



Bridal 2011 Showcase



Wanted: Flower girl or boy

By Tresa Erickson

You've been gathering your bridal party for months now, and with the attendants out of the way, you can finally focus on the children who will be in your wedding. You only have one nephew, so the matter of whom to ask to be ringbearer is settled. The flower girl, on the other hand, is not so easy. You have several nieces. Hmm, what's a bride to do?

Before you make any choices, remember that the younger the child, the more difficult it may be for them to do the job. Focus on girls, or boys if you wish, between the ages of four and eight, and for the best results, select someone in the upper part of that age range. Consider the maturity, personality and temperament of each candidate. Shy, reserved children may not want to participate, whereas more active children might. Be wary of overly active children. You don't want to end up with a flower girl or boy speeding down the aisle and tossing petals into the guests' faces as they zoom past.

Once you have selected someone, speak to their parents and make sure they are comfortable with the idea. Traditionally, they are the ones who will pay for their child's wedding ensemble. If that is not within their budget or they don't think their child is right for the role, they may ask you to select someone else. Don't be offended. Move on to your second choice and start the process again.

As soon as the matter is settled and you

have found a child to be your flower girl or boy, you can move on to the details. You want the flower girl or boy to be comfortable, so select a dress or tuxedo that fits them well and is free of scratchy fabric. The dress should complement the style of your dress or the bridesmaid dresses and you may want it an inch or two longer to make up for any growth the flower girl might experience. The tuxedo should complement the style of the tuxedos worn by the groom and groomsmen.

If you are selecting a dress, keep in mind that the best flower girl dresses are made by companies that specialize in children's wear. While some dresses are white and resemble the bridal gown, others match the bridesmaid dresses or have a sash that matches the color of the bridesmaid dresses.

The flower girl or boy should be invited to the bridal shower, if applicable, and definitely to the rehearsal. In fact, you may want to appoint an adult to supervise them and any other children at that event. The flower girl or boy generally walks in front of the bride in the processional and in front of the maid of honor in the recessional. They may scatter petals, hand out single flowers or just carry a bouquet, and once they have reached the end of the aisle, they may stand near the attendants or sit with their parents. At the reception, they should sit with their parents rather than at the head table.

It is not easy to choose the right child to be your flower girl or boy, especially if you

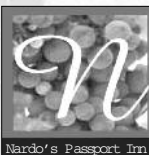
have several candidates. Keep their age, personality and temperament in mind, and for the best results, do not permit the child you choose to eat candy, cake or any other sweets before your wedding. Keep them as calm as possible and give them a small gift

afterwards to thank them for a job well done.

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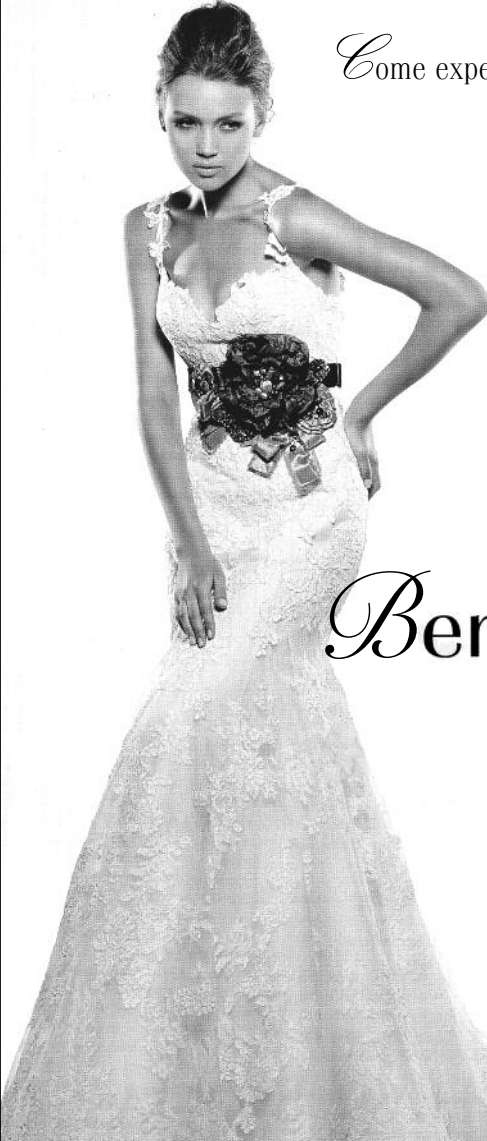
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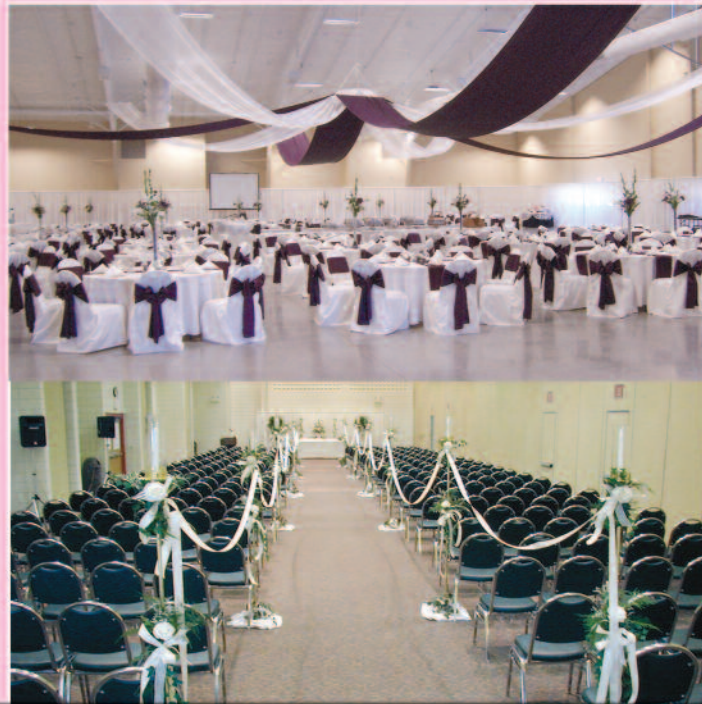
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Negotiating the guest list for your wedding

By Samm Erickson

He finally popped the question and you accepted. Now there are a lot more questions to be answered. When? Where? How? Who? Are you going to invite everyone you know, including your second grade teacher? Or will this be a more intimate affair for close friends and family only? Somewhere in between these two extremes is probably where you will end up, but how do you make that decision? After all, your wedding is the day that you will make your love

public and share it with others.

The number of guests is something that should be negotiated early on. Your budget will probably be the primary determinant of how big your guest list can be. A formal dinner and reception will be considerably more expensive than just appetizers. In many cases, it is the people who are paying for the event that will get to choose who is coming. Make sure this is negotiated well in advance so that there are no conflicts going down the aisle on the wedding day. The guest list should be focused on people who

are important in your life.

Start your planning with a master list of everyone that you would like to invite to the wedding-the perfect, most inclusive list you can think of. This can generate some old memories and be a fun way to spend some time with your future spouse. Divide the list into different groups. Take care of your family first because they helped raise you and made you who you are. Close friends come next, whether they be old or new. Then move on to further relations, people you work or socialize with occasionally.

You might consider making an "A" list of guest that are essential to your wedding and a "B" list of guests that you would like to have come but don't fit into your overall plan right away. Send out

your "A" list early and, if you get rejections, you can send out your "B" list invitations and still have a full wedding. Think about cutting down on your floral arrangements or choice of meals to include more guests since they are what make the wedding. No one will remember if you served salmon or trout, but they will remember not being invited.

The truth of the matter is that you may end up hurting some feelings by not inviting everyone you know. Inevitably, someone will find out that they weren't invited and be hurt. It is important to get past this guilt and understand that this is your day to celebrate and that you can't possibly invite everyone who would like to come. The guest list can be a terrible minefield to negotiate, but starting early, setting definite goals and seeking the support of your future spouse will go a long way toward minimizing the stress of designing it.

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Bridal 2011 Showcase



Bridal shower etiquette

By Tresa Erickson

You've just been asked to be a maid of honor, and as such, you will have many responsibilities, including throwing the bridal shower. You've never tackled such an event, and you could use some advice.

In recent years, the rules of bridal showers have relaxed. Traditionally, maids of honor were responsible for throwing the bridal shower, but today, almost anyone can host it and there can be more than one. The bride's mother might hold one for the immediate family, the maid of honor for the bride's friends and a coworker for the bride's coworkers. The shower can even be co-ed and held for both the bride and the groom and their friends and family. However many showers are held, the maid of honor should always be consulted first.

All showers should take place four to six weeks before the wedding. Any later than that and the bride may find it difficult to fit it into her schedule. As for the guest list, it is not necessary to invite every single person the bride knows or every person she invited to the wedding. Anyone invited to the shower, however, should be invited to the wedding. Ten to 20 guests make for an ideal gathering. The list should include the wedding party, the mothers of the bride and groom (and fathers if a

couples shower), the sisters of the bride and groom (and brothers if a couples shower), and all close family members, friends and coworkers invited to the wedding.

Each person on the guest list should receive a separate invitation even if they live in the same household. All invitations should be hand-addressed and mailed a month before the shower. Each should include the bride's (or couples') name; the date, time, location and theme, if applicable, of the shower; the name and phone number of the host; any maps or directions to the location; and an RSVP deadline. A list of registries may also be included, though some experts insist this is improper.

Guests should not have to pay for any part of the shower, including their meal if the shower is held at a restaurant, and all members of the wedding party and both mothers should be involved in the shower in some way, if they would like. Involvement can be something as simple as recording the gifts received or organizing the games.

Although the rules of bridal showers have relaxed, there are still some experts advise should be followed. If you are planning to throw a bridal shower, be aware of the etiquette involved and do your best to follow it.

A day of sparkle

By Tresa Erickson

Your wedding day is almost here and your ensemble is nearly complete. You've got your dress, veil, shoes, gloves and purse. Now all you need is some jewelry. The right jewelry can make all the difference between looking good or garish, so choose the pieces you plan to wear with care.

Generally, the more elaborate your gown, the more elaborate your jewelry can be. Keep in mind, though, that the wedding dress is the star of the show and you don't want to take away from it, so less really is more when it comes to selecting jewelry. While a matching set of diamond earrings, necklace and bracelet might look good with that little black cocktail dress hanging in your closet, it might not work so well with an intricately beaded, sequined gown.

The jewelry you select should complement your dress. If your gown is vintage, then you will want older jewelry, whereas if it is modern, then you will want more contemporary jewelry. The same principle ap-

plies to stones. Are your bridesmaids wearing royal blue dresses? Then you'll probably want to wear sapphires or diamonds rather than rubies or emeralds. Is your wedding dress drenched with pearls? Then you'll probably want to wear pearls rather than rhinestones. The color of the metal in your jewelry should complement your dress as well. Silver and white gold tends to go well with white dresses, and yellow gold with off-white dresses.

If you are planning to wear a necklace, you will want to give extra consideration to the neckline of your wedding dress. V- or sweetheart necklines call for V- or Y-shaped necklaces, whereas off-the-shoulder dresses call for smaller necklaces or chokers. High or intricately beaded necklines may require no adornment at all.

Selecting the right bridal jewelry takes careful consideration. Study your wedding dress and select pieces that will complement it and add to your overall ensemble.



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