

THE UK'S NO.1 BEST-SELLING BRIDAL MAGAZINE

BRIDES

CONDÉ NAST

Award
Winning
Editor

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

THIS WAY TO...
pretty

Your fashion,
beauty and
decor...done

10-PAGE SPECIAL
EVERYTHING
THAT WAS
FABULOUS
AT BRIDES
THE SHOW

**FIRST
LOOK!**
352

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SHOES
& JEWELS

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HONEYMOON FLYING
BUSINESS CLASS!



The most Googled questions

answered by the pros

Our planners address your wedmin worries (pewh!)

1 How many bridesmaids is too many?

Don't choose your maids based on what you or other people think you should do. You needn't even have 'bridesmaids' in the traditional sense – you could just ask your best girl friends to help you out in different ways (readings, welcoming people to the ceremony, or even doing a speech). But if you do decide to have a large wedding party and are worried about what it might look like (10 girls in the same dress? Hmm...), you can mix it up by picking an overall colour palette and then choosing gowns of different shapes, lengths and styles within the shade. That way, everyone

will feel and look comfortable, but they won't look too 'matchy'. One of my clients asked each of her maids to bring her their all-time favourite dress – the one they put on and that always makes them feel fabulous – then had these gowns replicated in her wedding colours.

Alexandria Schiefner;
alexandriaevents.co.uk



2 What does 'giving notice' mean?

To get married or form a civil partnership in the UK, you need to notify your local Register Office at least 28 days before your ceremony actually takes place. By 'giving notice', you are making a public and official declaration that you are free to get married or form a civil partnership (that is, you are over the age of 16, you are single, divorced or widowed, and you are not closely related to your intended partner). There is a charge of £35 per person to do this, and you must provide proof of your name, date of birth, place of residence and nationality. Your 'Notice of Marriage' will then be publicly displayed in the Register Office for a 28-day period. Check your council's website for details of how and where you need to give notice in your region.

Lisa Baker; just-bespoke.com

3 How much deposit does a wedding venue need?

The deposit that a venue requires to secure your wedding date can really vary a great deal. Dry-hire venues, where you bring in your own catering and other suppliers, typically ask for 50% of the hire fees. Package venues or hotels will tend to request 20% of your predicted total spend (that includes food and beverages). If cash flow is or could be a worry, ask your venue whether you can pay in smaller installments along the way – this can also be a good negotiation tool. Be sure to keep dates in your diary as to when the next payment is due – venues appreciate you being on top of your finances! *Isabel Smith; isabelsmithweddings.co.uk*

4 What is my stepmother's role in my wedding?

It depends on your relationship; if the two of you get on wonderfully, then it would be nice to include her in some or most of the preparation. However, if you don't have a special connection, there is no etiquette that says you must include her in anything important. If you feel that you can plan your wedding without the guidance of your mother or stepmother, make sure you tell them so early on, so that it doesn't become more difficult. From my experience, in some cases, they feel it's their duty to plan your wedding for you, as their mother may have done for them. *Matthew Oliver; matthewoliver.co.uk*



5 Do we have to allow children at the wedding?

The great thing about modern weddings is you don't 'have to' do anything! It can be lovely to have children present, but if you don't have lots of nieces, nephews or kids of your own, it's fine to ask any friends with children not to bring them. *Dominique Douglas; stylishevents.com*

6 How can I avoid friend-and-family politics when planning my wedding?

In truth, this is pretty hard. Enlist level-headed friends and family who only have your best interests at heart and who, ideally, actually get along with each other. An independent wedding planner can also help, as they'll give impartial, experienced advice and are not an emotional stakeholder in the wedding day. *Sandy Moretta; ternevents.com*

7 How long should I spend planning my wedding?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer, but there are a few things to consider. Do you need to save for the big day and, if so, how long will that take? Wedding venues can be booked up months or even years in advance, so that may inform timings, too. Do you have any life events coming up – job changes, studies or house moves you need to work around? Finally, if you know exactly what kind of wedding you want, a short engagement will suit you; if you're unsure, then you may need a bit longer. *Rachael Corigliano; serendipity-weddings.co.uk*

8 When should I buy my dress?

Lead times at bridal boutiques vary, but typically it can take three to four months from the dress being ordered to it arriving in the shop; plus, you need to factor in one or two months for fittings and alterations. So book appointments at least seven or eight months before the wedding. If you don't have that long, look for sample sales, talk to an independent dressmaker, or shop on the High Street or online. *Andri Benson; alwaysandri.co.uk* →



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