

# Weddings

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Tuesday, February 11, 2025



# Wedding Timeline Guide 2025

Wedding planning involves many movable pieces that ultimately need to come together on the big day. Planning is typically a months-long process, and adhering to certain monthly benchmarks can help couples stay the course. Brides magazine offers that the perfect engagement period is 12 to 14 months, which affords ample time to get organized and work with vendors. With that in mind, here's a 12-month timeline for couples getting ready to say "I do."

## 12 MONTHS OUT

At the start of the planning process, establish your budget, hire a wedding planner (optional), choose the wedding party, pick a date, and start to assemble a cursory guest list. This also is a great time to begin touring venues to get a feel for potential ceremony and reception locales.

## 11 MONTHS OUT

Now is the time to get a firm handle on the theme and scope of the wedding. Start picking wedding colors and overall design. Also, interview and hire vendors, such as photographers, bands and videographers. These vendors tend to book up quickly as wedding season draws near, so it's never too early to book them.

## 10 MONTHS OUT

This is a good time to start shopping for a wedding gown because

it might take some trial and error to find the perfect dress. You also can start shopping for wedding party attire at this time. Check with formalwear vendors to see how long it will take for the gowns to arrive in the shop for alterations. If you haven't already done so, be sure to book the wedding venue.

## 8 MONTHS OUT

Reception halls may have their own schedules, but you should think about setting your menu at this time, including deciding if you will host a seated dinner, a buffet or something else. Eight months out also is a good time to finalize the guest list and send save-the-date cards. This also is a good time to visit stores to create registry gift lists.

## 6 MONTHS OUT

Meet with potential florists and

other vendors, like transportation companies and hotels, to secure these arrangements. Your place of worship also may require certain classes or preparatory meetings, so be sure to inquire about these. Meet with a makeup and hair stylist and book a trial. Choose attire for groomsmen and give them a deadline for fittings and orders. If you will not be getting married in a place of worship, hire an officiant at this time.

## 4 MONTHS OUT

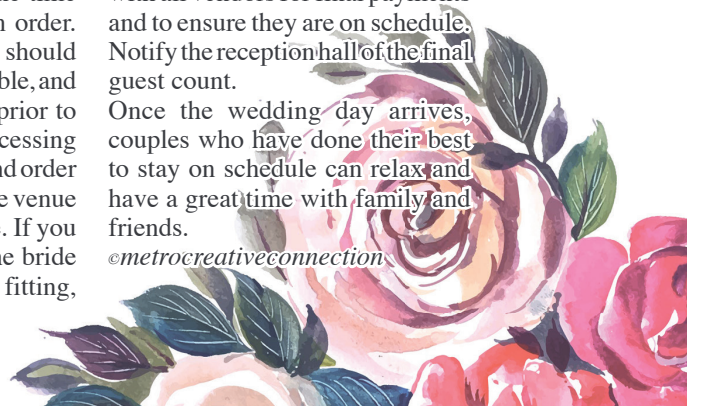
Grooms traditionally arrange the honeymoon, so this is a fine time to get those travel plans in order. If you need passports, you should secure them as early as possible, and no later than four months prior to the wedding to ensure processing times. Book cake tastings and order the cake if it is not part of the venue food and beverage package. If you haven't already done so, the bride should have an initial gown fitting,

and wedding invitations should be ordered at this time.

## 2 MONTHS OUT

Secure your wedding license and buy wedding party gifts. Address and mail the wedding invitations. Undergo a second gown fitting and work with the seamstress for the final fitting date just before the wedding. Finalize any song selections with the DJ or band. The final details will occur in the last weeks before the wedding. Buy all the small accessories and items, undergo final fittings and check in with all vendors for final payments and to ensure they are on schedule. Notify the reception hall of the final guest count. Once the wedding day arrives, couples who have done their best to stay on schedule can relax and have a great time with family and friends.

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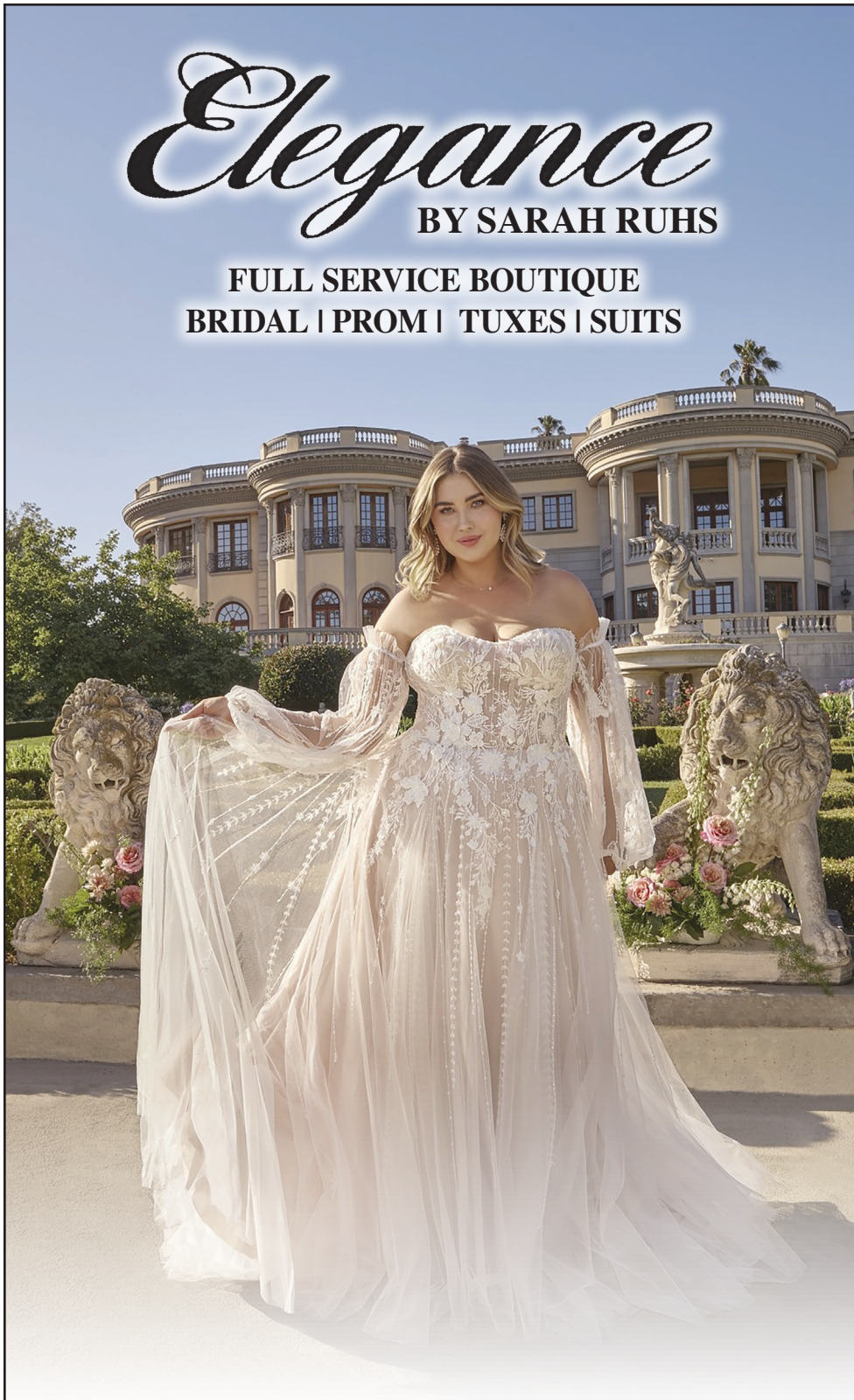
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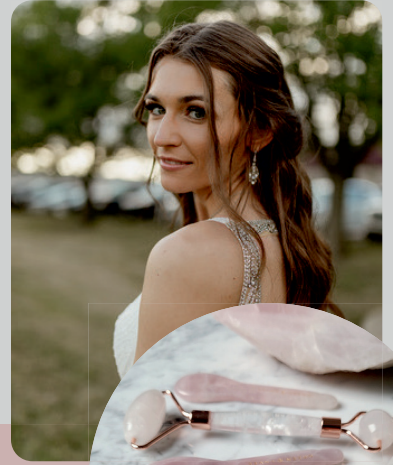
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## What to Know Before a Wedding Gown Shopping Trip

Weddings mark a turning point from one stage in life to another. The significance of that transition is perhaps one reason why couples and their guests dress so nicely for a wedding ceremony and reception. Formal garb is a wedding tradition, and guests anxiously await seeing which type of gown a bride will wear. In western cultures, white wedding gowns have been the standard since the nineteenth century and are believed to symbolize purity and grace. In eastern cultures, wedding gowns often have been elaborate, colorful creations that have their own symbolic meanings unique to various areas of the world. Shopping for a wedding gown can spark mixed emotions. While it is exciting to try on some remarkable garments, there also is the pressure of knowing all eyes will be on you while wearing this couture creation. Narrowing down wedding gown prospects can take vision, time and patience. The following pointers can help when it comes time to visit bridal shops.

### Make an appointment

Many bridal shops operate by appointment only. That's because the staff wants to devote complete attention to a client, and having people simply walk in from the street can draw their attention away and/or lead to long wait times. Identify the stores you want to visit, and then call to secure your time slot.

### Narrow down styles

Think about what your personal style might be and how you want to look on your wedding day. If you're not sure about the vocabulary surrounding dress silhouettes, visit Pinterest or Instagram and save images of dresses that you love. Then you can show the sales staff what you are thinking instead of going in empty-handed.

### Keep an open mind

Try on a few different styles even if you have a particular dress in mind. You never know if something might be a better fit for your body type or the scope and style of your wedding unless you give it a go.

### Start the process early

Unlike off-the-rack clothing, most wedding shops will have to order your dress and have it shipped. Then comes a few weeks for alterations. KWH Bridal notes eight to 12 months before a wedding is a good time to choose and order a dress. Brides magazine says most made-to-order wedding gowns take about six to nine months to create. There also are three separate fittings to ensure the gown will fit like a glove.

### Invite a handful of confidantes

It's best not to arrive at the shopping appointment with an entire entourage. Pick, at the most, four people whose opinions you trust; otherwise, it could be a case of too many cooks in the kitchen. As a bride-to-be you'll already be anxious, and you'll want soothing, supportive people with you.

### Plan your budget

Know well in advance what you can afford to spend. According to data from The Knot, wedding attire accounts for 7 percent of the average couple's budget. Most wedding gowns are in the range of \$2,000. Don't forget about additional costs, such as veil, shoes, alterations, undergarments, and any add-ons. In addition to these tips, arrive to an appointment well-rested, fed and comfortable.

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## From Snapchat to “I Do”



by Jantina Carney

Cris and Kendall's love story began in the heart of Iowa, where both of them grew up—Cris in Milford and Kendall in Estherville. Though their paths hadn't crossed before, fate had a plan that would soon bring them together in the most unexpected way.

One summer day, Kendall Evans accompanied her sister Brenna to Fillenwarth Resort in Okoboji, where Brenna spoke highly of a guy named Cris Halbur whom she worked with. Brenna insisted that he was the male version of Kendall and, if she could set her up with anyone, it would be him. Little did Kendall know, Brenna had a plan.

That day, she took Kendall to the boat Cris was driving and left them alone together. In that moment, silence filled the space between them. Neither spoke a word, but something unspoken lingered in the air. Later, Brenna shared Kendall's Snapchat, and, from that moment on, they never stopped talking!

Love blossomed quickly. For Cris, it was Kendall's beauty, warmth, and personality that captivated him. For Kendall, it was during their long-distance days in her undergraduate years—each goodbye became harder, and the ache of his absence made her realize that life without Cris simply wasn't an option, and he was without a doubt, “the one.”

On a family vacation to Miami, Florida, Cris had planned the perfect proposal. With their closest loved ones there, he arranged a catamaran sunset cruise, the sky painted in breathtaking hues of orange and pink. Unbeknownst to Kendall, her parents had been in on the plan, pretending they would be in Nashville to keep her from suspecting anything. As the sun dipped into the horizon, with the ocean waves gently rocking the boat, Cris got down on one knee and asked Kendall to be his forever. Surrounded by love, laughter, and the magic of the moment, she said yes.

On August 10, 2024, under a perfect blue sky with a gentle breeze, Kendall and Cris exchanged vows at The Shores at Five Island in Emmetsburg, it was everything Kendall had dream of! Her ivory gown, from A Heavenly Celebration in Emmetsburg, featured delicate lace accents and a unique detail—customized crystal flower buttons placed every fourth button to stand out beautifully in the outdoor ceremony setting. Cris, looking dashing in his attire from Elegance in Okoboji, was a vision. The moment their eyes met as she walked down the aisle was pure magic.

The day was filled with personal touches: a rosary, a five-generation family heirloom from Cris's mother, Jen; a symbol of love and faith that now carried on with them! Heartfelt notes exchanged between Kendall, Cris, and their siblings during the unity ceremony; and the warming of the rings, a

symbolic gesture involving both families. Her bridal party, a mix of sisters and close friends, stood by her side, radiant in their Revelry dresses. Kendall's Maid of Honor was her sister, Brenna, along with Bridesmaids Madison Goodwin, Meredith Hoffman, Brianna Fix and Alison Duncan! Making the day go even more smoothly were her Personal Attendants, Lindsey Jensen and Sydney Swanson. Cris's groomsmen, led by his brother Jake, along with the Groomsmen, Blake Peter, Bryce Peter, Blake Evans and Preston Harms, were a lively bunch. The ushers, Tyler Adams and Kyle Martin, added a bit more fun to group! Even the ring bearer and flower girls, Kipton, Finley, MaKenna, and Bella, played their parts flawlessly.

After the ceremony, the couple and their bridal party celebrated with a boat ride, a moment of joy and adventure before the reception began.

Their reception continued at The Shores at Five Island, where the energy was electric. The bridal party's entrance was nothing short of entertaining—complete with shotgunning drinks, football tosses, golf swings, celebratory shots, and even LeBron's iconic chalk toss. Lidderdale County Store provided the meal, and Mojo Productions kept the dance floor rocking! Kendall and Cris swayed to Ed Sheeran's “Perfect” for their first dance, followed by tender moments with their fathers and mothers! The groom and his mom danced to “My Wish” by the Rascal Flats and Kendall and her father shared a moment while dancing to “My Little Girl” by Tim McGraw. Heartfelt toasts were



given by Kendall's sister Brenna, Cris's brother Jake, and both of their fathers. The dance floor came alive, with Cris, his brother Blake, and cousin Max making the most of every beat.

Amidst all the magic of the day, a few moments stood out the most:

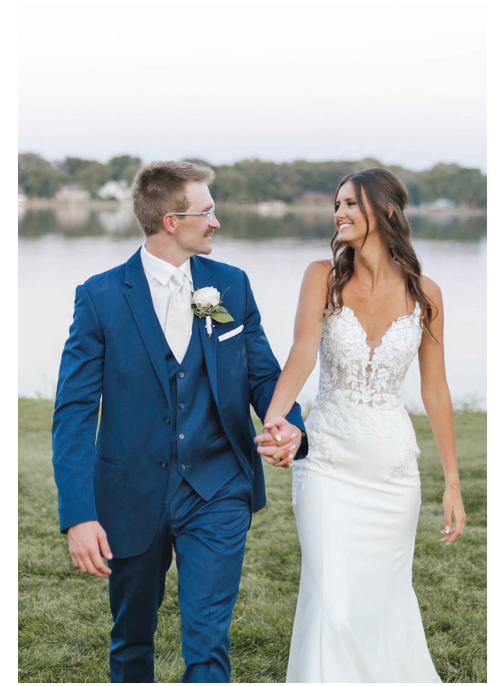
- **The First Look:** As Kendall walked down the aisle, locking eyes with Cris, time seemed to stand still.
- **The Unity Ceremony:** The couple, along with their siblings, exchanged heartfelt notes, a beautiful reminder of the bond they shared.
- **The Warming of the Rings:** Their families played a special role in blessing their wedding bands before they were exchanged, filling them with love and meaning.

For Kendall, wearing her dress made her feel confident, beautiful, and completely herself.

For Cris, seeing Kendall for the first time that day was an indescribable feeling—heartwarming, overwhelming, and the best moment of his life.

The newlyweds jetted off to Secrets Royal Beach in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, where they spent a week soaking up the sun, indulging in delicious food, enjoying breathtaking shows, and relaxing on the beach.

As they begin their new life together, their dreams are simple yet profound:



- Building a home filled with love and laughter
- Creating lasting memories

Supporting each other through every chapter

To future couples planning their wedding, Kendall and Cris share this advice: Don't stress about the small details, make your wedding reflect YOU—not just what you've seen at other weddings!

Their hearts are full of gratitude for their families, friends, and the incredible vendors including Tessa Woods from the Cutting Edge Salon, The Willow Tree Garden Center for the beautiful florals, Emily Marie Photo Co. for capturing the day just perfectly, Michael Houseman for the fantastic videography, and Happily Ever Afters for the items they rented, for helping them plan their perfect day and bring their dream wedding to life! A heartfelt thank you goes to Kendall's mom, Kieja, who played a huge role in planning and making everything perfect while Kendall was in grad school.

If given the chance, they wouldn't change a single thing. The day was seamless, filled with love, and everything they had ever dreamed of.

A love story that began with a silent boat ride has now set sail on the greatest adventure of all—forever. Congratulations on your wedding! I wish you both a lifetime of happiness together!



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## The Roles Played by Bridesmaids and the Maid of Honor in a Wedding

During a wedding, the couple tying the knot certainly gets to shine, but so, too, do other ceremony participants. From the parents of the bride or groom to the officiant to the ring bearer, there are many roles beyond bride and groom. A bridal party typically includes a soon-to-be-bride's close friends and family. The bridesmaid tradition may trace its origins to ancient times, when bridesmaids would be selected to dress like the bride and confuse vengeful spirits or warring rival clans who might want to harm the bride. A special individual gets to enjoy a higher-level job within the bridal party, serving as maid of honor, if she is unmarried, or matron of honor if she has already walked down the aisle. Bridesmaids lend support and provide help as needed, but it is the maid of honor who will serve as the right-hand woman to the bride. Here is a deep look at the unique rolls these women play both before and during a wedding.

### Bridesmaids

A significant amount of planning goes into a wedding and bridesmaids may be called upon to help brides make various decisions. Bridesmaids also offer support to the bride, who may be feeling a tad overwhelmed. It is important for bridesmaids to calm the bride and care for her while she tackles the tasks necessary to host such a momentous occasion.

Bridesmaids can lend support and opinions when visiting with vendors like florists or musicians. A bride-to-be also may ask certain bridesmaids to come to dress appointments.

Collectively, bridesmaids will plan and help pay for the bridal shower and bachelorette party. They also can assist the mother-of-the-bride with whatever extra help she may need.

### Maid of honor

The maid of honor (MOH) does all of the above and more. She will attend wedding dress shopping appointments and serve as a trusted source of honest feedback. The MOH also may be called in to mediate any conflicts within the bridal party, as these ladies may not all know each other prior to the nuptials. She will check in with the bridesmaids to be sure they are on task and fulfilling any responsibilities in a timely manner.

The MOH will be the main point of contact for the bridal shower and bachelorette party. She will keep track of gifts so that the couple can follow up with thank you notes. She also may help assemble and mail out wedding invitations. The MOH will help the bride get dressed on the wedding day and attend to any needs she may have, including providing snacks and water. In the event the bride's gown is cumbersome, the MOH may need to assist the bride by adjusting the dress while seated or when visiting the restroom.

During the ceremony, the MOH will hold the bride's bouquet and she will give a toast at the reception. She also may make music requests to keep the party upbeat and fun.

There is no minimum or maximum number of people who can be part of a bridal party, but it is important to choose people who can be relied upon and who will enhance the experience. The bride-to-be can discuss her expectations from bridesmaids and the maid of honor at the start of the wedding adventure to ensure that everyone can help ensure the day is a momentous occasion.

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**Top Trends in Tuxes**

Theories on the origins of the tuxedo vary significantly. Some believe that this formal garment was created by wealthy aristocrats attending an autumn ball in Tuxedo Park, New York. However, the Wall Street Journal has reported that the tuxedo might be a British invention, spearheaded by the fashion-conscious King of Wales Edward VII in 1865. No matter where the tuxedo originated, it has become standard attire for formal occasions, including weddings. It may seem as though every tuxedo is the same, but that's not the case. Tuxes come in different styles, so those tying the knot or attending other formal functions can choose an option that fits their personality and physique. Here's a look at what sets tuxedos apart and some noteworthy tux trends.

**Suits versus tuxedos**

Some may wonder what sets a tuxedo apart from a suit. One of the more notable differences is that tuxedo lapels are designed with silk, satin or textured grosgrain to provide that signature V-look, says Brides magazine. Suit lapels are made from the same fabric as the suit jacket. Tuxedos traditionally are held up with suspenders, while suit pants have belt loops for use with a belt. Suits are styled with a dress shirt while tuxedos are worn with a particular tuxedo shirt that likely has a spread collar, bib, decorative studs, and French cuffs fastened with cufflinks.

**Change up lapel styles**

Men who want to set themselves apart can opt for what The Knot calls the most popular styles of tuxedo lapels. Notch lapels are the most common and feature two lateral points. Shawl collars feature a smooth, sleek looped lapel without notches or peaks. Peak lapels have the lower point of the lapel peak above

the upper. Trying on the different jackets can give individuals an idea of which lapel look is best.

**New color spectrum**

A traditional tuxedo will be black, although navy tuxedos have gained a following. But individuals can find a tuxedo in any color. Those who want to add some extra flair to their weddings may opt for a tuxedo in a color that coordinates to the season or aligns with what the rest of the bridal party is wearing.

**Alternative fabrics**

The majority of tuxedos are made from wool and will have the silk or satin detailing as described. Newer trends include incorporating fabrics like linen or flannel, although these are rare and may be harder to come by.

**Neckties grabbing hold**

People can set themselves apart with everything from lapels to tuxedo shirts to different colors, but only bowties or neckties can be worn with tuxedos. While bowties once were the gold standard, those personalizing their wedding looks and taking liberties with style are increasingly opting for neckties. Gents can choose a necktie in a complementary texture that will coordinate with the elegance of the tuxedo.

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by Jenna Snyder

There's no exact moment of knowing you found "the one", but Greg and Brooke Orwig knew just a few weeks after dating that "This is The Real Deal". That's where their story begins. Greg and Brooke both grew up near the lakes area, Greg Orwig in Lake Park, Iowa, and Brooke Arndt in Jackson, Minnesota. They met while attending a Tripwire concert at the Jackson County Fair but didn't start dating until a few years later. Let's fast forward 6 years. Brooke's sisters would always heckle Greg on how he needed to propose because 6 years is definitely long enough to wait for a proposal. Greg's answer every time was that he would propose before their son Bridger turned one. "For anyone who knows Greg, they know he jokes about everything, I'm pretty sure he makes it his job to be comical in every scenario. So in all honesty, Greg's whole timeline of proposing was never taken seriously", stated Brooke. Then came Bridger's first birthday party. They had plans to announce their second pregnancy to their family and friends but Greg had an additional surprise for Brooke. Greg worked closely with Lisa Kalfs (their cake lady for all milestones in life), from Lakefield, Minnesota, to have the engagement ring inside Bridger's smash cake. The ring was secured and everything was going as planned. They huddled around their son and got down on a knee to assist him. However, Bridger had no interest in smashing the cake! Brooke recalls Greg quickly hijacking the duty of dismantling the cake to make sure the ring was exposed. "I was so irritated that he took over Bridger's Cake, but quickly had a change of heart when I saw Greg pull the ring out (already on one knee) and asked me to marry him! The quickest, easiest "YES" in my entire life, said Brooke."

Not long after the proposal they started planning for their special day. Greg and Brooke did most of the planning themselves with unmeasurable amounts of help from The Arndt Family. The first item on Brookes' to-do list was to find the dress she's dreamt about since her childhood. "I knew I wanted long sleeves, absolutely no buttons, a low key sparkle/glam (if any), absolutely no poof, and a semi-form fitting dress. I knew what I was looking for", Brooke stated. Her biggest supporters; her daughter, mom, sisters, and best friend spent the day with her searching for "the dress". The girls started at David's Bridal, they had some beautiful dresses, but "the one" wasn't there. They ventured over to Bridal Gallery in Sioux Falls, SD as well and started looking through the aisles of dresses. "Each supporter would grab a dress and ask me if I liked it. My younger sister, Faith, picked out a Mori Lee dress that had none of the criteria

I wanted. I quickly shot her with a "no way". That's nothing like what I want," said Brooke. In true Faith fashion, she urged Brooke to entertain the idea of this dress. "Brooke, just try it on, you might actually like it," stated Faith. "I agreed, got the dress on and all of the wants I had on my list for what I needed in the dress quickly went right out the window. There was not a doubt in my mind, this was "THEE" dress." The beautiful Mori Lee gown, sleeveless, with dainty rhinestone straps, large open back outlined with rhinestones, subtle buttons going down the back of the dress, delicate asymmetrical beading throughout and a form fit quickly became her wedding dress.

Classic colors of black and white set the tone for the wedding party. The bridesmaids wore black dresses, picked by each bridesmaid to fit their style, and their daughter's dresses were both purchased at Elegance Bridal in Okoboji, IA. The tuxes for the groomsmen were a sharp black, white shirt, black vests and black suspenders, all tuxes, including the groom's, were purchased from Elegance Bridal. The groom deserves to stand out too, Greg chose the same sharp black tux, a black shirt, and black tie to complete his look for their special day. Now to pick out the flowers that would be fitting for both Brooke and Greg. They chose The Wild Flower Studio out of Jackson, Minnesota, to create the most beautiful masterpieces. Brooke first met Kim when she moved in next door to her parents in Jackson, MN many years ago. "We all couldn't wait as Kim ventured off to begin The Wildflower Studio. We

watched this place of hers blossom- and boy did it", sated Brooke. When Greg popped the question, Kim was at the top of their list of "things to do" to make sure she was the one who was going to create their image of the perfect wedding flowers. "When we went to meet with Kim at her studio it was so laid back, something we thrive on," said Brooke. "We gave her our low down- we like the rustic, country theme. We didn't want anything bright colored or "fancy", we wanted warm tones, browns, wild grasses, wildflowers, with a dark and moody tone. Kim and Greg picked out a leather tie to use for the bottom of the boutonnières, it tied everything together! "The flowers truly fit us perfectly, wild and beautiful." Kimberly was so amazing to work with and she 1000% nailed our image of the perfect wedding flowers. We can't thank her enough for all of her help! I think to sum her and her work up in a statement, she makes the dream come true, plain and simple, she nailed it...in every way," stated Brooke.

Finally, the big day, November 2, 2024, arrived! Brooke, her mother, sister and bridesmaids all had their hair done by Meagan Schley, bride's cousin from Alpha, MN, and Lindsey Wassenaar, owner of Styles on Main in Lakefield, MN. Local makeup artist, Katherine Ihnen, owner of Pretty By Kitty, in Lake Park, IA, did all the girls' makeup. We had our hair and makeup done on site, "which was great," Brooke added. When asking Brooke how she felt getting all dolled up and wearing her wedding dress, she replied, "I felt like the bride you see in movies. The hair, makeup, earrings, shoes, my beautiful dress and veil, it was all perfect." AK Photography of Spirit Lake captured the day with memorable photos for the couple that will last a lifetime.

The scene for their beautiful, fall wedding, held at The Bend in Milford, IA, was a rustic, country-western feel with Pampas grass blowing in the fall breeze. Brooke and Greg decided upon doing a "first look". Greg recalls, "Up until that day, I told myself, "I will not cry, I will not cry, I. Will. Not. Cry" and I thought that I had truly convinced myself that I wouldn't. I thought if I could practice

a little mind over matter, I wouldn't have to be emasculated in front of the entire wedding party and in front of the photographers." "Seeing Brooke for the first time is hard to describe, it's something I will never forget, just like my children being born, every detail is seared into my mind and not to mention the wave of emotions that I felt that day. There is no descriptive word in the English language to best explain just how gorgeous she looked," said Greg. A couple other first looks took place that we have to mention. Brooke had a first reveal with her father. "It was special, he was the first person to see me in my dress," she said. Greg and his Best Man, Shane Spilde, did a first look too! Brooke said, "it was super comical to see a big tattooed man in a real wedding dress that he borrowed from a buddies wife. We will laugh about this moment for a long time!"

The soon to be Orwigs only uncontrollable wish was to be married outside. The weather permitted and they got their biggest wish yet, the weather was absolutely beautiful. Greg awaiting anxiously to see his bride walk down the aisle lined with white chairs, and Pampas grass filled vases at the entrance and Altar. Brooke mentioned one of her favorite moments was "when my dad and I got to the end of the aisle, and he gave me to Greg. It was so special and something I'll never forget." The soon to be married couple branded a cowhide rug with their custom brand during the Unity Ceremony, something completely unique and very special. At last, in the presence of their kids, family, and friends, Greg and Brooke said "I Do", two words they've been waiting to say to one another for so long.

The bride's wedding party included: Emily Arndt (sister) as Maid of Honor; her bridesmaids, Faith Arndt (sister), Tasha Timmins, Kate Anderson, Alexis Bombei, Kaitlin Fischer, Kristin Vest, and daughter Via Orwig. Brooke mentions, "having friends that fill your cup, love your kids like their own, and no matter the distance, they are there for you, that's what I love most about these girls!" The Bride and Grooms' feisty son Bridger as the ring bearer and their little firecracker daughter Presley as





their flower girl. The grooms wedding party included: Shane Spilde, lifelong friend, as Best Man; his groomsmen, Jason Jacobson, Daniel Owens, Nile Skoegerboe, Luke Bombel, Donald Jones, and Zak Krenz. "I would just like to say that these guys are much more than just "groomsmen" to me and Brooke. They are more like brothers than anything, and I feel truly blessed to have each one of them in my life, I Love them guys," stated Greg.

The guests gathered inside at The Bend during cocktail hour for appetizers and snacks following the ceremony, while the wedding party and friends rode in a snowmobile trailer "for one" to Johnny's Pub in Lake Park. Greg and Brooke's saying has always been, "Johnny's for one?" The mood for the evening was the perfect blend of rustic romance and country western. The white linens draped over each table with beautiful centerpieces featured vintage farmhouse rustic lanterns, pampas grass, pheasant feathers, and candles. The head table was set up on risers overlooking their guests, they were the first wedding to use risers at The Bend. Brooke said, "it looked so amazing and I was so glad we chose to use them!" Family mementos of Greg's late brother, Douglas, Brooke's grandparents, Joyce and Roy, and Brooke's Aunt, Cathy, were featured together in memory of them. "They all would've loved nothing more than to be here with us on our special day, said Brooke." It was time for the bridal party to make their grand entrance, each couple got to choose their own entrance, some were funny and some cute. The bride and groom entered with their hands in the air (like the famous ending scene from The Breakfast Club), finally as Mr. and Mrs. Orwig!

The meal for the evening was catered by Central Catering from Hawarden, IA. Brooke and Greg chose Central Catering's Heartland meal package, where they got to pick from a wide variety of meats, veggies, potatoes, salads and desserts. The guests were offered their choice of pulled pork on a bun or broasted chicken, paired with "the best" potato supremes, according to Brooke, Italian pasta salad and Oreo dessert. "The meal was so good and working with Gray and his team at Central Catering was fun and easy, we can't thank them enough for all of their work," stated Brooke and Greg.

Desserts were provided by Kiehl's Bakery from Lakefield, MN. "We needed 300 donuts for the big day, which is a lot, so they actually closed the bakery down the day of our wedding to prepare all of our donuts! I cannot thank Brian and his team enough," said Brooke. Brian, the owner of the bakery, recalls Brooke coming in as a young girl to the Bakery, when it was in Jackson, MN, stating that Brooke would come in with her mom every morning, get a Bismarck donut and sit in the window sill. "I'll never forget it and we are so glad that we could be part of her special day," said Brian.

DJ Biggie G, Greg Spaeth, was hired to keep the party entertained throughout the evening. The newlyweds first dance was to "Meant to be" by the Nadas, which was a song that Greg had sent Brooke in the first couple months of dating, telling her that this would be their wedding song someday. Special toasts were made that night. Faith Arndt, the bride's sister, talked about how Brooke and Greg

have evolved over the years and her appreciation to be in the front seat of this life! Shane Spilde, Greg's best man, expressed his gratitude to be a part of not only their big day but all of the days leading up to it. Finally, the bride's mom, Heidi Arndt, expressing her love and gratefulness to hold such a huge role in their life as well as their children's. Heidi spoke on the years of building up to this day, memories made and all the years yet to come. "There wasn't a single dry eye in the room after that toast," said Brooke.

The entire night was spent with their closest family and friends dancing the night away. Greg and Brooke have many wonderful memories of their special day! A few that really stand out to them would be their first look. Brooke recalls, "It was so wholesome. Just Greg and I. Both of us standing there all done up, something we had been planning for months on end. It was as if the world stopped turning for just a split second. All of the stress and tedious planning paid off when he turned around with tears streaming down his face in pure happiness. This was the moment we'd been waiting so long for. It was perfect, not to mention having our entire crew of family and friends all under one roof to celebrate our love."

Every wedding has something that doesn't go quite as planned and fun stories to tell! The day of the wedding Greg and Brooke realized they didn't have a blow torch to heat the brand for their unity ceremony, luckily her dad came to the rescue. Not even 10 minutes after the ceremony Greg stepped on the back of Brooke's very long train and broke the bustle but somehow managed to fix it. The couple planned on having 200 guests and over 250 showed up because tons of their RSVP returns got lost in the mail.

When asking Greg and Brooke if they had any advice to give to other couples planning their wedding, they replied, "Do not part ways during your day. Hold hands and commit to doing everything together. Everyone preaches that it's the fastest day of your life, and they're right. Make sure you spend it together." The couple plans to do a "family moon" instead of a honeymoon. "We just really love our kids and want to spend this milestone with them," said Brooke! There's nothing set in stone, but a plan is in the making and it will revolve around their kids!

"We hope that our kids grow up to see that true love does exist. That you don't settle, you work hard, create the happily ever after with the right person and that Fairytale endings do exist," said Greg and Brooke. When asking them both what they look forward to most now that they are married, they replied "going through every chapter of life together, as "The Orwigs." "We've heard from so many people that "nothing changes besides a piece of paper," well, we beg to differ. Being married is different, it's great, and our love feels amplified," said the newly married couple.

Greg and Brooke would like to especially thank Brooke's parents and her sisters for being a staple in making this possible, for keeping them sane, helping them facilitate vendors, planning alongside them, and, most of all, their time and help. "There's not a thank you big enough and we wouldn't have been able to do what we did without them," stated the Orwigs.

After all was said and done, I asked if there was anything they would have done differently? Greg replied, "While Brooke says she wouldn't change anything, and that it was the perfect day, to which I 1000% agree. In hindsight, I would pay a large sum of money to have the venue cleaned the next day instead of having to clean it by yours truly, while it was clear evidence of a great time, so was my hangover."

Greg and Brooke reside in Lake Park, Iowa, with their three little kids, Via, Bridger, and Presley. Greg's been working in the lakes area at Consumers Lumber for 13 years now and Brooke is a RN that does travel nursing and absolutely loves helping others. Congratulations, Greg and Brooke, your love story is "The Real Deal"! Wishing you both a lifetime of happiness, adventures, and love as you continue on this journey as husband and wife.



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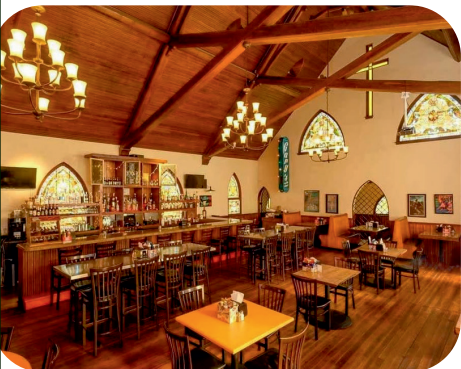
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# Wedding Hair for Every Style

Weddings are one of the most-photographed and documented days in couples' lives. From the moment the question is popped to the final goodbye before setting out for the honeymoon, all eyes (and cameras) will be carefully trained on those vowing to share their lives together.

French Touch Photography says wedding photographers take an average 50 to 100 pictures per hour. That means couples ultimately may appear in 600 photos before the night is through. Is it any wonder that brides, grooms and everyone in between want to ensure they are presenting the best versions of themselves come the big day? The hairstyle chosen for a wedding can affect how couples view these photographs in the years to come. It can take some trial and error to find a wedding day hairstyle that is perfect, but these popular styles are good starting points.

• **Bouncy blowout:** Many brides choose to leave their hair down for the wedding, and this style looks bouncy, smooth and approachable. The blowout can be straight, or stylists can add curled edges for a luxurious look.

• **Messy bun:** A messy bun is another hairstyle that appears effortless. An imperfect bun with some tendrils escaping and a decorative hair pin is both elegant and fun.

• **Boho braids:** Whether a hairstyle is mostly down and free-flowing or pinned back into a loose bun, adding bohemian style braids can impart whimsy to any look. This hairstyle may be best for informal weddings and to match gowns that are flowing and ethereal.

• **Top knot:** This style is a practical choice for warm weather weddings, when heat and humidity can attack a polished style. The look is made by winding the hair into a bun at the crown of the head. It can be enhanced with a crown or headband.

• **Half-up, half-down:** Brides who want their locks down with voluminous waves but without hair in their faces often opt for a half-up, half-down style. This pulls the front portion of hair back and away from the face, which can be braided, twisted or even just loosely pinned, depending on preference.

• **Side-swept:** This look pulls tresses over to one side, where they cascade in waves over the shoulder. It is elegant and classic.

• **Chignon:** From the French chignon de cou, which means "nape of the neck," a chignon is a wrapped bun hairstyle pinned low on the head where it meets the neck.

While it's the bride's hairstyle that often draws the most attention, the groom also may want to experiment with hairstyles.

• **Pompadour:** This style is characterized by a voluminous top that is swept back from the face.

• **Quiff:** Like a pompadour, this hairstyle also features volume but with natural curls offering a full, defined look.

• **Classic side part:** This look is classic and polished. A clean parting that is either slightly off from the middle or even deeper on the side completes this look.

• **Undercut:** This hairstyle features hair buzzed on the sides and back with a longer top.

Everyone can be wedding-ready with classic or trendy hairstyles that complete a finished look.

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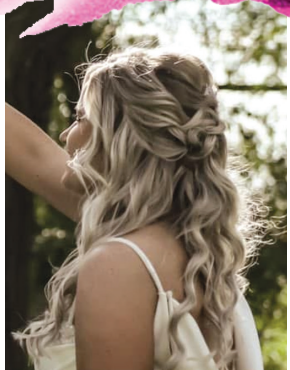
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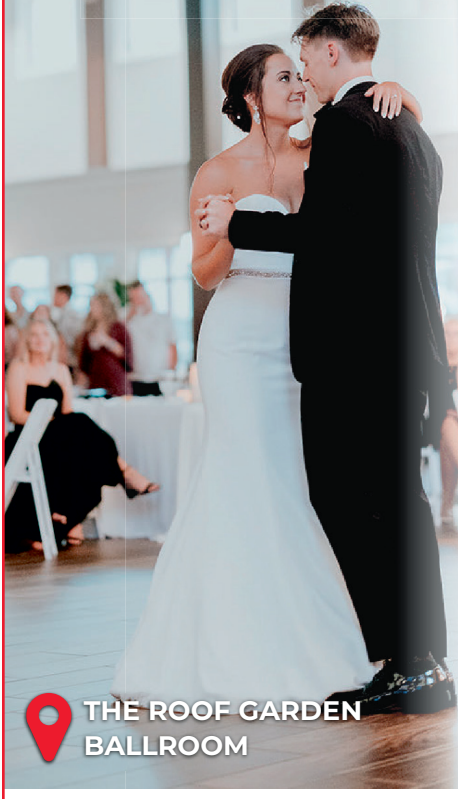


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# Consider Wedding Flowers Carefully

Although many decorative elements help to create ambiance for a wedding celebration, perhaps none is more awe-inspiring than beautiful floral arrangements. Flowers offer visual appeal, captivating aromas and texture that can make a space more welcoming.

Engaged couples typically go to great lengths when planning their weddings, but flowers may not be as micromanaged as other elements. Some are content to let florists design their arrangements, but the average cost of wedding flowers in 2023 was \$2,800, according to The Knot Real Weddings Study. That price tag merits some input on the part of couples. Floral experts say couples should budget for floral arrangements coming in at 10 percent of the overall wedding budget, which is the industry standard. Therefore, for a \$60,000 wedding a couple should assume their florals will cost \$6,000. It's important to note that the cost of wedding flowers has been steadily increasing over the last few years due to inflation and climate change, says The Knot. So couples may need to be even more involved in floral decisions to maximize their dollars spent.

Here are some variables to consider when selecting wedding flowers.

- **Greenery:** Adding greenery to fill in spaces in floral arrangements can save some money. Centerpieces and bouquets that are floral-heavy will certainly cost more.

- **Symbolism:** Consider the meaning behind flowers to make choices even more personal. You also may want to select flowers that will complement the theme of the wedding. For example, traditional spring blooms like tulips and daffodils will coordinate with spring weddings.

- **Flower varieties:** Hardier varieties of flowers, such as daisies, mums, carnations, and protea, are less likely to wilt quickly in bouquets or centerpieces than some other blooms, even when they are cut. Such blooms can hold up in any weather and last the entire day so that arrangements will be picture-perfect no matter the hour.

- **Venue:** Couples may find that some venues already have faux flowers or other decor. That may mean couples do not need to have as many flowers or any elaborate arrangements.

- **Size:** A particularly large floral centerpiece can overwhelm a table, and a bouquet that is overly cumbersome may detract from the bride or her bridesmaids. Choose the correct scale for comfort in bouquets. For table arrangements, select a size that will not discourage conversation or block guests' view, nor take up too much real estate on the table.

- **Allergies:** Although they are cut, flowers in arrangements can trigger allergic responses in some people. Others may be bothered by overly aromatic flowers. Work with the florist to find blooms that will be best.

- **Color scheme:** Although white flowers always coordinate, many couples like some color in their arrangements. Be sure the flowers pick up the hues used in bridesmaid dresses or even the season of the year.

Couples should take an active role in deciding what to include in floral pieces for their weddings.

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## How to Allocate Funds When Planning a *Wedding*



Whether it's a lavish, black-tie affair or a laid back gathering in the backyard, a couple's wedding day is a momentous, and often costly, occasion. According to the online wedding planning resource Zola, the average cost of a wedding in 2023 was \$33,000. That's a significant sum for couples to spend, and it's understandable if couples aren't sure how to allocate funds for their big day.

It's important that couples recognize what's most important to them when planning their weddings. Recognition of those priorities can help couples determine how to allocate their funds. Equally helpful can be how past couples have spent on their weddings. Utilizing data from its The Knot 2023 Real Weddings Study, the wedding experts at The Knot ([theknot.com](http://theknot.com)) have calculated general percentages of a wedding budget couples can devote to various components.

- **Venue: 37 percent**
- **Catering: 28 percent**
- **Band: 12 percent**
- **Wedding rings: 9 percent**
- **Photography: 8 percent**
- **Flowers: 8 percent**
- **Alcohol: 8 percent**
- **Rehearsal dinner: 8 percent**
- **Videography: 7 percent**
- **Couples' attire: 7 percent**
- **Rentals: 6 percent**
- **DJ: 5 percent**
- **Wedding party attire: 4 percent**
- **Guest entertainment: 3 percent**
- **Transportation: 3 percent**
- **Ceremony music: 3 percent**
- **Cake and desserts: 2 percent**
- **Stationery: 2 percent**
- **Officiant: 1 percent**
- **Favors and gifts: 1 percent**
- **Additional jewelry: 1 percent**

Couples with a keen eye might notice these percentages add up to significantly more than 100 percent. That's because the budgetary breakdown reflects personal preferences, individual couples' budgets and what couples can expect to spend on certain components. For example, The Knot data indicates a couple that prefers a band for their reception instead of a DJ may need to allocate roughly twice as much of their budget to accommodate that preference. In addition, couples who do not intend to pay for wedding party members' attire can find other ways to allocate those funds, which The Knot data indicates typically accounts for roughly 4 percent of a wedding budget.

Another variable to consider is family. According to The Knot data, couples allocated an average of 8 percent of their budgets to their rehearsal dinner. However, couples' parents may offer to pay for that meal, which can leave more room in the budget for other expenses. In addition, The Knot reported that the percentage of couples asking a friend or family member to serve as their wedding officiant rose from 37 percent in 2015 to 51 percent in 2020. Wedding officiants do not often eat up a significant portion of a couple's wedding budget (1 percent), but this is another expense that modern couples may not need to account for.

Weddings can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Couples who determine how best to allocate their wedding budgets may find it far simpler to plan their big day.

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Okoboji, IA

February 11, 2025

Editor: John Adams



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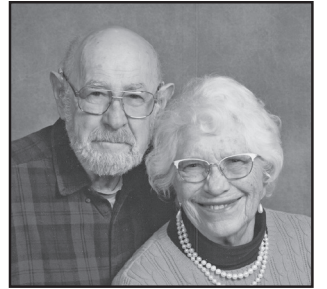


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of Spirit Lake  
Married July 1, 1958



75 Years  
Blaine & Marge Pedersen  
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Married July 20, 1949



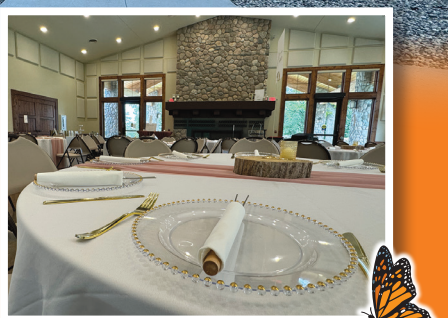
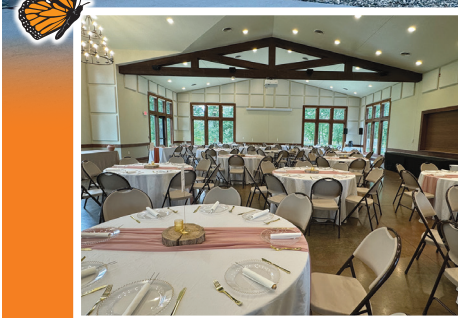
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A wedding day is a magical and memorable day for a couple and their family members. Months or even years of planning may go into making a wedding day special.

For some, an outdoor wedding and celebration amid the beauty of nature is the ultimate setting in which to tie the knot. When Mother Nature is your decorator, the setting can be hard to match. Perhaps that's why 62 percent of couples opted for outdoor nuptials in 2023, according to The Knot 2023 Real Weddings Survey. However, there may be some extra work involved when exchanging vows outdoors, hosting a reception outside or both. That work includes having a contingency plan in place if the weather does not cooperate. Here's what couples should know about having a backup plan for their outdoor weddings.

• **Identify a second location.** Couples who book outdoor receptions at catering halls can inquire how they handle inclement weather. Many will have a clause built into the agreement to move the party indoors in the event of bad weather. Others may enable the wedding to move to a different space for an added fee. Smaller, less formal weddings taking place at other locations may require a bit of ingenuity when looking for a backup space. Perhaps a friend has a large house where everyone can gather, or an employer may have a warehouse, loft or even a barn that can be transformed into unique venues at the last minute?

• **Choose outdoor spaces with covered areas.** The wish might be to have blue skies overhead, but it's impossible to control the weather. So it's safe to select outdoor spaces that offer a measure of weather protection, such as a pavilion in a park or a covered deck at a beachside locale. Such sites offer a little security without

detracting from the ambiance.

• **Look into a tent rental.** A tent is a great investment because it keeps everyone out of the elements rain or shine. Even on a lovely summer day, the blazing sun can make being outdoors uncomfortable. A tent is the solution. Couples should coordinate with a wedding planner or the venue itself to be sure that a tent is allowed on the grounds.

• **Think about event insurance.** Special event insurance may protect against financial loss in the event that severe weather throws a wrench into outdoor wedding plans. Poor weather may make moving around the venue treacherous and might force a postponement. Liability and cancellation protection in an insurance policy helps couples avoid financial hardship.

• **Hire a wedding planner.** The Knot suggests hiring a wedding planner or coordinator who can pivot to plan B in the event of bad weather. This helps take some of the stress off of the couple so they can enjoy the day.

• **Plan wardrobe and hair/makeup accordingly.** Brides and bridesmaids can choose fabrics for dresses that will be comfortable and not become blown around or see-through due to rain and wind. The wedding party can ask hair stylists to create a wedding hairstyle that is somewhat weatherproof. Experienced makeup artists likely know some tricks to keep makeup looking flawless even when the weather isn't. Outdoor weddings can be beautiful events, but it is important to have a backup plan in place in case weather doesn't cooperate.

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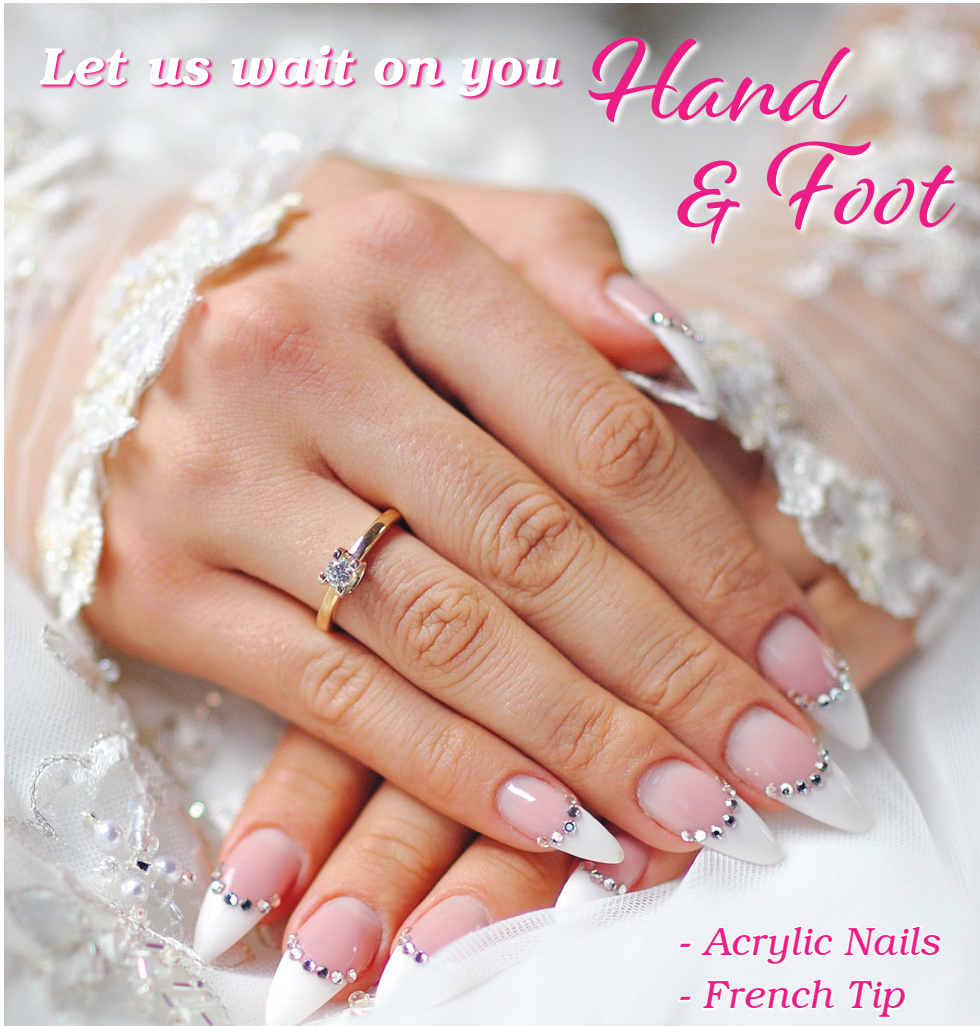
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