


{ BRIDAL GUIDE }

The Chicago guide to plan your
unique and perfect wedding!



*Tips, Trends &
Checklists from
Chicago's elite
wedding vendors!*



documenting the american
experience

figweddings



Be U Weddings' Annual Bridal Guide



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.....Publisher's Note.....



Sacha Krasney

President/Publisher

I am very excited and proud to launch Be U Weddings' First Annual Bridal Guide. After nine years in business since I first launched Squash U (www.squashu.com) invitations, and the amazing success we've seen with Be U Brides (www.beubrides.com) custom bridal paper products, I truly believe this may be my best creation yet.

I love to give wedding advice. I adore seeing my client's delight when we discuss color trends and décor ideas, and then sharing their smiles when I ease the process of finding the perfect vendor to fit their wedding style and budget. I started Be U Weddings so that I could help make wedding planning this enjoyable for not only my clients, but all other brides in Chicago.

This inaugural Bridal Guide wouldn't be possible without my absolutely amazing team and partners at Be U Weddings. Their dedication, hard work and true love for the wedding industry clearly makes this Bridal Guide one of a kind.

I hope you enjoy it as much as we do and that it will be an inspiration to you when planning your big day.

Always Be U.

Sacha

Contents

Shane,

From the very first moment we met, I hoped it would be you.

I have carried around the image of you in my heart my whole life.

When I look into your eyes, I see adventure. I see enough love to last a lifetime. I see my greatest friend.

I only hope that I am able to show you even a glimpse of the love you give me every day.

I promise to stand by you, to love you, and honor you as my husband.

I will give you all of my love, all of my life, until we are parted by death.



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Snappy Shots by Bev

chapter one

Timeline

You've got the ring—now what?! After the initial engagement euphoria settles in, you might fall into a moment of panic, also known as the phrase, “We have so much to do, and no time to do it!” Take a deep breath, and meet your *other* match: your wedding timeline. Marked with key dates, important tasks to keep tabs on, and the answers to each “When do I need to do this?” question, this document is the key to your sanity. To plan the perfect celebration, simply follow a comprehensive checklist with a timeline based on the duration of your engagement period. Sure, there might be a few hiccups along the way—the church put us down for the wrong date?!—but with these steps by your side, you'll feel a sense of order in spite of the chaos. In this section, we dive in to the to-do's and the to-don'ts of your wedding duties. After this crash course, you'll be checking off things in no time.

- Featuring Michelle Durpetti Events -



George Street Photography

Meet Michelle Durpetti Events

Finding that one person in the world who knows you better than anyone else? Riveting. Committing to one another forever? Exhilarating. Planning every detail of your own most important day? Overwhelming. That's where a wedding planner comes in! Michelle Durpetti Events is a wedding, events management, and production firm founded on the principle that event planners must be good sources of creative ideas

"Oftentimes, we find that our couples that do not come to us first, over-commit to their venue and then can't bring the rest of the wedding elements to life..."

combined with practical experience, flexibility and know-how to manage an event from beginning to end. After years working in public relations, and producing such top-tier events as William J. Clinton Presidential Library Grand Opening Dedication Ceremony, Michelle Durpetti merged her passion and skill set into Michelle Durpetti Events in 2008. Just one year later, *Exhibit City News*, the nation's only tradeshow industry newspaper, named her as one of their top "40 under 40" of 2009. Now, along with her associates, she creates custom wedding coordination packages to suit clients' specific needs.

Whether you're seeking a full planner, from conception to champagne toasts, or day-of support, the Michelle Durpetti Events team tackles each to-do with ease

(largely so you, the bride, don't have to!). The key to doing it all? First things first: meet with a planner, and put a plan in motion. Michelle's team talks us through the art of the matrimonial production calendar.

Q What do brides often want to tackle first in the planning process that they should delay until closer to the big day?

A We find that the two things brides go after from the get-go are the venue and gown, but those are often items that we don't recommend waiting on. However, we do recommend hiring a planner before committing to a venue and most other vendors. Oftentimes, we find that our couples that do not come to us first, over-commit to their venue and then can't bring the rest of the wedding elements to life at as grand of a scale to match the venue.



Michelle Durpetti Events: 312.988.9900
info@durpettievents.com

Q

What step in planning is most often forgotten by brides and grooms?

A

Sometimes our couples are so excited to be engaged they go directly to the big pieces (venue) without sitting down and really realistically allotting budget parameters; that will directly correlate with whatever is economically feasible but also to how much time they will have. (For example, the more “DIY” a bride decides to go, the more time she is going to need to focus on the wedding.). Tipping is not often factored into budgets. Couples also get so busy focusing on details of the wedding that they even forget (in the month range) to pick up their marriage license.

Q

How can grooms get involved in the planning process?

A

We have consistently had both brides and grooms involved in the planning process. Typically, we have found that grooms can feel a little bit intimidated (code for “dread”) when it comes to things like floral, décor and linen selection...but feel more comfortable in the more pragmatic areas like budget, food and DJ/band. We recommend making sure he’s a part of the catering and cake tastings, and also in the music selection process. This way, the groom can add his two cents without being overwhelmed.

Q

What would you say are the most common misconceptions brides have when organizing the timeline of their engagement and planning process?

A

That they will actually have the time to do it and that they do not need to have a planner! Brides are balancing family, career, friends, his family... maybe even a pet! A wedding can take as much or as little time to plan as you allow for. By hiring a planner, you are not only eliminating a lot of the grunt work, but you are bringing in an expert who works in the industry and does this on a daily basis.



Courtesy of Michelle Durpetti Events

Q

What are some modern tasks that have been added to the planning process?

A

We often schedule a “Style & Steam” with Jessi Sheehan of Evolve Chicago. She is a fantastic stylist with a ton of experience in bridal couture who will come in and actually steam bridesmaids’ dresses and the bridal gown, while also helping the groom and groomsmen with pocket squares (a trend we’ve seen—replacing boutonnieres on groomsmen and doubling as a very unique and personal gift) or bow ties.

Q

Naturally during this time, everyone wants to help, but a bride may not be comfortable sharing all of the responsibility! What should brides and grooms delegate to family and friends to help make them feel involved?

A

Great question! Those willing to lend a hand to the bride and groom can help in the following ways:

- Mother of Groom: Rehearsal Dinner
- Mother of Bride/Maid of Honor: Invite and planning the bridal shower
- Maid of Honor: Bachelorette Party
- Best Man: Bachelor Party
- Little cousins/nieces and nephews: Ensure your guests sign guest book on the day of; also program passing, ushers, etc. ❤️

Planning Calendar

{By Michelle Durpetti Events}

ONE YEAR

- ☐ Inquire about potential locations for ceremony, reception and honeymoon
- ☐ Determine the numbers of guests you plan to invite
- ☐ Determine the style/theme of the wedding
- ☐ Identify wedding date options
- ☐ Identify potential vendors
- ☐ Set and review your budget and determine who will help contribute to the fund
- ☐ Start perusing dresses online and flipping through magazines to get a sense of the style of dress you prefer before visiting bridal boutiques
- ☐ Put together a wedding binder for all documents
- ☐ If you are marrying out of your resident country, determine the documentation requirements (can sometimes take a year or longer)



11 MONTHS

- ☐ Create a wedding website
- ☐ Develop theme/vision/color scheme
- ☐ Conduct site inspections
- ☐ Select and finalize your date (woohoo!)
- ☐ Book ceremony and reception venues
- ☐ Determine officiant and make an appointment to learn about the pre-marital requirements
- ☐ Contact and schedule consultations with potential vendors (wedding planner, musicians, photographers, videographers, stationers, bakers, florists, caterers)
- ☐ Select wedding party members (attendants, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers)
Finalize guest list

10 MONTHS

- ☐ Research save the date styles and place order
- ☐ Set up wedding dress appointments
- ☐ Take engagements photos
- ☐ Host (or attend) your engagement party



8-9 MONTHS

- ☐ Select and book vendors (sign contracts and put down deposits)
- ☐ Select and order wedding dress, veil, and accessories
- ☐ Select and order formal wear for groom and groomsmen
- ☐ Select and order formal wear for bridal party; discuss with mothers so that they may begin looking for their dresses
- ☐ Select and book honeymoon location (arrange for passports, vaccinations, birth certificates, and visas if necessary)

6 MONTHS

- ☐ Mail save the dates
- ☐ Develop draft of day-of timeline and payment schedule
- ☐ Reserve block of hotel rooms for out-of-town guests and wedding night location for bride and groom
- ☐ Select wedding bands, insure them, and order engraving
- ☐ Confirm bridesmaids have ordered their dresses
- ☐ Select transportation for ceremony and reception
- ☐ Reserve any rental equipment (tables, chairs, tent, etc.)
- ☐ Schedule cake tastings, select baker and place your order
- ☐ Select and order stationery (invitations, envelopes, thank you cards, menus, escort cards, etc.)
- ☐ Plan rehearsal dinner

4 MONTHS




- ☐ Select ceremony and reception music
- ☐ Determine new living arrangements (if necessary)
- ☐ Create a map of directions to ceremony and reception
- ☐ Purchase wedding and honeymoon insurance (personal preference)
- ☐ Give the final guest list to your calligrapher or stationer to address envelopes
- ☐ Schedule the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Pick out wedding favors

3 MONTHS

- ☐ Address wedding invitations (consider a professional calligrapher or printer)
- ☐ Review floral arrangements and finalize order
- ☐ Purchase bridal party gifts
- ☐ Begin beauty/spa regimen
- ☐ Select beauty consultant and experiment with make-up and hairstyles
- ☐ Schedule hair, make-up, and mani/pedi appointments
- ☐ Begin preparing ceremony program

2 MONTHS

- ☐ Finalize legalities
- ☐ Apply for and obtain marriage license
- ☐ Obtain name change forms
- ☐ Mail invitations
- ☐ Schedule final dress fitting for bride and bridesmaids
- ☐ Confirm honeymoon details
- ☐ Arrange bridesmaids' luncheon or brunch
- ☐ Select final bridal accessories (purse, shoes, jewelry, etc.) 
- ☐ Appoint guestbook attendant and gift attendant
- ☐ Create reception seating diagram
- ☐ Mail thank you notes for all bridal shower gifts
- ☐ Complete paper documents for changing your name

4 WEEKS

- ☐ Finalize layout of ceremony and reception site
- ☐ Determine security plan
- ☐ Confirm all vendors

3 WEEKS

- ☐ Contact guests who did not RSVP
- ☐ Finalize program
- ☐ Finalize video presentation or photo montage for reception or rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Enjoy your bachelorette and bachelor parties

2 WEEKS

- ☐ Send a shot list to photographer and videographer (a list of must-have photos)
- ☐ Finalize confirmed guest list
- ☐ Finalize seating arrangements
- ☐ Create escort cards and table numbers
- ☐ Finalize hotel block and wedding night accommodations
- ☐ Begin confirming all vendor load-in/load-out times
- ☐ Finalize day-of timeline and schedule
- ☐ Arrange for gown cleaning and pressing and bouquet preservation for after the wedding
- ☐ Finalize vows

1 WEEK

- ☐ Send master timeline & day-of schedule to vendors
- ☐ Drop off wedding rings to be cleaned & pick up
- ☐ Give final guest count to reception venue/caterer
- ☐ Remind the men to pick up formal wear and shoes
- ☐ Prepare tip envelopes and arrange for the wedding planner/best man to distribute them at the wedding reception
- ☐ Drop off any items with your wedding planner
- ☐ RELAX



Click here to download and print your Planning Calendar.

To see more from Michelle Durpetti Events visit page 50 or visit them online at www.durpettievents.com





Photographer: Thomas Slack / Ceremony and Reception Venue: Room 1520, Aérée Loft / Bride's Dress: Lazaro (purchased from Bella Bianca) / Bride's Shoes: Jimmy Choo (purchased from Nordstrom) / Invitations and Paper Products: DIY by bride's family and friends / Cake/Desserts: Sweet Mandy B's / Flowers: Fleur / Catering: Entertaining Company / Music: Fig Media / Other Music: Friend of the bride



Soirée Weddings & Events

Glamour is back in force with this luxurious fete at the West Loop's Aérée Loft at Room 1520, exquisitely captured by Thomas Slack Photography and beautifully planned by Tiffany Munster of Soirée Weddings & Events. The bride looked divine in her mermaid-style Lazaro gown and Jimmy Choo peep toes, and her bridesmaids followed suit with their custom gray Twobirds dresses and matching shoes. Fleur designed breathtaking bouquets and arrangements that reflected the sophisticated feel of the event. Pink lighting added to the overall ultra-chic ambiance. As a truly personalized

take-home favor, guests were treated to the bride's family cookie recipe and the ingredients perfectly packaged in mason jars. Like no other venue in the Chicago, Aérée Loft at Room 1520 features an urban, elegant loft space that is a bright white blank slate that can be transformed into the perfect wedding. Directly from the street is the venue's impressive 16-foot-tall glass entryway, which is brilliantly illuminated by Italian crystal chandeliers within. Inside, the dramatic foyer is graced by a stunning artisan staircase that leads to a versatile, impeccably designed great room.



Soirée Weddings & Events: *This couple was so in love. Even with all the excitement going on, and all the details and all the moving parts, you could just tell that none of that really mattered. They were just so happy to marry each other. The wedding being fabulous was just an added bonus for them! The truly unique part was the uncharacteristically cool weather for June. It was 50 degrees that day, but besides that, it was the little details that we thought of. The chuppah was created by Fleur. Elegant crystals dripped from the curly willow branches—it was the perfect combination of rustic and chic! Deitzah and Andrew thought out every detail of the menu, and really wanted to treat their guests to the type of food that they loved. Also included were Sweet Mandy B's cupcakes and a gelato bar—a nod to Italy, the couple's honeymoon destination. Aérée Loft at Room 1520 is so accommodating and helpful. I always love working with Julie of Entertaining Company since she is so professional, but also so fun to work with. Fig Media did an amazing job DJing. They always know how to read the crowd and get people on the dance floor. Bella Bridesmaid goes above and beyond for their clients—they don't sleep until the client is happy. I love that about them!*



Photography by I 326 Studios

chapter two

Budget

There it is—the dreaded “B” word. The topic every bride and groom hates to discuss, but the word that becomes the topic of each discussion. Gone are the days where strictly the bride’s father foots the bill; now, couples themselves or additional family members may help share the burden, which also increases the financial personalities at play! But wedded bliss shouldn’t begin with screaming matches over final amounts due. A bridal budget requires three key components: a checklist, priorities and a bottom line. Managing the numbers might be difficult, but it can certainly be done. From liquor to live bands, we count the costs to tie the knot in the Chicagoland area and teach you to stick to your spending. Who knows—with the right instruction (and a little bit of luck), you just might even come in under budget (take that!).

- Featuring A Perfect Event -



Photos Courtesy of A Perfect Event

A Perfect Event

Wedding & design expert and author, Debi Lilly, believes everyone deserves "A Perfect Event." She is on a one-woman mission to inspire, educate and share her twenty years of party planning, stylist tips, and DIY designs to elevate celebrations for any occasion, everywhere, coast to coast.

"She planned Oprah's 50th on-air live birthday party celebration and designed florals and décor for dozens of other shows..."

Founding A Perfect Event the day she graduated from college was a dream come true for Debi. She had already been planning and designing friends' weddings for years and couldn't wait to bust it out full time, on her own. (No time for classes and syllabuses...there were parties and weddings to plan!) From day one she loved the idea of creating a full-service design firm to concept and manage every single element of the process in house, from planning to floral to graphic design, paper, gifts and more.

Within a few years, A Perfect Event grew from a small business out of her Lincoln Park apartment to a 3,000+ square foot storefront, filled with an award-winning team of planners, floral designers, artists, graphic designers and more. Debi appeared for over ten years on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" as Oprah's "Favorite Pro." She planned Oprah's 50th

on-air live birthday party celebration and designed florals and décor for dozens of other shows, including the legendary "Oprah's Favorite Things" and "World's Largest Baby Shower," to name but a few.

Frequently featured as an entertainment expert in Martha Stewart Weddings, InStyle Magazine, Brides, and more, she trains each year at Le Cordon Bleu Paris. Debi is the entertaining contributor for ABC Chicago and Windy City Live on ABC. She also partnered with Safeway, the premiere grocery chain in North America with almost 2,000 retail stores, for her own design and décor line, Debi Lilly Design, in 2010. Her floral, decor and entertaining collection in Safeway stores includes 200 affordable, accessible, trend-forward floral, home, candle and gift products, all located in the convenience of the grocery aisle. If that's not enough, you can find even more of her stylist secrets are shared in her new book A Perfect Event, as well as her new eMagazine "A Perfect Event."





Budget

So who better equipped to offer some advice on every bride's not-so-favorite subject? Debi dishes on the financial elephant in the room: budget.

Q How can a bride and groom avoid going over budget?

A “As soon as you begin planning, set your wedding budget. Build an Excel spreadsheet, so you can actively update the costs of each vendor and contract as you work through the design and details. Be focused as you reach out to vendors, to evaluate both their quality of service and cost of service, working only within your budget for each category. I can’t tell you how many clients will fall in love with a vendor that is two to three times more than their budget allows, creating quite the budget challenge. There are so many amazing vendors in Chicago, and wedding planners know exactly who provides excellent services within your specific budget.

Secondly, examine what your wedding priorities are. If budget doesn’t allow for everything that you wish you could have, what is the lowest priority for the wedding details? Remove those items from the budget to help focus your budget, and create more of a budget for your high-priority wedding designs.”

Q Is it okay to negotiate with vendors?

A “Negotiating with vendors is a must. Great vendors want to work with you and create the perfect contract to fill your wedding service needs. From payment schedules to help with budgeting and costs, to hands-on meetings and planning assistance, to discounts on services and products, we believe it never hurts to ask.

This is yet another area that a wedding planner can be of great assistance—negotiating client contracts is job one!”

Q What hidden costs should brides and grooms be on the look-out for (tax, tips, etc.)?

A “Often when catering is quoted (which is one of the largest wedding costs), tax and gratuity are not detailed in the total cost per person. Professional planning tip: When asking catering costs, always ask for “plus plus” tax and gratuity pricing to be included in the grand totals. Don’t try to work it out yourself, separately, as calculations can be tricky, and you don’t want to make any assumptions. The caterer is there to share complete total costs for you.”



A Perfect Event:
3050 North Lincoln Avenue, Chicago
773.244.9333



Iliana Morton Photography

chapter three

Colors

With so many items on your to-do list (and chapters in this bridal guide!), it is all too easy to slip up and forget a detail or two. That's why it's important to streamline your tasks as much as possible. One way to do so? By picking an overall theme or style for your nuptials, most integral to which is your color scheme. From Tiffany blue and classic ivory to canary yellow and navy blue, there are countless gorgeous combinations in the pages to follow. Once you settle in on your palette, you'll be surprised at how subsequent decisions come with ease. Take a spin on the color wheel to see which hue tickles your fancy.

- Featuring Be U Weddings -

Organic Green



Carasco Photography

Organic Purple



Courtesy of Pistil & Vine

Vintage Green



Courtesy of Be U Weddings

Choose Your Color Palette

You may assume choosing your venue, deciding the date of the big day and narrowing down your guest list are the most stressful choices of your wedding planning; but no one ever told you how hard it would be to select your wedding colors!

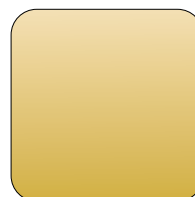
Picking out a palette will not only ease the decision-making process throughout your engagement, but it will create and carry a beautifully consistent theme throughout your wedding details, from invitations to bridesmaids' dresses and everything in between.

Slightly weary about pinpointing several hues? Or, not sure if one shade matches the other? Don't fret: you're not alone in this color conundrum!

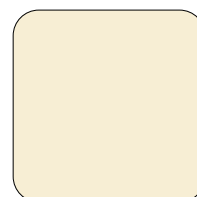
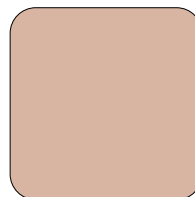
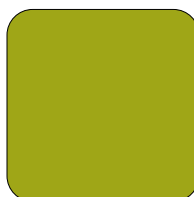
Let Be U Weddings become your wedding color forecaster; we'll help you concoct a selection that suits your wedding genre. If you're still stuck, find a hue that resonates with you below, and follow our suggestions to accent it. Happy picking!

If you love green!

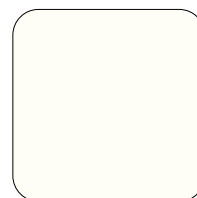
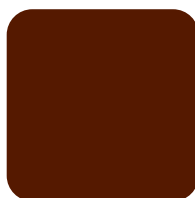
Vintage: A new color trend for 2013 is celadon green paired with gold and grey.



Organic: If you want something a bit more natural, pair olive green with taupe and ivory.



Contemporary: For a modern look, pair a mossy green with brown and white.



Vintage Pink



Fig Media Photography

Contemporary Purple



Carasco Photography

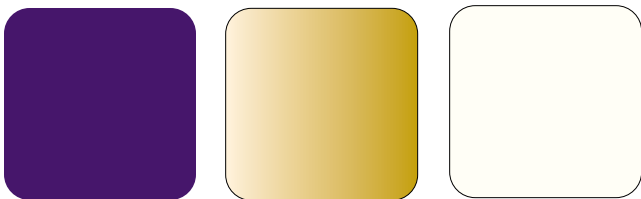
Contemporary Pink



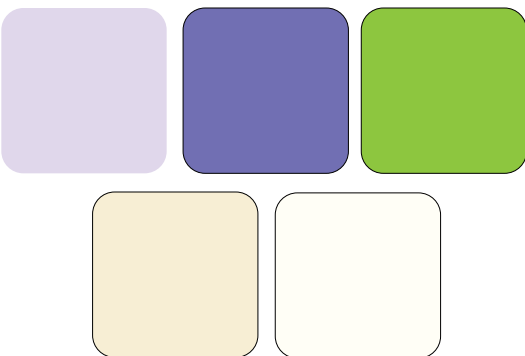
Jaclyn Simpson Photography

If you love purple!

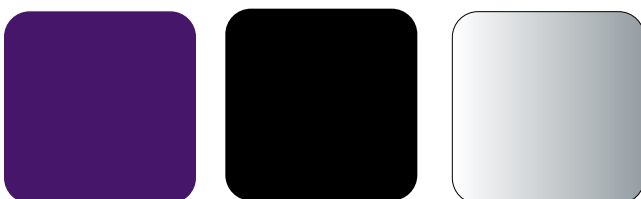
Vintage: For a royal vintage look, combine eggplant with gold and cream.



Organic: Blend purples, greens and shades of white for a natural aesthetic.

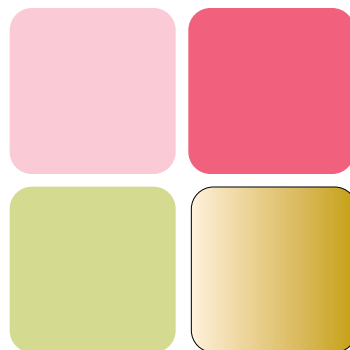


Contemporary: Mix eggplant with black and silver for super sleek style.



If you love pink!

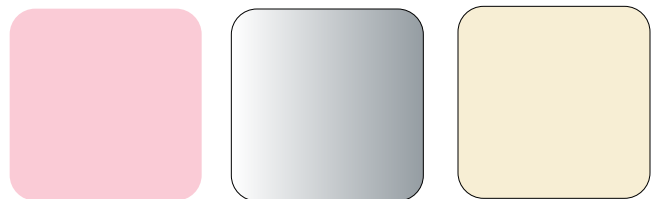
Vintage: Combine different shades of pink such as pale pink, bright pink and blush with gold and celadon green.



Organic: Rosy pink, lime green and a stark yellow unite beautifully!



Contemporary: Contemplate a sheer wash of pink, silver and ivory—so chic!



Vintage Blue



Sarah Corbett of Soulscapes Photography

Organic Red



W. Scott Chester Photography

Vintage Red

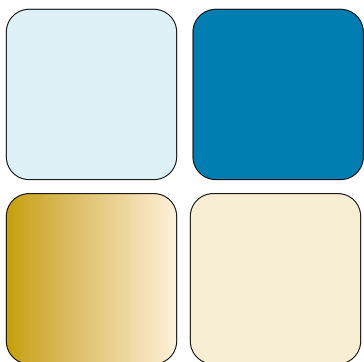


David Wittig Photography

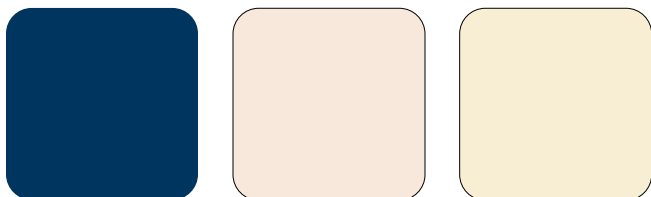
Choose Your Color Palette

If you love blue!

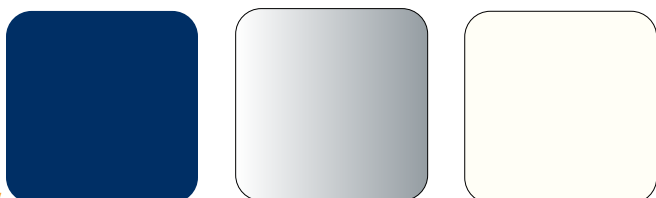
Vintage: Couple pale blue and cobalt with gorgeous gold and ivory.



Organic: For something more natural, blend navy blue, champagne and ivory.

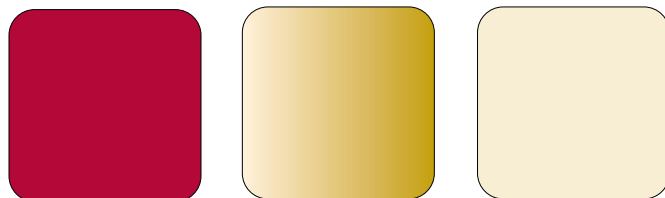


Contemporary: A deep blue resonates alongside a stark silver and white.

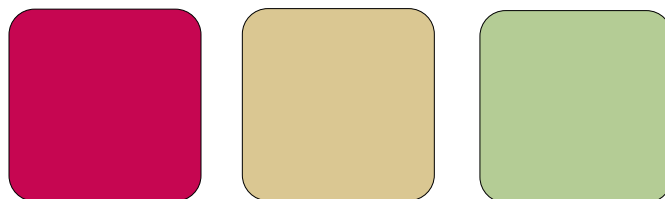


If you love red!

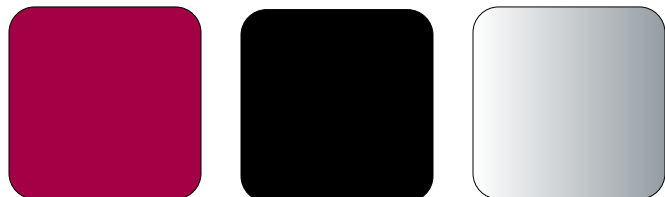
Vintage: Go for these vintage favorites—maroon, gold and ivory.



Organic: Raspberry, taupe and light forest green create a soft scheme.



Contemporary: Highlight the contrast between aubergine red, black and silver.



Contemporary Blue



David Wittig Photography

Vintage Yellow



Carasco Photography

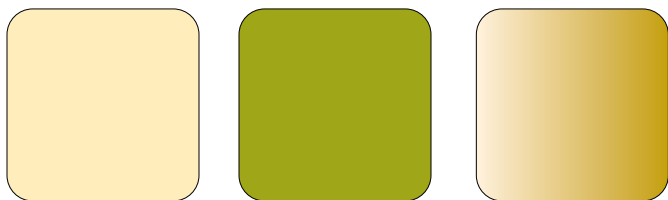
Organic Orange



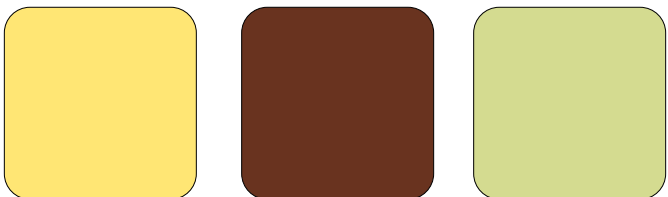
Maypole Studios Photography

If you love yellow!

Vintage: Butter yellow, olive green and gold are so romantic.



Organic: Pair Canary yellow with brown and green.

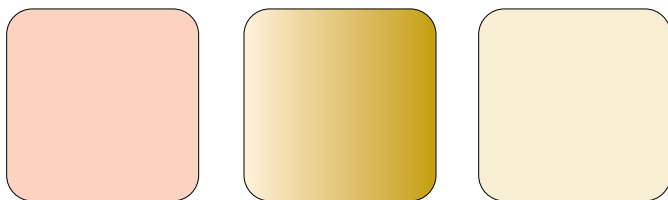


Contemporary: Pale yellow, cool grey and blue create a win-win combination.

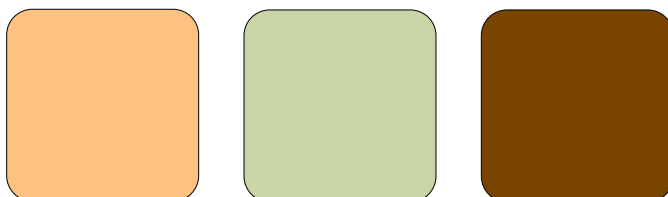


If you love orange!

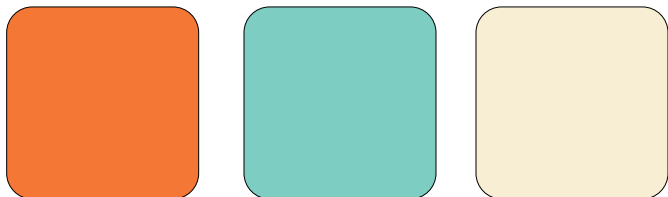
Vintage: Coral, gold and ivory are the signature shades of vintage style.



Organic: Mix tangerine, avocado green and brown.



Contemporary: Blood orange, aqua and ivory are magically modern.



For more color trends visit BeUweddings.com



Studio B Photography

chapter four



Who's ready to get your hands dirty? If you've glanced at a bridal blog or perused Pinterest in the last couple of years, you know. We're at the peak of a do-it-yourself, homemade hoopla in wedding world. Therefore, it's time to brush up on your Martha Stewart and Betty Crocker skills, ladies! Whether you're simply starting out with paper product basics or you're a full-blown decorating machine, there is a hands-on bridal creation just for you. The inspiration is endless, especially from some notable Chicagoans. In this chapter, you'll learn to breathe new life into odds and ends, from construction paper to candles and chalkboard paint, to dazzle guests on your day. Here's to saving some of your budget and having a blast—perhaps with a few paper cuts along the way.

- Featuring A Perfect Event -

.....For a Winter Wedding.....

DIY Frosted Glass Centerpieces {Courtesy of Debi Lilly from A Perfect Event}

Transform your glassware into pretty, “frosted” candle hurricanes with this simple stylist trick.



- { 1 } Gather glass hurricanes and glass pieces of any size and shape.
- { 2 } Purchase one or more cans of spray frost at a craft store, florist or hardware store.
- { 3 } In a well-ventilated area, preferably outside, spray your glass pieces as if you are spray-painting them on the outside of the glass. Set aside to dry.
- { 4 } If your pieces do not look “frosted” enough, you can easily apply a second coat. It’s OK to layer! The more layers you add, the frostier it becomes.
- { 5 } Fill with pillar candles, set on top of a decorative tray or mirror, and surround with scattered petals—perfect for winter nuptials. The best news of all? You can wash off spray frost when finished if you like, and continue putting those pieces to use long after, when spring has sprung.

.....For a Spring or Summer Wedding.....

DIY Chalkboard Runner {Courtesy of Debi Lilly from A Perfect Event}

Add a DIY touch to a summer picnic or outdoor affair with a chic chalkboard table statement.



1 Gather just two ingredients, black paper and chalk, to make a chalkboard runner in a few minutes.

2 Unroll the black paper the length of your reception tabletop, with one to two inches hanging down the ends of the table for an elegant, finished edge.

3 With the chalk, draw a flourish design across the length of paper. Get creative! Opt for round circle shapes for the "plates," or draw guest names if you like—whatever shapes your heart desires.

4 Set the table with floral, candles, plates, stemware, and more.

.....For a Fall Wedding.....

DIY Ribbon Place Card Frame {Courtesy of Debi Lilly from A Perfect Event}

For a memorable place card display, combine the colors of autumn with a stunningly simple set-up.



{1} Using an oversized frame, backer board, fabric, ribbons, and place cards, you can create an elegant place card board display.

{2} Stretch fabric across the backer, securing with a staple gun.

{3} Measure your place card height, and then measure evenly across the height of the board. Mark where to line up the ribbons horizontally, to create "rows."

{4} Stretch ribbons across the width of the board, and staple the ribbon ends to the back of the board with the staple gun.

{5} Affix your place cards into alphabetical rows, A-Z, from top to bottom. ♥



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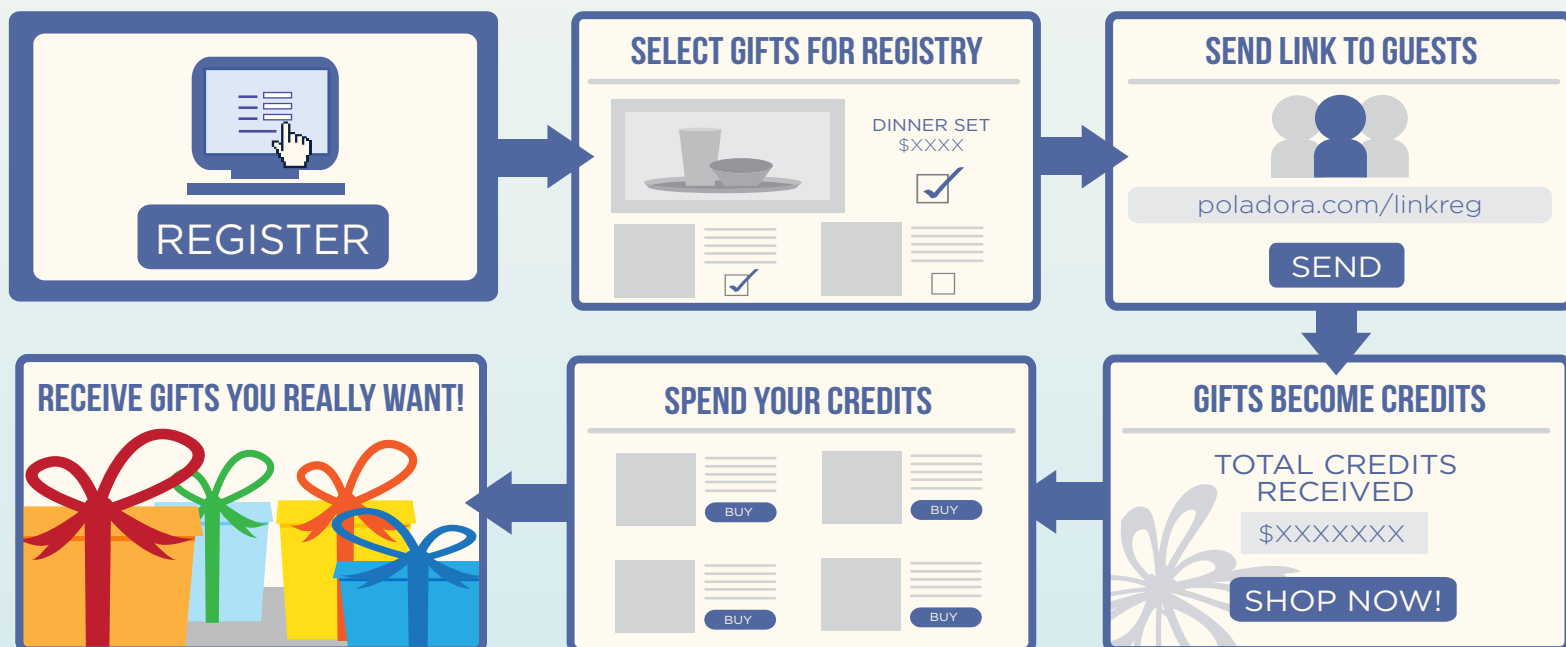


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Photographer: Jiho Park of Lilly Photography / Ceremony Venue: St. Hyacinth Basilica / Reception Venue: Fountain Blue Banquets & Conference Center / Bride's Dress: Blue by Enzoani (purchased at Bella Sposa) / Bride's Shoes: Aldo / Groom's Attire: Calvin Klein (Formally Modern Tuxedo) / Invitations: Erica Gonzalez of EL Designs (printed by J.S. Printing) / Cake: Central Continental Bakery / Ceremony Flowers: Aberdeen's Wedding Florist / Reception Flowers: Flowers by Romani / Music: Alec Gorecki of DJ-Chicago Mobile DJ Productions / Lighting: Yanni Design Studio



Learn to Love Happily Ever After

As students prepare for a new school year, it's only fitting to celebrate the charming union of two Chicago-based teachers, captured by the talented Jiho Park of Lilly Photography. Passionate about their careers and lives, this couple elegantly incorporated unique elements into their special day, including chalkboard signage, apples, pencils, lined paper menus, and textbook-inspired table centerpieces. We especially love the crisp apple green,

rustic brown and stark white color combination—perfect for a late summer or early autumn fête.

Consider the newly renovated Fountain Blue Banquets & Conference Center in Des Plaines for your upcoming wedding. Their newest addition, the Lions Gate Pavilion, features an outdoor ambience in contemporary surroundings. Choose from a variety of rooms and packages to accommodate parties of 35 to 400 guests.



***From the Bride:** Shaun and I met through a teaching scholarship program, and we are currently both teachers. Teaching is our passion—it is the thing that brought us together. Because of this, we felt that it was only right to pay a sincere homage to our profession and intertwine these elements into every aspect of the wedding. We are both Capricorns and very down-to-earth, so naturally we chose earth tones for our wedding, which lent itself nicely to the teaching theme! It was our mission to bring out all these special touches with elegance and class. We took special care to ensure that not one detail was overlooked, handmade or specially ordered. We've dedicated our lives to teaching and to each other: for better or for worse. Our love for each other, our story and our passion for educating radiated through each part of the day.*



Carasco Photography {Courtesy of Michelle Durpetti Events}

chapter five

Venues

When you start to wrap your head around your special day, it's all about location, location, location! Your venue sets the mood and ambience of your entire wedding. Do you want a black tie affair with chandeliers and painted murals on the ceilings? Maybe you want a cozy party in an urban loft with wood and brick accents to accompany your s'mores buffet. Whatever the setting, you've come to the right place. Chicago is home to a plethora of gorgeous backdrops to house your matrimonial moment. From restaurants, churches and parks, to LEED certified buildings, museums and mansions, the Windy City has it all. Just remember: it's your day, and you and your partner's decision (not Grandma Grace's). Now let's start scouting!

Featuring A Perfect Event, Michelle Durpetti Events,
and Soirée Weddings & Events.

Venue Recommendations

Vintage: The Rookery



Artisan Events Photography

As recommended by Soirée Weddings & Events:
The Rookery- quintessential Chicago! the architecture is amazing. if you do both the ceremony and reception there, then your guests don't have to leave the space. It's all indoors which is perfect for the unpredictability of Chicago weather; but the glass ceiling allows in some natural light.

The Rookery
209 South LaSalle Street
Chicago, IL 60604
312.553.6100

Rustic: Loft on Lake



Courtesy of Loft on Lake

As recommended by Michelle Durpetti Events:
Offering urban elegance with a creative edge, Loft on Lake is a welcome retreat. The interior boasts raw architectural elements such as beautiful exposed brick and warm oak timber; 20-foot ceilings and its most distinguished feature—a 65-foot long skylight that is unique in all of Chicago.

Loft on Lake
1366 West Lake Street
Chicago, IL 60607
312.738.2437

Traditional:
Harold Washington Winter Garden



Courtesy of Harold Washington Library

As recommended by A Perfect Event:

Talk about prime real estate! The Winter Garden is the architectural centerpiece of the library. Located on the ninth floor, this elegant and spacious atrium features a terrazzo and marble floor and a 52-foot glass paneled dome that spans the entire room. And you can definitely trust A Perfect Event on this one: Founder Debi Lilly hosted her own nuptials here!

Harold Washington Winter Garden
400 South State Street
Chicago, IL 60605
312.747.4300

Outdoor:
The Ivy Room



Matt Blum Photography

As recommended by Michelle Durpetti Events:

Quite simply, it's a modern oasis in the city. A quiet courtyard drenched in ivy is the perfect backdrop for an outdoor spring or summer ceremony. Guests can also venture inside to the ballroom, which still offers picturesque views of the lush garden.

The Ivy Room
12 East Ohio Street
Chicago, IL 60611
312.645.7760



Photographer: Miller + Miller Wedding Photography / Ceremony & Reception Venue: Salvage One / Floral: Asrai Garden / Event Planning & Design: Ryan Alexander Events / Bride's Dress: Lezu (purchased from New York Bride & Groom in Charlotte, NC) / Groomsmen Attire: J Crew / Paper Products: Designed by Groom / Bridesmaid Dresses: Anthropologie / Hair and Makeup: Beauty on Call and Pix Cosmetics / Accessories: The Left Bank / Catering: Fig Catering / Bakery: Harper Cakes & Confections / DJ: Toast & Jam / Transportation: High Standards Limousine Company



Ryan Alexander Events

Prepare to relish all of the lovely details with this heartwarming vintage-eclectic soiree at Salvage One, beautifully captured by Miller + Miller Wedding Photography and brilliantly planned by Lauren Housely of Ryan Alexander Events. Lauren helped the couple transform their unique vision into reality with clever elements, such as a custom chalkboard

photobooth decked out with their robot theme. Asrai Garden designed alluring, vintage-inspired floral arrangements in assorted glass jars. Salvage One provided just the right backdrop as their ever-evolving space is easily reinvented for any event. Couples seeking a warm ambiance with vintage appeal can confidently add this venue to their list.



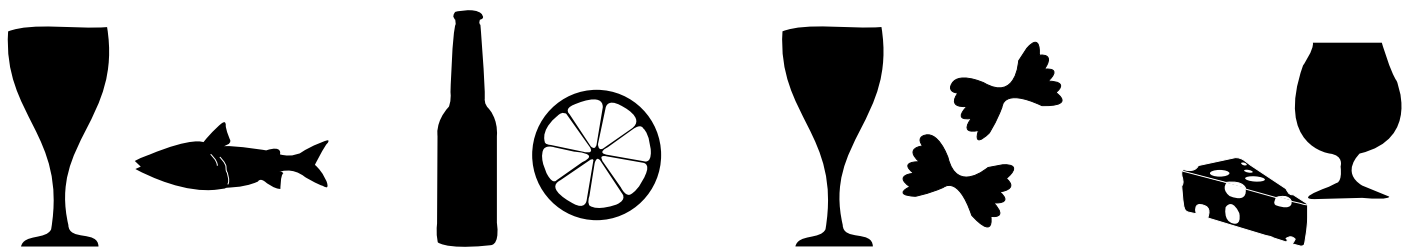
From the Bride: It was very important for Shaun and I to create an intimate wedding that included many personal touches and reflected us as a couple. We found that Salvage One was the perfect vintage backdrop for our wedding and also gave our out-of-town guests a Chicago loft experience. Our ceremony was a blend of our personal vows and elements of Shaun's Persian heritage. For our reception, our main goal was for everyone to have fun. We had casual seating and a lounge area to encourage mingling and of course there was a lot of dancing. We incorporated several personal elements into our wedding ceremony and reception. Shaun was able to express his artistic side by designing our wedding invitations. I made our wedding cake and several items for a dessert display including coconut macaroons, pate de fruit and caramels.

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Carasco Photography {Courtesy of Michelle Durpetti Events}

chapter six

Bridal Party

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Let us be clear: there is so much more to the bridal party than bridesmaids' dresses! For starters, how would you like to incorporate your family members? How many maids do you envision? Will you have one or multiple maids of honor? What about bridal attendants, or as they do in the South, a "house party"? Don't forget your readers, greeters and ushers! There is no doubt you'll have a plethora of people who would be overjoyed to assist you on your big day, but heed this chapter's advice and choose wisely. Our vendors dish on the duties, characteristics and yes, those infamous dresses for this special addition to your wedding

- Featuring Soirée Weddings & Events -



Courtesy of Soirée Weddings & Events

..... Meet Soirée Weddings & Events

Ever since Tiffany Munster can remember, she's been planning, organizing and coordinating everything from her closet to dinner parties. Friends would flock to her for her expertise in planning birthdays, bachelorette gatherings and even showers—but her true love for planning set in during the course of her own nuptials. "Every day to me was like living in a wedding magazine, and I LOVED it!" Tiffany recalls. "That is when I knew that this was my calling."

"Don't be afraid to ask for things that you want, even if you haven't heard of it done before..."

The communications degree-holder, blessed with the self-professed "gift of gab," found success in the sales industry and used her connections and networking skills to propel the launch of Soirée Weddings & Events in 2010. Initially handling all aspects of the wedding planning gig solo—juggling each part of the business—Tiffany has since then added two associate coordinators to the team and continues the company's growth and evolution.

"I consider myself so lucky to get to do what I love every day," Tiffany says. "I get to be a part of the most important day in a couple's life. There is nothing more rewarding."

Amidst the plethora of top-notch wedding coordinators in the Windy City, Soirée Wedding & Events prides itself

in its ability to accommodate almost any budget. "The challenge comes when you have clients with realistic budgets," Tiffany notes. "But we strive to take those realistic budgets and create weddings that look like a million bucks!"

Working with the likes of Chicago mainstays such as The Murphy, Carasco Photography and Entertaining Company, Soirée Weddings & Events serves as a planner, coordinator and consultant, but also brings its brides' visions to life as an event designer. Tiffany encourages couples to be creative and use their imaginations when conceptualizing their wedding day. "Don't be afraid to ask for things that you want, even if you haven't heard of it done before," she says. "Run it by your planner—they probably have the best way to incorporate the idea into your special day!" Ask and you shall receive!



Soirée Weddings & Events: 312.545.3707
tiffany@soireechicago.com



..... Choosing Your Bridal Party

Q With so many women vying for the job, how should brides select their bridal party?

A Choose people of true importance or meaning to you. I would recommend asking family and closest friends. They will be the ones that will still be around when you look back at your pictures in 20+ years. Want to make them feel special? Make them a card, frame an old photo or write them a personalized poem asking them to be your bridesmaid. Send it in the mail and wait for a response. They will love the gesture and the fact that you asked in such a special and meaningful way.

Q Then, there's the next ordeal: the bridesmaid dress. What's your advice on the selection process?

A Choose something that is budget friendly, comfortable and flattering; if your bridesmaids have to pay for it, you want them to feel good in it when they wear it, as well as being easy on the pocketbook! Choose a color that goes with the season and also with your theme. Just because your colors are blue and yellow doesn't mean that they have to wear either blue or yellow! Try a neutral color like champagne, taupe or even a fun print! It will add more interest to your wedding day—and the girls will appreciate not looking like Big Bird!

Q Can a bride choose more than one maid of honor?

A You are the bride, and you can do whatever you want! I have even seen "Men of Honor," often brothers or male friends of the bride. Anything goes... it's your day! Just make sure that if you have more than one, you don't play favorites. Give all of them equal responsibilities and attention.

Q What should brides keep in mind in terms of the size of her bridal party?

A Keep the party size intimate. Wedding parties that are too large tend to be impersonal. Not only is it more expensive (something to think about if you are on a budget!), but also can be a challenge when trying to manage them throughout the wedding day. Rehearsal, ceremony processional, bridal party photos, and lining them up for introductions...these will all take exceptionally more time with a bridal party of 14 or more.

Q Finally, the fun stuff: wedding party gifts! What are your favorite ideas?

A Something practical: Have them all pick out their own shoes, and you pay for them. You can also do a personalized clutch or piece of jewelry, something that represents each one of them. Or, take them to the spa the week of the wedding for a treatment of their choice. With everyone running around thinking about your wedding, it will be a nice gesture to let them relax and enjoy a moment for themselves. Guys are usually easier to please. Treat them to a night out at a sporting event—they'd like that much more than cufflinks! ♥



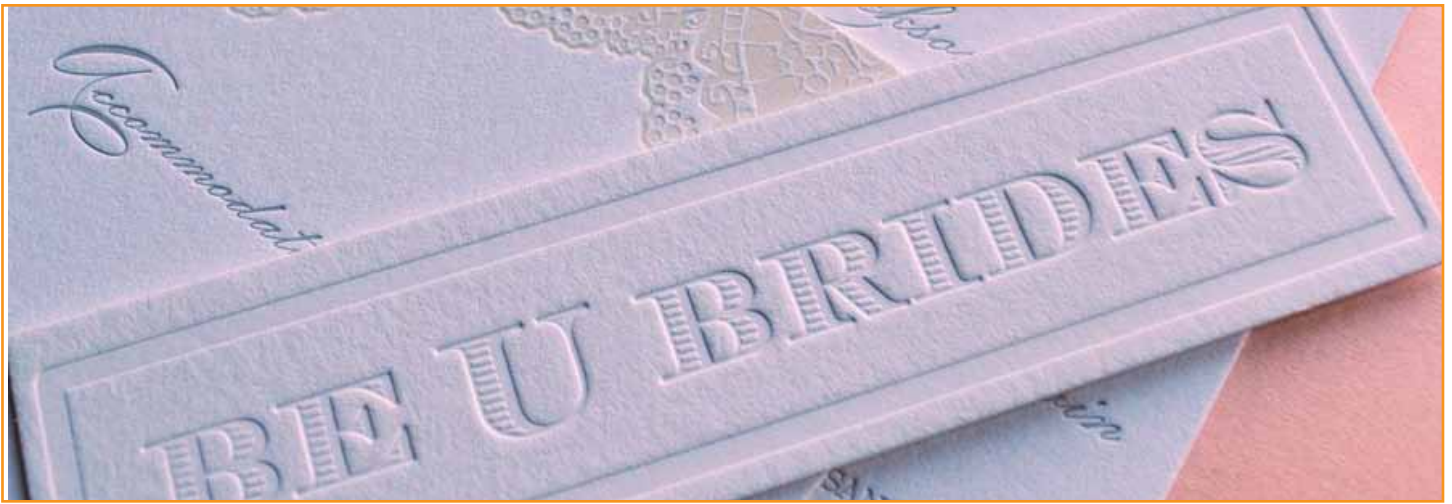
{Courtesy of Be U Brides}

chapter seven

Invitations

The invitation is the first glimpse guests receive into your private wedding world. Think of it as an introduction. Wouldn't you like to make a "wow"-worthy first impression? Never underestimate the power of paper. To set the tone, you'll first need to decipher your wedding style, the unifying thread between the various vendors you have already selected. Would a modern suite with a striking contrast or a vintage-inspired lace-trimmed card do the trick? Let's find out.

- Featuring Be U Brides -



Courtesy of Be U Brides

..... Meet Be U Brides

Sacha Krasney, a Chicago-based designer, realized her love of all things bridal after planning her own 2009 wedding. After successfully launching a popular brand of wholesale and design-your-own announcements and invitations (www.squashu.com), she took a leap and launched Be U Brides custom stationery in 2010. Armed with her stationery knowledge and nearly a decade of experience, Sacha set out to capture a bride's individuality through unique, custom invitations.

"Be U Brides is 100% about the bride and groom. The invitation is a piece of your wedding history. Whether contemporary, organic or vintage, it's about staying true to U."

Be U Brides stationery has been featured in a variety of local and national publications, including *Be U Weddings*, *Daily Candy*, *Chicago Social Brides*, *Modern Bride* and *Style Me Pretty*. With such critical acclaim, it's no wonder brides turn to Sacha for impeccable and iconic invites. And she's thrilled to indulge them.

"Be U Brides is 100% about the bride and groom. The invitation is a piece of your wedding history. Whether contemporary, organic or vintage, it's about staying true to you," says Krasney.

Be U Brides accommodates a variety of budgets, offering basic packages of thermography printed sets

to custom letterpress or foil stamped with a multitude of bells and whistles—whatever expresses your unique personality! Want to get the ball rolling? Sacha recommends that brides make an appointment at least four months ahead of their wedding date to plan for paper perfection (of course, if you're designing save the dates as well, you'd need to extend that timing to about eight months in advance!).

To aid in the production process, Sacha swears by an initial questionnaire she doles out to bride to determine their individual style. Are you a modern, classic, vintage or organic bride? We've got the bridal breakdown to get you started. After all, decisions of the paper type, printing process, color, wording, and embellishments await!



Be U Brides: By Appointment Only
www.beubrides.com 312.265.0513



Contemporary: {Non-traditional and congruent with the present time period.}

U: You love the latest trends in fashion and modern architecture; black & white is quite possibly your favorite color scheme. On your wedding day your venue will be contemporary, a crisp museum or modern loft space. Your table settings will include loops of grasses and cymbidiums pods. You're drawn to a mermaid style gown—no fuss or frills—with a bouquet consisting of just a few calla lilies. Bridesmaids will don black and carry a pomander of white roses. The men will also have a fashion-forward touch, such as black and white patent leather shoes for their ensembles. Guests will “ooh” and “ahh” over your black and white square tiered wedding cake.

Your invitation: should set the theme for your modern wedding with straight lines and a contemporary shape. Use a white very thick white paper with exaggerated text as the design and include an element of contrast, like a black or grey envelope, handwritten with white calligraphy.



Organic: {Free-flowing and filled with natural beauty.}

U: Like love at first sight, you love when things “just happen.” You try not to plan out your calendar too far in advance. You adore afternoon walks with stops by the farmer’s market. Earth tones fill your home décor. On your wedding day, you will have long farm tables and burlap runners with greenery as your dominant floral décor. Your locally-sourced menu will be served at casual stations.

Your invitation: should introduce your organic theme with letterpress on natural paper and an organic flowing design. Also tie in a burlap element with the invitation suite or the envelope liner.



Vintage: {Romantic quality with lasting appeal.}

U: Pearls and lace make your heart sing; shabby chic, exposed brick and distressed furniture is your thing. You can't pass by an estate sale, antique shop or flea market without stopping in; you love the excitement of uncovering that "find." When it comes to your look on the wedding day, your dress will be memorable and timeless. You will cherish your "something borrowed" more than anything else in your ensemble. Your venue will teem with large, fluffy garden roses and luscious layers of lace. For a spring setting, colors like champagne and pale pink will abound with subtle contrast. For winter nuptials, you opt for ivory with accents of plum or deep rose. You hope to exit your wedding in the back of a white 1937 Rolls Royce while antique bells ring.

Your invitation: should introduce your vintage theme with an almost antique quality. Use letterpress, gold foil or thermography as your printing process. Soft paper is a must! Accent your invitation with a gold bevel edge or handmade envelope liner.



Traditional: {Simple, restrained and refined style}

U: You love simple and understated. Your favorite room in the house boasts white walls with just a touch of color. You yearn for country homes and white fluffy rugs. Clean and organized is your mantra. On your wedding day, your reception venue might be outdoors, perhaps in a backyard gazebo, or traditional religious venue. A string quartet will complement your walk down the aisle. Your wedding dress, a traditional A-line with a sweetheart neckline, will look lovely along side pastel-clad bridesmaids to suit your color scheme. Simple flower arrangements will adorn family-style tables set with white china for a sit-down dinner. Crystal chandeliers and candles will give your reception its classic glow. Your guests will cheer and throw the customary birdseed. At the close of the evening, you'll hop into a white limo and stop around town to pose in front of all your favorite places for a classic photo finish.

Your invitation: should set the tone with its style and simplicity. Use a soft white or ivory paper. Create a white-on-white pattern in the paper by using a process called blind letterpress and accent this with grey, navy or black text to create just the right amount of contrast.



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Event Planning/Coordination: Michelle Durpetti Events / Photography: Carasco Photography
 Ceremony & Reception: A New Leaf / Hotel Accommodations: Beldon-Stratford / Transportation: Pontarelli Charter
 Bride's Dress: Lazaro / Bride and Bridesmaid Accessories: The Left Bank / Make-up: Aga Kaskiewicz / Floral/Decor: A New
 Leaf / Catering: Phil Stefani Signature Events / Videography: Ben Mahoney Productions / Invitations/Stationery: Erickson
 Design / Cake: Tipsy Cake / DJ: Toast & Jam / Chicalba Bag Piper: Dave Johnston



Perfectly Planned by Michelle Durpetti Events

What could be more romantic than an intimate wedding celebration in a flower shop? This enchanting affair, at A New Leaf in Chicago's Old Town neighborhood, was beautifully coordinated by Michelle Durpetti Events and documented by Carasco Photography. Charmingly rustic, A New Leaf features a candlelit urban exposed brick and concrete floor setting with breathtaking floral arrangements and aromas.

The bride looked ethereal in her vintage-inspired Lazaro gown and delicate beaded accessories from The

Left Bank. Guests were treated to a special bag pipe performance by Dave Johnston, followed by a thoughtful mix of dance favorites from Toast & Jam DJs. Topsy Cake designed a gorgeous, garden-inspired cake.

Perfect for intimate gatherings, A New Leaf offers a lovely courtyard decorated with fig trees, flowers and ivy-covered walls (ideal for ceremonies and cocktails) as well as candlelit indoor spaces for a truly unique experience.



From the Bride: We enjoyed the entire wedding process from the proposal to the honeymoon, and it was all done in five months. I couldn't have done it without Michelle Durpetti Events as our wedding planner. Having all of my dreams come true in such a short period of time within budget and to fully trust that we were being cared for was what I loved most about my wedding, (and obviously my husband!) I loved how it was untraditional from the typical banquet hall-the ambience was sleek, romantic and laid-back at the same time. There were hundreds of candles lit rather than big flower bouquets, seat yourself tables for guests to share dinner with their date rather than six other strangers, and most unique was the venue's patio, which felt as if you were in someone's backyard. We had a beautiful cake made by Topsy Cake, but I thought a unique touch was serving dishes of Blue Moon ice cream separately, my favorite turquoise blue ice cream from where I grew up. The onsite ceremony upstairs at our venue also created a great flow right into the reception with no travel in between. Our guests loved that! Carasco Photography and Ben Mahoney Video Productions were hands down my favorite vendors. Both had my friends and family feeling like we had paparazzi!



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Photos courtesy of Carasco Photography

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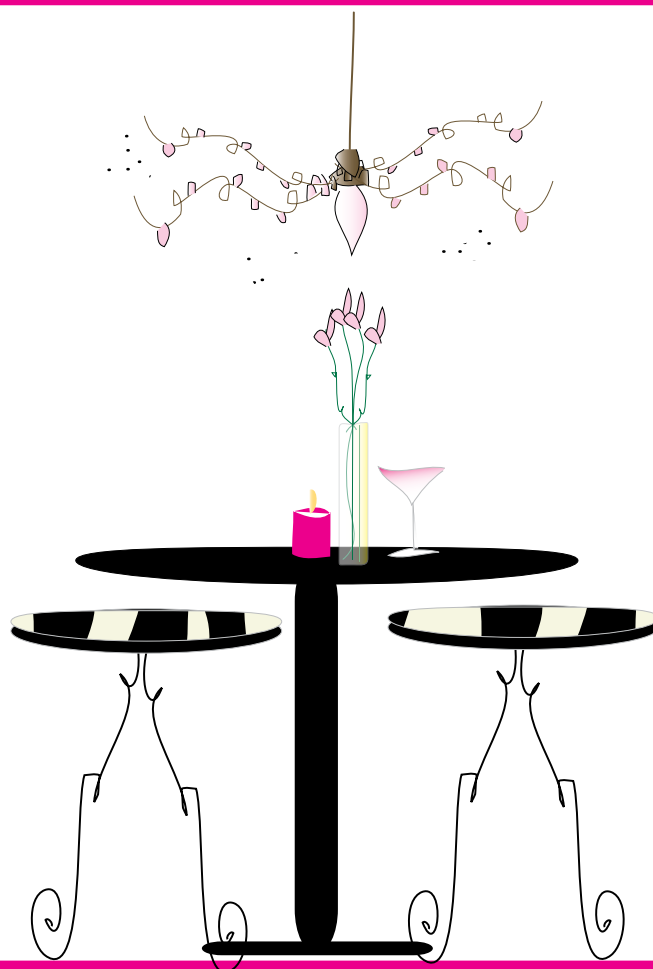
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Photography by Artisan Events

chapter eight



Ever since you were a little girl, you have been fantasizing about “the perfect gown.” And why shouldn’t you? Your wedding day attire is arguably the most viewed outfit you will ever wear, its legacy living on in photos for years to come. If there is one moment to pull out all the stops, this is it! Granted, this notion might leave you a little flustered. Finding a gown that, like your love, is once in a lifetime is a tall order to say the least! Will you fawn over a fitted sheath or wrap yourself in an A-line number? Will tulle capture your heart? Or, will it be a love affair with lace? No matter which path you choose, we’ll help you find a gown and embellishments that will suit your silhouette, embody your style and steal your heart.

Featuring:
Mignonette Bridal, Violet Bells Bridal, Due Sorelle Boutique
and Supreme Novelty Fabrics



Photography by Cage and Aquarium

Meet Mignonette

Now that you've snagged your lifetime love, we all know what's next on your agenda: the DRESS! While the Windy City boasts an array of bridal boutiques and wedding gowns, one shop in particular offers a unique—and hand-crafted—fit. Not only can you discover the dress of your dreams at Mignonette, but also, a newfound friend in owner and designer, Kpoene' Kofi-Nicklin. After all, she can relate to your trials and tribulations.

"...I stitch the wedding date into her dress (In blue! It's something we do for every bride.), the process is all about the bride."

"Shopping for gowns was tough for me because I couldn't find quite what I wanted at a price point I could afford, and I was starting to get overwhelmed," Kpoene' shares. "It became pretty obvious that I should be designing my own gown. It was the process of designing [it] with Jane Van Cleef, my assistant, that became the inspiration for everything that followed."

Just like the dresses Kpoene' now fabricates, Mignonette was a labor of love. Ten years ago, fresh out of college, the young designer loaded everything into a U-Haul to travel from Vermont to New York to concoct her first collection. Originally planning a ready-to-wear line, she began to sell pieces to boutiques and e-commerce shops. It was Kpoene's passion for creating custom gowns for clients that would ultimately guide her to the

bridal market. "I started designing wedding dresses in 2004 after a client wore one of my everyday dresses to work and referred me to a friend looking for a vintage-style wedding gown," Kpoene' says. The next few years surprised her with a move to San Francisco and the watershed moment in 2008: crafting a dress for her own nuptials. Relocating to the Midwest in 2011, Kpoene's handmade designs arrived in Chicago with the grand opening of Mignonette.

"I am so thrilled to have the opportunity to share the experience of having a handmade wedding gown with Chicago's brides," Kpoene' gushes. "What I love most is that you don't have to worry so much about trends—you can just focus on making something beautiful. I want to make sure that every bride gets a gown that is uniquely hers and that reflects who she is."

The Mignonette bride is not someone searching for



Mignonette Bridal: 1747 West Belmont Avenue,
Chicago, 773.880.9141



the “it” gown of the moment. Rather, she yearns to look radiant, but most of all, like herself, on her wedding day in a dress she truly had a say in.

Mignonette will not simply hand over a beautiful creation;

Kpoene’ and her staff proudly include the bride along the creative journey. “We want to educate consumers about where their money goes when we are making a gown,” Kpoene’ notes.

For the Mignonette team, this means taking the bride fabric shopping, discussing the merits of various styles and showcasing each step of the manufacturing process, with time for questions and alterations to the design. “From the second that we sit down to talk about the gown to the minute I stitch the wedding date into her dress (In blue! It’s something we do for every bride.), the process is all about

the bride and turning her dreams for a wonderful day into a reality,” Kpoene’ divulges. It’s her hope that her patrons will not be left thinking, “Ah, I got married in this,” and instead, singing, “I looked great!”

While no two gowns are alike, the Mignonette aesthetic tends to favor a classic, timeless style. This lends itself to designs that are soft, draped and romantic, with a heavy emphasis on fitted waists and full or modified A-line skirts. Kpoene’ only utilizes silk or eco-friendly fabrics, such as bamboo and tencel, in her masterpieces. This contributes to the boutique’s affordable luxury, but also enhances the versatility of their offerings. Forgiving straps, higher backs (allowing you to wear a bra), short trains, and flexible boning in the corset are just a few of the ways Kpoene’ caters to her brides. “The last thing a bride should be worried about on her big day is how to stop her dress from pinching,” Kpoene’ says. “My bride wants to dance at her wedding and she can’t do that if she’s struggling to breathe!”

Necklines



Bateau/Boat Neck:

This elongated, squarish and at times off-the-shoulder style was popularized by Coco Chanel and Audrey Hepburn in the 1950’s and 60’s, and gives you an instant old Hollywood appeal.

Feature Flatterer: Small busts and longer necks



Sweetheart:

Currently the most popular style in bridal, it is characterized by a neckline that resembles the top portion of a heart, often featured on strapless gowns.

Feature Flatterer: Any and all



Scoop:

This neckline forms a “U”-shape from shoulder to shoulder and flatters without showing too much cleavage. (Similar to a “V”-neckline, as well).

Feature Flatterer: Larger busts



One Shoulder:

This more contemporary style exudes classic elegance by drawing the attention upward.

Feature Flatterer: Collar bone and a variety of busts



Dresses by Mignonette Bridal {Photography by Cage and Aquarium}

The A-line: True to its name, the infamous A-line softly centers at the waist and steadily expands from the hips through the skirt, forming the shape of the letter “A.”

Leading Lady: A flattering silhouette for most every figure, this style looks especially lovely on ladies with broader hips.

Star Setting: A romantic or vintage-inspired venue, such as a barn or orchard.



The Modified Ball Gown: This princess-like design offers a fitted bodice that nips in tightly at the waist to unleash a lavishly full skirt.

Leading Lady: Someone with a larger bust, or a larger figure, suits this style, as the full skirt balances an otherwise top-heavy look.

Star Setting: Amidst candlelight and winter weather in a gorgeous ballroom.



The Grecian: Just like its ancestors, Grecian gowns boast a column shape characterized by elegant draping and floating layers.

Leading Lady: An athletic build (smaller bust and hips) can benefit from the illusions of draping.

Star Setting: The sun-kissed sands of a beach or destination wedding.



The Fit and Flare: This silhouette can appear in a few variations, but its key traits are a fitted upper body and a flared skirt that can begin at the hips, thigh or even knee (the latter known as the mermaid).

Leading Lady: Taller brides with a smaller chest tend to slip into these the best.

Star Setting: Any venue that makes a statement to match a statement-making dress!



Meet Violet Bells Bridal

So, you've already found "the one." Funnily enough, isn't the entire wedding process about finding "the" other things, as well? After finding the groom, you're engrossed in selecting the gown, the ring and the shoes. Don't forget to put the details in place with the veil and headpiece!

"One of the perks of being a bride is getting to have the hands-on experience and the opportunity to say 'Hey, I would like to add a bit more crystals or rhinestones.'"

Janessa Ann of Chicago's Violet Bells, a brand of veils and headpieces available on Etsy, recognized that being a bride is all about capturing the details that express your style. Just as she is inspired when handed a swatch book of colors and materials, she believes her brides have the same appreciation of fashion. "I really enjoy the work and imagination, putting details together to create a one-of-a-kind bridal veil, headpiece or sash," says Janessa. "One of the perks of being a bride is getting to have the hands-on experience and the opportunity to say 'Hey, I would like to add a bit more crystals or rhinestones.' This all comes from the core of her own sense of style and who she is. That is what makes me passionate about what I am doing."

After seven years' experience outfitting brides at Marshall Field's Bridal Salon and Jenny Yoo, Janessa followed her own passion to bring her personal

designs to life via Violet Bells. The talented headpiece guru offers her expertise to guide you in your veil or headpiece selection process.

Q

What is an upcoming design trend that Chicago brides should take note of?

A

The trend I see taking on is: lots of ruffles, layers and fluff. Different types of laces layered and beaded giving more character and definition. Pleats and gathers of chiffon, veiling and organza. If choosing a color, I see them in light, soft shades such as soft greys and pinks. I also see a European old-world style in the mix—Art Nouveau and Art Deco, probably igniting from the renewal of the famous story of the *The Great Gatsby*. Details of rhinestones, pearls, crystals and lace, giving a spray-like or a vine-like finish; a look that sort of fades away.

Q

What style of veil will work best with an A-line gown?

A

What comes to mind is a balanced style. She is most likely someone looking for balance and portion—something that doesn't overwhelm her—so I would choose to go with a veil with little-to-no gathering at the comb to be worn at the crown of her head to keep everything in balance. You want the eyes to start from top to bottom with a nice, continuous flow. I love the idea of the veil extending at least a foot past the train, while keeping it light on the details, such as a soutache trimmed edge, or for a romantic appeal, a narrow-cut Chantilly lace edging.



Courtesy of Violet Bells

Q What comes to mind for the modified ball gown?

A The glamorous, yet elegant bride; this is when it gets fun! I would definitely go in the direction of lots of fluff at the crown of the veil, or in the direction of lots of sparkle (maybe an ornate rhinestone headpiece). Keep the shades nice and light in color. This will keep the look fresh and crisp.

Q What would you pair with the Grecian dress?

A This is my favorite look, which also seems to be on the trendy list. I love, love, love dressing this bridal gown up with a light lace cap veil. The length of veil is beautiful when between waltz to cathedral length. Or a Russian net peek-a-boo lace cap blusher veil like [one of my creations] "Ella." Nothing brings more romance and passion to a style than a cap veil. I have three categories for the cap veil so far: a lightly pearl-beaded Chantilly lace for a fresh European Art Nouveau/Deco style. The other is a heavier Alençon lace with a corded edge portraying an old world romantic appeal. Finally, a style that keeps it light and brings eye appeal is the Russian cut lace cap attached to a headband or comb.

Q Is there a style that would work best with the fit and flare gown?

A This style is an open book: anything goes! This can make decision-making sort of difficult, but don't let that overwhelm you. I loved seeing my Priscilla pillbox hat dressed up with this style, classic and charming. Also, a good direction would be choosing a veil with a couple layers, keeping it between shoulder length and fingertip length.

Q Do you have some words of wisdom on the best practices for selecting "the one" for your wedding day?

A When choosing your veil or headpiece, have someone that has your style at heart and knows you the most by your side; she or he will keep you focused on what is important to you. When you are stuck on deciding what length veil to go with, step a little farther back from the mirror so you can visualize the whole silhouette, or have it end around the first seam of the dress to keep from having too many breaking points. If you would love a long veil, but are afraid of covering the lovely detail of the back of your dress, go with a veil that has very little or zero gathering at the comb. This will give a beautiful dream-like aura to the silhouette!

With your veiled outlook in tow, continue reading to find more helpful hints and tips for the walk down your Windy City aisle! ♥

Violet Bells Bridal: violetbellsbridal@gmail.com
www.etsy.com/shop/VioletBells

Meet Due Sorelle

No outfit is complete without the appropriate accessories, and your wedding day attire is certainly no exception. Just ask sisters Kelli and Cyndi, who have tinkered and tweaked their looks with handcrafted jewels since childhood. Thanks to the coaxing and encouragement of family and friends, the ladies transformed their hobby into a career with the aptly named Due Sorelle boutique. Pairing simplistic and intricate designs, the sisters craft necklaces, earrings and bracelets from stunning beads and crystals. Using each

piece's components as inspiration, the Due Sorelle duo scouts the Social Security website (seriously!) for popular baby names to assign their beautiful creations. To assist you in your quest of conquering wedding to do's, we asked the pair to select a few favorite embellishments to complement various wedding styles. And if you'd like to adorn your day-of duds with a few Due Sorelle designs, visit Mignonette Bridal or their Etsy shop online to find the perfect accessory. Now let's take a look!

Contemporary:



Left: Captivating Lola earrings: Swarovski rivolis in the color of your choice are wrapped in sterling silver crown settings and dangle from long silver-plated stainless steel kidney earwires. The unique shape adds a sleek modern touch.



Right: Vogue Dixie bracelet: You just can't wrong with a new spin on a pearl bracelet. Classic white Swarovski pearls are paired with gold rhinestone spacers and clasp to create this elegant bridal bracelet.

Destination:



Left: Modest Laurel earrings: These adorable little earrings feature white, rice-shaped fresh water pearls that are adorned with sterling silver bead caps and hang from sterling silver earwires.



Right: Eternal Ann necklace: Complement your destination "I do's" with something traditional. A Czech rhinestone encrusted pewter circle pendant with a white Swarovski pearl hangs delicately from a sterling silver chain.

Vintage:



Left: Dignified Eleanore earrings: Sparkling Swarovski crystals are carefully hand set into Czech rhinestone settings and attached to sterling silver posts. They evoke an air of old world elegance!



Right: Prestigious Ladonna necklace: Glass pearls, seed beads and Swarovski crystals are gracefully woven together to create this vintage gem!

Rustic:



Left: Harmonious Emma earrings: This style exudes everyday elegance for a bride that doesn't want to be too done up. Fine silver plated pewter or gold vines hold beautiful, clear Swarovski crystals and dangle from matching ear wires.



Right: Blooming Nettie bracelet: A white floral bouquet pendant focal piece is accented with vintage gold Swarovski pearls and rhinestone spacers. Talk about rustic chic!



Courtesy of Supreme Novelty Fabrics

The Fabric

Alençon (or Over-embroidered Lace): A silk or synthetic lace originating from Alençon, France; typically a heavier weight with a raised design, the fabric can be used either as a decorative element or on the entire dress.

Chantilly Lace: A lightweight lace with a subtle sheen; it often features a scalloped or decorative edge and adds incredible detail to veils, trains and necklines.

Guipure: An extremely heavy net handmade lace that contains a starkly raised motif; it often appears on hemlines, trains, and cuffs due to its weight and relative sturdiness.

Charmeuse: A lightweight silk with a shiny satin finish; the fabric drapes beautifully and is often used in 1920s style bias-cut gowns.

Chiffon: A very lightweight, sheer fabric; it can be ruched, pleated or otherwise manipulated to give a soft look to a gown. When left un-hemmed, it also frays beautifully.

Georgette: A similar material to chiffon, but sturdier and less transparent. It also has a more pronounced sheen.

Satin: A heavyweight fabric that often forms the inner structure of a gown, though it can also serve as

the main material; it is produced in matte and shiny finishes and works best for structured gowns or full-skirted gowns.

Taffeta, Dupioni and Shantung: Similar weaves that are characterized by a faint sheen, an opalescent quality (sometimes they change color depending on the light), and a stiffness or texture. Dupioni is the thickest of the three and typically has 'slubs' (crosswise bands of raised threads) in the material. Shantung is softer, though still sturdy, and can have a flowing appearance. Taffeta is crisp, with a plain, smooth weave. It holds structure well and rustles as you move. All three fabrics are excellent for structured dresses and would look great in either a column or tea-length dress, or a very full-skirted gown with deep pleats.

Tulle and English Net: Light materials that evoke softness and ethereal qualities; tulle is available in many weights, but most commonly a small weave with tight holes for bridal. Due to its transparency, gowns often feature three or more layers of tulle. English net is a stretch material constructed of fine weaves often used as an overlay; the fabric is even lighter than tulle and will not retain a sharp structure.

Supreme Novelty Fabrics: 312.226.1030 ♥
www.supremefabrics.com





Photographer: Tina Thomure of Artisan Events / Ceremony Venue: St. Clement Church / Reception Venue:
 InterContinental Chicago Magnificent Mile / Bride's Dress: Gigi of Mequon (Purchased at Gigi of Mequon) /
 Bride's Shoes and Accessories: James Ciccotti / Invitations: Robin's Paperie / Event Planning/Coordination: A Perfect Event /
 Dessert: Take the Cake / Floral Decor: A Perfect Event / Caterer: InterContinental / Music: Stephanie Rogers Band



A Perfect Event Wedding

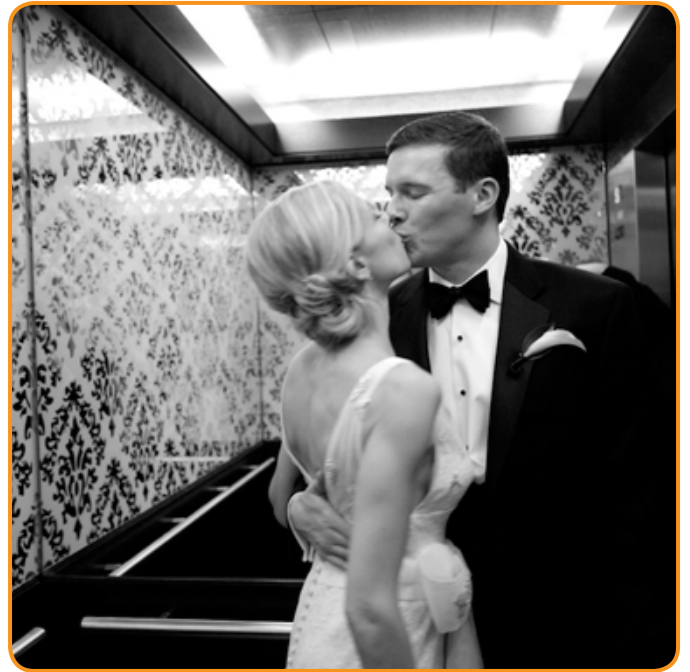
Prepare to be utterly enchanted by this couple's romantic love story and their fairy tale wedding at The Hotel InterContinental, captured by the talented Tina Thomure of Artisan Events and styled/planned by Debi Lilly of A Perfect Event. The couple exchanged vows at the beautiful St. Clement Church, followed by a classically elegant reception at The Hotel InterContinental. The bride looked lovely in her Paloma

Blanca gown accessorized with shoes and jewelry by Chicago designer James Ciccotti. A Perfect Event designed stunning bouquets and arrangements, and Take the Cake created a simply sophisticated cake that reflected the luxurious setting. Situated along Chicago's famous Magnificent Mile, the InterContinental Chicago features breathtaking views of the city, an exceptional culinary team and a state-of-the-art facility for an unforgettable event.



From the Bride: Although Taylor and I met in Chicago when we were both working at the same client downtown, we quickly learned that we grew up only three blocks away from one another in the same small city in Wisconsin, and somehow managed to have never met! Five years later, we celebrated our wedding with our family, friends and all of our common neighborhood friends that we had both grown up with—both of us knew almost every single person at our reception!

We were unbelievably lucky to have worked with fantastic vendors—every single one was a joy to work with, and I would recommend every one.



Photography by Artisan Events

chapter nine

Beauty

Getting gorgeous for the big day can be overwhelming. From facials to slim-down strategies, our beauty experts share an easy-to-follow plan to looking confident and beautiful for your walk down the aisle and beyond.

Featuring:
Cleise Brazilian Day Spa and Maya P. Alluring Artistry



Photography by Cage and Aquarium

..... Meet Cleise

Given the opportunity, what bride wouldn't want to look like a Brazilian supermodel on her wedding day? Luckily Chicago brides-to-be can forgo the tickets to Brazil in favor of world-class service and treatments at River North's Cleise Brazilian Day Spa. Owner Cleise Gomes and her highly talented team are passionate about providing service excellence, effective skincare and Brazilian techniques. For brides who want to put their best face forward, preparation is key!

"Reserve some bride-only time. The more relaxed you are, the more beautiful you will feel for your special day."

To keep stress about the beautification process at bay, Cleise Brazilian Day Spa offers a customized "Wedding Countdown Plan" for brides by pre-booking appointments six months prior to the wedding day. Translation: your treatment plan is determined,

customized, scheduled, and off your checklist! The comprehensive plan includes body treatments, facials, pampering, massages, and at-home care. The result? A stunningly confident bride even more eager to be the center of attention at her wedding (if that's even possible!).

How we do know Cleise Brazilian Day Spa is the perfect bridal sanctuary? Take it from Be U Weddings' publisher herself, Sacha Krasney. "Before my wedding I broke out from stress, and she cleared me right up." Sacha recalls. "I did not even have to worry about having a zit on my wedding day. I also got a body wrap and all necessary waxing so that I felt absolutely beautiful on my wedding day and before my honeymoon. Cleise and her estheticians are very talented and will go the extra mile to make sure your skin is just perfect."

After all, what's a gorgeous gown without radiant skin to boot? We asked Cleise to dish on specific treatments to beautify brides-to-be and others planning ahead for the big day.



Cleise Brazilian Day Spa: 732 North Wells Street, Chicago, 312.664.0750

Q

Let's dive in to the not-so-glamorous part of the wedding process: What are your wedding clients' biggest skincare and beauty concerns?

A

Her face (no blemishes!), eyebrows, shoulders, décolleté, and hands. All brides should start taking care of their skin and body a minimum of six months prior to the wedding. Our Microdermabrasion Facial is one of the most popular treatments for brides. Eyebrows also need to be professionally designed according to the shape of the face—sometimes, it takes two to six months or even a year to correct a bad eyebrow shaping!

Q

What services do you recommend for the bridal party?

A

We recommend facials (like our Rio Signature Facial, which includes face, décolleté and hands) and eyebrow shaping for all the bridesmaids and maid of honor, as well as full body exfoliation. For the groomsmen, we offer body waxing and a facial designed for them, as well as eyebrow trimming.

Q

How should the mother of the bride prepare for her daughter's special day?

A

We recommend that the mothers come in three months before the wedding so that we can address various skin concerns. We have a far-reaching menu of facials available such as the 3-D Anti-Aging Facial, which is perfect for the mothers as it helps to minimize those little wrinkles around the eyes, mouth and neck, and brightens the skin. Or, they could try a skin tightening treatment that uses radio frequency, which may be purchased as a series.

Q

For the bride looking for a quick fix, what would you suggest?

A

One of our newest treatments and most popular services that I highly recommend is the Bioslimming, an absolute revolution in body wraps. It helps reduce one to two and half inches per measured area in only 60 minutes; it dramatically decreases the appearance of fat deposits, cellulite and stretch marks.

Q

Do you offer any special packages or discounts for brides or wedding parties?

A

We develop unique, customized wedding packages designed to meet each bride's needs. Packages of two or more treatments are generally discounted 10% to 20% depending on the services selected. We also offer series of five or more treatments at 20% off.

Cleise Spa's Wedding Countdown Plan:

Six Months To Go

Start fresh! Begin a series of body treatments to optimize the health of your skin. Experience the latest advances in natural enzyme-based skin-care products, or try services to improve muscle tone and minimize cellulite. At this time, Cleise Spa suggests reviewing a series of customized facials to reinvigorate the skin.

Three Months To Go

Kick it into high gear. Pinpoint problem areas with one of three special facials: the Signature Facial (face, eyes, neck, décolleté, and hands); the Firming Facial (corrects and soothes your most delicate skin); or the Back Facial (the most neglected area of skin on your body). The Cleise team will also advise products for at-home use for your optimal wedding glow.

One Month To Go

Breathe deeply and relax: your wedding will be wonderful! Enjoy pampering treatments such as massages or body wraps to relieve tension and rejuvenate the spirit. Don't forget your future husband, either—after all of your stressing, he might need an afternoon at the spa to refresh! Cleise Spa even offers exceptional couple's treatments.

One Week To Go

Target the details: Opt for a wax now to ensure any minor irritation is erased well before the honeymoon. Do note, if you have never had a bikini wax before, Cleise strongly advises to try your first at least 60 days before the wedding date, and then return one week before the wedding date. Enjoy one more facial, and be sure to add on a Hand Renew Treatment; after all, everyone will be gawking at your bling the entire day!

One Day To Go

It's almost here! Reserve some bride-only time. The more relaxed you are, the more beautiful you will feel for your special day. Experience a de-stressing massage, which is designed to heal, soothe and rejuvenate tired muscles and revitalize your skin. An esthetician will also perform a last minute check-up and correction if needed, so that you are at your most radiant. But of course, by this point, you will be—you're 24 hours away from marrying the man of your dreams!

**Please note: Certain cases need one year to start the program (such as acne-prone skin).*



Courtesy of Maya Puentes

..... Meet Maya P. Alluring Artistry

Before you try tackling the latest neon hair craze or washed-out eyebrows for your matrimonial look, consider this: bridal beauty isn't a makeover; it's a "makebetter." Flaunt what you got thanks to these tips, courtesy of Maya Puentes of Maya P.Alluring Artistry.

1 Consider the Elements Realistically: While overall aesthetic should take top billing, don't forget to weigh in factors from your hair length and texture to even your venue and potential forecast! "I will normally try and steer a bride away from wearing their hair down in the summer/humid months, or recommend that they wear it down for the ceremony and up for the reception," Maya says. This also means: if you don't have hair like Kim Kardashian now, you probably won't be able to have it on your wedding day.

2 Keep Calm and Carry On: Now is not the time to experiment with different cuts, color or styles. If you're insistent on trying something new (despite our Be U Weddings' warning!), opt for subtle highlights or a semi-permanent color that will fade out if you are unhappy with it, Maya suggests. Permanent hair changes would need to occur at least three months prior so you have time to reconfigure your look if you don't like the result.

3 Stay True to Your Look: If you don't tend to wear much makeup, don't pick your special day to experiment with a smoky eye or heavy foundations. A tinted moisturizer will lightly camouflage any impurities and even out your skin tone, which is needed for photos, without feeling heavy. Still want some extra oomph? Trying out a vibrant lipstick is a great way of amping up your look without completely transforming yourself.

4 Stockpile Key Tricks: Start practicing those great tips you always read about! If you have oily skin, work a mattifier into your routine (so you'll be sans shine come the big day). Want longer-lasting lipstick? Moisturize your lips to prep them before applying your liner and lipstick, remove excess moisturizer and wipe lips with alcohol. Product will adhere longer!

5 Load Up on H2O: Your mom advises this for good reason. Not only will you stay hydrated, but you'll fortify healthy skin and create that natural glow. What more could a bride want on her wedding day?

♥ Maya P.Alluring Artistry: 708.574.1383
www.mayap3.com/alluringartistry

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Courtesy of Poladora

chapter ten

Registry.....

Discover a stress-free approach to registering locally and intelligently. Whether you and your fiancé fancy cookware and cuisine or yoga classes and massages, you'll receive exactly what you want and need. It's that simple.

- Featuring Poladora -



Meet Poladora

When Stephanie Pirishis was engaged, she and her fiancé looked everywhere for the right gift registry options to fit their lifestyle and needs. Ideally, she wanted the ability to register at some of their favorite local stores, and snag the products that reflected who they were as a couple. After much research, she could not find an elegant solution, and so she took matters into her own hands and launched Poladora.com in 2009.

"Poladora connects unique Chicago stores with couples looking to shop local."

Poladora connects unique Chicago stores with couples looking to shop local. It boasts sixteen retailers, offering products and services including: traditional housewares; cooking equipment; furniture; cooking, dance and yoga classes; spa treatments; food and wine; and wedding-related vendors (florists, photographers and stationers).

As guests don't always gift what couples are crossing their fingers for, Poladora holds each gift as a credit, and when the couple is ready, they may fulfill it for items that they truly want. This prevents a variety of hassles, from the need to return items or the disappointment when presents don't live up to their expectations. Best of all, the credit is valid toward any item at any of Poladora's retailers. Gives a whole new meaning to registries, no?

We recently chatted with Stephanie about why Chicago couples are choosing Poladora for their gift registry needs.

Q

What separates Poladora from traditional registries?

A

Poladora is not a one-stop big box store, retail chain or department store. We are a network of local stores, boutiques and services.

Couples can choose from items from our 15+ stores with over 8,000 products and services. Couples register online through Poladora.com and find everything at their fingertips without having to visit all 15 retailers. Also, neither the couple nor the guests ever have to leave the site or be referred to a third party; everything is done directly through Poladora.

Poladora also wants to make sure couples get what they want. This is why we are a consolidated registry. When guests buy couples a gift, we hold it as a credit, and couples then choose how and when to fulfill on their gifts. This is important to us because it allows couples to make sure they get the gifts that are a high priority to them and not be limited by which store the guest bought it from.





Courtesy of Poladora

Q

What are the benefits or perks of using Poladora.com?

A

Poladora is a network of local stores: You can still get the traditional items one would get at a big box or department store, but instead you get to support local stores.

A few perks:

- Access to more unique items: One of the issues I had when registering was I felt I ended up getting the same plates and glasses as all my friends. I found it very complicated to access stores I liked to get the unique and fun items that are more representative of our style without needing to create ten different registries.
- Access to non-traditional items: If you are a wine lover, then why not get wine for your wedding gifts?
- Easier access to large ticket items: Since all gifts become credits, you can aggregate your credits towards a dining table, bed frame or other item.
- Funding for your wedding expenses: With photographers and florists available, you can use part of your credits toward wedding-related expenses.
- Ensure you get what you really want: Since all gifts become credits, there is no stress about what people are going to offer you.

Q

What types of products and services can couples expect to find at Poladora?

A

Dinnerware:

A great selection of formal and informal dinnerware, ranging from the simple basic restaurant china to highly ornate Prouna (some even use Swarovski crystals).

Artisan Products:

Sawbridge Studios represents products by artisans. You can find some beautiful inlaid boards and fantastic furniture!

Bridal Showers/Bachelorette Parties:

- Centered Chef created a special private cooking class package, which is a great way to break the ice when families meet for the first time.
- Yogaview has a private-group yoga class, which is a wonderful way to relax before a wedding.
- You can have Matthews Mobile Massage come to you for some spa treatments.
- We have also partnered with The Left Bank, so the bride can register for and receive her shoes and wedding accessories as shower gifts.

Wine:

One of my personal favorite items is the wine cellar starter kit. With two cases of wine, there is some to drink now, and some to drink for the first anniversary, so it makes a wonderful gift for any wine lovers.

Wedding-related Expenses:

Some couples can choose to offset their wedding expenses by registering and/or using their credits toward wedding-related expenses, such as wedding photographers, florists or stationery (especially nice for thank you cards).

For more information and a complete list of retailers, visit Poladora.com.

Registry Checklist

{Courtesy of Poladora}

| Dinnerware | Formal | Casual |
|---|----------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner plates | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charger (Optional) | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salad/Dessert plates | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soup/Cereal/Pasta bowls | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mugs | | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cups & saucers | 8-12 | 6 |
| Glassware | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White wine | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red wine | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Champagne | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Juice glass | | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iced beverage (Optional) | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| Flatware | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner fork | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner knife | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salad fork | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salad knife | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soup spoon | 8-12 | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tea spoon | | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steak knife | | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Butter spreader (Optional) | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish knife | | 8-12 |
| Barware | Quantity | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beer glass | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brandy glass (Optional) | 6 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cordial glass (Optional) | 6 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High ball | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Old fashioned glass | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Martini glass (Optional) | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Margarita glass (Optional) | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cocktail shaker (Optional) | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decanter | 2 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wine coaster (Optional) | 1-2 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shot glasses (Optional) | 6 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water pitcher | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ice bucket | 1 | |

| Serving Pieces | Formal | Casual |
|--|-----------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serving platter | 2-3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serving bowl | 2-3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cake stand (Optional) | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chip & dip bowl | | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Square baker | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rectangular baker | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheese tray | 1-2 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salad bowl | 1 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gravy boat (Optional) | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar and creamer | 1 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tea pot (Optional) | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Butter dish (Optional) | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salt & pepper shaker | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gravy ladle | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cake server | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cake knife | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar spoon | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salad server | 1 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Table spoon | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Table fork | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pierced serving spoon | 2 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta tongs | | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trays | 2-3 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bread basket | 1 | 1 |
| Home Accents | Quantity | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vase (different sizes) | 2-5 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Votive | 12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frame (different sizes) | 6 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clock | 1 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mirror | 1-2 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lamp | as needed | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Table cloth | 1-2 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Napkin | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Place mat | 8-12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Napkin ring | 8-12 | |

| Furniture | Quantity |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dining table | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dining chairs | 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee table | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couch | 1-2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arm chair | 1-2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bed | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedside table | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chest | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment set | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desk | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desk chair | 1 |
| | |
| Kitchenware | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knife block set | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carving set | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steak knife set | 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cookie sheet | 1-2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muffin pan | 1-2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cake pan | 2-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pizza an (Optional) | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen scale | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixing bowls | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring cups | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spatula | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tongs | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whisk | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wok (Optional) | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch oven | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colander | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting board | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garlic press | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pots & pans set | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apron (Optional) | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food processor | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee maker | 1 |



Click here to download and print your Registry Checklist.

| Bedroom & Bathroom | Quantity |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pillow cases | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitted sheet & flat sheet | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comforter cover | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comforter | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bed skirt | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pillows | 2-4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bath towels | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wash cloths | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand towels | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bath rug | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| <h3>Experimental</h3> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking classes <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga classes </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Dance classes <input type="checkbox"/> Spa treatments </div> | |
| <h3>Food & Wine</h3> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Wine delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Gourmet food delivery </div> | |
| <h3>New Home</h3> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly flower delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Stationery cards (with new name and address) <input type="checkbox"/> Address stamps </div> | |
| <h3>Contributions to Bridal Events</h3> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking classes <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga classes <input type="checkbox"/> Girls' day out <input type="checkbox"/> Photo shoot <input type="checkbox"/> Spa treatments </div> <div> <p>*Family and friends may want to contribute to activities leading up to the big day!</p> </div> | |
| <h3>Bride-Specific Gifts</h3> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding jewelry <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding shoes <input type="checkbox"/> Bridal purse <input type="checkbox"/> Mom & bride photo shoot </div> | <h3>Wedding-Specific Gifts</h3> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement photo shoot <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding photography <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding accents <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding flowers </div> |



Carasco Photography {Courtesy of Michelle Durpetti Events}

chapter eleven

Flowers

Wedding flowers are infused with love and beauty. Our designers show you how to set the mood for your special day with trend-setting, seasonally appropriate stems. From vintage to organic, discover how to recreate the latest, loveliest looks in floral.

- Featuring Avant Gardenia -



Courtesy of Avant Gardenia

Meet Avant Gardenia

Avant Gardenia is a clever play on words, derived from the French term “avant-garde,” meaning daring, unexpected or innovative in regards to any form of art. Never one to settle for the status quo, owner and lead designer Jenna Sprengel felt this was the perfect representation for her business as she strives to do things that are creative, unique and unexpected. “‘Gardenia’ refers to the flower and reminds me of my Grandma Nebel,” she says. “She always loved to make herself a gardenia corsage to wear for Easter and Mother’s Day because she loved the smell of them. Seeing that I probably would never be doing what I love everyday if it weren’t for my grandparents’ influence, I was thrilled to be able to have part of the name of my business represent them in a way, even if I was the only one to know it.”

Jenna aims to push the boundaries of what is expected as the “norm” in wedding floral and décor while reflecting the couples’ personal style as well.

Jenna’s grandparents, Jim and Pat Nebel, owned and operated a flower shop for 35 years beginning in 1969, well before she was born. As a child, she spent much of her time with them at the flower shop, watching them create breathtaking arrangements; thus, flowers naturally became an important part of her life. With an artistic talent and a knack for visual design, Jenna began working for them several days a week when she was in high school and again in the summers when she was home from college. She loved learning about the business

while spending quality time with her grandparents. Originally planning to become an English teacher, Jenna began crafting florals for friends’ weddings on the side when her grandparents retired and sold their shop. Thanks to a word-of-mouth response, she gave up her teaching career to pursue her own full-time wedding and event floral business.

Jenna aims to push the boundaries of what is expected as the “norm” in wedding floral and décor while reflecting the couple’s personal style as well. She loves incorporating other decorative elements to enhance the floral designs and make her clients’ weddings memorable. Avant Gardenia is an alternative to the ordinary floral experience. Expect individualized service and attention. All of her clients are important, and she enjoys building relationships with them throughout their planning process; it allows her to better tailor designs specifically to their personalities and tastes.



Avant Gardenia has worked with an array of venues in Chicago, such as The Adler Planetarium and The Drake Hotel, as well as a variety of elegant suburban venues. They have been featured multiple times on *Be U Weddings* and *Style Me Pretty*.

Avant Gardenia | By Appointment Only | 630.999.3030

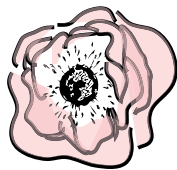
Winter:



Amaryllis: Large blooms; bold and elegant. Comes in red, white, peach, and some bi-colors.

Meaning: Pride, determination and radiant beauty.

Price Range: \$\$\$



Anemones: Unique with a black center; yet also can have a green center. Comes in red, white, purple, pink, and blue.

Meaning: "Expectation" and are among one of the most popular flower choices amongst first time brides.

Price Range: \$\$



Icelandic Poppies: Charming and unique bloom. Paper-thin petals. Comes in white, peach, orange, red, and yellow.

Meaning: Remembrance and dreams.

Price Range: \$\$\$



Acacia Mimosa: Very fragrant; soft, fuzzy texture. Only comes in yellow.

Meaning: Friendship, elegance, secret love flower.

Price Range: \$\$\$

Spring:



Peony: Fluffy and romantic; very fragrant. Comes in white, blush, pink, hot pink, red, and coral.

Meaning: romance, prosperity, flower of riches and honor.

Price Range: \$\$\$



Nerine Lily: Soft and smaller than a standard lily. Comes in white or pink.

Meaning: Majesty & honor; purity of heart.

Price Range: \$\$



Parrot Tulip: Textured and fun. Bi-colored red, orange, yellow, and green.

Meaning: Perfect lover; fame.

Price Range: \$\$

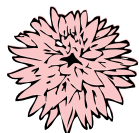


Clooney Ranunculus (aka: buttercup): High petal count similar to a peony, but much smaller. Comes in all colors.

Meaning: I am dazzled by your charms.

Price Range: \$\$

Summer:



Café au Lait Dahlias: Large and textured, yet has a soft look. Only comes in blush peachy-pink.

Meaning: Dignity and elegance, forever thine.

Price Range: \$\$\$



Scabiosa Pods: A rustic choice, spherical shape; a nice accent flower. Only comes in brown-ish green.

Meaning: Admiration.

Price Range: \$\$



Garden Roses: Large heads with lots of petals; soft and romantic look. Comes in most colors.

Meaning: I love you, love at first sight.

Price Range: \$\$\$

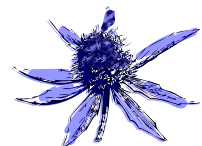


Celosia: A fun textured flower in bold colors and available in 2 shapes: feathered or flat (looks like a brain). Comes in yellow, hot pink, orange, and red.

Meaning: Healing flower; joyous, feelings of attachment. Bright colors mean courage and passion.

Price Range: \$\$

Fall:



White Eryngium: Very textured, unique, and natural looking. Comes in white and blue.

Meaning: Embody health, love, fertility and protection, harmonious affections.

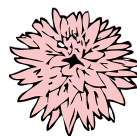
Price Range: \$\$



Chocolate Cosmos: Small and delicate. A perfect accent flower. Comes in dark blackish-brown.

Meaning: Love flower.

Price Range: \$\$



Button Dahlias: Rounded shape with lots of texture. Smaller than standard dahlia. Comes in most colors.

Meaning: Elegance and dignity, forever thine.

Price Range: \$\$



Kale: Thick, leafy stem; member of the cabbage family. Pretty with fall colors and mixtures. Comes in purple and white.

Meaning: Vegetable.

Price Range: \$\$\$

Choosing your Bouquet:



Carasco Photography {Courtesy of Avant Gardenia}

Rustic: Elegant and charming, rustic designs may seem easily replicated, but marrying the right details can be challenging. This bouquet, crafted specifically for a Be U Weddings' table display at a fall 2012 BHLDN event, gives off a natural, untreated aroma; yet it is dressed up with pewter satin ribbon, pearls and a vintage key to add character and elegance—quintessentially rustic. It is simply made of scabiosa pods with accents of white astrantia, both unique and unexpected flower choices with appropriate appeal. Scabiosa pods, available in the summer and early fall, are very textured and dry wonderfully, which would allow a bride to keep her bouquet for years to come.



LaVie En Rose Photography {Courtesy of Preston Bailey}

Organic: There are two ways to achieve an organic look for your bouquet: one is through your flower choice and textures, and the other is with a free-flowing, hand-picked shape. Some brides choose to use both methods. This bouquet combines sunflowers with the petals plucked (a neat look) and gerbera daisies, both of which can be grown locally. Some other natural choices are kale, a cabbage-like flower, as well as succulents. The addition of branches and twigs enhances the organic look as they naturally flow freely amongst the blooms. Pliable branches or vines can also be woven throughout the bouquet or around the stems for a more styled look.



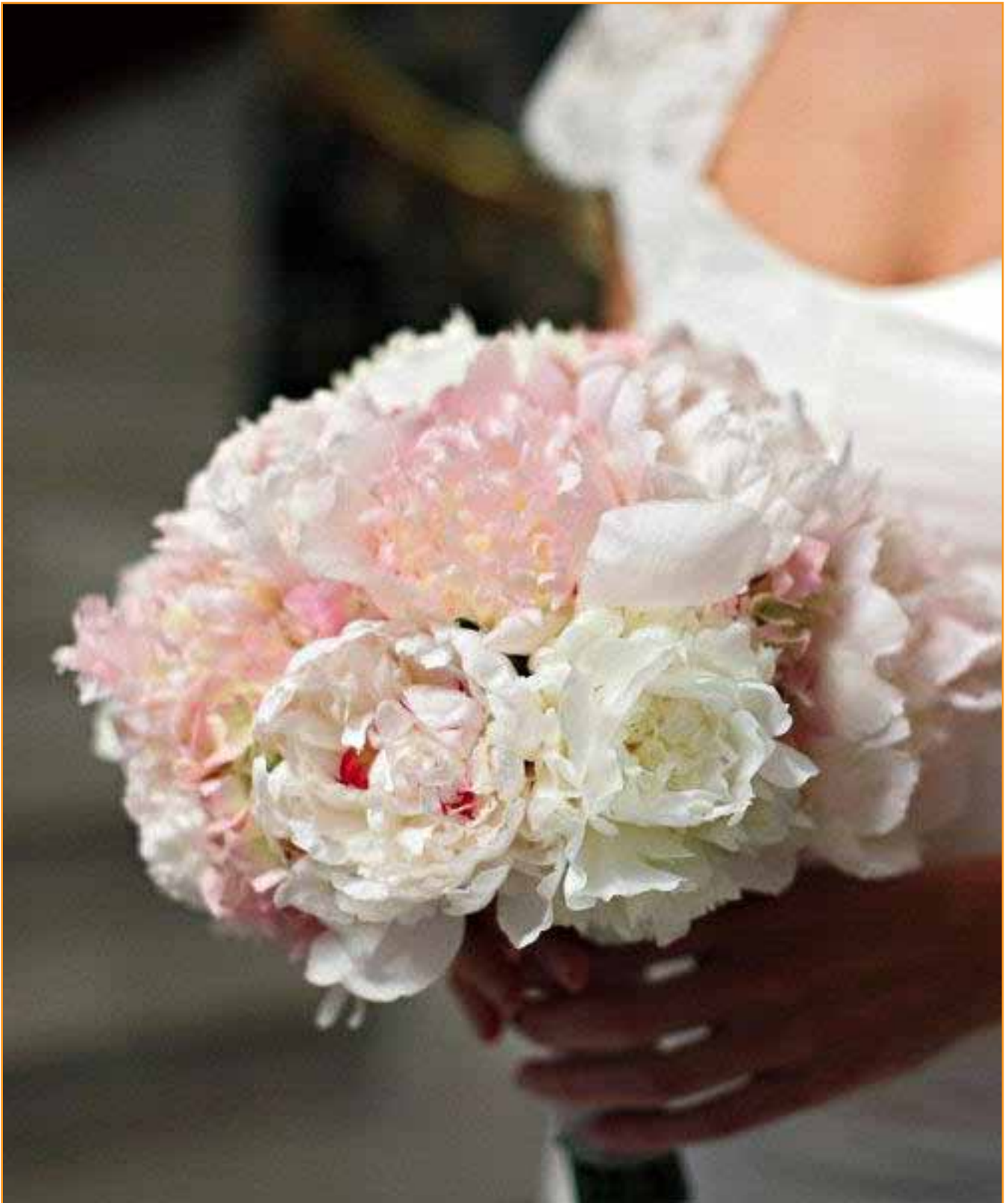
Lilly Photography {Courtesy of Avant Gardenia}

Vintage: To achieve a vintage look, stick with a soft, muted color palette. For this bouquet, the rough textures from frayed tulips and silver brunia berries combine with the velvety softness of dusty miller foliage and lace accents for a romantic juxtaposition. For another vintage aesthetic, opt for the airiness of fluffy peonies, garden roses and clooney ranunculus mixed with the harshness of the black and white anemone and the gentle nature of dusty miller and ostrich feathers. To further enhance your blossoms, add brooches or family heirlooms for an old world touch.



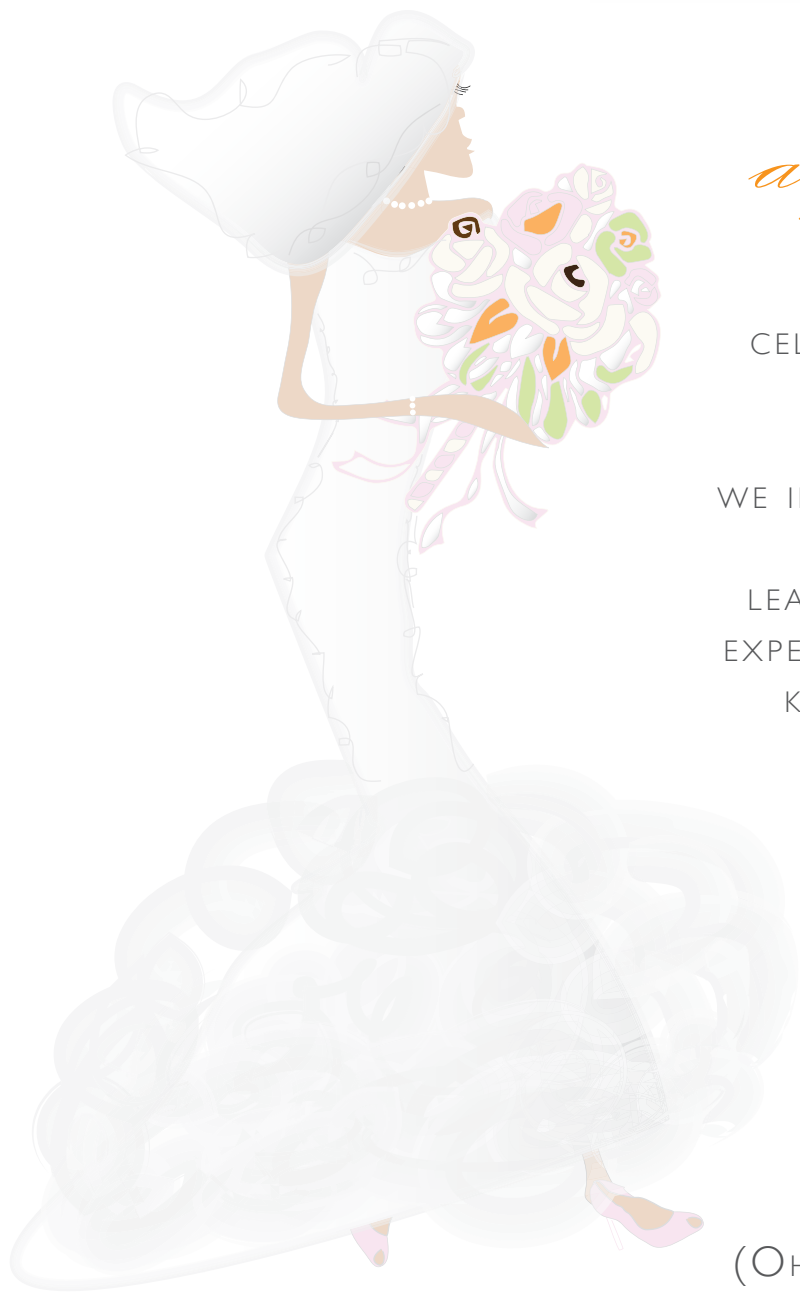
Lilly Photography {Courtesy of Avant Gardenia}

Contemporary: The contemporary class is all about personal style. Much like modern dresses brim with pops of color (ranging from purple to black), contemporary bunches result from unexpected flower and color choices. Similar to bridal fashion designs, some flowers offer black accents, such as an anemone, a less traditional wedding flower that has grown in popularity. The bloom stars in this bouquet, alongside bright colors of orange, purple and yellow. It has a lush look that will be memorable because of its boldness.



Life on Print Photography {Courtesy of Avant Gardenia}

Traditional: The traditional bridal bouquet is soft and romantic, typically composed of an all-white mixture. Flowers like roses, hydrangeas, gardenias, and peonies are perfect for brides seeking something a bit more conventional. This look is timeless and elegant; it exudes sophistication and beauty, the perfect accessory to the future Mrs.'s breathtaking and classic look.



a fashionable affair

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CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH OF CHICAGO'S ELITE
BRIDAL GUIDE E-MAGAZINE

WE INVITE YOU TO BE U AND FIND YOUR BRIDAL
STYLE AT AN EVENING OF BRIDAL BLISS
LEARN FABULOUS TIPS FROM BE U WEDDINGS'
EXPERT PARTNERS, ENJOY SIGNATURE COCKTAILS,
KRAFT BEER AND INNOVATIVE HORDERVES

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STARRING CHICAGO'S MOST ESTEEMED
BRIDES-TO-BE



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2012
6:00-8:00 PM

ROOM & BOARD 55 EAST OHIO
(OHIO & RUSH STREET) CHICAGO, IL 60611

PLEASE RESPOND TO BeUWeddings@Zapwater.com
BY OCTOBER 17, 2012



Photography: Colin Lyons Photography / Venue: Illinois Beach Resort and Conference Center (Zion, IL) Floral: Wish Florist
 Bride's Gown: Fanal by La Sposa (purchased at A Joyful Occassion) / Groomsmen Attire: Vera Wang tuxes by Men's
 Warehouse / Paper Products: Paper Source Bridesmaid's Dresses: Bill Levkoff / Hair: Concepcion Comparetto
 Make up: Fresh Face Chicago / Catering: Illinois Beach Resort / Bakery: Sweet Tooth Delivery / DJ: Non-Stop Entertainment



Colin Lyons Photography

The coastline of Lake Michigan played the ideal backdrop to summer nuptials captured beautifully by Colin Lyons Photography. The affair was skillfully put together by none other than the bride and her sister. No small feat! The bride expertly designed her own menu and programs, while her sister handled the printing. The DIY touches didn't stop there, as the bride's mother also crafted her garter and veil. Both the bride, in a La Sposa gown, and her maids, in Bill Levkoff dresses, basked in the summer rays with their strapless numbers, as vows were

exchanged on the beach. The all-white blooms fashioned by Wish Florist swam gracefully atop blue accents, leaving us longing for the warm days of summer.

If you are looking for your own little piece of beach paradise, consider the Illinois Beach Resort. Located on 4,100 acres of protected state park directly on Lake Michigan, just 40 minutes from the hustle and bustle of Chicago, you will feel transported to a tropical paradise, minus the hassle of airport security and passports!





Pure Kitchen Catering at *A Perfect Event* Book Launch {Courtesy of Be U Weddings}

chapter twelve

Catering

You've gathered all of your loved ones together for such a momentous occasion. After exchanging "I do's," let's be honest: it's time to get the party started! But first comes an indulgent feast to fill your guests with plenty of energy for the hours of dancing that await. It should come as no surprise that when it comes to style of food service, the world is your oyster (or burger, steak, fish fry—you get the idea!). These days, there is no "standard" to the bites your friends and family will munch on. The more personality it has, the better! Whether you're in need of a formal sit-down dinner, a laid-back BBQ bash, or a mix-and-mingle cocktail creation of your favorite foods, we talked to some of Chicago's best caterers to get the skinny on big day food. So dig in, and may the best menu win!

Featuring Pure Kitchen Catering
and Goose Island Catering



Courtesy of Pure Kitchen



..... Meet Pure Kitchen

Remember when wedding meal choices were as simple as chicken, beef or fish? Consider that a thing of the past, and dive into the deliciousness of cocktail hour, specialty stations, signature drinks, late-night snacks and so much more. Need a little help selecting how to satiate your guests? The taste curators of Pure Kitchen Catering know a thing or two about creating a menu that suits your palette just right; after all, they're constantly re-inventing (and blowing away) the concept of "catered event food."

By turning their farm-to-table fresh cuisine into sophisticated delicacies, they've broken the "one-size-fits-all" wedding menu barrier.

"The goal at Pure Kitchen Catering is to create food that celebrates the amazing diversity and reflects the cultural significance of our region," says Chef Joel Paige.

"The diversity of our clients' tastes range from pescatarian to vegetarians, vegans and multi-cultural backgrounds. Our goal is to meet and exceed their expectations for every event with food that not only reflects our community, but our clients' heritage." In short: it's a full-on experience.

Founded in 2009, Pure Kitchen strongly supports the Chicago community. Committed to using only fresh ingredients from local farmers and producers, the team scours a 250-mile radius for the best available. By turning their farm-to-table fresh cuisine into sophisticated delicacies they've broken the "one-size-fits-all" wedding menu barrier.

Here, the foodies of Pure Kitchen provide insight into two catering styles perfect for a Chicago fête's feast.

Pure Kitchen Catering: 451 North Elizabeth, Chicago
www.purekitchencatering.com
 312.224.8277



Dining Options



Courtesy of Pure Kitchen



Courtesy of Pure Kitchen

{Pure Kitchen Catering}

The Food Station:

Food stations can be an interactive and easy approach to catering: guests can roam the venue, piling their plates with options of their choosing. To keep everyone full and happy, follow Pure Kitchen's tips:

1. Treat the food station set-up like a cocktail reception. Embrace the informality and enjoy your guests.
2. Narrow the window of service—end of story! First, you don't want hour-old sliders (trust us, you just don't!). Fresh food equals happy palates. Secondly, mixing up your stations with a changing menu keeps guests intrigued without letting them over-indulge.
3. Know your style. If you are dreaming of a classic, formal event, move on to another service option. Food stations are meant for interaction and socialization. They are the relaxed and casual way to throw a catered event.

Cocktail:

For the economically-conscious couple, a cocktail style reception can be a wise choice: less food, fewer rentals, and smaller wait staff. While this is a less traditional and more casual reception, a cocktail-inspired evening by no means implies that you should be lacking in flavor! Think small versions of larger classics. Our fall favorites include mac and cheese fritters (smoked shiitake mushrooms with grumpy goat cheddar), red kuri squash & black walnut shooters, and Arabica coffee-cured bison. Summer ushers in pork belly, sliders and decadent tomatoes. While a cocktail reception can be hosted at practically any venue, art museums or historic sites work best, allowing guests to mingle and enjoy the space. Just be sure to mention to guests that it will be a more informal affair as you don't want guests expecting a full sit-down dinner.



Courtesy of Be U Weddings



Courtesy of Goose Island Catering

{Goose Island Catering}

Sit-Down Dinner:

The sit-down plated dinner creates a more intimate environment. It also allows for a more refined presentation of the food with menu items creatively displayed and artistically balanced on the plate. With a sit-down dinner, the wedding couple can control where guests are seated and who they will interact with. It provides guests who don't know people at the wedding a comfortable format for meeting other guests and keeps older guests and relatives from having to do too much standing. The sit-down plated dinner permits the bride and groom to control the flow and timing of the event while ensuring their family and friends are treated to first-class service.

Casual BBQ:

The casual BBQ wedding offers an interactive, fun and social setting where guests continually move and mingle throughout the event. Exchanging comments over zesty BBQ sauces and signature grilled items while aromas from the grill float through the air, guests naturally interact more with the food. When families travel from many different locations, this style of wedding offers more opportunities for everyone to meet and get to know each other. Although the dinner is casual and relaxed, this format of wedding can be just as memorable. Just be certain a friend or caterer mans the grill station—and does not let the goods stay out too long!



Courtesy of Goose Island Catering

Meet Goose Island Catering

A decade ago at Chicago's Old Town Art Fair, Goose Island brewery began its journey taking their unique pub hospitality on the road—pairing the right beer with the right food. The art fair audience responded enthusiastically and the venture continued to various street fairs, music festivals and special events. As

"We brew world-class beer. Let's pair it with fun, exciting food – locally sourced."

Goose Island's menu of beers advanced beyond iconic favorites, such as Honker's Ale and 312, into more intriguing Belgian-style ales, such as Matilda, Sofie and Pepe Nero, so did the food evolve. Goose Island Brewpub's culinary team began to develop catering menus of locally sourced foods perfectly paired with hand-crafted ales.

Goose Island now offers an authentic Chicago catering experience with menus ranging from casual and zesty barbecue sandwiches to elegant, but relaxed seated dinners. They believe that great beer will enhance any occasion and that guests always appreciate the "local" factor that Goose Island brings to the party. Their staff exudes enthusiasm and professionalism and will engage your guests like good friends. Goose Island also values being green, doing their part to reduce their impact on the environment.

Goose Island Director of Catering Tim Lane recently received the following review from a summer 2012 wedding. "Tim was very responsive, patient and accommodating with all the nitty gritty details that go into planning a wedding. He worked with us to meet our budget. We decided to start with passed appetizers for the cocktail hour and stations for dinner. We did a carving station with two meat options, pasta, flatbread, whipped potatoes, fresh veggies with hummus and salad. We received tons of compliments... 'best wedding food we ever had.' And we achieved our goal—a relaxed, yet refined experience," said Jill Kohnen and Matt Gualardo.

"Couples tell us that they ultimately just want a fun and more relaxed wedding party," says Tim. "To offer a selection of 'Chicago-made' craft beer is a great way to start. We listen closely to our clients' vision of their party and then go to work on creating a menu package that is completely unique to their tastes. The result is a collaboration that they will be talking about for many years to come."

When a couple coordinates their wedding tasting with Goose Island Catering, they are exposed to special small batch pub beers. They often find a new favorite which Goose Island will name in honor of their wedding day with a word or phrase that represents both the bride and the groom. For example, one couple called their small batch beer, "Adoration Pale Ale."

Beer Selections for Your Wedding Day

{Courtesy of Goose Island Catering}

You should first choose something light bodied to please a broader audience. Then, when selecting additional beers, you can match it to the menu and select something seasonal or vintage, with a bit more punch.

Light Bodied:

312 Urban Wheat Ale—represents Chicago which makes it a conversation piece

Green Line Pale Ale—another popular choice for the slightly more serious craft beer drinker. Speaks to Goose Island's value of being green and a method of windy city transportation.

Vintage Collection:

Matilda, Sofie and Pere Jacques, the Vintage Ales, are also very popular to pair with food because they are more refined beers in the Belgian family, making them wine like.

Seasonal Ales:

Goose Island Catering can design your beer selection around a seasonal menu as follows:

- Summer—Summertime
- Fall—Harvest Ale
- Holidays—Christmas Ale
- Winter—Mild Winter



Beer Pairing Dinners

Welcome Beer: *Sofie*

Passed Appetizers:

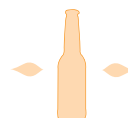
Butternut Squash Pierogi
Roasted Brussels Sprouts
& Camembert Crostini
Caramelized Bacon Arancini

Dinner Courses:

Autumn Salad
Local Chevre, Bacon Lardons, Roasted
Butternut Squash, Watercress
Pairing: *Matilda*

Rotisserie Pork Loin
Slagel Farms Rotisserie Pork Loin,
Peppercorn Spaetzle, Cabbage, Jus
Pairing: *Pepe Nero*

Apple Tart
Seedling Orchard Honey Crisp Cinnamon
Apples, Malted Crème Fraiche
Pairing: *Pere Jacques*



{Quantity}

In terms of quantity to order, Goose Island Catering says it is important to know your audience but recommends the following general guideline for ordering beer (assuming there is a full bar and wine being served).

150 people—8 to 9 cases, half light bodied and half seasonal or vintage

200 people—11 to 12 cases, half light bodied and half seasonal or vintage

250 people—13 to 14 cases, half light bodied and half seasonal or vintage

Goose Island Catering: 312.915.0071
tlane@gooseisland.com

Liquor Recommendations

{Courtesy of Pure Kitchen Catering}

Roughly the rule is two drinks per guest during the first hour and one per hour after that for average drinkers. So, if your event runs six hours you should account for seven drinks per guest (1050 total).

Factors:

- 5 drinks per bottle of wine
- 1 drink per beer bottle
- 15 -18 drinks per (750ml) liquor bottle

Bar shopping list:

- 8-10 cases of wine (480-600 drinks)
- 10-12 cases of beer (240-288 drinks)
- 12-18 bottles of Vodka (192-324 drinks)
- 10-12 bottles of Gin (160-216 drinks)
- 8-10 bottles of Whisky/Bourbon (128-180 drinks)
- 3-4 bottles of Rum (48-72 drinks)



Courtesy of Pure Kitchen

Specialty Cocktails

{Courtesy of Pure Kitchen Catering}

- Bourbon Peach Smash -

mint or thyme, bourbon, peach preserve syrup, house sour

- Strawberry Rhubarb Mojito -

Rum or Vodka-infused liquor with berries, mint, rhubarb

- Rhubarb Bourbon Masher -

rhubarb, mint simple, bourbon

- Raspberry Mint Mash -

raspberry, mint, mint simple, vodka

- Pure Manhattan -

fois de bois bourbon, absinthe, bourbon

- Lemon Ginger Fizz -

lemon ginger syrup, house ginger beer concentrate, soda, vodka

- Cucumber Mint Mash -

cucumber, mint, vodka or gin, house sour, soda
Pimms #1 works great too

- Early Melon Mixer -

cucumber, young melon, house sour and mint vodka

- Grilled Lemonade -

grilled lemons, house sour, vodka, soda

- Raspberry Lemonade -

raspberry, house sour, vodka, soda

- Grilled Peach -

grilled peach syrup, molasses, mint house super sour, vodka

- Blue Berry Thyme -

blueberries, thyme syrup, house super sour, gin or vodka



Shane Welch Photography



Julia Franzosa Photography



Shane Welch Photography



Shane Welch Photography

chapter thirteen

Cake

Chocolate, vanilla, carrot, red velvet, oh my! The colossal creation, often the mouth-watering star of the reception, is a wedding planning experience on its own. Translation: there's more than meets the icing! Whether you select a traditional three-tiered cake, cake pops, cupcakes or even pies, you'll want to finish off your meal with a memorable piece of heaven. But do you want buttercream frosting or fondant? Sweet or savory filling? Edible flowers or decorative design? Whether you're crafting a delectable dessert bar or simply vying for a show-stopping cake, Chicago's bakeries overflow with custom creativity and terrific taste. Besides, what better way to get those fiancés involved? They won't want to miss this! Read on for tips of what truly takes the cake.

Featuring Truffle Truffle, Tipsy Cake,
SweetPea Cakes and Cake



Julia Franzosa Photography

{As recommended by Pure Kitchen Catering}

Contemporary: Truffle Truffle is Chicago's true artisan chocolatier and confectioner packing a great big punch. They are apt to leave your guests amazed with not only spectacular taste but stunning displays and packaging. "We seek to spark a smile from the moment our package is opened to the last dreaded drop," says owner Nicole Greene. Green has been dreaming up delectable treats since early childhood, cultivating culinary dreams in her father's own professional kitchen. For the couple looking to step away from the norm, a Truffle Truffle cake is the route to go, each decadent truffle hand-rolled to perfection then placed on a fabric covered foam tier, giving you a true custom cake.



Courtesy of Topsy Cake

{As recommended by Soirée Weddings & Events}

Organic: With a flair for whimsy, “the Cake Aussie,” Naomi Levine of TopsyCake brings bridal dreams to life. Naomi’s own dreams of baked goods started at a young age. “My favorite books back then were cookbooks. I was fascinated with *Australian Women’s Weekly Birthday Cake Book* and *Margaret Fulton’s Encyclopedia of Food & Cookery*. It’s a dream come true to have my own successful bakery. There is nothing better than to make a living at what you love to do,” Naomi says. Having moved to Chicago in 1999, the tasty doors of TopsyCake opened in 2006, after Naomi turned heads selling her goods to local restaurants and hotels. Her cakes are known for mixing up wholesome, fresh ingredients and whipping them into masterful works of art.



Courtesy of SweetPea Cakes

{As recommended by Michelle Durpetti Event's}

Vintage: Only the finest French Chocalates and Madagascar Bourbon Vanilla will do when creating bridal decadence at Sweetpea Cakes. Owner Carrie Curie, refined her skills over the last 23 years, finding the perfect balance of art, design and creativity in each cake and cupcake she produces. "Our priority is to enhance your celebration with the perfect cake. We guarantee an unforgettable, unparalleled cake," says Carrie. In order to exceed customer expectations only a few custom cakes are scheduled each week, so the team to can devote one-on-one attention to every cake they create. No pre-made cakes here!



Courtesy of Cake

{As recommended by A Perfect Event}

Traditional: “Wedding cake creation is the perfect way to make something beautiful that is more than just a work of art, but is delicious as well” owner of Cake, Mary Winslow proclaims. With a passion for patterns and/or ornate details Mary asks couples to paint her a picture with details from their life. Creating design elements from the pattern of lace on great-grandma’s gown or drawing inspiration from a couple’s song lyrics, Mary is sure to fashion a unique masterpiece. “I love to eat. I love to create. I love to eat what I create.” sings Mary, and your guests are sure to follow that example.



Fig Weddings Photography

chapter fourteen

Photo, Video, & Music

Stunning black and white photos. A captivating film of you and your betrothed. Classic tunes that kept everyone dancing the night away. In between the intense emotions and special thoughts, these are some of the most memorable portions of the entire day, largely because they might dictate how you remember it! If you're searching for a photojournalist style to snap candid moments, a film maker to intertwine those moments into a story, and a fantastic deejay to provide the musical backdrop, we've got your back. Selecting these key vendors (photo, video and music) might be some of the most pivotal decisions in your planning process. After all, they directly affect how you visually or audibly recall the best day of your life! Read on for the tips and tricks to navigating the best shots, compiling the ultimate nuptial reel, and pleasing the crowd with big day-worthy beats.

Featuring Fig Weddings and Cage and Aquarium



Photography by Fig Weddings

Meet Fig Weddings

When co-founder Michele Gustin recounts the inception of fig weddings, she recalls a time of deejays that was literally “the worst.” “They wore awful tuxes, were expected to do the lights—it was ridiculous,” she remembers. “Why couldn’t you get one to just play really great music?”

“We probed Melissa’s mind on the art of capturing the big day on film and jamming to great tunes that don’t include the “Chicken Dance.”

So that’s what she and husband James sought out to do. They founded the first deejay company in Chicago playing hip music, wearing tasteful suits and sequencing the night—and that was only the beginning. Soon after, the service expanded to include videography and photography for all kinds of events. Since its creation in 1993, fig weddings has unleashed a fresh, creative and personalized approach to music, video and photo where the relationship with the client is key. Because for Michele and her team, there’s more to their role than just documenting or spinning throughout the day.

“We’re there for these people, not just watching them,” Michele says. “I once heard the phrase, ‘Make sure everyone [at your wedding] is there to uphold your marriage’—wow, what a concept! We’re engaged. You’re expected to participate and be part of it. How do you become part of what is happening? How do you become the couple’s advocates? That’s a big part of our training.”

Capturing the underlying humanity, spirit and personality of the couple is the core of fig weddings’ work, be it for video, photo or music, and to say it has resonated would be an understatement. The fig team is in high demand, with prices ranging from \$2,800 to \$4,500 for film and \$1,350 to \$1,800 for deejays. Michele and James also pioneer advances in the industry, including offering a “Liquid History” film, a post-wedding video portrait that reflects the couples identity, just not in the nuptial setting.

We probed Melissa’s mind on the art of capturing the big day on film and jamming to great tunes that don’t include the “Chicken Dance.”



Q What are the “must-haves” in a wedding film?

A It should be a document of the whole day. A lot of people think they need to stage the event or something, but it's truly your document. For example, it's way cooler if you get ready at a place that means something to you. Yes, we've all done the getting ready session at a hotel, and that's fine, but it's lovelier to be at a grandmother's house, for instance. You don't need to make things look pretty. That's not the point! We're more about the humanity.

Q What are the advantages of hiring a videographer?

A I cringe at the word “videographer.” I don't think you need a video. You need a filmmaker. Photos are people's memories that are then interpreted. Video is an experience. I had a groom ask, “Why wouldn't everyone want this?” We understand people do have to make budget constraints, but I'd say, switch to cupcakes or something instead [of an expensive cake]. We think it's so worth it. Our couples still talk about how they watch it on their anniversaries. One groom even rented out the hall from their reception and played the video there for his bride!

Q How can brides and grooms best describe to a videographer what they are looking to get out of the video?

A We love for people to send us movie clips. James usually gives assignments to watch wedding-related movies, begin to notice what you like and pin it or document it. What do you see in popular media that you're a fan of?

Q How can a deejay best keep the night flowing?

A It's really a matter of facilitating music, and getting to know whom you are inviting and whom you want to please. You make everyone conscious of the agenda, so it's not a surprise. Then, how do we sequence things with all of the events? You have

the architecture of the space and the event, and the two need to work together. Sequencing is a large component of our training. It's up to the deejay to create cohesion, so guests know they are part of something, to make them feel good.

Q What are the benefits of having a deejay vs. a band?

A Deejay is more of a party with music as opposed to a “show.” If there is a band, that's what's happening—and is the main focus—and there is nothing wrong with that. A deejay can definitely be a cost consideration, but even with a band's cost, you typically can't get the variety [of a deejay] for that amount of money. More and more people just want the vibe of a deejay—low key, great music

Q What's your take on accommodating requests from guests?

A We develop a protocol ahead of time. People will request songs on your “do not play” song list, so what are your parameters on that? It's up to the bride and groom to decide. The magic is of course in the spontaneity but you have to do work ahead of time so you are better at making decisions the night of.

Q Any advice for personalizing your playlist?

A Include people. Who are you actually inviting [age ranges, etc.]? What do you imagine them dancing to? It's an amazing yet subtle thing, but people will feel included and enjoy the evening more with a song that resonates for them. You may not want to include everything your dad likes, but you might have one song that you can tolerate that would mean something to him.

Q What crowd-pleasers are currently in your deejays' loop?

A Such a variety! Everything from “Call Me Maybe” by Carly Rae Jepsen to “Jessie's Girl” to classic rock. Anything by Usher, or “Good Feeling” by Flo Rida.



Photography: Melissa Martens of Fig Weddings / Ceremony Venue: Christ Church (Winnetka, Illinois) / Reception Venue: Chicago Botanic Garden / Bride's Dress: Tara Keely / Bride's Shoes: Manolo Blahnik / Groom's Attire: Brooks Brothers / Groom's Tie: Collared Greens / Invitations: Mite Printing (Glencoe, Illinois) / Cake: Deerfields Bakery / Caterer: Culinary Landscapes / Music: Upbeat Music Productions



Chicago Botanic Garden Wedding

Prepare to be enchanted by this gorgeous garden-chic affair at the Chicago Botanic Garden, captured by the talented Melissa Martens of Fig Weddings. We love the playful preppy touches sprinkled throughout the celebration. Keeping with family tradition, the bride wore an exquisite Italian veil passed down from her grandmother. Her family also created the beautiful

centerpieces and wreath. The navy, green and white décor was simple and sophisticated, and showcased the breathtaking setting.

Looking for a natural, inspiring setting for your upcoming wedding? Consider the Chicago Botanic Garden with event sites nestled amid glorious gardens, peaceful lakes and native woodlands.



From the Bride: I wore the veil that my mom and aunts wore. It was purchased in Italy many years ago by my grandmother. I also wore a gold pin that was attached to my flowers. The pin has been worn by every woman on my husband's side on their wedding day starting with his great grandmother. My mom and her friends made all the flower arrangements and wreaths that decorated the dinner tables and church. My sisters and I created our candy bar. We loved having all our closest friends and family in one place. It was very relaxed and fun, yet classic and elegant at the same time. Melissa and Eric from Fig Weddings were great. We also really enjoyed working with Michael from UpBeat Music.



Photography by Cage and Aquarium

Meet Cage and Aquarium

When Shelley Anderson and Tyler Huffman, co-owners of Cage and Aquarium, fell in love and tied the knot, combining their professional specialties into one became the next natural step in their lives together. With a deep-rooted love for photography, Shelley began shooting weddings in 2004; as a lifelong musician of many instruments, Tyler expanded his repertoire and became a DJ in 2007. As the two grew in their separate fields, it quickly became evident that they should fuse them together.

"A wedding photographer has completed their job when they can string together different moments to tell a complete story."

Now, Cage and Aquarium, a boutique event company that serves Chicago and New York, cleverly combines three services: DJ, photography and live music. "Our uniqueness stems from our connection to Chicago music and arts scene," Shelley says. Turntables, beat-matching and scratching are the elements of everyday life for Cage and Aquarium DJs; their photographers offer a fresh, photojournalistic approach. With more than five years' experience, Cage and Aquarium is careful to take a limited number of engagements to ensure each couple receives the attention they deserve.

We picked their image-capturing brains to help guide you through the do's and don'ts of planning pictures. With these helpful tips, rest assured there's no way you'll be left with awkward photos of when you didn't want to be photographed.

Do... consider each segment of the day—and the details you'd like your photographer to highlight.

A bride and groom should think of their day in sections, such as "Getting Ready," "Ceremony," "Family Photos," "Location Photos (Bride/Groom and Bridal Party)" and "Reception." Once you can view the day that way, consider what elements you want your photographer to concentrate on. Are all 30 of your cousins coming to the wedding, and you would love a group photo? Is there a special and unique moment happening during the ceremony the photographer might not be expecting? You can trust your photographer will do a great job capturing the overall day, but don't hesitate to tell them what specifics are important to you.

Don't... let your photographer fly solo.

Couples tend to love the photojournalistic moments the most, and that gives good reason for them to book a package with two photographers. Two photographers can be focusing on different things throughout the day and provide more coverage than just one. There are always moments happening at a wedding and the couple will have no idea they occurred until they see the photographs.

Do... opt for the engagement session.

We highly recommend the engagement session because it is the perfect precursor to the wedding photographs. Most couples have not had professional pictures taken together before and the engagement session is time well spent getting comfortable in front of the camera and getting to know how their photographer works. Afterward, they have the opportunity to share what they liked or did not like about the session and that can only help the photographer make their wedding photographs better.

Don't... forget to utilize the pre-existing beauty of Chicago's backdrops.

Several of the Chicago Park District venues are beautifully urban and make for a great photo backdrop. A few of our favorites are Promontory Point, Columbus Park Refectory, Garfield Park Conservatory and the Cancer Survivor's Garden. There are also many modern loft spaces that offer a blank canvas for couples to create their own style such as Loft on Lake, The Ivy Room, Gallery 1028, or Ravenswood Event Center. A classic wedding can be gorgeously done at the Renaissance Blackstone Hotel, the Chicago History Museum, or Peninsula Hotel. One of our favorite cozy spaces (with some amazing food) is Osteria via Stato.

Do... trust your photographer's need to take so many photos!

We approach each wedding as a photojournalist. A well-rounded portfolio of photographs from a wedding will be able to tell the story of the day. A wedding photographer has completed their job when they can string together different moments to tell a complete story. They also want to capture a small handful of classic, signature images that represent the wedding as a whole.

Don't... think photography packages are one size fits all.

Cage and Aquarium's base package is a great starting point for all couples. Within that package we offer a full day of coverage with two photographers, a DVD of high-resolution images and on-line proofs. If a couple wants to upgrade to a package with an engagement session, professional albums, proofs and prints, we offer those options as well.

Photographer Shot List

Besides the obvious moments, details and posed pictures photographed throughout the day, there are always a few moments we see at a lot of weddings that make for great memories. They might not make your typical shot list, so be sure to add them!

- ☐ The bride and her father just before they walk down the aisle.
- ☐ Parents or other key people in the bride and groom's life reacting to the ceremony.
- ☐ Whatever the flower girls and ring bearers are doing to stay occupied during the ceremony.
- ☐ The groom as he fiddles with his new wedding band.
- ☐ Close-ups and candids of the couple throughout the day as they laugh together, hang out with their bridal party, greet guests together, etc.
- ☐ Newly joined families enjoying each others' company (i.e. the mothers of the couple sharing a moment together).
- ☐ The mother of the bride watching the bride/father dance.
- ☐ One last shot of the bride and groom, in the midst of having a blast at the reception.

Or come up with your own!

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



Photography: Cage and Aquarium / Ceremony + Reception Venue: Lakewood Barn (Private Residence) / Pies: Sweet House of Madness (Lake Geneva) / Flowers: Lilypots / Caterer: Celebration on Wells / DJ: Cage + Aquarium (Scott Schaefer + Neville Allen) / Live Acoustic Music for Ceremony: Al Wetzel Duo (Lake Geneva)



Lake Geneva Farm Wedding

Can you imagine a more idyllic setting for an outdoor wedding than this picturesque private farm in Lake Geneva? We're head over heels for the lush, sprawling landscape and cozy barn. Captured by the talented Shelley Anderson, Kristin Gulick and Michael Hindman of Cage and Aquarium, the wedding photos perfectly showcase the beautiful backdrop and darling DIY details. For a decidedly Wisconsin-style appetizer, guests were treated to mini Wisconsin

Leahy's bratwurst poached in beer and onions. This resourceful couple made many of the DIY accents, including the rustic wooden signs and wedding programs. A red and yellow color scheme was a lovely touch for this chic country affair.

A mere 60 miles from Chicago, Lake Geneva is an ideal location for a mini destination wedding. Popular venues include the Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, the Abbey Resort, Northwind Perennial Farm, and more.



From the Bride: I loved everything about our wedding! I would say my favorite part was the ceremony, which was very personalized for us and took place at our ideal setting. I also loved having all of our family and friends in one place celebrating with us and supporting us on our special day. Overall, I was happy that our wedding reflected us and our personalities.

We were fortunate enough to have very positive experiences with all of our vendors. Cage and Aquarium (photography and DJ) and Lilypots are two vendors that really stand out and we will never forget the huge impact they had on our wedding. Both vendors are extremely talented and really understood our vision. They were easy to work with and were able to work within our budget!



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chapter fifteen

Day Of

The big day is almost here. You can practically feel the excitement, the nerves have started to set in, and the anticipation of when you can finally say “I do” is beyond palpable. But what if the date arrives, and you’ve forgotten your something blue? Or your bridesmaid’s shoe snaps in two? We’d like to introduce your day-of survival guide. Regardless if you have a planner or day-of coordinator, we break down the must-haves to have on call (case in point: scissors, blue ribbon and glue). Paramount to your survival kit is also a flow of events. The run of show dictates a play-by-play timeline of occurrences, from the minute you arrive for hair and makeup to the minute you are introduced on the dance floor (as a brand new wife!). With these in your arsenal, no special moment—or loose string—will go unnoticed.

- Featuring Soirée Wedding & Events -

..... Big Day Survival Kit

What To Include In Your Big Day Survival Kit {Courtesy of Soirée Wedding & Events}

One bonus in hiring a wedding coordinator is access to their handy-dandy, uber-essential day-of emergency kit. You'll find pretty much everything in there that you would ever need when braving the elements of wedding season and the ever-dreaded Murphy's Law. There are, however, some items that you must have in this kit, especially if you are planning to DIY:

- ☐ **Q-tips:** They are the perfect size to slip inside your bra or in your cleavage during the ceremony. As soon as you feel the floodgates about to open, take one of your trusty Q-tips out and use the cotton tip to lightly press your tear ducts. Not only are you saving the makeup you just paid a lot of money to apply on your pretty face, but you're preventing the tears from flowing. Trust me, it works!
- ☐ **Crochet hooks:** If your dress has buttons, these little wonders help your gal pals get you into your dress. With the flick of a wrist, you are in your dress in a jiffy!
- ☐ **Band-Aid friction block:** Rolls on your tootsies like deodorant, but helps prevent against future blisters.
- ☐ **Safety pins, bobby pins and stick pins:** They might be obvious, so there's no excuse not to have them.
- ☐ **Ibuprofen:** Achy feet, heads and muscles will thank you later!
- ☐ **Candy/mints:** A sugar rush helps when the wedding party is starting to hit the wall or needs a quick freshener after a snack.
- ☐ **Fashion tape:** This tackles gaping blouses or dresses that won't stay in place.
- ☐ **Scissors:** Pesky hanger ribbons on bridesmaid dresses, that itchy tag, last minute décor at the reception. You never know when you will need them!

Emergency Phone Numbers:

Maid of Honor:

Best Man:

Wedding Planner:

Back-up Vendors:

Band or DeeJay:

Caterer:

Florist:

Limousine Service:



Maypole Studios

Order of Events

Before & After “I Do”: Getting Your Marital License & Changing Your Name in Chicago {Courtesy of Soirée Wedding & Events}

Before the wedding:

You MUST have a valid marriage license to get married in Cook County. The officiant will then sign it and send it in to Cook County to be processed. Marriage licenses are not valid until 24 hours after they are issued (so you can't run out and get one on the day of the wedding!) and expire after 60 days of being issued. Be sure you don't go get one too far in advance. Visit the Cook County Clerk's website here for the exact steps to acquire a marriage license.

A few things to note:

- Couples must appear together at one of the Cook County Clerk's six locations.
- Couples must fill out and sign a marriage license application.
- Each member of the couple must present valid identification with proof of age.
- The marriage license fee is \$60.



[Click here to download and print your Planning Calendar.](#)

To see more from Soirée Wedding & Events, visit pages 10 and 40 or visit them online at www.soireechicago.com



After the wedding:

After you are married, you will need to request a marriage certificate from Cook County in order to change your name. You can do so here.

Go ahead and order several copies, as you might need to mail a few off to financial institutions or passport agencies. It is \$15 for one and only \$4 for each additional after that.

Once you have received your certificate in the mail, you can then take that to the social security office with all of the necessary documents to change your name. They will mail you a new social security card. Then you can take that, along with your old driver's license, to the DMV to apply for your new driver's license with your new married last name!

Don't forget:

If you are planning on leaving for a honeymoon immediately after the wedding, do NOT book the trip under your new married name! Double-check that you book the trip with your maiden name so you have all of the appropriate identification/documents to travel (driver's license or passport). There won't be enough time to change your name and get new travel documents before you leave!

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