The Gist

THE ENGAGEMENT
LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
BRIDAL CONSULTANT
THE MOMENT OF TRUTH
THE PARENTAL FACTOR
TIPS ON BUYING THE WEDDING GOWN
SHOPPING FOR THE WEDDING GOWN
CONTEMPORARY NUPTIAL GARB
WRITING YOUR OWN VOWS
CANDELIGHT
PRESERVING AND RESTORING THE GOWN
UNDERNEATH IT ALL
YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED
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GERMS AND JEWELS
FLOWERS
THE RECEPTION
CATERING THE AFFAIR
THE WEDDING CAKE
THE RESEARSAL
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SHOWERS OF LOVE
ARRIVE IN STYLE
THE MOMENT OF TRUTH
THE HONEYMOON
IT CAN LAST

MODELS

MICAH ARMSTEAD
(Ringbearer)
NOVARRO ARMSTEAD
STEPHEN MACK
PRECIOUS HOLLIE
(Flower Girl)
MARSHA JOHNSON
SHAWN MURRAY
DEBORAH LANGHORN
CHARLIE LONESOME
ERIK THARRINGTON
DIANE TUNSTALL
VALERIE SEABERRY

Credits

ANTONIO GALLERY FOR HAIR
CRIP'S FLORIST
FORUM CATERERS
GOWNS BEAUTIFUL
MARIKA'S BRIDAL & FORMAL WEAR
MARTIN'S BRIDAL & FORMAL WEAR
MARTIN'S WEST
METRO BROKERS LTD.
M'LADY SHOES
PAULINE BROOKS BOUTIQUE
TODAY'S BRIDE
REGENCY TERRACE CATERERS
S. HIKEN FORMAL WEAR
UNDERCOVER LINGERIE

ELNORA BURTON
(Bridal Consultant)

JACQUEP. CROSLIN
(Production Coordinator)

PATTIE G. HODGES
(AFRO Women's Editor)

BRUCE D. SMALLWOOD
(Photographer)

THOMAS STOCKETT
(Artist)

Your Wedding Photos

To find the perfect photographer for your needs, you might ask another couple for a recommendation, but you should talk with several photographers yourself before you finally settle on one.

Any reputable photographer will have sample albums of his work — ask to see them. Don't thumb quickly through the photographer's sample album, but look carefully at both the formal and candid shots.

Do the people seem relaxed and at ease? Do they look natural ? Does the photographer seem to capture the emotions of the event? On the whole, are you pleased with his work?

Compare prices. Find out how many photographs in black and white and color you are obligated to buy. (Once you choose your photographer, ask for a written confirmation of price.)

There are several kinds of photographs you will want of your wedding: your official bridal portrait, photographs of the actual ceremony (if permissible), formal portraits of you and your wedding party and close family members, and candid pictures taken at the reception.

The bridal portrait is often taken at the time of your last fitting of your dress. The photographer will come to the bridal salon, and either he or the store will probably supply a bouquet, but check on this in advance. You may prefer to be photographed in the photographer's studio, as you can be sure to have the proper lighting and background there.

The bridal portrait should be taken at least three to four weeks before the wedding as this is what will be used for newspaper announcements.

For photographs of your ceremony, be aware that some churches do not allow flashbulbs or altar photographs during the ceremony.

Check with your minister, priest or rabbi concerning the regulations of your church, and make sure your photographer is aware of these regulations.

Fortunately modern photographic equipment makes it possible to record your wedding without the use of flashbulbs and from a distance so that the ceremony is not disturbed.

Except for a few photographs taken at the altar immediately after the ceremony, formal portraits of you and your wedding party and family should be taken after everyone has gone through the receiving line. This way guests are not kept waiting while you have your picture taken.

Standard candid shots of the reception should include guests going through the receiving line, the cake cutting ceremony, dancing including the bride and groom's first dance, the tossing of the bridal bouquet, and the departure of the newlyweds with the farewell shower of confetti or rice.

In addition to these traditional shots, the truly sensitive photographer will capture the moments of spontaneity, the atmosphere of festivity, and the unconscious facial expressions that really tell the story of your wedding. It is these truly candid shots that you may cherish most.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Who pays for what? Nowadays the idea of the bride's father offering a dowry and assuming the entire responsibility for wedding costs has been modified and expenses are being shared by both families. If a compromise is possible, the entire burden is not placed on the bride's family.

If the groom's family volunteers to share the cost of the reception, for example, the bride's family may accept if they wish. Decisions on assuming financial responsibility should be discussed openly by both families when planning the wedding.

Although the rules are flexible, the following list is a helpful guideline:

BRIDE:
1. Wedding ring for the groom
2. Wedding gift for the groom
3. Gifts for bridal attendants
4. Physical examination and blood test
5. Personal stationery or note paper
6. Accommodations for out-of-town attendants

GROOM
1. The bride's rings
2. Wedding gift for the bride
3. Transportation from reception to honeymoon locale
4. Marriage license and blood test
5. Bride's bouquet and boutonnieres for men in the party
6. Flowers for mothers and grandmothers
7. Ushers wedding ties and gloves
8. Gifts for ushers and best man
9. Clergyman's fee
10. Limousine service
11. His bachelor dinner
12. Honeymoon trip
13. Hotel accommodations for best man and ushers

THE BRIDE'S FAMILY
1. Engraved invitations and announcements and mailing costs
2. Wedding reception, including food and beverages, music, decorations and cake
3. Bridal outfit and accessories and bridal attendants' dresses if necessary
4. Trousseau
5. Photographs
6. Flowers, including bouquets for maid-of-honor and bridesmaids
7. Rental fee for church for hall
8. Reception rental of carpets, canopy, decorations
9. Transportation of bridal party from home to ceremony and from ceremony to the reception
10. Wedding gift of substance or honeymoon trip
11. Hotel bills for out-of-town attendants
12. Bridesmaids luncheon
13. Rehearsal dinner (optional)
14. Household furnishing, linen, china, silver, crystal, furniture (optional)

THE GROOM'S FAMILY:
1. Wedding clothes
2. Traveling expenses and hotel bills
3. Wedding gift
4. Rehearsal dinner, if they wish

An Elegant Wedding

The Bridal Timetable

Arrangements for a large formal wedding require at least six months for proper planning. However, all weddings ought to be planned well in advance.

The following is a checklist to guide you in planning details and avoiding last minute rush.

BRIDE'S REMINDER LIST:

Six Months Before:
Buy a wedding planner.
Decide the type of wedding you want.
Decide the time of day and type of reception to follow.
Decide on wedding and reception sites.
Discuss expenses and budget with both sets of parents to decide sharing of expenses.
Decide the date of the wedding.
Determine how many guests may be accommodated.
Decide number of attendants and choose them.
Plan color scheme for ceremony and reception.
Visit clergyman with fiance.
Make reservations for place of reception and reserve caterer.
Select and order dress and accessories, select bridesmaids' gowns.
Begin guest list for both sides.
Choose china and silverware patterns and register with Bridal Gift Registry at your favorite store.
Start looking for new home, begin household shopping.
Send for honeymoon brochures.

Three Months Before:
Complete guest list.
Order invitations and announcements. Address them upon receipt.
Shop for trousseau.
Choose a photographer and set a date for bridal portraits.
Arrange for wedding music through your clergyman.
Acquire estimate from florist for floral decorations.
Make honeymoon reservations.
Make appointment with doctor for (physical) and gynecologist.
Make transportation arrangements. reserve limousine.

Two Months Before:
Select groom's and bridesmaids' gifts.
Order all flowers.
Plan bridesmaids' luncheon.
Set day for rehearsal dinner and party.

One Month Before:
Mail invitations so they are received three to four weeks before wedding.
Record wedding gifts and send thank-you notes immediately upon receipt.
Make hotel reservations for attendants.
Order groom's ring.
Have final fitting.
Have wedding portrait made.
Arrange for newspaper announcement.
Buy honeymoon clothes.

Two Weeks Before:
Obtain blood test and marriage license with fiance.
Complete trousseau purchases.
Arrange attendants transportation to ceremony.
Make beauty shop appointment.
Notify post office of change in address.
Change name on your driver's license, insurance policy, charge accounts.

One Week Before:
Pack for honeymoon.
Prepare wedding announcements to be mailed on your wedding day.
Give caterer final number of reception guests.
Attend bridesmaids' luncheon.
Arrange rehearsal, usually day before ceremony.
Check on final details with florist, photographer, musicians.
Relax and enjoy your well-planned wedding.

An Elegant Wedding

As the saying goes — "There's more to a wedding than getting to the church on time," and for today's bride, there is more substance than reliance on rigid rules for the actuality of a contemporarily perfect wedding.

Times have changed from the days in Ancient Syria when eligible women were assembled over a year for an auction to the highest bidder.

Today, in speaking of wedding etiquette, these words come to mind, "what's relevant is right." Prescribed ritual is no longer a requirement. "Good tactics" and depth of meaning are more important than white-gloved sterile decorum. Etiquette exists as a framework; not a requirement.

The Engagement

"Mr. Right" has asked you to marry him — what an exciting moment! Suddenly engagement and wedding plans become the most important issue in your life. The great question becomes — "I'm engaged! — what should I do first?" The answer — "Share the news." Tell your parents before you tell anyone else. Do what you can to arrange a meeting between your parents and your fiance. He will tell them of his interest, love and affection for you, their daughter, and ask for your hand in marriage — A very old custom, but nice if he does. The bride should tell her parents alone if there is likely to be a reaction other than immediate happiness.

If you have not met his parents, try to meet them. If at all possible, plan a meeting where the two families could get together. Again, if the groom feels it is best, he may tell them alone.

Close friends and relatives should then hear the news from the couple, either individually or at a party. When the couple's intimate friends and relatives have been informed, a newspaper announcement should be made.

The engagement period is the time when a couple learns about each other as well as planning their wedding and new life. The couple should discuss many important questions to see if they can agree on crucial points. Examples are, "Will the bride work after marriage?," "Will we have children and when?" and "Where will we live?"

Other more in-depth ones may be goals for the future — a home (large or small?), a luxury car?, lots of free time to travel? Engaged couples should discuss questions relating to money and time management early to see if a compromise can be reached on those goals that they do not agree upon. Now is the time to be honest. It is important to become committed to certain goals because reaching goals requires joint saving and planning.

Honest financial planning is also necessary. Figure out what assets you have — furniture, bank accounts, insurance — and what liabilities you have. Then set up a savings plan. Financial experts advise a couple to place three months salary in a savings account as an emergency fund.

Now is the time to review your career possibilities. Will your present job enable you to make enough to reach your goals or is more training and a job change in your future? Couples need to think these ideas through to avoid money fights. Family responsibilities make careful planning a necessity for the young couple to make ends meet. Can two really live as cheaply as one?

BRIDAL PARTY — Bride, groom and attendants, including maid - of - honor, bridesmaids, best man, groomsmen, flower girl and ring-bearer make up the joyous bridal party on the unforgettable wedding day.

Length of Engagement

There is no set answer. This question can best be settled by you and your fiance. If statistics are of any help, it seems that the most successful marriages are those with engagement periods of about six months. The engagement period ought to be a time of the greatest happiness. However, if the bridal pair finds that they cannot agree on plans for their future life, and only fighting results, the couple may decide not to marry.

Although it isn't easy to break an engagement, it is easier than an unhappy marriage or a marriage that ends in divorce. Once a couple has decided to break their engagement, people should be told in the same order as in announcing the engagement. Parents should be told first.

Public Announcement

As soon as the word is out to family and friends, a newspaper announcement should be prepared. Smaller newspapers are more apt to give space to both an engagement announcement and wedding story.

Each publication has its own rules for submission, but basically a newspaper will want a clear black and white photo of the bride for an engagement and a picture of the bride in her bridal gown for wedding coverage. Some newspapers prefer a photo of the couple for the wedding story.

Wedding forms to be filled out by the couple with specific information on the bride, groom, parents, etc. are usually available from the society editor of the publication.

Deadlines for submission vary with each newspaper, with some accepting the story up to two or three weeks after the event and others insisting that the story be submitted no later than two or three weeks before the ceremony.

Wedding Plans

No detail is too small. Careful planning and attention to detail will make your wedding ceremony and attendant festivities unfold with effortless ease. The time and care you give to its preparation will be repaid by your peace of mind during the great event and by the evident enjoyment of your guests.

In this planning invite your mother's opinions and by all means, give due consideration to your future husband's convenience and wishes. Grooms are too often neglected

Bridal Consultant

Bridal specialists or consultants are a joy to the prospective bride. An efficient, experienced calm specialist can smooth out every obstacle in your path.

The size of your wedding might require a full time specialist for a brief period whose services are on a payroll basis. Bridal specialists will assist you in consolidating your planning. They will do the work while you enjoy your wedding.

The Clergyman

One major duty which should not be neglected, and if the setting of the ceremony is a religious one, cannot be forgotten, is a visit to the clergy.

Besides scheduling use of the church or temple, the couple should consult the clergy about premarital counseling. Most clergy want to be sure that the couple they are uniting have at least a reasonable chance of staying together rather than ending in divorce court.

The Parental Factor

The parents of the bridal pair and their cooperation is one of the most important factors in making the wedding a successful venture. Parents of the couple, by being cooperative in the planning of the wedding ceremony, can start the pair off with a feeling of security.

Parents should help the couple decide on the size, type and circumstances of the ceremony and reception. Here the rule should be advise and mediate, do not dictate. Both mothers should consider their roles as keepers of the harmony.

A gigantic task awaits both families as they prepare the guest lists for the ceremony and the reception. While the bride and her mother set guidelines as to how many individuals may attend, the groom and his family must draw up their invitation list and send it promptly to the bride's family so that invitations may be issued six to eight weeks in advance. (Some experts say three to four weeks).

Each family should make arrangements for their own out-of town guests, including their accommodations, meals and transportation.

Parents should plan to attend the rehearsal to become familiar with their role in the ceremony. Participating in the reception, introducing guests and generally socializing should be the duty of all parents, although the bride's mother is the official hostess.

All four parents can best welcome the bride or groom to their respective families by making the wedding day a special time to remember.

Fathers of the couple have less actual tasks to do than the mothers. Traditionally, the bride's father pays for most of the cost of the wedding, but the groom or groom's family should provide the wedding and engagement rings, marriage license, clergy's fees, corsages and boutonnieres and the honeymoon trip.

The groom's family could also offer to handle other expenses, such as liquor or musicians. The rehearsal dinner is given by the groom's family.