for all. This is particularly important if your guest list includes senior citizens, those with health-related problems, and people with special needs. If your event is adjacent to a home or

a building, providing an indoor seating area would be more comfortable for those special guests.

If you are planning a sunset wedding ceremony, the time of day you plan for is crucial. Make sure to place key elements in directions that will avoid interference from the sun's glare.

Never place seating where the sun can blind your guests. The same advice goes for the placement of seated tables that guests will use for dining or socializing. Make sure that your buffet, beverage, or dessert tables are located in a shaded area also. Remember that the Texas sun is hot and can spoil cold food, wilt fruit and even melt desserts in a matter of minutes.

It is easy to forget the small details when planning a big event.

LIGHTING

Lighting is very important, not only for convenience, but for the safety of the guests. Remember, people attending your event are not always familiar with your outdoor area like you are. It is especially important to light walkways that will be used.

Another thing to consider is the need for lighting after the event is over. Will there be caterers or music providers removing their equipment, or possibly friends staying to help with the cleanup of the area? Lighting can be just as vital after the party as it is during the event.

THE DETAILS

It is easy to forget the small details when planning a big event. Here are a few key details to think about:

- Possible permits required by the city or county
- Trash containers
- Parking logistics for service providers and guests
- Restroom availability
- Lawn service and insect control
- Licensed bartenders
- Security staff
- Generators or other power source

TENTS

Tents actually create an outdoor venue. A tent provides shelter when unpleasant weather conditions exist, but are considered a "fair weather friend," especially here in Texas. These structures provide much-needed shade and can even be cooled during the summer and warmed in the winter. Tents offer the perfect blank canvas for decorating and truly set the stage for any type of gathering.

One of the biggest benefits of reserving a tent is the peace of mind it provides. It is one less worry that the host will encounter as the event day draws closer. In other words, including a tent from the beginning can save both time and money if mother nature decides not to cooperate with your plans.

SEATING FOR GUESTS

Many hosts are under the impression that not all their company will be sitting at the same time. This is not a good way to plan a social event. Think about it. Typically guests arrive in couples. Most ladies will set their purses down either on the top of a table or in the chair where they intend to sit. Chances are that the person with her plans to sit in the next chair. They usually will stand and socialize as other people arrive knowing that they have already reserved their place. In other words, chairs are taken even before it is time to sit down.

continued on the next page

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Another important fact is that no one wants to stand while they eat. If you have food at your party, make sure to have enough tables to accommodate everyone -- even if you are only offering finger food. Never expect a guest to sit with a plate on their lap and their drink on the ground. Not only does it appear that you didn't plan ahead, but it also looks like you cut corners at your guests' expense. No matter if your gathering is casual or formal, a host that appears insensitive and cheap will leave guests with a negative impression.

Round tables are preferred for guests and rectangle for food or other service related needs. Chairs are usually available in different styles and colors. When deciding what chair to use, consider the width of the leg if your event is outdoors. The wider the chair leg, the sturdier the chair is on a grass surface. If you are planning your party indoors, make sure you chose a chair that will not scratch wood floors or leave scuff marks. Remember that chair appearances vary from utility to formal use and are usually priced accordingly.



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Audrey Welch and Glen Tate • March 20, 2010

TATTOOS · AND · TRADITION

PHOTOGRAPHY | JP BEATO III ARTICLE | ASHLEY MCCOLLUM

With touches of tradition (something old, something new) and splashes of non-tradition (A Converse sneaker-clad wedding party), Audrey Welch and Glen Tate pledged their eternal love on March 20, 2010. The historic Astin Mansion in Downtown Bryan served as the ideal setting for a wedding as unique and passionate as the bride and groom themselves.

Long before Glen and the wedding party walked down the aisle to Queen's "Another One Bites the Dust," he proposed to Audrey with a song of his own.

"We were celebrating our two year dating anniversary at Messina Hof's annual New Year's Eve party," recalls Audrey, a local tattoo artist, of their engagement day, December 31, 2008. "We were with our two best married friends, Daniel and Jennifer, and had rented rooms at The Villa Bed and Breakfast. We were relaxing in our room after taking a winery tour and tasting, just sitting around and enjoying each other's company. Glen and Daniel went out to the car to get his guitar and when they came back in, Glen started playing the song that he had written for Daniel and Jennifer's wedding. After that, he played a song he wrote for me, 'From Time to Time.' After he finished, he grabbed a ring box out of his pocket, and accidentally dropped it as he went down on one knee."

Audrey and their friends giggled as Glen caught it and then placed his great-grandmother's ring on the second knuckle of her ring finger (Audrey says she was a petite woman, so later in the night she moved it to her pinky).

He then timidly asked, "So, will you?" To which she replied, "Will I what?" He said, "Will you marry me?" With a smile she said yes.

Audrey says she later learned that Glen had asked Daniel to be his best man just moments before he proposed, and had also asked her parents for their blessing ahead of time.

"I immediately called all my girls – and guy – and asked them to be in the wedding," she said. "There was my Maid of Honor, Meryl Bond (*whose own wedding story is featured on page 60*); Bridesmaids Charlotte Wadkins, Diana Mills and Jacinda Douthitt; and Bridesman, Daniel Wilson."

And then came the wedding planning. "I can't say that I was one of those little girls who dreamed of her wedding day and kept a hope chest, but during my relationship with Glen, I started to fantasize about what it'd be like and what I'd want," said Audrey.

"All I knew is that I wanted it to be fun," said Glen,

After he finished playing the song he wrote for me, he grabbed a ring box out of his pocket, and accidentally dropped it as he went down on one knee.

an aspiring musician and member of the band, "Anything Twice."

Browsing the Bridal Association's website, www.ido-ido.org led Audrey to Brazos Valley Bride Magazine, where she read about event planner Ashley Brockman, owner of An Affair to Remember Premiere Event Planning.

"When we met with Ashley for the first time, we all fell in love with her," Audrey said. "There was no other option. She helped us beyond anything she can ever know, both business-wise and emotionally. I can't imagine what my wedding day would have been like without her!"

The couple chose Astin Mansion because they wanted a setting in or near Downtown Bryan. "Glen

and I love the Historic Downtown area, but, to us, Astin Mansion was a happy accident," Audrey said. "We didn't know such a beautiful and impressive estate was hiding downtown. We knew we wanted an outdoor ceremony with an indoor reception, and the majority of our guests didn't have to travel very far. It was the perfect place! It fit our budget and our desired look."

Audrey then found photographer JP Beato's images online. "I saw his photographs on Rosewood of New Tabor's website and they made me want to get married anywhere ... to anyone ... as long as I had that photographer," she said with a smile. "When I first emailed to ask for a quote and how to start the process, the subject line was, 'Where have you been all my life?' I admit that may have been a little intense, but having this photographer was the most important thing to me about the wedding. Well, other than my husband."

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As for the flowers and cake, Audrey says there was no contest. "Postoak Florist and Cinderella Stories are the best of the best, and I knew that the beauty and quality of their work was beyond other," Audrey said. "Debbie from Postoak and Sandee from Cinderella Stories were so smart, pleasant and helpful."

Their wedding day was everything they hoped it would be and more - the perfect blend of traditional and modern creativity.

"I did not let Glen see me until I walked down the aisle," said Audrey. "I didn't show him what my dress looked like, and kept the bridal portraits hidden."

She added, "I had something old (my engagement ring), something new (my bridal gown), something borrowed (my grandmother's handkerchief tied around my leg) and something blue (my contact lenses), but instead of a silver sixpence in my shoe, I had a penny. My father walked me down the aisle to give me away."

Audrey says they chose traditional vows instead of writing their own. "Our Priest, Father Bruce Chabot, of Saint Paul's Episcopal Church in



Navasota, officiated our wedding," she said. "He officiated my brother's wedding; I used to babysit his children; and I've even tattooed him!"

The reception included a plated dinner; a groom's cake (replica of two size 12 Converse tennis shoes); and a four-tiered, white, round wedding cake adorned with ivory tea roses and fruit, with flavors inspired by citrus fruit.

In fact, citrus fruit was incorporated into the wedding party, bouquets and more.

"I was watching 'Get Married' on Lifetime, and it featured a bouquet with grapefruit in it," Audrey said, "I had never seen anything like that before, and haven't seen anything like it since. As soon as I saw it, I had to have it, but I couldn't decide on what fruit I wanted. So, my bouquet, the Maid of Honor's and Glen's Groomsmen's all had oranges, lemons and limes, and then each of my Bridesmaids carried their own. Charlotte had oranges, Diana had



limes, and Jacinda had lemons. Each of their dresses featured fruit patterns. Meryll's (Maid of Honor) dress had all three, whereas the rest of the girls' dresses only featured the fruit in the bouquets they were carrying. Elissa's (Glen's female attendant) dress was designed to match Glen's suit, even though she carried all three fruit, as well."

Glen said, "It seemed perfect and Springy, since it was the first day of Spring."

Also made to match the fruit and suits were Converse Chuck Taylor All-Star tennis shoes.

"I actually borrowed that idea from another wedding I was in," Audrey said. "I was a bridesmaid in a wedding that was supposed to have Converse Chuck Taylor All-Stars in Seafoam Green, but the plan fell through. I figured, since she didn't use the idea, she wouldn't mind if I borrowed it. I love the way it worked out. The colors of the shoes matched all the fruit, and the suits. They were each embroidered with our wedding date -- our friends will always remember our anniversary! They were also made (RED), which is designed to help eliminate AIDS."

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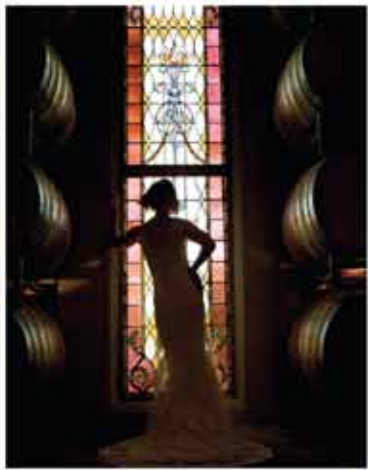
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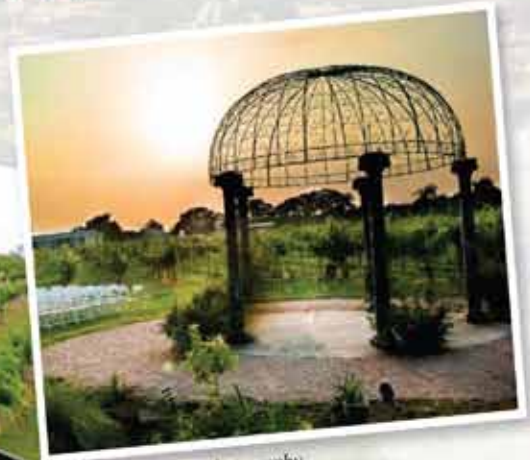
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Meryl Bond and Hector Rodriguez • September 4, 2010

THEN, NOW AND UNTIL FOREVER

PHOTOGRAPHY | JARED TSENG ARTICLE | KAREN YANCEY

“We met at a party during high school in ‘99 and we’ve been dating ever since. I could tell at a young age that he was going to be the love of my life,” said Meryl Rodriguez as she recounted how she met her new husband Hector. “He quickly became someone special in my life.” It turned out they had a lot of mutual friends and they started dating early in the year.

When Hector first asked Meryl out, she thought it was a group going to a movie. She soon realized it was a date when Hector was the only one who showed up! During the movie, she got the impression he liked her because he would subtly lean in to her. After the movie, they had coffee at a local coffee shop where Hector reluctantly admitted to having a crush on her. “I fell for his shy charm. We showed up to school the following week holding hands,” Meryl said, “That was eleven years ago.”

For most couples, an engagement is a joyous occasion in which the bride is exuding energy and happiness. The opposite occurred with Meryl. Hector had started noticing a lack of energy and a decline in her usual vivaciousness. “I knew something was wrong when I had to tell her to get out of bed at six in the evening,” Hector said. “I didn’t understand what was happening.”

Meryl went to see her doctor in and had blood tests done, to figure out what could be causing her exhaustion. In April 2009, she was diagnosed with leukemia, a type of blood cancer. “I was home by myself when the nurse called to tell me. I burst into tears. I was confused. I didn’t know much about cancer. I thought leukemia was only associated with small children.”

continued on page 61

Meryl+Hector continued from page 60



Meryl had suggested to Hector that it could be cancer the night before she got the call, but he didn't take it seriously. He said "It's not cancer. My grandparents had cancer. You're too young."

Meryl waited until Hector got home from work to tell him the news.

"I was shocked," Hector said, "I take pride in having a plan for life and my house of cards fell apart with the diagnosis."

The first time Meryl saw Hector cry was when he called to tell his mother. "I guess my wall crumbled when I broke the news to mom," Hector said.

Meryl was to begin a year and a half of chemotherapy treatments in Houston, and the couple knew it was going to be difficult for both of them. "It was stressful for my fiancé," Meryl says, "We were trying to educate ourselves about what the disease was. But, he was always my rock."

The couple was living in Denton at the time, Meryl studying for her Master's degree at the University of North Texas, and Hector working full time. The chemotherapy in Houston meant a change of address for Meryl.

Hector helped Meryl move to her parents' home in College Station so they could care for her while she was receiving treatment at MD Anderson. Hector stayed in the Dallas area to continue working.

Communication and visitation was difficult during this time. "He was very understanding of the fact that there were days when I was so tired that I didn't feel like talking on the phone," Meryl remembers. Hector made the long drive from Dallas to MD Anderson in Houston so he could spend as much time as he could with Meryl.

Meryl stayed positive. From day one, the doctors claimed she was a good candidate for a stem-cell transplant. In the hospital, Hector lightened Meryl's mood with jokes. "I joked with her to make her smile. We didn't know what was going to happen next. We took it one day at a time," Hector said.

He would give Meryl's parents a break by taking her for walks in her wheelchair. He even stayed up with her in her hospital room. "He was adamant about seeing me," Meryl said, "There were days I would look in the mirror and not recognize myself for all the tubes and IVs hanging out of me. But, he always felt the same way about me. He saw me at my worst and he still thought I was beautiful."

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They had discussions about whether Meryl could have children in the future. The doctors said chemotherapy can cause infertility or early menopause. "I kept having children as a future option, but when that option was taken away, it was like a punch in the gut," Hector said.

Hector's family offered to pay to have some of her eggs harvested before treatment. "My parents are action-oriented so they offered to use their family emergency fund to pay for harvesting Meryl's eggs," Hector said. "I am so grateful to them. My family is always there for each other."

The doctor always gave them hope. He talked about children of patients who had transplants as "transplant babies." He told Meryl there were plenty of them running around.

The chemotherapy made wedding planning a challenge because Meryl's energy was depleted during the treatments. That was why she hired her wedding planner Ashley Brockman who came highly recommended by a friend.

"Meryl was amazing at taking things a day at a time and knowing when she had overdone it," Ashley said. "Meryl sometimes had wedding meetings after recurring blood work was done so she had to set time limits."

Meryl would push through the meetings with all of her focus on the wedding, Meryl's attitude was unbelievable during all of this," said Ashley, "From the beginning she was so strong and full of faith."

Meryl added, "The wedding was something I could look forward to. It gave me something to fight for on hard days."

The bride chose her dress by browsing online. She then hired seamstress Mallene Kendall of Cypress to create it. "I wanted something classic with a twist. It had a 1940's style with a boat neck, but also featured a low back to make it modern."

Kendall also made the four bridesmaid's dresses which were black separates with red sashes. The bridesmaids were given the freedom to choose a neckline that best suited them. "I was trying to consider what my bridesmaids would want in a dress," Meryl said.

For jewelry, she worked in the old wedding tradition. "My 'something old' was my maternal grandmother's pearl ring. I wore new earrings given to me by my mother. I had a blue garter and I borrowed my paternal grandmother's wrist watch," Meryl said.

continued on page 63



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For her wedding colors, Meryl chose black, white and red. "I wanted something romantic and elegant," she said.

Post Oak Florist was hired to do the floral arrangements. "They were very knowledgeable about what flowers were in season, Meryl said, "And they were able to interpret my initial ideas into something that was within my price range." "I selected red roses with dark red calla lilies for the bouquet because they contrasted nicely against my white dress," she added.

Meryl vowed she would not wear a wig during the wedding ceremony. She said, "I stayed bald and proud during the chemotherapy treatments, but I really hoped to have hair at my wedding."

While attending the 2010 Spring Bridal Show, Meryl had approached stylists there representing a salon to ask about pricing -- hoping her hair will have grown back for the wedding. It took her a moment to understand why they looked at her oddly. The stylists thought she was joking. "I honestly had gotten so comfortable being bald that sometimes I forgot that I was," Meryl said.

Meryl also ran into an old high school friend, Jared Tseng. At first Jared didn't recognize her because she was bald. She had decided to shave her head before chemotherapy made her hair fall out. "I thought that was brave," Jared said.

Meryl reconnected with Jared and realized he was a wedding photographer. "I was really impressed with his work, so I hired him."

Reverend Dick Maddox of M.D. Anderson agreed to officiate at the ceremony. He was the chaplain who blessed the stem cells before Meryl's transplant.

"The chaplain said a prayer with all the doctors and nurses before the procedure. It was important to us that he officiate our wedding," Meryl said.

Fortunately, the stem-cell transplant was a success and Meryl was cancer-free for her wedding. On September 4, 2010, after a two-year engagement fraught with uncertainty, the couple tied the knot. That day was also the eleventh anniversary of their first date. The wedding was outside with sunny, beautiful weather. One hundred and thirty people came for the ceremony.

They walked down the aisle at Double Creek Crossing to the processional piece Canon in B. Meryl and Hector exchanged vows on a raised cobblestone platform surrounded by massive ancient oak trees. Behind the officiant was a beautifully decorated arch covered in tulle and green ferns.

Jirong Ye, harpist, performed during the ceremony.



After the ceremony, photographer, Jared Tseng noted that the wedding was not only a celebration of the couple's love, but of life, itself.

continued on page 88



planning the perfect wedding begins with the perfect **dress....**



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Hayley Bilski and Jake Tappan • October 22, 2010

DESTINATION: AGGIELAND

PHOTOGRAPHY | PICTURE PERFECT IMAGES ARTICLE | KAREN YANCEY

“I met Jake at Texas A&M during our junior year but we didn’t start dating until four years later,” Hayley Tappan said about her new husband. At the time, Jake was rooming with Michael, Hayley’s friend from high school. In college, Jake was in to wakeboarding so he and Hayley spent a few afternoons on the lake with Michael and some other mutual friends. “I thought Jake was really cute but neither of us were thinking of dating anyone seriously,” Hayley said. After her graduation, she moved to Dallas to begin her life after college.

As fate would have it, Jake also moved to Dallas, and her friend Michael came to the area to attend graduate school. Shortly after the move, Michael invited Hayley to watch a basketball game with some friends at Jake’s new apartment. It wasn’t until then that Jake and Hayley really hit it off. “We didn’t stop talking to each other all evening. Soon, we started dating,” Hayley said. “That was in April 2008, exactly four years after we graduated from Texas A&M.”

“Everything went by so fast,” Hayley remembers. Their first trip together was taken the following July. They went to a romantic bed and breakfast in Wilmington, North Carolina. “It was then that I knew this was the guy I wanted to marry,” Hayley said. “There was no drama. Everything was so easy when I was with him.”

By the end of 2008, Jake wanted to purchase his first home. “He told me he couldn’t imagine living in a house without me.” Fortunately, their search was short. After only a few months of looking they found the perfect home. In February of 2009, the two were homeowners. They two enjoyed furnishing their new house and making a home together, but Jake hadn’t yet popped the question, and Hayley began to wonder and speculate just when he would.

continued on page 67



"I was sure Jake was going to propose over the holidays, but he didn't," Hayley said, "It was such a letdown!" It turns out that Jake had wanted to propose then, but the ring wasn't quite ready.

After the holidays, Jake and Hayley accompanied their college buddy, Michael, and his wife to Isla Mujeres, Mexico for an impulse romantic tropical getaway. Michael and his wife rented a house on the island and asked if Hayley and Jake wanted to come along.

"I didn't think Jake would propose to me on vacation," Hayley said, "Jake had always joked about how clichéd proposals like that were."

The evening they arrived on the island, Hayley and Jake shared some champagne with their friends while they admired the beautiful scenery. But there was still no proposal. On the second night, Hayley and Jake went out walking by the water. Jake took out the ring and popped the question while their friends took pictures from a nearby cliff. "I was completely shocked because I didn't think it would ever come," Hayley said. "It was a wonderful surprise."

Jake was so nervous about losing the ring, that he tied it to a rope bracelet and kept it in his pocket for two days waiting for the right moment. It was worth the wait. "It was just perfect," Hayley said.

continued on page 68



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The bride-to-be enjoyed every minute of wedding planning over the nine month engagement. Since Jake's job required him to travel away from home about two and half weeks each month, this left Hayley with plenty of time to herself to make all the arrangements. "I am an only child, so I am very particular about things. I knew I wanted to get married in October," Hayley said, "I thought nine months wouldn't be enough time to plan a wedding but it turned out to be just right."

Hayley hired Susan Keough of A Moment in Time Planning to be the coordinator for the day of the wedding. "I didn't want a family member to have to worry about or be responsible for things on the day of our wedding," Hayley said. "I wanted everyone to just have fun, and having a wedding coordinator allowed us to not worry about a thing."

Jake and Hayley decided to get married in Bryan because they didn't want their families to have to travel all the way up to Dallas. Hayley's family is from Brenham, and Jake was part of a military family who

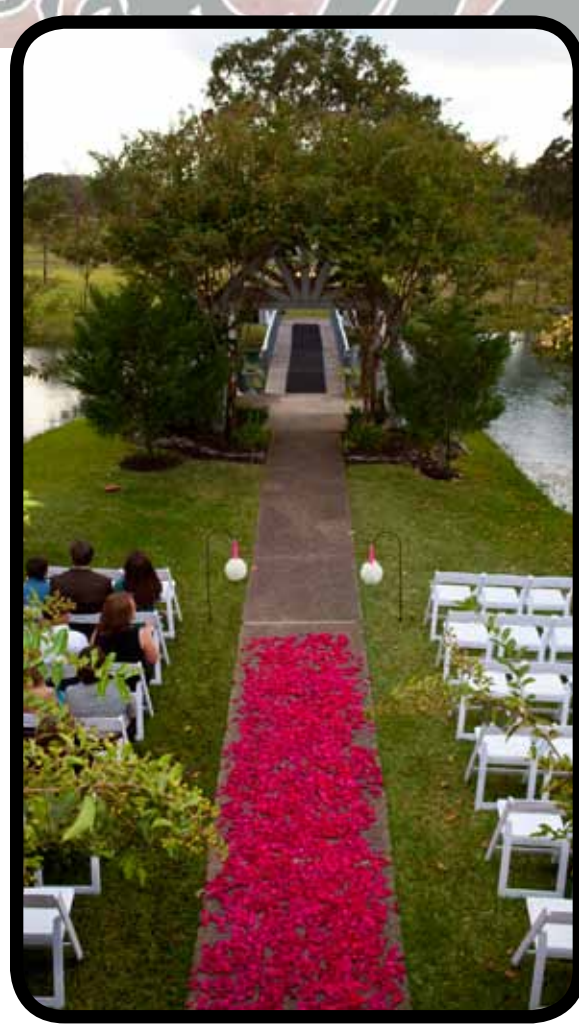
traveled all over while he was growing up. Because Brenham didn't have many venues to choose from, the couple realized the perfect place was somewhere they used call home. The Home of the 12th Man.

"We met at A&M, so Aggieland has a special place in our hearts. Also, the area has a larger selection of wedding venues than my hometown. It just made sense to get married there." Hayley said.

Hayley envisioned a wedding outside then move the reception indoors. Hayley's mother happened to mention The Greenbranch as a venue that would fit the bill. Once Hayley saw it, she knew it was just what she wanted. "The place was very modern and the indoor/outdoor arrangement was perfect."

After the venue, Hayley chose Picture Perfect Images' Amy McCormick to handle the task of photography. "I was very pleased with the her," Hayley said, "She was even willing to drive up to Dallas to shoot our engagement session and my bridal portrait."

continued on page 70



"We met at Texas A&M, so Aggieland has a special place in our hearts. It just made sense to get married there."



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Hayley + Jake continued from page 68



Hayley went to the 2010 Bridal Show and Benefit where she found Cakes by Blondie. "I liked her because she was really nice and her prices were good, and of course the cake was delicious!"

For their color scheme, Hayley wanted a classic elegant look with a twist of "something different," so she chose black and white, with touches of bright pink. Pink accented just about detail. The table runners were black and white damask pattern with touches of pink. The bridesmaid's bouquets were wrapped in pink ribbon. The cake had pink flowers. The invitations had pink accents. Jake even wore a bright pink tie with his tuxedo and his four groomsmen wore pink pocket squares.

Hayley chose Post Oak Florist to provide unique flower arrangements for each table. She chose to have large bowls of roses, hydrangeas and spider lilies.

The champagne-colored Sottero Midgley gown Hayley selected was created from organza with an ornate sweetheart, dropped waist bodice adorned with pearls, beads and crystals. The full skirt featured asymmetrical pin-tucks and a chapel train. The back had a corset closure. "I chose a dress that was completely different from what I thought I would ever wear," Hayley said. "I had always pictured myself in a more simple, sophisticated dress. I tried it on as a joke! It was so glitzy and princess-like.

But, when my mom and I saw it on, we were both surprised at how good it looked."



Hayley had four bridesmaids and two junior bridesmaids. She chose a Belsoie design for the bridesmaids dresses all of which were black, with floor-length skirts and made of Tiffany chiffon. As for "something old, new, borrowed and blue," Hayley nearly didn't pull it off. Her undergarments were blue, her gown was new, and she borrowed a crystal pendant a friend to wear. However, she left the "something old" item at home in Dallas. So, Hayley's mother found an old key and put it in her bouquet.

continued on page 72

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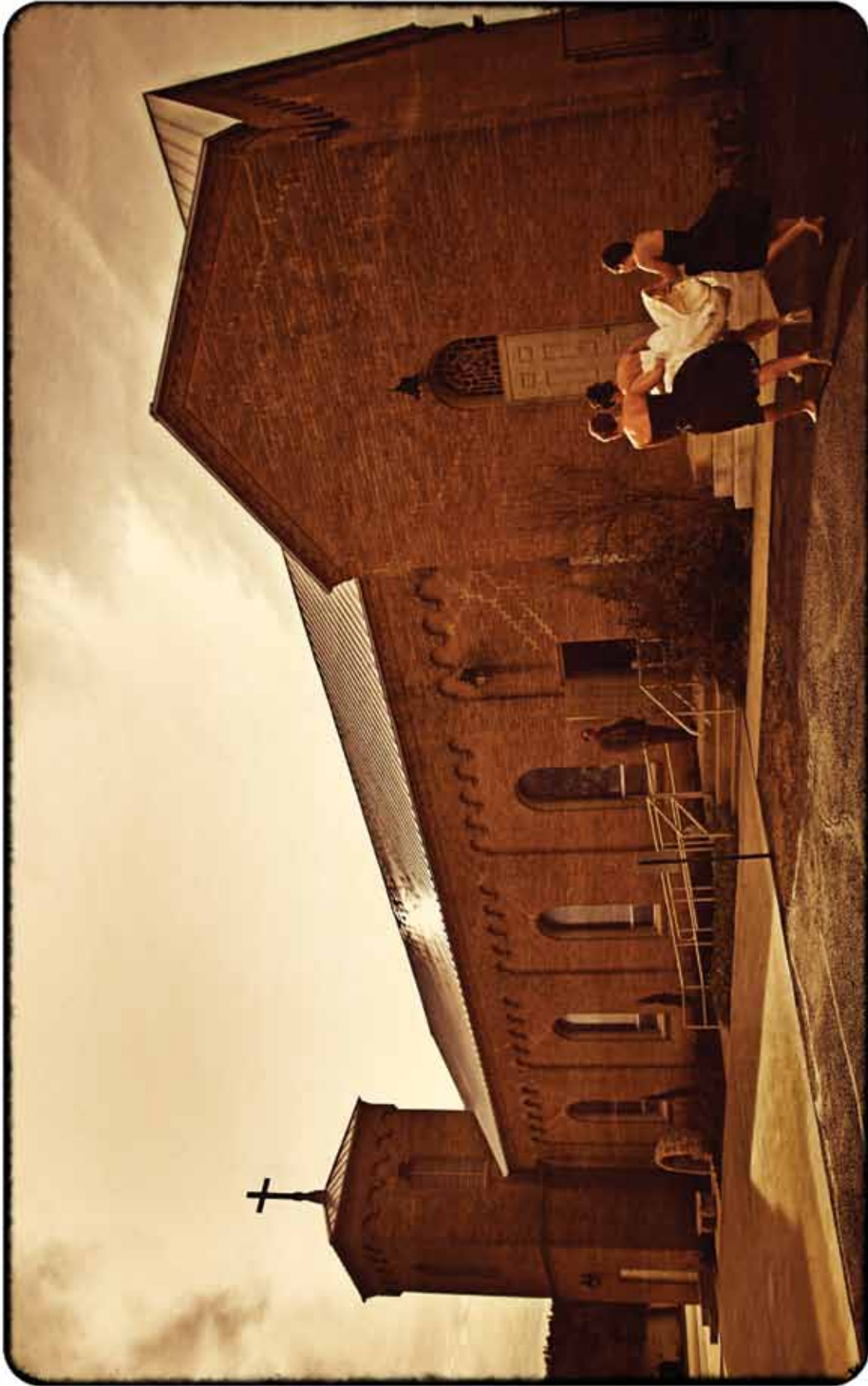
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On the morning of the wedding the bride, bridesmaids, mother and grandmother of the bride had a ladies brunch, then the bride and bridesmaids had their hair and makeup done.

One hundred and forty people came to celebrate the wedding with Hayley and Jake. When the ceremony began, Hayley walked down the staircase from the Greenbranch's bridal suite onto a walkway covered in bright pink rose petals. She had bought four hundred roses and had a de-petaling party the night before.

"I was so excited when the ceremony started. I was giggling and laughing because I was so ready to get married," Hayley said.

The weather and venue were a beautiful backdrop to the sweetness of the ceremony. The aisle led to a gazebo attached to a bridge and fountain beyond. There, Jack was waiting to make Hayley his wife. "We both got a little teary-eyed during the vows," Hayley said. At the end of the ceremony, they did a romantic dip kiss.

"Everything was perfect at the reception," said Hayley. They started with a cocktail hour where a toast was made to the couple and they cut the cake. Then everyone sat down for a gourmet meal by Madden's Casual Gourmet. Chef Madden's cuisine came highly recommended by Hayley's family members.

After the meal, the Little Bobby Douglas Band from Houston provided live entertainment, and Events Lighting was hired to light a paisley pattern on the dance floor which tied in with the other décor to give the party a chic atmosphere.

The couple danced their first song to "All I Want Is You" by U2. Jake actually texted the song to Hayley when they were dating. She knew all along that it would be played at their wedding.

"I wasn't totally traditional. There wasn't a bouquet garter toss. I just wanted everyone to have a good time at the party," Hayley said. "And they did! No one wanted to leave at the end of the night."

continued on page 74



Kathlyn Dagna
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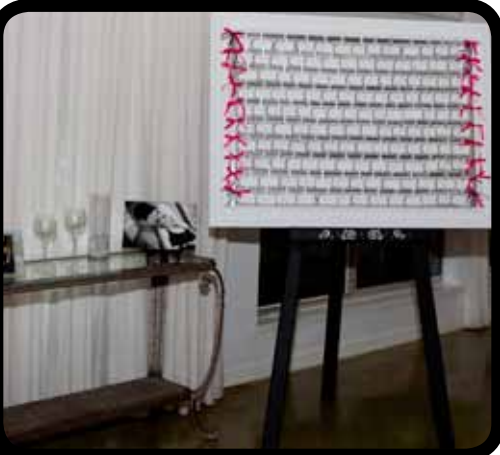
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Guests finally went home at two in the morning and the newlyweds spent the night in the Greenbranch's bridal suite. They woke up just three hours later to drive up to Dallas to catch their Noon flight to Hawaii. They made a quick stop at their house to grab their honeymoon clothing when Jake's parents surprised them with a limousine ride to the airport.

The couple arrived in Hawaii and they spent six nights and seven days at the beautiful Four Seasons Hotel in Maui. "The service was perfect and we hardly left the hotel," Hayley said. The hotel boasts an Infinity pool that overlooks the ocean, so the newlyweds spent most of the time lounging in the sun and relaxing in their first days as man and wife. Their honeymoon wasn't totally without adventure, though. "We tried surfing, went to a luau at a nearby hotel, and we did a few other touristy things," Hayley said. They enjoyed every minute of their time away from home, starting their new lives as Mr. and Mrs. Jake Tappan.

"I want to thank Jake's parents for a beautiful rehearsal dinner," Hayley said, "I also want to thank my mom, stepdad, and dad for all that they did to give me my dream wedding. And of course, a very special thank you to Jake and I's mutual friend, Michael for continuing to introduce us until we fell for each other."



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U.S. Destination Weddings

FOR COUPLES CONSIDERING A WEDDING AWAY FROM HOME, HERE ARE SOME GREAT SPOTS HERE IN THE UNITED STATES

article by Sherry Hinnant of *Aggieworld Adventures & Travel*
photo by *Songbird Photography - Sedona, Arizona*

Considering a destination wedding? Mexico or the Caribbean come to mind naturally, but how about the “good ol’ US of A”? America is known for its diversity -- a nation of vast cultural and geographical variety -- so you have endless choices of exciting wedding destinations right here on the homeland! Additionally, marriage laws are the most liberal in the world which typically allow for couples to be married by whomever and wherever they want!

From beaches on the ocean’s edge to high atop a snow-capped mountaintop, in the desert sands, rustic village, or sophisticated city, the wedding you’ve always dreamed of can happen right here in the United States. Weddings may range from simple and elegant, bold and festive, traditional and formal, unconventional and fun...you name it! In America, anything is possible...especially the perfect romantic wedding of your dreams!

According to a recent MSN report on “Best Places to Get Married”, the following locations were listed:

- Central Park - New York, NY
- Chapel of Love - Bloomington, MN
- Columbia Gorge Hotel - Hood River, OR
- Disneyland - Anaheim, CA
- Disney World - Orlando, FL
- Empire State Building - New York, NY
- Graceland Wedding Chapel - Las Vegas, NV
- Little Church of the West Chapel - Las Vegas, NV
- Palace of Fine Arts - San Francisco, CA
- Philadelphia Zoo - Philadelphia, PA
- Westin Beach Resort - Key Largo, FL

Other favorites include:

- Sedona, AZ
- Martha’s Vineyard, MA.

Of course, Alaska and Hawaii, are also great places to “tie the knot” depending on whether you like cool majestic mountains, or warm sunny beaches! And, let’s not forget about our own great state of TEXAS!

Look no further than your own “backyard” at local venues like local wineries, rose gardens or pavilions, Victorian mansions, outdoor ranch locations, even on a spiritual labyrinth or a cruise ship at the Port of Galveston!

Look no further than your own country for a beautiful wedding destination.

If you are really envisioning traveling to get married, here are some things to think about, motivations and logistics to find out if a destination wedding is right for you?

- Does the location have emotional significance? Did you meet your fiance there? Did you spend time there as a child? What about this location is special to you?
- Do you expect family and friends to travel here to celebrate with you? Is this a realistic expectation? Will you pay for people to fly and stay in a hotel? Will you just elope or have a very small, intimate wedding?

• Can you visualize the wedding in this place? How does it look?

• Are you wanting someplace unique to have the wedding to express your personalities? What about it draws you as a couple?

• Are you hoping to save money? Typically destination weddings cost less, due, in part, to the fact that these are usually smaller and more intimate than weddings at home. Some luxury resort properties, (mostly in the Caribbean), even offer “free” weddings!

• Do you just want to get away from it all? The desire to get away from all the stresses of traditional wedding planning and/or well-meaning relatives and just concentrate on the simple meaning of your marriage is a common one.

A few aspects of the destination wedding to keep in mind are that there are fewer guests, sometimes it requires a longer length of stay, reservations far in advance may be required to guarantee the venue of your choice, and it may be a challenge to coordinate unless you involve the services of a professional travel agent. In the end, destination weddings always promise to be very memorable for you and your guests!

For additional information regarding destination weddings, check out websites: destinationbride.com, locationweddings.net, or Google “Texas Wedding Locations.” And, of course, don’t forget the invaluable and experienced knowledge of your favorite travel consultant!



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Importing Your Vendors

HOMETOWN PROS AT DESTINATION WEDDINGS

Destination weddings can either be a cinch to plan or they can be a real challenge for all involved. Whenever possible, choose local florists and caterers. After all, the items they provide are perishable. Who really wants to worry about their wedding cake on a plane anyway? Select local vendors for your perishable, and less important items. But for the more important services, work with professionals you know and like. Here are some details to anticipate:

ADDED EXPENSE

Be prepared for added expense. You'll be expected to pay for airfare, transfers, meals and hotel rooms for your vendors (and assistants, if they require them). Some may also require that you pay for a rental car or equipment transfer or shipping.

TRAVEL REQUESTS

Some vendors will insist on making their own travel reservations. While you don't have to pay for first class, you should respect their airline preferences. Many professionals have established relationships with specific carriers and other companies based on their needs -- for example, a good insurance policy in case equipment or bags are damaged or accommodations for a fragile items.

INVESTIGATE VISAS

In some countries, your vendor may have to apply for a special visa or work permit in order to service your ceremony. Rather than encourage him/her to work around the inconvenience, recognize that the attention to bureaucratic red tape is the sign of a true professional.

EARLY ARRIVAL

Arranging to have your vendors arrive in town a day ahead of time is a good idea even if it adds a day to their fees. In case of inclement weather or other unforeseen glitches, your pro will still have time to make alternative travel plans or hop on a later flight.

GET DETAILED ESTIMATES

Ask questions up front about what your vendor expects in regards to time and expense so you are stuck with any unpleasant surprises after you get home from the honeymoon.

AGREE ON A PER DIEM

Establish dollar limits for meals each day. If you know your photographer has agreed to spend only \$50 a day on food, you won't panic when you hear him ordering an expensive cognac at the end of the night. He's doing it on his own dime.

INCLUDE THEM IN YOUR CALCULATIONS

Calculate your photographer, officiant, or planner into the head counts for events like rehearsal dinner, and lunches. If your budget allows, it will be easier than having them run off to find their own food during the event.

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EYELINER

Navy is the new black. Ask your makeup artist or product specialist for some great options for wearing blue.

BOUQUET

Hyacinths and hydrangeas are blue-tiful! There are many other types of flowers that can be dyed blue for effect. Many Texas brides ask for bluebonnets in their spring bouquets. Ask your florist for recommendations.



NAIL POLISH

Paint your toes bright blue with *Blue My Mind* by OPI; opi.com. Your local salon can create a pedicure with just the right hue.



GARTER

This is a classic way to get your blue on! Find a beautiful lacy garter with blue ribbon and you're set.

RIBBON

Tie a ribbon around your ankle under a long dress or put ribbon in your hairdo. It's an old-fashioned style that is making a return. Some brides sew a blue ribbon into the hem of the dress for a more subtle touch.

COCKTAILS

Blue drinks and other signature cocktails are a popular trend. Ask your favorite bartender for suggestions.



CONTACT LENSES

Pacific or Caribbean tints make your brown eyes blue; ask your eye care doctor to make recommendations fit for you.

TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT TATTOO

Place a blue rose where he can find it that night; permanent tattoos can be a special reminder of your wedding day forever!



SHOES

Why wear white when you can wear *blue*? Wedding shoes can be whatever you want them to be. So ask about ordering a pair of powder blue (or bright blue) shoes from your local bridal shop. You could even have your bridal party sign the bottom of your shoes in blue Sharpie for fun.

JOURNAL

Carry your vows down the aisle in a keepsake blue journal; ask your

stationer for great suggestions.

HAIR ACCESSORIES

Floral clips or jewel-tipped bobby pins add sparkle, ask your stylist for ideas and suggestions.

LINGERIE

Sport wedding-day undies embellished with colored ribbons, lace or crystals.

SASH

Cinch your dress with cornflower or cerulean for a splash of color; visit with your local bridal salon for a great way to enhance your dress with color.

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Wedding Music 101

MUSIC TO HIGHLIGHT YOUR CEREMONY

article by Lisa Lin of BCS String Quartet

The most important thing to remember about wedding music is that there is no right or wrong piece of music. Each ceremony is unique because each couple is unique, and what they choose should harmonize with their personality and lifestyle. After the venue and attire, the music ultimately sets the tone for the event, so it is best to mindfully make the selections a few months before the big day. (This also gives you time to change your mind later.) The lists below highlight some pieces that have been used as ceremony music throughout the Brazos Valley.

Recent trends have shifted towards using ceremony music to reflect songs that have either been childhood favorites or have some connection to the bride and groom. If these non-traditional pieces are chosen, be sure to give the musicians enough time to find the music, and the best way to avoid any additional fees, if the piece is not in their repertoire, would be to find the arrangements for the ensemble or soloist. Some of these popular pieces include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Moon River</i> | <i>Somewhere Over the Rainbow</i> |
| <i>Viva La Vida</i> | <i>All I Ask of You</i> |
| <i>The Forrest Gump Theme</i> | <i>Linus and Lucy (Charlie Brown Theme)</i> |
| <i>Wind Beneath My Wings</i> | <i>The Prayer</i> |

Some ceremonies include religious hymns that fit well during the unity candle or during the processional.

- Ave Maria (Schubert)*
- Ave Maria (Bach-Gounod)*
- Come Thou Fount*
- The Lord's Prayer*
- Be Thou My Vision*
- How Great Thou Art*
- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (Ode to Joy)*

If the couple likes the idea of classical music but wants to stay away from the very traditional, a whole world of beautiful pieces is just at their fingertips.

- Clair de Lune (Debussy)*
- Pathetique Sonata (Beethoven)*
- Arioso (Bach)*
- Bist du Bei Mir (Bach)*
- Aria from Xerxes (Handel)*
- Meditation from Thaïs (Massenet)*
- Flower Duet (Delibes)*
- Sheep May Safely Graze (Bach)*
- Allegro from Spring (Vivaldi)*

continued on page 81



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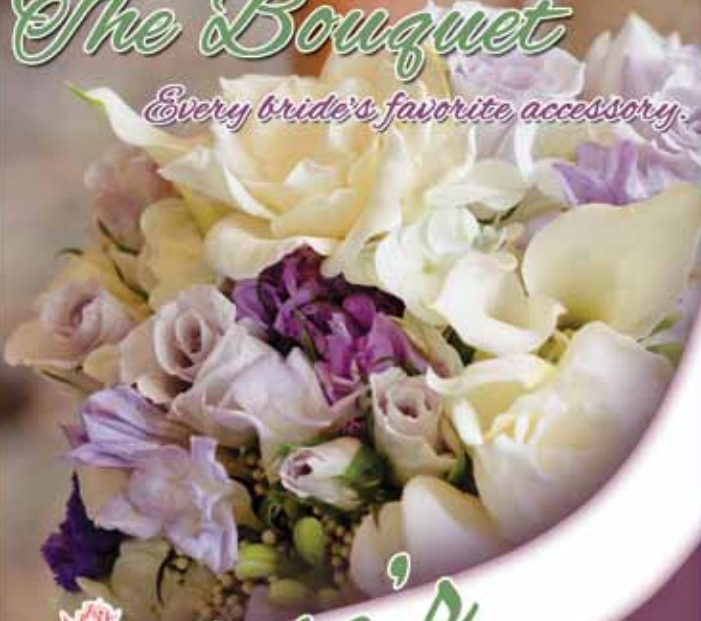
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Largo from Winter (Vivaldi)
Te Deum (Charpentier)
Entrance of the Queen of Sheba (Handel)

As trends come and go, the following list of classics will always give you the sounds of a traditional wedding ceremony. These are enduring favorites that will withstand the test of time.

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Bach)
Canon in D (Pachelbel)
Hymne (Vangelis)
Trumpet Voluntary (Clarke)
Bridal Chorus (Wagner)

Air on the G String (Bach)
Wedding March (Mendelssohn)
Ode to Joy (Beethoven)
La Rejouissance (Handel)
Rondeau (Mouret)
Hornpipe (Handel)

Be it a string quartet or harpist, organist or guitarist, live music will always add a special element to the day. Music is a ubiquitous part of our daily lives, but wedding music should be a memorable and poignant accompaniment to a momentous occasion.

Lisa Lin is a member of the BCS String Quartet, a professional local string quartet featuring two violins, a viola and a cello, which has been performing in and around the Brazos Valley since 2004. For more information, visit www.bcsstringquartet.com

Wedding Checklist

- ✓ Church
- ✓ Flowers
- Breast Augmentation**
(Enhance that new dress)
- ✓ Guest List
- Tummy Tuck**
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Gown Restoration

GOWN RESTORATION IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY BOX...

article courtesy of *Pride Cleaners* | photo by *Michael Kellett Professional Photography*



You spend so much time and effort (and not to mention, money!) to select the perfect gown for your wedding day, that it would be a shame to waste all those resources by leaving the once-worn gown in the back of your closet for years. It just makes good sense to preserve your gown for the memories that it embodies, and possible future use (maybe your daughter will want to wear your gown on her wedding day).

WHAT IS GOWN RESTORATION?

The special cleaning and packaging techniques utilized in gown preservation ensures your gown will maintain its beauty. A professional preservationist will look at your gown and note the materials used, embellishments, any stains, and then formulate a specialized cleaning procedure. After it's clean, the gown will be wrapped and placed in a storage box.

Preservationists suggest having your gown cleaned as soon as possible after the wedding because if you wait too long, some stains can set permanently. Keep in mind that the longer you wait, the more difficult the gown will be to clean. For example, fabrics like silk are harder to treat, and stains like dirt, mud and red wine are more challenging to remove.

FINDING A RESTORATION SPECIALIST

A few weeks before your wedding, you will want to investigate where to take your gown for cleaning and preservation. Ask bridal shops and dry cleaners in the area to make recommendations.

CLEANING TECHNIQUES

Some gown specialists use the wetcleaning method, which means they gently wash the gown by hand with gentle cleansers that remove noticeable stains and even unseen stains (like sugar or champagne) which can oxidize and turn yellow over time if left untreated.

Other companies use a more traditional dry-cleaning method, which involves pre-treating the stains and then placing the garment in a dry-cleaning machine.

Solvents such as perchloroethylene or petroleum-based cleansers are used as stain removers. Petroleum-based solvents aren't as strong, but due to the high oil content, the petroleum nourishes certain fabrics and can give them a lovely sheen.

WRAPPING IT UP

The correct packaging materials are imperative for guaranteeing the life of your gown. Most gown restorers highly discourage packing your dress in plastic because it can cause permanent wrinkles and trap moisture which then promotes mildew. Most cleaning professionals agree that the ideal materials for packing the gown in are white, acid-free tissue paper or unbleached muslin.

To protect the gown, professionals recommend it be placed in an acid-free or pH-neutral box, like sturdy paperboard boxes which allow the gown to breathe and adjust with changing temperatures.

While some companies seal the box to keep out insects, other say that this is unnecessary, if the gown is packaged correctly. If you want to include shoes, jewelry or other accessories in the box with the dress, visit with your preservationist to find out their suggestions on how best to do that.



For more information about gown cleaning, preservation and restoration, contact *Pride Cleaners* in College Station at (979) 695-8610, or in Bryan at (979) 846-2614. Visit them online at www.pridecleaners.net.

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1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

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Audrey + Glen continued from page 56

Fifteen percent of the net retail sales of the Converse RED products are donated to The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Geneva, Switzerland)."

She added, "I love the way they looked with the girls' big, pouffy petticoats."

Glen said, "I have just always liked the way Converse looks with suits."

Audrey says that not much about the wedding party itself was traditional. "Men and women on both sides, two flower girls (who wore feathered angel wings and flower petals in their dresses) and no ring bearer," she said.

Audrey walked down the aisle to their friend and professional classical guitarist, Jody Mosely, playing "And I Love Her" by The Beatles.

The music continued at the reception with Brockman plugging in her mp3 player in lieu of a DJ and Glen performing with his former band, We Are the Murder. The band included Glen on rhythm guitar and vocals; Bridesman Daniel Wilson on lead guitar; Best Man Daniel Pfannstiel on bass guitar; and Groomsman Kevin Chubirka on drums.



"Who else can say that her husband was also her wedding singer?" Audrey said. "They played both of the songs he sang to me when he proposed and a new one he'd written for me 'In the Morning, When You Wake,'" she said.

continued on page 87

Home's Haven Catering

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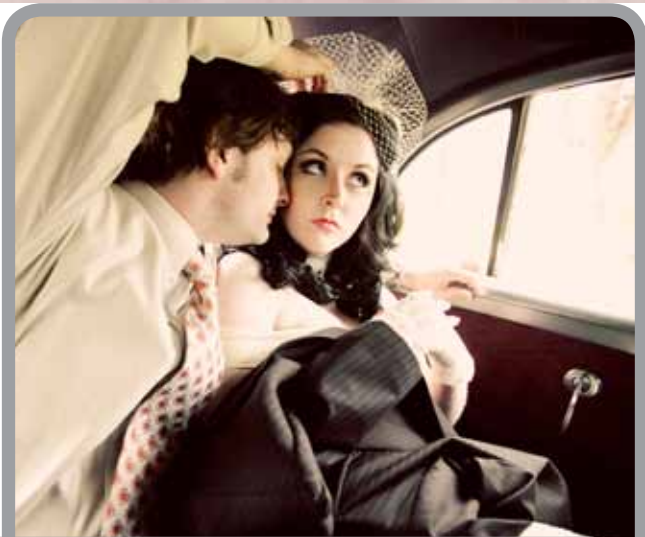
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They then played two fan favorites from when they were known as Shortbus Superheroes.”

On the tables at the reception, Audrey made centerpieces that incorporated the fruit again. Brockman says some tables had whole oranges, lemons and limes that were hollowed out to hold tea lights that all sat on a square mirror. In other centerpieces, there were hurricane globes that had thinly sliced oranges at the bottom of a chunky candle.

The festivities continued long after the reception ended, Audrey says, with the wedding party and a few guests walking down to Stafford Main Street in Downtown Bryan for an after-party.

The most memorable party of their wedding day? “That is so hard,” Audrey said. “I loved sharing that day with all of my closest family and friends, and I love that they got to witness the start of my new life with my husband, but I think Glen said it best - I guess I kind of like the part when we got married!”



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Global Event Group catered the reception with fine cuisine. Meryl chose them because she “knew their food was good.”

Livewire Productions, Wade VanDerBoom served as the Master of Ceremonies at the reception. VanDerBoom added to the fun at the party when he had the bride and groom play a game of twenty questions using pink and blue bunnies. The couple sat in chairs with their backs to each other. Then he quizzed the couple on what they knew about each other. With each question, the newlyweds had a chance to hold up their bunnies. “It was a huge coincidence because ‘bunny’ is one of the oldest nicknames Hector and I use for each other,” Meryl laughed.

Fabulous Fare was hired to do both the bride’s and groom’s cakes. The bride’s cake was a tri layered cake with white frosting accented with red and black flowers and piping.

“I wanted someone who could do a special *Godzilla* grooms cake,” Meryl said, “We brought in pictures

from old movies and Jaclyn at Fabulous Fare pulled it off really nicely!”

After celebrating the evening away with friends and family, Meryl moved back to Dallas with Hector to start their lives as husband and wife. Technically, Meryl is only in remission because patients have to be five years cancer-free to be considered cured. However, Meryl is doing very well. She recently attended her one-year checkup, and is pleased to say that her doctors say she is healthy. Physicians have high expectations that the cancer won’t come back because she responded so well to the transplant.

One celebration for the couple was when the doctors said Meryl was well enough to travel. While they haven’t gone on their honeymoon yet, the newlyweds plan to go during the spring of this year.

“I want to thank my husband Hector for standing by me during the chemotherapy,” Meryl said, “and I want to thank my mother, who found the time to take care of me, even though she was working full-time.”



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A NEW SPIN ON OLD FAVORITES

Many brides feel like they should serve coffee with cake. Instead of the plain old regular and decaf, try offering an **Espresso Bar** to satisfy the trendy taste buds of GenX guests and coffee connoisseurs. This will give your coffee fans after-dessert satisfaction, as well as provide a pick-me-up for those who want to dance the night away at your reception.



Photo by Picture Perfect Images

Step up the style of your side items by serving them in a martini glass. A "salad-tini" (at left) is colorful and the perfect size for an appetizer.

When it comes to the meal, every bride tries to pick foods that will impress. Many times,

it is the presentation that will "wow" your crowd. New trends include the **Potato Bar** and **Food-Tini**. Let your guests make their own potatoes at this buffet station or get martini glasses to serve up delicious and colorful side items or appetizers like mashed potatoes or salads in this chic new fashion.

MIXING IT UP

Many budgets do not include a full bar, but beer and wine just don't provide enough of a selection when guests belly up to the bar. A great way to save money by not offering a full, open bar is to select a signature mixed drink to serve. Your **Signature Drink** is a reflection of you and your groom's personality and tastes. Visit with a local bartender or liquor store to see what will suit your unique needs.

For wine lovers, consider serving wine to guests from **custom personalized wine bottles**. Choose your favorite wine and make it your own with a unique custom label. Vineyards will bottle and ship the wine like it was made just for you.

TEXAS PROUD

Are you and your groom proud to be Texans? Show that spirit in your reception decorations. Table centerpieces inspired by the great state of Texas are always in style. The Lone Star is simple, but makes a statement that is hard to beat.



Photo by Picture Perfect Images

Texas pride is incorporated in weddings many ways. Above, the groom's cake table features a Texas-themed cake next to a bouquet of wild Texas bluebonnets.

INTERACTIVE RECEPTIONS

A new favorite in reception entertainment is the **Photo Booth**. Give your guests the opportunity to get a little crazy in front of the camera. The guests will get a copy of their photos, and a second set will remain for the bride and groom. This is the perfect alternative to placing disposable cameras on the tables.

Many brides want to get guests involved in the entertainment. So, it's no wonder **Karaoke** has grown in popularity at wedding receptions. You know your guests better than anyone, so make sure this option is something that will be a crowd pleaser, instead of creating awkward or uncomfortable moments.

Enhancing your wedding reception is easy with a little bit of research, or by having a trusted wedding planner in your corner. Either way, it is your day to shine and enjoy the party of a lifetime. Make it memorable!

Susan Keough is the owner of A Moment in Time, LLC, a Bryan-College Station wedding planning service. She is a member of the Bridal Association of the Brazos Valley.

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Party Time Rentals has just celebrated its 35th year in business. To this day, the company is still a family-owned business operated by Patricia Scarmardo. It is one of the oldest and largest "Tent and Event" companies in the state. Party Time serves clients within a 100 mile radius, and it has evolved into a major event provider. The company works with both corporate and individual clients for a range of events from galas to festivals, conferences to weddings.



Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and many other local boards throughout the years. Patricia and her company have been involved with many major national and local charities, and countless service organizations. Party Time Rentals is a member of the Better Business Bureau with an A+ accreditation, B/CS Chamber of Commerce, the American Rental Association and a certified Texas HUB vendor.

Patricia attributes the company's success to her employees. "We have highly trained individuals who provide everything from event consulting to our professional tent crews," she says. "We pride ourselves on our years of service and invaluable experience. We have worked on thousands of events."

"We have accumulated a vast rental inventory over the years. This has allowed us to offer our clients the best choices at a fair price. So, our clients don't have to travel to Houston or Dallas once they visit our showroom. This helps to keep money in the Brazos Valley," Patricia added. "I have always believed in keeping the local business community strong and supporting numerous charities."

Patricia is one of the founding members of the Bridal Association of the Brazos Valley and has served on the Board. She has also served as a member of the

Recently, the company's location has expanded to include a 6,600 square-foot space for a new tent washer facility. It is one of only six in the state. This addition will enable Party Time Rentals to consistently provide high quality tents for our clients.

What is planned for the next 35 years? Patricia says that she intends to keep adding the latest items to the inventory so that customers are never disappointed. Her main goal, however, is to continue to grow and remain a vital member of the Bryan/College Station business community.

For more information about Party Time Rentals and the services it provides, visit www.partytimerentals.com or call (979) 696-5555.

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Videography FAQ

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR VIDEOGRAPHER

article by Johnathan Stone, *Stone Media*

Videography is one of the most important and lasting services a couple will secure for their wedding day. Video is one of the few things that will capture the special moments of the event; and allow the bride and groom to relive them for years to come. So, what goes into a quality video? How will you know that you will get professional service and a final product that you will be pleased with? Here are some questions to ask when interviewing your videographers.

ESSENCE

What is the videographer's style? This is probably the most important difference between videographers because there are many different styles of capturing and editing. Some might provide comprehensive and documentary-type shots and some more cinematic or dramatic.

How un-obtrusive are they? Do they move around during the ceremony? Do they stage any shots like a still photographer does? Do they use a tripod at the reception that might allow them stand further away from the action? Do they use a light on the camera?

Do you mesh well with their personality? Are they respectful and fun? Do you believe they will capture the moments of your special day and not emphasize any mistakes? Will they treat your ceremony like a worship service, or a formality? Will they treat your reception like a celebration, or a party?

EXPERTISE

How long have they been providing general video services? How many weddings have they worked? Is the videographer a member of any professional associations? Has the videographer worked at your selected ceremony or reception location before?

EQUIPMENT

What kind of equipment does the videographer use? Do they capture the video in high definition? Do they edit or deliver in high definition? Do they use a wireless lapel microphone for clear audio during the vows? Do they connect to the sound system for clear audio from the minister or music?

How many cameras and operators do they use? The number of cameras that a videographer uses may vary from the ceremony to the reception. Generally, more cameras at the ceremony would capture more of the action and some videographers are skilled at setting up stationary cameras without operators. Do they capture a close-up and a wide perspective? Several operators at the reception can also provide close-up shots of both the newlyweds and a person giving a toast at the same time. One camera might capture the same action by choosing only one or providing a wider shot with both in the frame. Do they bring backup equipment in case of emergencies?

Also be sure to ask your videographer to detail what is included with each package and the video in particular, and get everything in writing so that you can be sure to get exactly what you've paid for.



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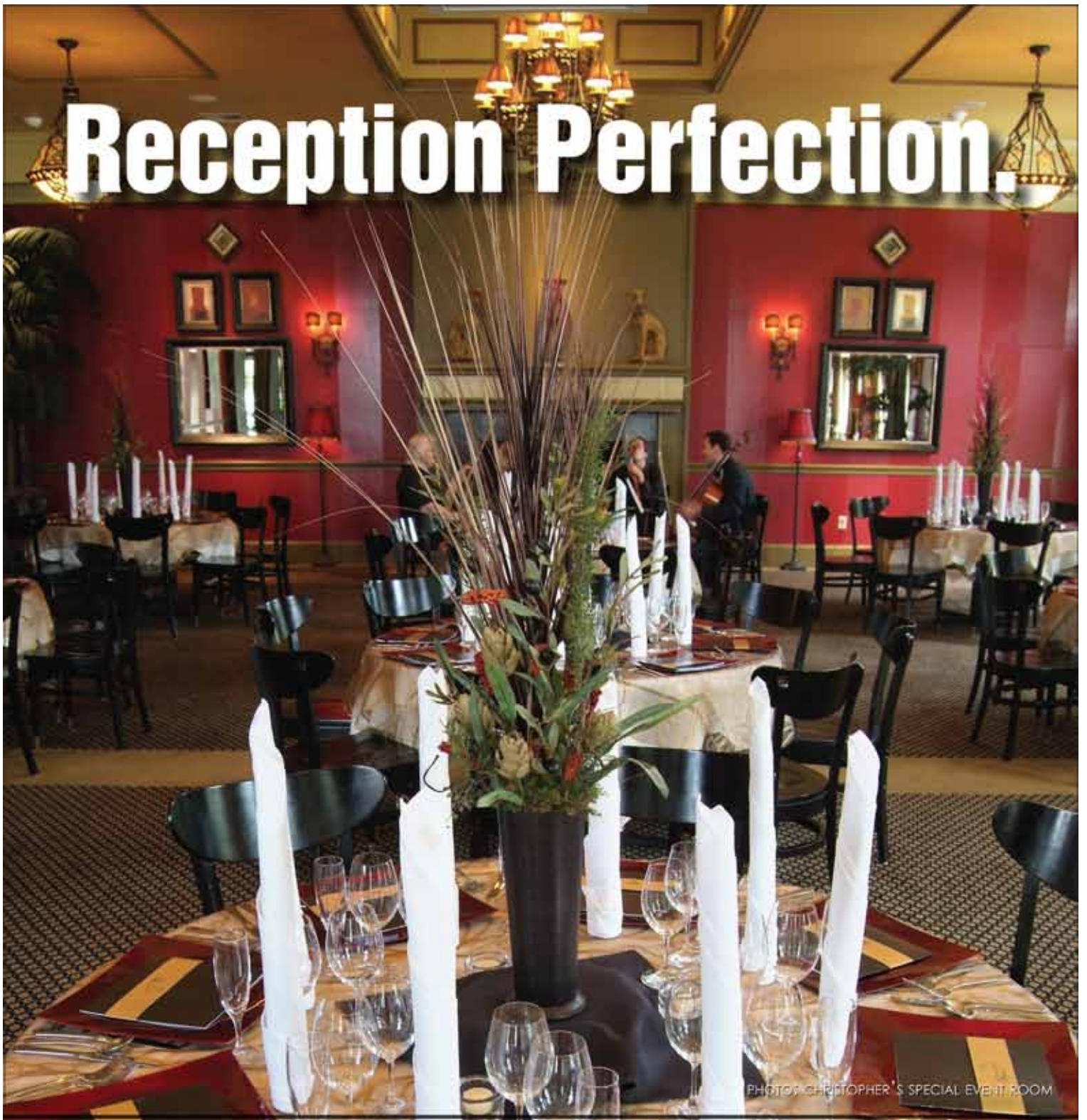


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BRAZOS VALLEY BRIDE'S

Professional Profiles



photos by Michael Kellett Professional Photography

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We've also included a list of every member of the Bridal Association of the Brazos Valley. All of the best local bridal businesses in one place! For more information on your favorites, visit The Bridal Association's website at www.ido-ido.org.



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Ashley Brockman

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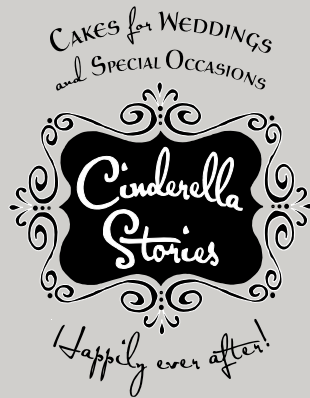
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At Cinema Candy, we're all about fun. Not balloon animals and magic tricks fun, but bringing a unique and unexpected approach to capturing your wedding in a way that will make you smile every time you snuggle on the couch to relive the greatest day of your life. Of course you'll love it because you're the stars — but your friends and family will love it, too. Why? Because they'll wish their memories were so fun and sweet.

CINEMA CANDY

108 North Avenue

Bryan, Texas

979-255-8767

www.cinema-candy.com

Specializing in sweet wedding films



CRYSTAL LITTRELL PHOTOGRAPHY

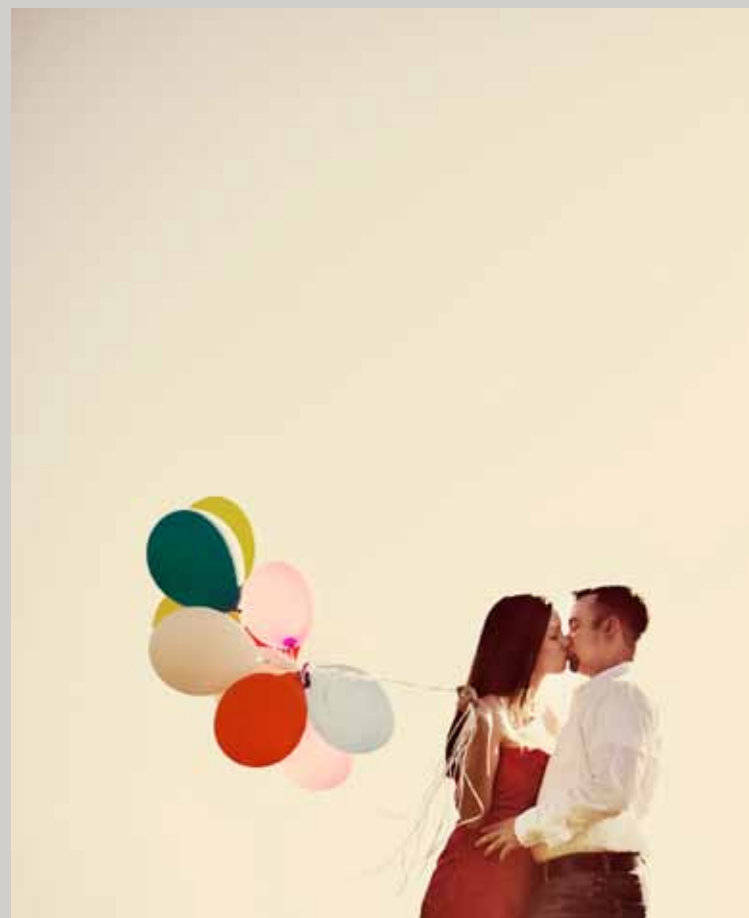
Dare to be different...

Mixing timeless elegance with a modern flare, Texas-based photographer Crystal Littrell describes her style. "My intimate, yet unobtrusive style embraces the uniqueness of each couple I work with," she says. Crystal documents the exquisite detail of your wedding through an artistic perspective, because in the end the moments are what matter most.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

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EVENTS LIGHTING

Bryan, TX

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and invitations*



Marietta James



photos by Memoir Photography

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Matt and Cassie Bobbitt



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Ashley Lackey



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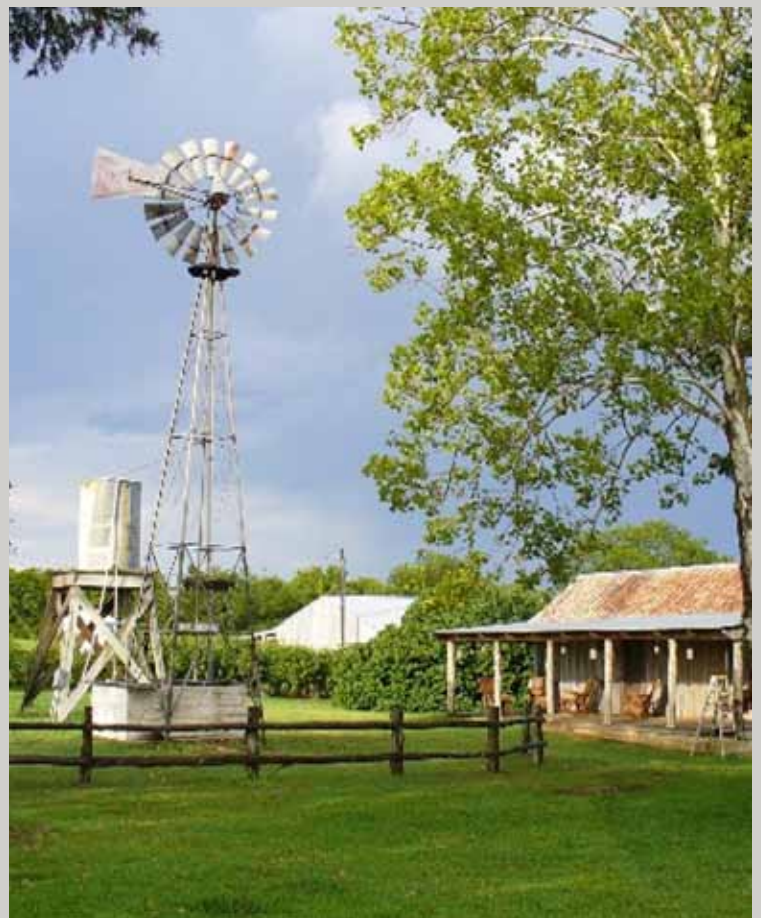
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Wade VanDerBoom



photo by Butch Ireland Photography

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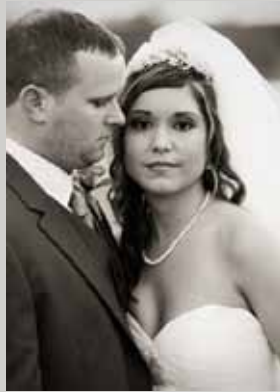
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something new,
Something borrowed,
something maroon.*

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THE BRIDAL ASSOCIATION OF THE BRAZOS VALLEY

2011 Membership List and Contact Information

**Information graciously provided by The Bridal Association of the Brazos Valley. For membership information, please visit www.ido-ido.org*

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www.7fodge.com
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979.845.0838
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bstennis@co.brazos.tx.us

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jwolfe@brazoscountyexpo.com

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buppy6@buppys.com

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butch@butchireland.com

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contact@cake-junkie.com

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blondicc@embarqmail.com

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gcalbert@cstx.gov

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www.eggma.org/quartet
collegestationstrings@gmail.com

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gm.txc49@choicehotels.com

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cottage_travel@msn.com

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512.736.9896
www.crystallittrell.com
info@crystallittrell.com

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214.994.0203
www.dannyboylephotography.com
danny.boyle@yahoo.com

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979.200.9555
www.doublecreekcrossing.com
leah@doublecreekcrossing.com

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