

WEDDING DAY DREAMS

Spring 2002

The details make the difference

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The
Goodland Daily News

Advice and tips from one who is planning her wedding

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

Here's some advice on planning your first wedding.

(Notice I didn't use the words "successful wedding," because I'm in the middle of piecing together my first — and hopefully last — union, and I have no idea how it will turn out.)

You'll want to take this advice anyway, because if you're reading this, you probably have no clue what you're getting into — just like I didn't about three months ago — and anything is bound to help.

First and most important, find a fiancé who will happily do most of the work — that reduces a lot of stress and makes the whole process much easier for you.

Second, write long to-do lists, buy a bunch of "how to plan a wedding" books and clip out a ton of articles on the subject (don't forget to save this article). Later, I'll tell you how to use these materials.

Third, if you have access to a computer and the Internet, don't be afraid to use them, because they can save you a lot of time.

Also, make sure you take a firm, forceful person along when shopping for a wedding dress, don't be afraid to be creative, marry someone with a priest in the family, go with your gut and remember to bring socks — or paint your toenails — when you get your engagement pictures taken.

Why take advice from someone who has little experience? Well ... I don't know.

But like I said before, what's it going to hurt, right? Maybe it's good to hear from someone who's only slightly less confused than you are.

My boyfriend asked me to marry him two days before Christmas. We had been dating for about five months. I know it sounds sudden, but I was planning to move and he decided he couldn't live without me.

I felt the same way about him and had thought about getting married, but I was still completely shocked when he popped the question. I suggested we wait at least a year — running through my mind all of the movies I've seen about the horrors of planning a wedding.

After spending about three hours getting used to the idea and calling each other "husband" and "wife" a trillion times, we decided to get married in September — giving us plenty of time to plan and hold the wedding before it started snowing.

After three months, we have most of the event planned.

We are getting married at a church in downtown Denver, where I grew up; the reception is at the Brown Palace Hotel, just a few blocks away; we are going to Las Vegas for our honeymoon; we have picked colors, a wedding cake and a disc jockey; I bought my wedding dress; we have decided on the wedding party and we are almost ready to send out wedding announcements.

The only things left to do are buy invitations, register for gifts, hire a

photographer, get rings and make final decisions on decorations and other little details.

For me, it's been a fairly painless process. I'll tell you why.

1. I have a fiancé who will happily do most of the work.

Mitch researched and booked the reception and rehearsal dinner sites, planned the honeymoon and is working on finding a photographer. We definitely wouldn't have as much planned right now if he hadn't worked so hard.

His job is more flexible than mine and he has time during the day to make calls and send faxes. Though I feel a little guilty for not contributing more, I'm glad he wants to

help with the planning and is so excited about the wedding. Mitch asks me before making any final plans and I know he values my opinions.

I've tried to do as much as I can, including finding a disc jockey, coordinating flowers for the wedding, picking a wedding cake and checking out the reception site. But Mitch has definitely done most of the hard stuff.

I've known a few couples who have gotten married and it seemed to me that the woman did most of the planning. I don't think there's anything wrong with doing it either way, but I'm happy that I don't have to worry about putting together an

entire wedding while working full-time.

I think I'd be worried if Mitch didn't want to be involved in planning the wedding because it could be a sign of what to expect when we're trying to make decisions or plans in marriage.

So, I guess another piece of advice I have for future brides is to be wary of a man who isn't willing to help plan the wedding. What will that mean when you're married?

2. I haven't worried much about the "right way" to plan a wedding.

When we first decided to get married, Mitch and I had no idea where

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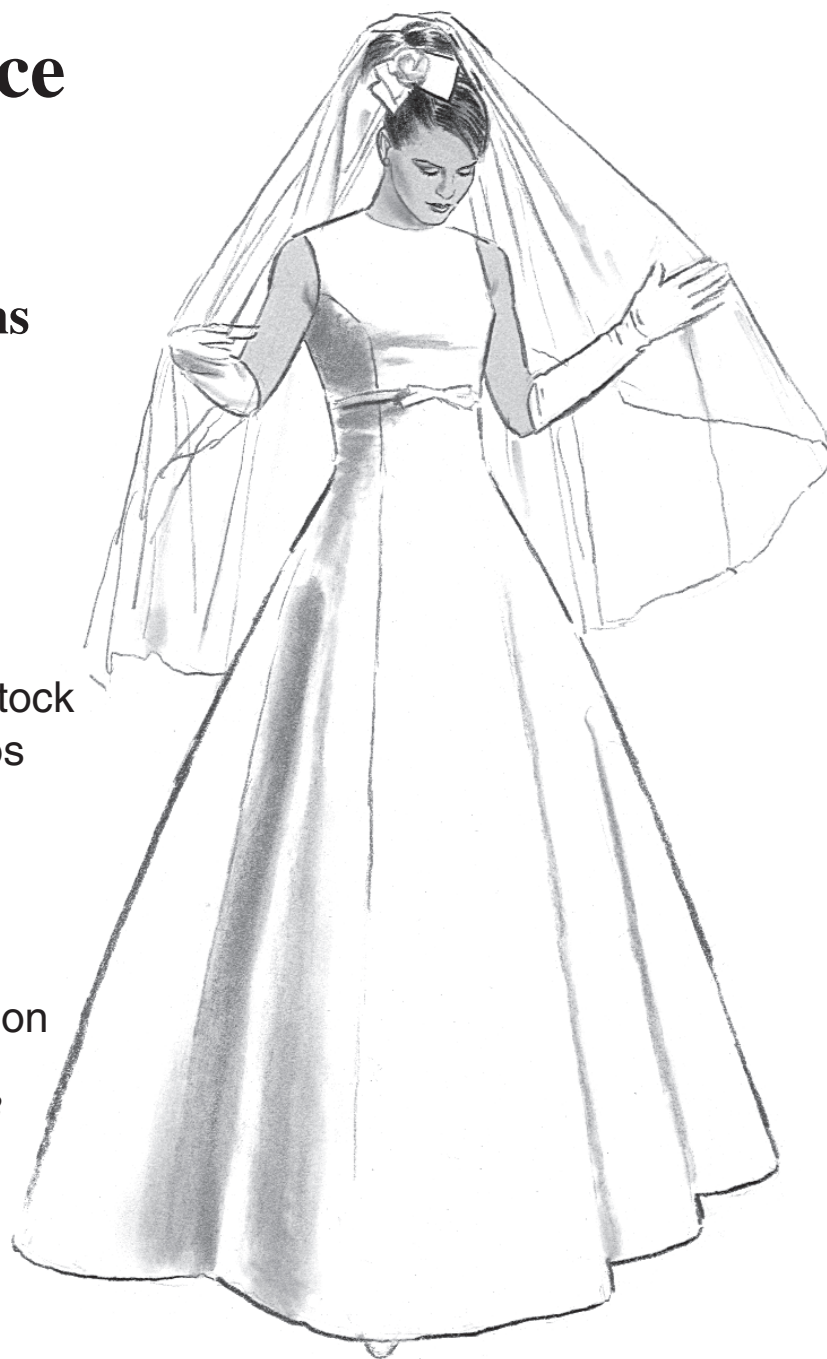
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Make decisions to match your likes

BRIDE, from Page 2

or how to start. His mom sent us a few books on the subject and I bought about five bride magazines and read countless articles.

They all had good organization tips and good advice on what decisions to make before starting to plan the wedding. In one magazine, I found the disc jockey we plan to hire and ideas on how I want my hair to look on my wedding day.

I value the advice I found in those books and magazines, but I set them aside after a good once-over and haven't looked at them since.

I decided to listen to a friend who was recently married and make decisions based on what I like, not what a book says is proper.

Mitch and I talked about how we each pictured the perfect wedding and we basically went from there. So far, we haven't needed the books for much, but I think they will come in handy when we're trying to wrap up the little details.

I'm not saying you shouldn't read wedding planner books or that they don't give good advice, just don't think you have to do everything they say.

That leads into another piece of advice I have: Don't be afraid to be creative.

I want a simple wedding and I want the wedding party to be comfortable, so all of the bridesmaids will be free to wear whatever dress they choose, as long as it's black. That's right, black.

My stepmom said she attended a wedding in New York where all of the bridesmaids were wearing black and it looked great. I thought it sounded like a good idea and figured everyone looks good in black.

The maid of honor recently gave birth to her first child and has put on a little weight. I thought she would feel more comfortable wearing a slimming color and picking out a dress which she feels flatters her figure.

Since the women will be wearing black, we figured the men should, too. So, the groomsmen will be wearing black-on-black tuxedos with silver ties — the colors are red and silver.

I don't like big flower bouquets, so the bridesmaids will be carrying three single, red roses and I will have a small bouquet of roses with the stems showing.

My three brothers are my best friends and one of Mitch's good friends is a woman, so there will be men standing on my side of the aisle and women on his side.

We had uneven numbers to stand up with us, so we decided to just divide them up evenly without

thinking about whose friend or family member they are. We figure we'll have all the same family members and friends after the wedding, anyway.

My older brother, Nate, is a rapper, so he and his partner will be performing at the wedding and my father and I will be dancing to an Elvis song. My father said my mother and stepmom refused to dance to Elvis at their weddings, so I figured we could dance to Elvis for him at mine.

3. I have used the Internet as much as possible.

Using your computer and the Internet can save you a lot of time and money.

Before I went shopping for my wedding dress, I went on the Internet and found the style of dress I wanted. That way, when I went to buy a dress, all I had to do was say, "Here's what I want."

I tried on three dresses and bought the second one, which was the exact style I had decided I wanted after looking on the Internet.

Many bridal shops have web sites, but I used the David's Bridal site and brought my dress from David's Bridal shop at Park Meadows Mall in Denver. The David's site allows you to look at hundreds of dresses on models and create your own "dressing room" on the Internet.

If they have your password, your friends and family members can look at your virtual dressing room and give you their opinion.

My father was happy I looked on the Internet beforehand. I made him go with me to buy a wedding dress, and he was glad it didn't take long.

That reminds me of another piece of advice: Make sure you take along someone firm and forceful when you go shopping for a dress.

I was happy my stepmom, who is good at getting what she wants, agreed to go shopping with me. When the sales clerk said they didn't have the veil I wanted in stock and offered me another style, my stepmom demanded they order the other veil.

I probably would have just said, "OK, well, if that's how it has to be," and then I would have been unhappy.

Mitch and I used the computer to create wedding announcements, which we will send out this month just to tell people to mark the date on the calendar and reserve rooms.

We will order formal invitations later, but making the announcements on the computer was a lot cheaper than buying note cards and envelopes.

Since many of the people attend-

ing the wedding live in Denver or cities outside Kansas, Mitch and I plan to register for gifts at chains that have locations all over. I discovered last week that we can also register on-line.

E-mail comes in handy with all of the address-collecting you have to do before sending out the invitations.

Not everyone has this benefit, but one thing that has made planning a wedding much easier for me is the fact my stepmom is an Episcopal priest. I recommend you marry someone with a priest in the family.

We don't have to pay for the church, the priest or the musicians. We can have the wedding at any time of day we want and we can decorate the church any way we want.

Churches can be expensive these days, so I'm glad there's a priest in the family!

Another piece of advice is to remember to bring socks when you get your engagement pictures taken or the photographer will make you take a picture barefoot. That's OK if you have had a pedicure recently.

Lastly, go with your gut. If something feels wrong, don't do it.

And — I have to remember this — don't worry too much about something going wrong.

My bosses' wife said the only things you'll remember about your wedding 20 years later are the things that went wrong.

So pray for a disaster or you won't have any memories!



Getting ready for the big walk down the aisle is both fun and frustrating, but when that day arrives you can be sure you have done the best to get the details right.



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