

A bride in a white strapless gown is sitting on a path in a forest. She is holding a bouquet of pink roses. The background is filled with trees and Spanish moss hanging from the branches. The scene is lit with soft, natural light.

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# Sanity check

Wedding planning means a lot of tasks and a lot of stress. But it doesn't mean you're going to go crazy.

**I**t is an insane time. You're planning for one of the biggest days of your life, probably trying to DIY on lots of the wedding-day details to keep expenses down. Plus, you're putting in demanding hours at work, or, in some cases, conducting a full-blown job search, not to mention dealing with all of your friends' and family members' various nuptial demands.

Yes, the months leading



up to a wedding are always going to be among the most stressful in a woman's life. That's why we have pulled together these 10 stress-busters specially made for brides. Read on and relax.

## Set a budget and stick to it

It may seem like obvious advice, but experts say it

also is one of the pieces that might have the most impact on your stress level. Don't try on a \$4,000 dress if your

Please see **SANITY**, page 6

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# Joyful gatherings at Gin Creek

Staff report

Here's an odd sight. Two middle-aged farmers hitch a water tank to a tractor and gently sprinkle a dirt road while wearing tuxedos, bow ties, shiny black shoes, and smiles. "We usually do this right before a crowd arrives," says Richie DeMott as he and his brother, Doug, take up the task. "Otherwise 100 cars or more can kick up a lot of dust on a country road like ours."

There's a wedding today at the edge of a lovely lake in a tree shaded corner of their South Georgia spread. Members of the catering-savvy Demott clan, plus neighbors and friends, attend to every detail: setting chairs on grass, transporting the bride via golf cart to a gazebo based ceremony, cutting the cake, spinning dance tunes, and more. The DeMotts have turned their 42-acres oasis near Hartsfield into a popular venue named Gin Creek.

Calling All DeMotts Richie's wife, Brenda, and Doug's wife, Christina, serve as wedding planners and caterers. Richie and Brenda's school teacher daughter, Kelli, handles public relations. Their son, Max a grad student at The University of Georgia, acts as a sound



technician and DJ for different events. Doug's daughter Meaghan, a Valdosta State university student, switches from server to dishwasher to chauffeur. "One of my jobs is to drive the golf cart that brings the bride from the cabin where she dresses to the ceremony location she explains.

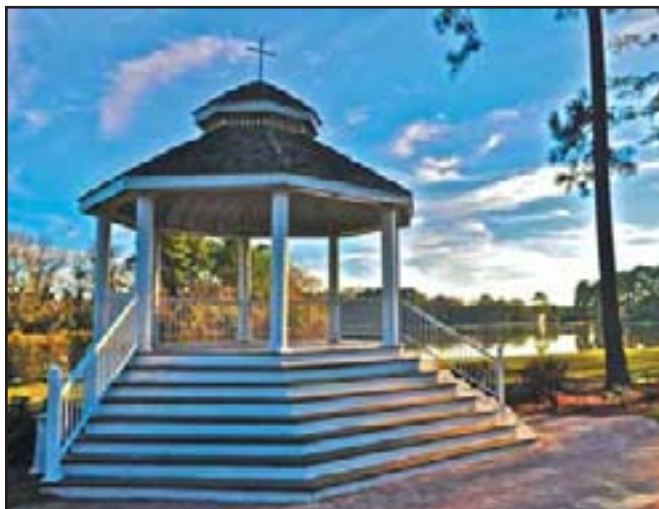
Richie and Doug's sisters, Rhonda Sauls and Kay Powell, and their mother, Dorothy DeMott Turner, help out with everything from bookkeeping to punch serving. Cousins Mitzi Edwards and Jackie Sloan lend their talents as decorators. Other relatives and friends are on call as photographers,

florists, vocalists, limo drivers, and even a hot air balloon pilot. "This is a group effort, for sure," Doug says. "It has grown quickly from a little sideline to a major un-

dertaking that no one branch of the family could handle."

"Our dad grew tobacco here and dug out this lake. After his death, our mother built the original lake house as place for the family to relax," Richie says. "We're still farmers at heart-with corn, peanuts, and soybeans growing just beyond the tree line-but running Gin Creek has become our main focus."

When not playing the role of genteel hosts, the DeMott brothers stay busy adding facilities as needed. In the shade of tall pines, broad oaks, and aromatic photogenic footbridges and swans, the centerpiece gazebo, and more. A horse drawn carriage, an antique Rolls-Royce limo, a pontoon boat, and other amenities stand ready for action.





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# Sanity

budget is \$1,500, warns Barbara Coolidge Tibbetts, author of "I Want My Mother's Dress to Match the Napkins: Funny Stories and Serious Advice For Looking Your Best At Your Child's Wedding" (CreateSpace, 2009).

If you fall in love with that \$4,000 dress you'll either go over budget to get it, or feel like what you "settle for" in your price range is inferior. There are good, solid options for everything, from invitations to venues, in every budget.

## Consider counseling

It is not just for problem couples. In fact, many states

offer discounts on marriage licenses for couples who have gone through certified premarital counseling. Wedding-planning stress often illuminates stressors that might crop up in later in a marriage, says Alisha C. Walker, one of "The Married Coaches" (www.themarriagecoaches.net) who offers couples counseling in Atlanta.

For example, working through your expectations for saving and spending on your wedding now will reduce your immediate stress level, as well as help solidify your relationship for other big potential stressors down the road, such as buying your first house.

## Cut out the diet talk

There's no surer path to stress-induced misery than buying a dress that is too

small, hoping you'll fit into it by the big day. Author Tibbetts, who also owns the T. Carolyn dress shop for mothers of the bride in Dallas, says it takes a loss of 15 pounds to drop one dress size.

This doesn't mean you should abandon efforts to eat right and exercise. Both of those things can help reduce stress during the planning process. And, if you lose a few pounds in the process, great.

## Start the process very slowly

Eisner thinks the "wedding distress disorder" many brides-to-be experience is because "people move too quickly into action mode." You don't have to buy a newsstand's worth of bridal magazines the day of your engagement and start the planning immediately.

Enjoy your engagement time and think about the marriage and life you are building, not just the party.

## Brainstorm with friends

Christine Eisner, author of the "Comfort Living - A Back-to-Basics Guide to a More Balanced Lifestyle" (Lifestyle Design, 2009), suggests newly engaged couples try the following exercise.


Sit down, close your eyes and visualize your wedding. Instead of thinking about how you want your wedding to look, think about how you want it to feel. (Eisner's book and coordinating journal include a grid of 30 words - such as "calm," "cozy" and "sleek" - to help you find the right words, but you also can brainstorm your own.)

Once you have that word

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## Sanity

in mind, make that your mantra. If you want a wedding where people are “comfortable,” you’ll make different decisions about your venue and flowers than if your key word is “opulent.”

Having that word in mind makes it easier to make decisions, Eisner says, because you’ll automatically drop options that don’t fit.

### Shop alone the first time out

Tibbetts advises mothers-of-the-bride and brides-to-be who are looking for that special dress to go it alone, at least the first time out.

“The more people you bring into the mix of decision-making, the more confusion there is,” she says.

“There needs to be a transition from the little girl fantasy.”

Christine Eisner

Narrowing it down on your own helps assure that you get the dress that portrays the image you want.

### Transition from fantasy world

Many brides-to-be try to plan their big day to match a picture that has been in their heads since they were in grammar school.

While it is fine to have a fairy tale aspect to your wedding, says Eisner, you need to adjust your fantasy to the person you are now. You may now want something different that you didn’t know about when you were a child.

“There needs to be a transition from the little girl fantasy,” Eisner says.

### Learn to trust the professionals

Too many brides torment themselves — and possibly those around them — by looking at magazines and then trying to become a specialist in every aspect of the wedding in an effort to replicate what they see.

If you give the florist, caterer, baker and other pros the creativity they need, you may find that they have ideas that fit your budget and goals — and are different than what you’ve seen before.

A corollary to that is that you should listen to the pros when they point out potential pitfalls. They’ve been there; they’ve done that. They know of which they

speak.

### Allow people to participate

Not taking friends and family dress shopping doesn’t mean you are eliminating them from all the pre-party prep.

If you have a friend who owns a restaurant and wants to pitch in, perhaps you can ask her to come up with a signature drink for your reception, Eisner suggests.

### Don’t buy into the fairy tale

That’s the last piece of advice from Walker: “Because, the next day, reality hits.” The more you make your wedding fit with your everyday life, the less stress you’ll experience when it is over.

— CTW Features



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Smart travel is Brown's specialty.

# Stress-free honeymoon

## Travel Channel's Samantha Brown offers tips for perfect post-wedding trip

Sometimes you just gotta get away. And as host of the Travel Channel's "Great Weekends," Samantha Brown knows how to do just that. Here are her suggestions for leaving the wedding all behind and having a blast on your 'moon.

You've just spent a year deciding on things like the perfect dress to the napkin fold - give yourself a break and don't over-plan your honeymoon. Wait to book excursions like snorkeling or a helicopter ride for when you get there.

Factor in "door-to-door" travel time. It

may be a five-hour flight, but total travel time could be almost double that amount. If you only have a week, choose a closer location so you're not spending a chunk of your honeymoon in transit.

Look beautiful in your pictures. It's a gorgeous sunset picture of the two of you, but your face is so shiny it's almost reflective. Always bring powder, waterproof mascara and a little lip gloss - now post those pics on Facebook!

Stay away from organized tours - there's nothing romantic about being with 30 people on a bus. Splurge on a personal guide or driver to take you around and get a local's perspective of where the best beaches and spots (hint: no tourists) are.

Find out the peak times of the places you want to go to - beach, Machu Picchu, museum - and avoid at all costs. General rule is if you go first thing in the morning or after 4 p.m. you'll have the place to yourself.

— CTW Features

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# Going with the FLOH

World Wide ... What? America's favorite mom, Florence Henderson, knows what it takes to get older relatives wired into your wedding

**S**o the wedding Web site is up and running, and with a few clicks guests can RSVP, book a room at the hotel and even purchase something off one of the registries. It sounds simple enough - except some of your older relatives may be a little nonplussed by it all.

If technology is completely foreign to them, you might try to sing the laurels of technology and help guide them a bit. It just may stick.

"When you're younger

and have young kids, they're trying to keep up with you; when you're older, you're trying to keep up with them," says actress Florence Henderson. Most famous for playing mom Carol Brady on "The Brady Bunch," Henderson turned her own technology fears into a way to help older adults in the same boat. Her new venture, The FLOH Club, is a phone-based technical support service designed to help older adults with tech issues - it's like roadside assistance for com-

puters, says Henderson.

A reformed Luddite, if you will, Henderson long avoided computers and learning about technology, to the point that she'd have her assistant print out e-mails and would dictate back the responses. "I never really had the time or felt I had the need," she says. "I was so terrified to even try it."

But at the behest of her children - "Mom, you gotta do this," they told her - she dove in and was soon e-mailing from her phone and texting - and thinking it wasn't hard as she thought it'd be. Now, she has a Facebook page and Skypes with her family. "The most exciting thing for me is being able to video-conference," she says.

To help your parents, grandparents and other older relatives feel at ease with

the Web-savvy of today's weddings, Henderson outlines a few suggestions:

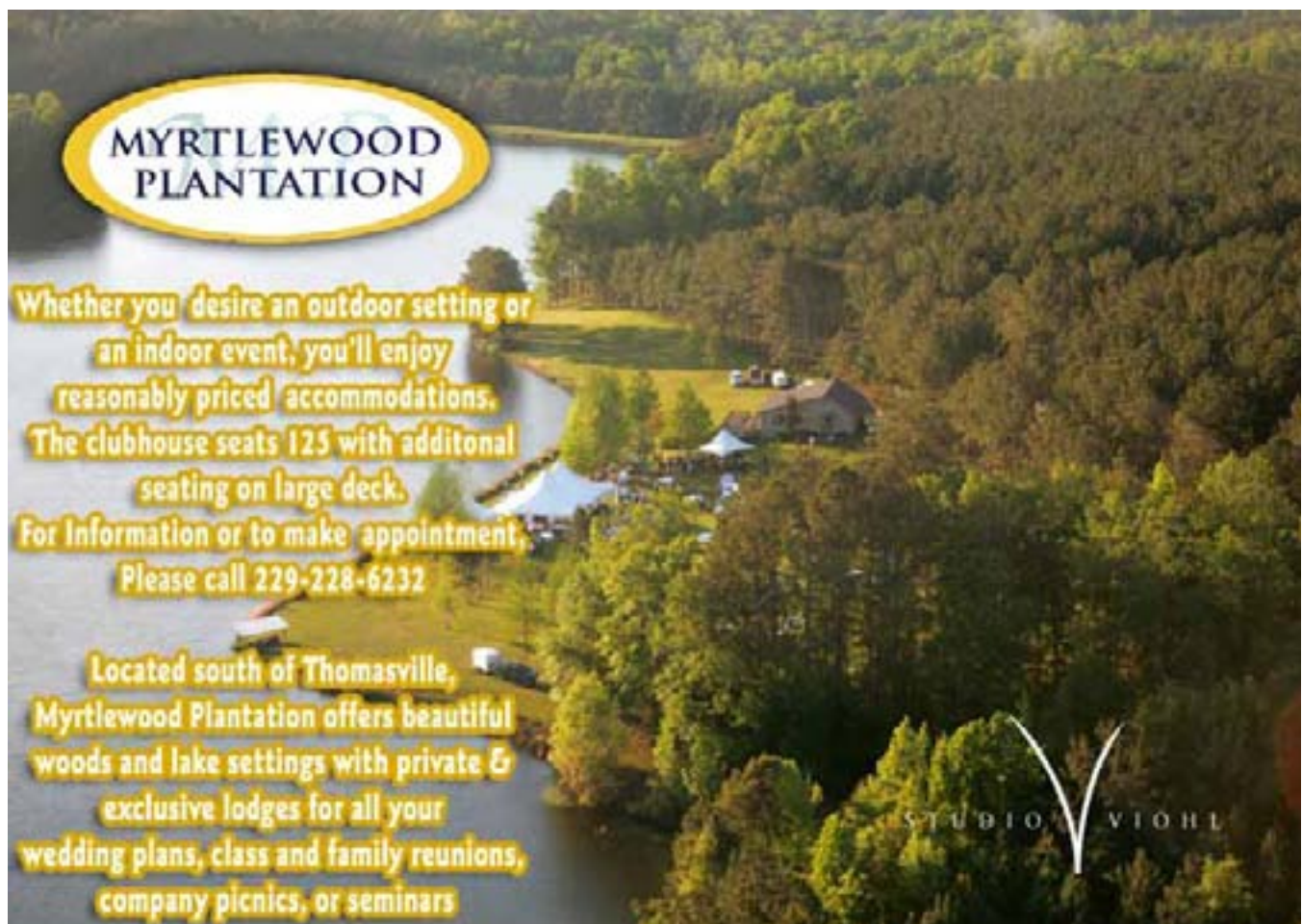
## Remind them of cost savings

When booking hotel rooms or making airliner reservations, "[You can] get good deals if you know how to do it online," says Henderson. "Especially today with everything so costly, if you can find a less expensive way to do it, that's so important."

## Feel secure with online purchases

"That is a worry," says Henderson, noting that now

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“When you’re younger and have young kids, they’re trying to keep up with you; when you’re older, you’re trying to keep up with them.”

Florence Henderson

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# Go

she does more online shopping.

Her tip: “Guide people to stores where they know their cards will be protected and where they’re not going to get ripped off.”

## A little goes a long way

Everyone’s busy, and sometimes it’s even tough to connect on the phone. E-mailing or sitting down for a

quick video-chat is a simple way to keep family in the loop on wedding details without laborious phone calls.

“I think for me it’s being able to stay connected,” Henderson says.

## Be a Cheerleader

“[My kids] know how I like to stay with it. They would always be encouraging me,” says Henderson.

“I’ve always wanted to be relevant and know what’s going on,” says Henderson.

“Being a part of something so vast and so big ... it makes me feel younger.”

— CTW Features



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# Best dress for your budget



Fitted strapless satin gown in champagne from Faviana. \$258

**H**ow much do you plan to spend on your gown? \$1,000? \$500? Something in between? Whatever your price point, there's never been a better time for chic, affordable bridal fashions

Just five years ago, if a bride wanted to spend \$1,000 or less for a wedding gown, most often she was relegated to designer sample sales or mass-market bridal discounters. Enter the tanking economy, the ensuing recession and the subsequent wedding budget crunch, and designers and manufacturers are quickly hitching their companies to a new trend: creating up-market gowns for un-

der a grand. Bridal lines such as Watters are prominently highlighting the category on their Web sites and in their magazine ads. Others have unveiled new secondary lines, such as Alfred Angelo's Niki Bridal. And new, modern designers are stepping out, including Ceec Design and Alix & Kelly, infusing their collections with influences from contemporary fashions, and finding reception with equally minded boutiques.

## 'Splurge and Steal'

The category certainly

Please see **DRESS**, page 12

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continued from page 11

# Dress

got a boost when destination weddings became the rage in the last decade. Brides sought more sand-friendly gowns that could billow before the ocean.

Companies like Nicole Miller and J. Crew have benefited from that trend. From there, some brides became more attuned to ready-to-wear looks and have embraced the high-low mentality of pairing expensive, designer duds with mass-market accessories or vice versa, says Maria Prince, vice president of Dallas-based Waters Brides.

"This is a generation of 'splurge and steal' buying," Prince says. "She'll buy a \$1,000 gown and splurge on \$700 shoes that she can wear again and again." As a result, the stigma of penny-pinch-

ing when it comes to wedding planning is in freefall, say wedding experts. "There may have been a stigma in the past where brides maybe felt the more you spent on a wedding gown, the 'better' it was, but the change in economy has opened everyone's eyes to the quality and style that can be found at lower price points," says Melissa Akey Drayer, owner and designer of Thread.

If a bride feels like she's giving up something at this less stratospheric cost, most designers insist that they're able to deliver on craftsmanship without sacrificing on styling.

Even those brides interested in their fairy tale moment can find less expensive ball gowns, which typically cost more due to extra fabric. Wtoo Brides offers an A-line look with waist beading at \$990.

For their spring offerings, designers don't seem to be cutting corners. There's a re-

turn to romance for designers, says Michael Shettel, head designer of Alfred Angelo. Brides will find gowns with floatier fabrics, like crinkle chiffon, satin organzas and airy taffetas. Body hugging styles with dropped waists and trumpet skirts are in, as are one-shoulder looks.

Dimensional flowers are getting played up along with beaded sashes and new textured ornamentation, like newly shaped stones at Wtoo.

## The wedding dress experience

Should a bride stick to a \$1,000 wedding dress budget, most designers say she'll still get the red-carpet treatment when buying her gown, from making an appointment to working with a wedding consultant through the entire dress-buying process. Unless she visits a

bigger bridal chain store where she can buy off the rack, she'll most likely have to order her dress, which can take up to three months. Some purchases can be trickier, like buying J. Crew gowns, which are sold only online. Under each dress description is a note to contact J. Crew's wedding specialist for help with the gown purchase. A few stores, such as Tom's Bridal in Anaheim, Calif., may charge for gown fittings but will deduct it from the purchase price of a gown should a customer buy it. "We don't look at how much she spends," says Aubree Cummings, a sales rep for Celebrations Bridal, a Las Vegas-based bridal gown store in business for 22 years. "Whatever she spends, we treat the customer the same. A bride walks in the door, and whoever greets her stays with her through the entire process."

— CTW Features

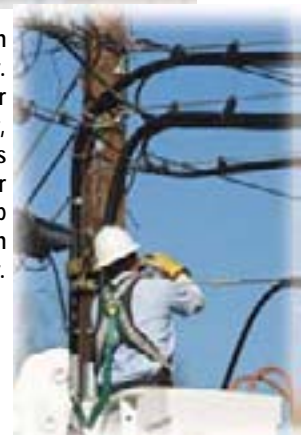


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# Get the most cake for your money

If you don't watch it, the wedding cake can quickly become a huge expense. Splurging on five tiers with multiple flavors and sugar flowers in every bite isn't worth the high cost for everyone, so here are some inexpensive ideas for a cake that's right on target.

The first and most important thing to remember is to be honest and clear about the budget you have in mind. If you're having a bakery prepare the cake, be sure to tell them about your budget concerns up front at the tasting. Some bakeries also have price minimums, so it's a good idea to get the cost issue squared away first.

"When I ask my [clients] about their budget, I'm not asking this to see how much I can get out of them," says Keli Fayard, the co-owner and chef at Vanille Patis-



serie in Chicago. "I'm asking this so I can design a cake that they will love and they've budgeted for. I like to come up with a design that includes a splash of color and a little wow-factor yet still falls within their preferred price range."

When planning the cake

of your dreams, the general rule is that the more time-intensive it will be to make, the more it will cost. This means adding flavors, tiers, or even changing the shape from round to square will increase the cost. Heavy use of fondant icing or sugar flowers also can bump up the price, as can custom colors if the decorator charges for hand coloring.

"To keep costs down, choose simple, round and white," says Fayard. She recommends adding your own decorations just before the reception, going with fresh flowers, lace or ribbon. They're not hard to work with and make a big impact.

One thing that you should not skip on, however, is the taste. "No one should ever sacrifice on flavor," says Cheryl Kleinman of Cheryl Kleinman Cakes in New

York. "The cake should always taste really, really good. The couple and the guests should be very satisfied."

She suggests getting a small, tastefully decorated two- or three-tiered cake for cutting in the ceremony, then sheet cakes to serve the guests. This way, you won't have to skimp on ingredients. "The money should go into having a great-tasting cake," Kleinman advises. "Lower-end bakers aren't using the best ingredients, but the high-end ones are, even ingredients on an organic level."

Your guests will remember the taste of world-class chocolate more than they will the intricate details of the sugar flowers. Plus, it's not going to last forever - you're going to end up eating it anyway.

— CTW Features



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# Sundown offers perfect setting

Staff report

May of 2009 was an exciting time for the John B. Alderman family. After 12 months of building, Sundown Farms Plantation had its first wedding reception. Since that time Sundown has had many events ranging from weddings, rehearsal dinners, receptions, showers, retreats and seminars.

Managed by Benji Alderman and co-owned by Benji, his wife Jenna, and his parents Ellen and Benny Alderman, Sundown Farms Plantation is South Georgia's premier event venue and quail hunting destination. Set in the middle of cotton fields the grounds were designed by landscape architect and Moultrie native Jonathan Vines.

The landscape features a large brick patio and seating wall off the main lodge as well as curving brick steps leading to the Murphy house. Beautiful fencing, winding walkways and large flower beds add to the special southern plantation feel.

The back of the lodge overlooks a lake and is the perfect setting for an outdoor wedding. Brides and bridesmaids walk the curving pathway from the Murphy House toward the main lodge to be met by the groomsmen and escorted to the altar.

After the ceremony the lodge is perfect for the wedding reception.

The interior is an open floor plan with dining and living in one area. Two adjoining rooms are wide open for extra seating and are especially beautiful settings for the wedding cake and groom's cake.

If the bridal party wants a more formal atmosphere, the Aldermans move out all the furniture to make room for round tables which they



Photos by Abby Mims



provide.

The main room is cypress with exposed beams. Hanging above are handmade deer antler chandeliers by Thomasville's Hardin Taxidermy. At one end is a beautiful fireplace designed by Marie Brown of Harrison Design, the designer for the interior lodge complex. For rehearsal dinners many clients choose to be seated at large heart pine tables which add that special southern charm.

Sundown Plantation has twelve bedrooms with sixteen beds which may be used

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Please see **SUNDOWN**, page 19

# Perfect match



## Dessy and Pantone get colors under control

**I**t's not easy getting your wedding colors to match. Your bridesmaid dresses' fuchsia may not be your florist's fuchsia, which probably isn't your venue's fuchsia or your cake designer's fuchsia, either. A new collaboration between Pantone and The Dessy Group hopes to change that.

The result, Pantone Wedding, incorporates Pantone's color tools with Dessy's collection of fashions and accessories with the goal of establishing a perfectly color-coordinated wedding.

Swatch cards (\$10) are available in approximately 200 Pantone col-

ors. The 8.5-by-11 sheets can be divided into 14 individual swatch cards - one side features full-color saturation, the other lists the color name and Pantone reference number. The goal: to be able to hand off perfect-match colors to your vendors.

Inspiration Boards help brides create the "look" of their wedding by mashing together photos of fashions and accessories in their wedding colors along with notes and other wedding-related images. Once saved, the style boards can be shared via e-mail and posted on Web sites and blogs. Each Dessy image also directly links to the product-detail page for finding and purchasing items. See them at [www.dessy.com/pantone](http://www.dessy.com/pantone)

— CTW Features




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# Our wedding, our way

## Young and broke — how college couples are marrying

The story of two kids tying the knot fresh out of college is hardly new. But in the midst of a rough economy, the story is becoming more complicated. For two doe-eyed couples, planning a 2010 wedding has meant sacrifice, persistence and a healthy dose of DIY.

### The couples

Hillary Sowatsky, 21, and Jeff Hentschel, 23: Hillary and Jeff met as students at Northwestern University. Jeff graduated in June 2009 and started working for Ford Motor Co. in Detroit; Hillary will graduate a quarter early in March 2010. The future Mr. and Mrs. Hentschel will tie the knot April 10, 2010 at Hillary's home church in suburban St. Louis.

**Alyssa Derose, 21, and Zach Gaidar, 22:** Alyssa

and Zach began dating in high school and attended Western Illinois University together. The future Mr. and Mrs. Gaidar will exchange vows Oct. 1, 2010, at Prairie Crossing in Grayslake, Ill., an outdoor venue with a barn and a gazebo.

### Setting the date

Alyssa and Zach initially planned to get married in April 2011. "It just seemed so far away," Alyssa said. "We didn't know what would be going on in our lives so far away from now."

To save money, the couple decided to hold their wedding on a Friday. "It cuts the cost in half," Alyssa said. "It's the same with photographers, going to DJs, anything like that."

But that decision poses its own challenges. Some guests have offered to take the day to help the couple set

up. Others have said they can't attend because they can't take the day off of work. Alyssa's main concern is that her rehearsal dinner is on a Thursday.

"We're probably going to use the rehearsal dinner, instead of having more family, as just the wedding party," Alyssa said.

Hillary and Jeff decided to get married in April to catch the end of the wedding off-season. But Hillary said she's already noticed venues booking up more quickly than usual.

### Guest list

The easiest way to cut money is to cut the guest list, Hillary said. "If you cut



Alyssa Derose, 21, and Zach Gaidar, 22 began dating in high school and attended Western Illinois University together.

one table, that's 10 meals, linens, the centerpiece, invitations for everyone and various other stationery and favors," she said.

For Alyssa and Zach, cut-

Please see **COUPLES**, page 20

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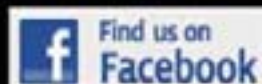
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continued from page 15

# Sundown

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continued from page 17  
**Couples**

ting down the list quickly turned to cutting down on invited family members. Alyssa's dad is one of 10 children; Zach's mom is one of six.

A huge priority for Hillary and Jeff has been to create an environment that can include more people even if the theme is less extravagant.

But even encouraging people to attend the wedding proved to be a challenge. "I have relatives who are out of a job that might not be able to come to the wedding," Hillary said. "It's an added pressure. You think: Will people feel obligated to come? Is there anything we can do to make it more feasible to come?"

One idea was to market the wedding as family week-



Hillary Sowatsky, 21, and Jeff Hentschel, 23, met as students at Northwestern University.

end. Hillary's family has a reunion every two years, but this year the family was unsure who would be able to make it.

### Finishing touches

Fitting all the wedding essentials has forced the couples to get creative.

Alyssa's wedding favors

double as place cards. A friend who is a graphic designer will create all the stationery for their wedding. Alyssa and Zach just have to provide the paper.

Hillary and Jeff are going for signature cocktails rather than a full bar.

"We're trying out different drinks that are local to the cities that have been important to us," Hillary said.

They're working on a drink for St. Louis and for Chicago, and Hillary said she hopes to have a purple drink for Northwestern.

### Secret life

Both Hillary and Alyssa like to keep their wedding planning and student life separate. Hillary knocked off most of the planning over the summer. Alyssa found her dress before school started and will look for a caterer and photographer at home over the holidays.

Alyssa said fitting her

wedding into a tight budget has been stressful.

But getting married now, even within her budget, just feels right.

Hillary said it's both easier and more difficult being engaged and trying to find a job. "Because Jeff graduated first and accepted a job first," Hillary said, "he's made the decision of where we're going to live."

"It does make it more difficult because I have to look in such a concentrated area. But come April, I do have someplace to live ... it takes the pressure off."

But being away from Jeff has made wedding planning more complicated, too. Jeff wants to stay involved, but since he can't make it to meetings with Hillary, she just takes good notes. "It's hard being apart," Hillary said. "But the next time we're together we're going to be together for the rest of our lives."

— CTW Features

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# Countdown to the wedding

## Getting started

- Discuss finances with everyone contributing to the event and set a budget.
- Set the date and ceremony/reception locations.
- Establish a guest list.
- Start thinking about the style and theme of your wedding.
- Start shopping for a gown.

## 6-9 months before

- Mail out Save-the-Dates
- Interview and book your vendors; don't forget to get a signed contract.
- Choose your attendants; shop for their dresses.
- Order your stationery.
- Start looking into honeymoon locales.
- Register for gifts.

## 4-6 months before

- Book your hair/makeup help.
- Plan the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner.
- Shop for wedding bands.
- Reserve a block of hotel rooms for your guests.
- Finalize your honeymoon plans.

## 2-4 months before

- Buy attendants' gifts.
- Get the men's fashions in order.
- Choose readings/music for the ceremony.
- Check marriage-license

requirements.

- Meet with your caterer to discuss menu and drinks.
- Order the cake. Pick out favors.
- Plan and shop for welcome bags.
- Arrange party rentals, if necessary.
- Book your wedding-night room.

## 4-8 weeks before

- Mail out your invites.
- Do a hair/makeup run-through.
- Discuss insurance/bank account changes you'll need to make.
- Send ceremony programs, reception menu and place cards to be printed.

## 2-4 weeks before

- Submit a shot list to your photographer and setlist to your DJ.
- Finalize the seating chart and prepare escort/place cards.
- Confirm details with your vendors.
- Get your final dress fitting.

## 1 week before

- Give your caterer the final headcount.
- Pick up your dress; break in your shoes.
- Pack for your honeymoon.
- Organize your payments and decide who will distribute them.

## 1 day before

- Get a mani-pedi.
- Enjoy the rehearsal and dinner.
- Get plenty of sleep.

Good luck.



— CTW Features

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# Preston Bailey shares secrets

**P**reston Bailey travels the world planning and executing lavish events, the most recent of which being the October 2009 wedding of Ivanka Trump. Fresh off creating a wedding and with the release of a new book, "Preston Bailey Celebrations" (Rizzoli, 2009), the party maestro gives brides a few style pointers for their big day.

**Q: How can brides adapt your "Why Not?" mentality for planning and decorating without coming off like Bridezilla?**

**A:** The "Why Not" mentality is what makes a wedding exciting. However, in order not to become a Bridezilla, she needs to choose what is most important to her and invest all of the design and planning in that area. At times, the "Why Not" mentality could also be costly.

**Q: You're big on "dramatic statements." What's a simple, easy way to create a dramatic statement for a wedding?**

**A:** The escort card table is a great place to create a dramatic statement - it's the first thing the guest sees, and it is the moment they are most likely to remember. A simple way is to assign a flower for each guest at the card table, just as I did for Ivanka Trump's wedding, in which each guest had a gardenia in floating water next to their names.

**Q: What types of colors and flowers for 2010?**

**A:** I tend to pay a lot of attention to the fashion shows in Paris and New York; they usually work six months ahead of time, so it's great inspiration. For 2010, I noticed a lot of deep purple, which is the cover "Celebrations."

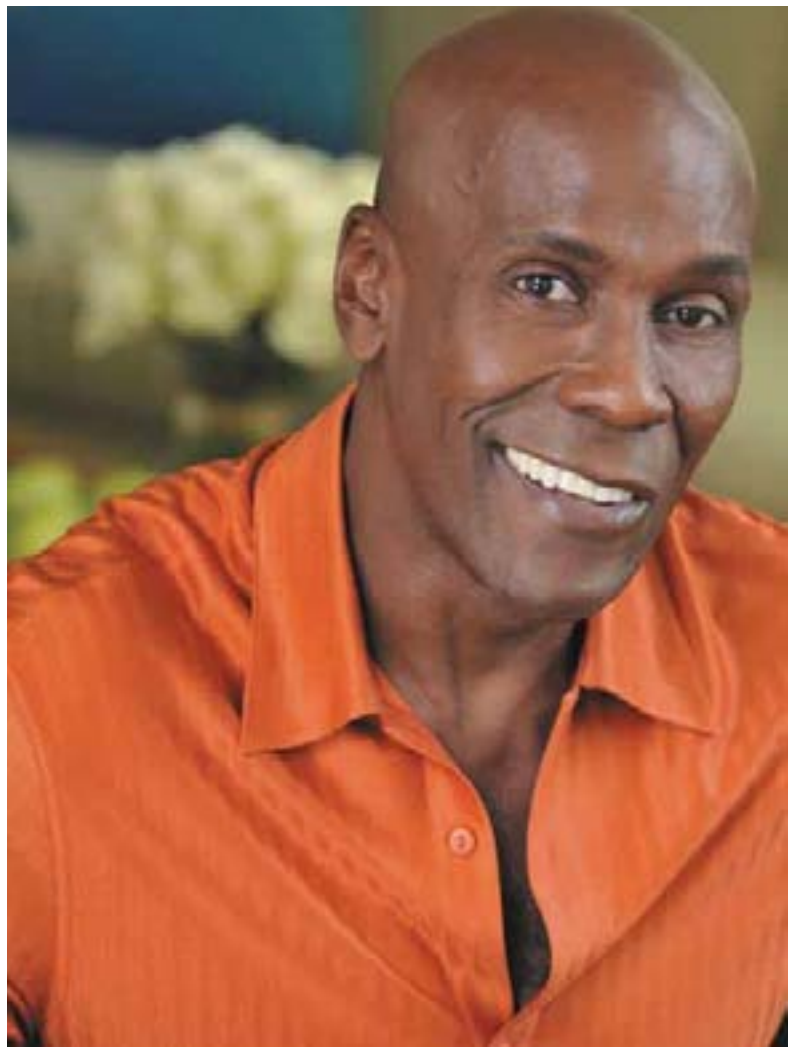
**Q: Do you have any do's & don'ts for centerpieces?**

**A:** I treat my centerpieces as dramatic statements full of layers and surprises. I love to create a piece that not only has great flowers but shows tons of intricate details. I tend to keep away from anything that looks too forced. Besides that, the sky is the limit. One can have a great deal of fun constructing centerpieces.

**Q: You say "beauty is in the details." Any suggestions for keeping details top of mind when brides have so many things to plan and keep track of?**

**A:** I think that the bride should keep in mind that the beauty of all details are what her team and staff and various folks will execute for her. She simply needs to share her vision and let us worry about all those wonderful details. Of course, if she is working alone, a trusted friend or freelance wedding organizer for the day could be a great tool.

— CTW Features



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# Tips on the right way to do wine



GARY VAYNERCHUK

Wine with dinner - where to begin? There seems to be an infinite number of wine choices and pairings out there, and almost as many ways to ruin either your guests' meal or your budget with the wrong selection.

Enter Gary Vaynerchuk, a video-blogging wine guru ([www.winelibrary.tv](http://www.winelibrary.tv)). He's here to make sure the wines at your wedding not only satisfy your budget but also deliciously reflect your personality, as well.

His first suggestion is to make friends with the person who sells and stocks the wine when you're shopping. "The best strategy is to form a relationship with your wine retailer and try new things," he says. "As they learn your palate and what you like, they'll be able to suggest new and interesting wines that you may never

have heard of and would never have tried on your own."

As for finding the perfect wine pairing with your reception entrées, the general rule is to match flavor intensity - a lighter menu with a lighter wine, a richer menu with a richer wine.

For the best for your budget, however, Vaynerchuk recommends going with a versatile wine, like some from the Dao, Douro and Alentejo regions of Portugal. That way, guests can have a meal choice and you don't have to worry about buying a large variety of wines.

"Portuguese wines are without question the single best value in the marketplace right now, making them great for weddings where a lot of wine gets wasted," says Vaynerchuk.

"You will find many \$6 to \$10 wines that knock your socks off, both red and white!" He adds that wines from Argentina and Southwest France also are deliciously affordable right now.

We know it can be tempting to splurge for this important moment, but Vaynerchuk advises to keep it cheaper. "People buy the \$40 house brand Champagne [for the toast] when they can just as easily spend \$10 to \$12 on a prosecco or Spanish Cava," he says.

It's one thing many couples forget - you don't have to serve Cabernet or Chardonnay just to please guests, especially if you don't want to. Vaynerchuk says to taste and explore many options. He adds, "It's your day, drink wine you like!"

— CTW Features

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of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(city, state)

of \_\_\_\_\_ son of \_\_\_\_\_  
(city, state)

### Facts About the Bride-To-Be

Grandparents: \_\_\_\_\_

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School: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Facts About the Groom

Grandparents: \_\_\_\_\_

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School: \_\_\_\_\_

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Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The wedding will take place at \_\_\_\_\_

in \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
(city, state) (date) (time)

This engagement announcement must be signed by one member of the participating couple

I \_\_\_\_\_ swear that the above facts are true to the best of my knowledge.  
(print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(phone number)

### WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

(please type or print)

**Bride's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride's Parents & Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Parents & Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Time, Date & Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Minister's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Musicians & Soloists:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Maid or Matron of Honor & Hometown:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Bridesmaids:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Brief Description of Dresses & Flowers:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Best Man & Hometown:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Groomsmen & Hometown:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Ushers & Hometown:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Other Attendants:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Bride Escorted By:**

**Brief Description of Bride's Gown:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Brief Description of Veil:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Brief Description of Flowers:** \_\_\_\_\_

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