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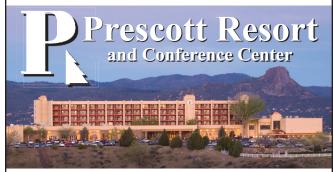
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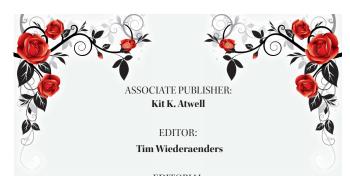


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PUBLICATION DESIGN:

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ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Nora Colwell Cheryl Lang Dawn Adair Roger Stalter Jon Wittenberg Judy Vann Tony Washington

GRAPHICS SUPERVISOR:

Cindy Manzione

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Fredrick Volke Ryan Lamb Sydney Taylor Jessika Bystrom Kelli Mora



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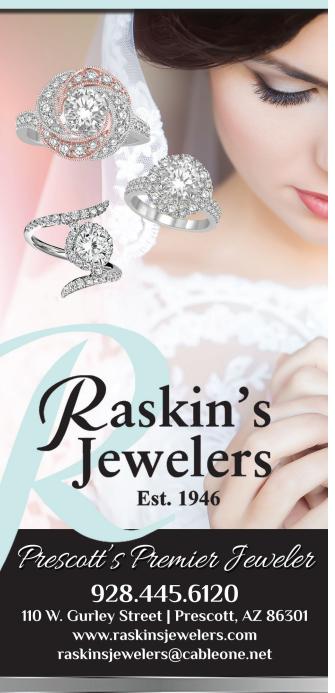
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As timeless as your love...





Katie Townsend Bell and Tyler Bell in the middle of Prescott's Gurley Street right outside their wedding venue — the downtown historic Hassayampa Inn — on their wedding day the weekend after Thanksgiving 2018. (Raul Gomez/Courtesy)

Do-it-yourself weddings

Leaving room for creativity, tradition and economy

By NANCI HUTSON

he moment has happened!
You and the one who makes your heart flutter have vowed to become more than Facebook official.
So now comes the fun – making plans for the celebration of a lifetime: your wedding day.

Whether you are a true romantic, or not romantic at all, there is a wedding style to suit you. You just have to find out what makes sense to you, what fits your wallet and what special touches you will most appreciate when looking back on the special day one month, one year, or five decades later.

And a do-it-yourself affair - or a customized hybrid pack-

age – may be the way to step away from tradition and reflect the identity and values of the wedding couple. They also can be more economical, depending on how much the bride and groom and their friends and family are willing and able to help.

Are any of your friends weekend chefs or bakers? Can your aunt craft a floral bouquet from her garden and or design fanciful guest favors? Does your best buddy own a tractor, drive a horse-and carriage or own a vintage automobile. Is there a seamstress in the family who can design a new gown, or refashion a vintage one?

Do you want a religious ceremony followed by a traditional dine-drink-and-dance reception, or would you prefer a member of the clergy or a justice of the peace to meet you and your guests at a favorite hiking spot within driving distance to a suitable wedding reception venue, be it a boutique hotel, vineyard, ranch or even a relative's backyard.

Do you want to rely on family caterers, and then hire a company to deliver chairs, tables, linens and dishware, or would you want to visit a few companies and select one to handle the food and bar portion of the event for you? Food trucks are a new trend for some couples. Some couples may opt to control beverage costs by offering just beer and wine, or a couple signature cocktails at the reception, rather than a full complimentary bar.

How about music? Do you have a favorite local band that you could hire to play for the wedding, reception or both, or would you like to save money and ask a friend to play DJ with your selection of top tunes.

Or maybe you spring for a professional DJ and ditch the

cold hors d'oeuvres, and for dessert they offered individual cakes from a local baker; they also had a two-tier wedding cake. They hired a family friend as their photographer – their sole wedding stress was caused by a last-minute cancellation from the two local professionals they hired for the job. Party favors were a supply of sparklers that guests could ignite at the end of the reception.

Total wedding cost: less than \$5,000.

The one thing all do-it-yourselfers will need is a wedding calendar, either a computerized version or an old-fashioned notebook where you keep a checklist and then track the timetables for when things need to be done or what has been done. This might also help with jotting down costs for particular items and rating what matters most to the wedding couple.

Prescott wedding planner Tahna Falk said floral arrangements can push up the price of any wedding. She suggests talking with a florist on how to reduce costs and still create the desired ambience.

Another cost that needs to be carefully considered is guest

...when it was all said and done we were able to see everything that we have been working on completed.

limousine and fancy cake.

Nowadays, weddings can be whatever a couple wants them to be.

For Prescott couple Tyler and Katie Townsend Bell, married the weekend after Thanksgiving, the personal touches were part of their ritual, with Katie, Tyler and members of their family and wedding party making their own bouquets from \$100 worth of flowers they purchased at various places around town. Katie wanted a rustic theme, so her father, Ben, built a wooden backdrop for their wedding and reception that they then decorated with eucalyptus leaves and pine cones.

She and her future husband opted for a rooftop wedding and evening reception at the downtown historic Hassayampa Inn. The staff enabled them to customize a package suitable for 200 guests.

For food, the couple opted for a plentiful supply of hot and

favors. Totally optional; Falk suggested that if they are to be offered they should be something that would be worth the price. She suggested an inexpensive photo or selfie station.

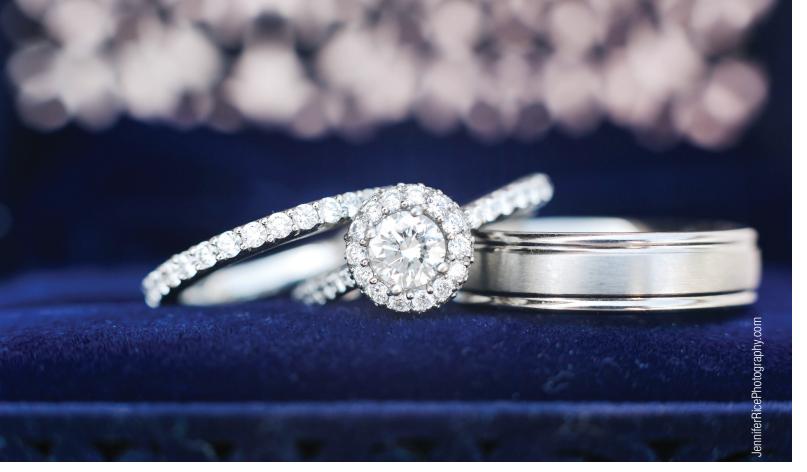
Falk and other industry experts are clear that preparation is the key to ensuring brides and grooms are not so consumed with details they cannot savor their wedding day.

With creativity, and their own blend of traditions and desire to make solid memories, the Bells found what they believe was the perfect way to celebrate the beginning of their new life together.

"I really enjoyed doing things myself for the wedding because when it was all said and done we were able to see everything that we have been working on completed," Katie said. "Everyone throughout the night and later days complimented us on how beautiful the venue and wedding was, which made it even more special."

Katie Townsend Bell and husband, Tyler, standing before a backdrop Katie's father, Ben, made for the ceremony at the Hassayampa Inn in Prescott. The backdrop was used for the wedding and reception and now a bedroom headboard in the couple's new home. (Raul Gomez/Courtesy)





Wedding Rings

TRADITIONAL OR NEW TYPES?

By DOUG COOK

hen it comes to choosing the right wedding rings for you and your future spouse, it's helpful to know whether you want to go the traditional route or with the newer, trendier styles on the market.

Most traditional engagement rings have a simple band with a diamond as the centerpiece. The solitaire style is one of the simplest, as it has one primary stone, while the halo style has a primary stone with accent diamonds.

What follows is a short breakdown for different types of trendier engagement rings and wedding rings for women, as well as trendier wedding rings for men.

TRENDING STYLES

WOMEN

Engagement/wedding rings: Greg Raskin of Raskin's Jewelers in downtown Prescott said 14-karat or 18-karat white gold and/or platinum rings are popular in today's market.

"Right now, the hot metal is still white metal," he added.

However, Raskin added that yellow gold has made a resurgence, although it was more favored in the 1980s and 1990s.

"We're starting to see people asking for that again," he said.

Rose-gold rings with alternative center stones have become increasingly fashionable, Raskin added. For example, morganite, a pink stone in the emerald family, has attracted attention as a solitaire or as a halo accompanied by round stones.

"Some people are using a pink stone in rose metal, and it's a beautiful look with some white diamonds around the top," Raskin said. "So, we are starting to see some alternative center stones as opposed to simply diamond."

Solitaires "are still extremely popular," Raskin added, with one stone in a plain, thin band. Vintage rings are also stylish, particularly the filigree.

"A European-cut diamond – an older-cut stone – maybe sprinkled with a little sapphire," Raskin added.

Genevieve Doren of Lamerson's Jewelry in Prescott said the halo style, primarily in 14-karat white gold, sells rather well. The princess-style diamonds, which are square- instead of round-shaped, are also popular on halo engagement and wedding rings.

Another trend is the diamond stackable ring, which has a unique, custom look, Raskin said. The stackable is available in "all the colors of the metals."

"They've been super popular," he added. "It's the wedding band that dresses up the engagement ring, and there's so many different styles now."

Doren said a lot of younger women today visit Lamerson's asking for the old mine cut or old European cut diamond rings. These are antique rings.

"We carry a lot of consignments," she added.

MEN

Wedding rings: Raskin still sells plenty of the traditional 14- and 18-karat yellow or white gold wedding rings for men.

"Those are always popular," he said. "But the alternative metals now are really, really hot."

Alternative metal rings include those made of titanium, tungsten or cobalt.

"In these metals, the cool thing is you can get almost like a gun-metal gray out of it," Raskin said. "So, they're extremely masculine. And, also, we've been inlaying them with wood, and you can do them in any pattern you want. You can do a camouflage pattern. We've done meteorite in alternative metals."

Like Raskin, Doren said the most popular wedding rings for men remain the plain 14K yellow or white gold bands.

"Those are the ones we sell the most," she added.

Doren said Lamerson's also sells a lot of stainless steel rings, because men who work with machinery and heavy equipment like that the steel can't get as damaged (scratched, dented) as a 14K gold ring would.

"Gold can bend quite easily, but stainless steel doesn't bend as much," she added. "It has more strength in it. We can even get stainless steel bands for men with the stones in them, with diamonds."











or many couples, their wedding often is the happiest day of their lives, coming after months of build-up and anticipation to make the sure the big day is what they have always dreamed it would be.

But no matter what meticulous planning goes into the ceremony, no wedding is complete without the bride's dress.

When it comes to wedding dresses, white is traditional. However, colors have started to garner some attention for brides.

Wedding dresses come in a variety of colors ranging from yellow to green to black and silver. Colors carry different meanings. For example, pink represents innocence, while black is said symbolize "power or class," according to bridepower.com.

Shari Brown, owner of Elegant Brides in Prescott Valley, has been in the business for 20 years and has had the chance to see some unique colors. But she admits white still remains at the top.

"I've done some black and some deep red, so we've certainly have had those for girls in terms of options," Brown said. "There are some of those (colors), but it seems like the highest percentage is still white and champagne."

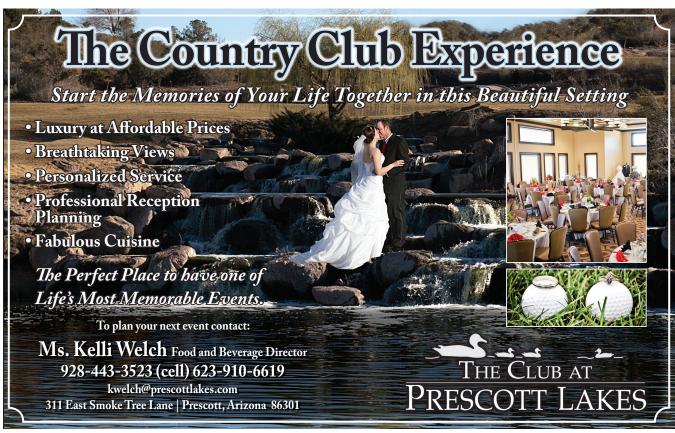
While tradition still reigns on the color chart, Brown said she has seen a variety of unique choices for dresses at her shop in Prescott Valley.

"Usually you have some unique colors that (become popular) over the year, and that's where the blush comes in, but I've done red and I've done green," Brown said. "Some girls like to have a totally unique wedding with different colors, so we do have that available with different options. I have (also) seen a lot of gold also this year ... but I don't really see that there's been a rush on colors like black or burgundy (recently)."

Also, due to the area being in the Southwest, weddings often take on a Western theme with cowboy boots and

Also, due to the area being in the Southwest, weddings often take on a Western theme with cowboy boots and jeans being a common choice for men, along with blue and light gray suits. Wedding dress colors also can be influenced by the Western theme.







What's a wedding worth to you?

Average wedding cost in Prescott

By MAX EFREIN

inancial advisers often tell their clients to keep big-ticket items in mind when planning their financial futures. Depending on where you are in life, that list may include a wedding.

Not every wedding is glamorous, but even the basics can cost a pretty penny.

"\$10,000 to \$20,000 seems to be the average budget for the Prescott area," said Tahna Falk, owner of StarStruck! Event Planning.

Before the couple takes any cost estimates to heart, however, they should sit down with family and discuss who is paying for what to determine the realities of the budget, said Mary Thompson, certified wedding planner and owner of My Wedding Flowers.

"How much money are you coming up with? What do your parents plan on chipping in? Find all your resources

of people who are going to be investing in that wedding. Then see what you can do with that money," Thompson said.

"Have some clear ideas in your mind of what's most important to you."

The typical wedding breakdown, according to Falk:

Venue: \$500 to \$20,000

Rentals (tables, chairs, tents, etc.): \$1,000 to \$4,000

Floral: \$1,000 to \$4,000

Disk jockey (DJ): \$800 to \$1,700 Photographer: \$1,000 to \$5,000

Cake: \$300 to \$800

Food: \$25 to \$35 per diner

On top of those are some of the more variable options, such as if a couple wants to hire an event planner to help with any aspects of the wedding. Day-of coordinating



typically costs about \$1,200, Falk said, whereas complete wedding planning can cost up to \$5,000.

If a couple wants bar service in addition to food, price can vary depending on who is providing that service, who is supplying the alcohol, whether it is an open or cash bar, and if offerings include top-shelf options or just standard beer, wine and well drinks.

For instance, if a couple is hosting the bar (meaning the

JenniferRicePhotography.com

guests drink for free) at a venue that doesn't provide the service, then the bartender might get paid \$25 an hour plus tips, Falk said. The couple would also have to

> bring the alcohol to supply the bar. In such cases, Falk recommends they purchase the alcohol in bulk from stores like Costco, where unopened bottles can be

> > returned for free.

"You can save a lot of money in those type of places when you can bring in your own alcohol," she said.

Other additions that can add to the cost are a videographer (\$1,500 to \$5,000) or guest favors (small gifts given to all who attend the wedding).

"Guest favors is definitely a tradition that has kind of fallen by the wayside, because a lot of the things that [wedding couples] do, guests don't take them, they don't use them, and it kind of ends of being like wasted money," Falk said.

One way many wedding couples have kept the tradition alive at an affordable cost is by having a photo booth (\$600 to \$800) set up at the wedding.

"People love [photo booths], because they can get their picture taken with the fun props, and that's something they take home," Falk said.

Behind all of these budget items are other standard wedding investments, such as a suit for the groom, a dress for the bride, wedding rings, wedding invitations/reply cards and hair/makeup services.

To see how much a standard wedding in the U.S. might cost depending on the type of venue and the number of guests, a free online resource is CostOf-Wedding.com.





February 2019 → Engagements to Arrangements - 13

5 tips on giving a great wedding toast

By GEORGE JOHNSTON



magine attending a wedding. The ceremony was beautiful. The couple expressed their undying love for each other, and there might have been tears in stern Uncle Joe's eyes.

Now it's time to party and celebrate the new couple, but the thing that could make or break the reception comes up: the toast.

Horror stories abound about terrible toasts, enough to chill the soul with the awkwardness that ensued. But what can a person do to avoid failing at the key moment? Here are five tips on giving a good toast that will help when the pressure hits.

SPEAK FROM THE HEART

Sincerity is the key to success when offering a toast.

"There is something powerful about a wedding toast when it is a sincere personal message to someone," said Jeremiah Sawyer, a DJ for Motion Candy Media. "I think those are, to me, one of the most powerful things about wedding toast."

Sawyer advises the person giving the toast to offer a personal story about the bride or groom. The DJ has witnessed toasts where the person barely knew the bride or groom, and it did not go over well.

A sincere toast about a bride and groom's relationship gives power to the speech because of the emotions involved, according to Sawyer.

"It is always special to see someone who talks about gratitude and how good the bride and groom are together," Sawyer said.

KEEP IT SHORT

No one wants to hear a long speech.

A good toast should be between three to five minutes.

"Don't take up half the reception putting everyone to sleep," Pastor Ron Merrell said.

KNOW THE AUDIENCE

Ask any stand-up comedian: Bombing is the worst.

Knowing the audience for toast can save some embarrassment for the speaker.

"The audience is going to be a mixed bag of people and not just one age," said Michael Kerr of SoundMethod. "You want to know who your audience is."



Brooke-Photography.com

Sawyer agrees and adds there are often mixes of race and religion in the audience

He advises not to be negative or talk about embarrassing subjects during the

toast. Sawyer also suggests having using some tact in the toast regarding the bride, groom, family and audience, because he has seen people inappropriately share personal information.

PREP FOR THE SPEECH

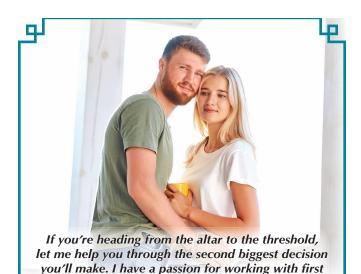
Writing down a toast then practicing it are vital tools in giving a good toast.

People get nervous, and having the toast locked down can prevent the awkwardness that comes from just winging it, Sawyer said.

BE SOBER OR SOBER-ISH

Alcohol may be the cause of and solution to must of life's problems, but it runs the risk of ruining an otherwise good toast.

"Be coherent when you give your toast," Sawyer said. "Nothing worse than an obnoxious, slurred, inappropriate toast." ■



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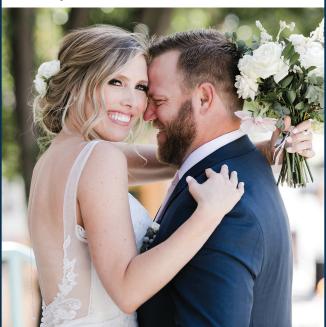
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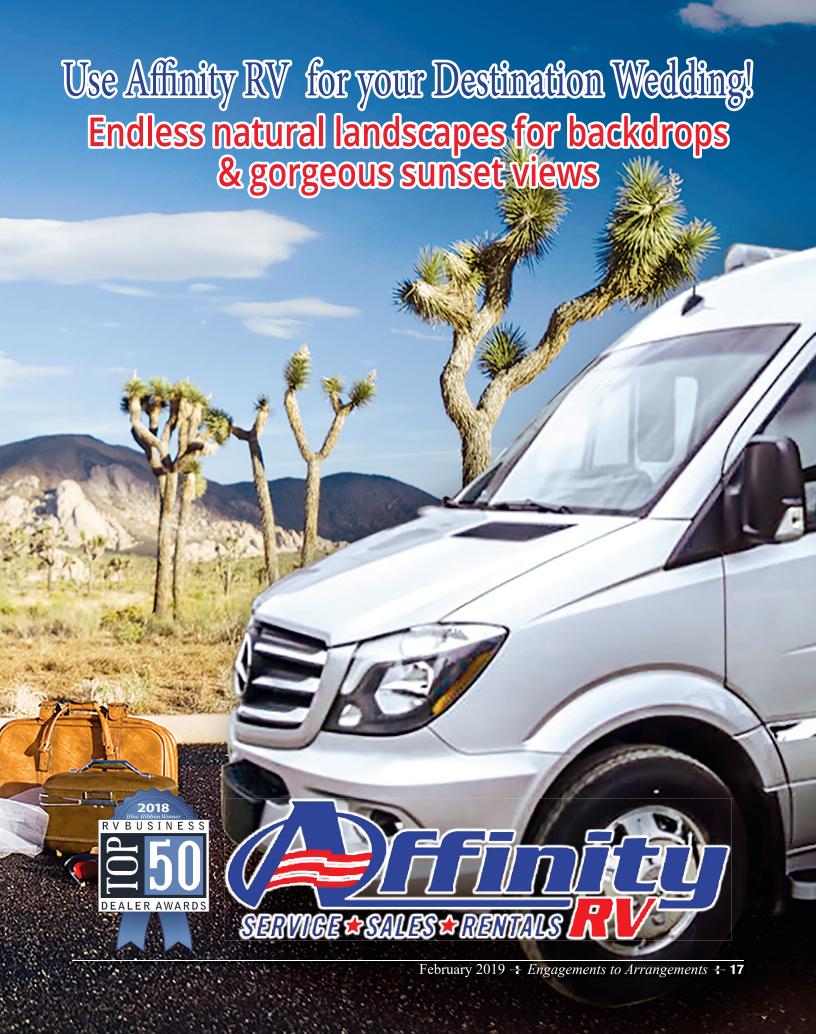
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Second marriage weddings

Bonds among blended families

By CINDY BARKS

or many couples tying the knot these days, the union is about more than just the bride and groom.

It's also about the children that one or both of the two have from previous marriages or relationships.

And experts say it's important to plan ahead to engage those young people in the ceremony and reception.

Tahna Falk, local owner and creative producer for StarStruck Event Planning, said she has helped to plan many second-marriage weddings, and including the children in the planning is the norm.

"Most couples take the extra time to really incorporate the children into the ceremony," Falk said.

She recalls one couple with four children between them. To signify the union of the new six-member blended family, the couple chose a ceremonial pouring of sand into a decorative glass container. A different color was chosen for each of the children, as well as the bride and groom, to signify the blending together of each member.

"It makes a nice keepsake for the family," Falk said of the blended sand arrangement.

In other cases, the couples choose to include the children in the vows. New stepparents sometimes write letters in advance to their soon-to-be stepchildren, and, depending on the couple, those letters might be read aloud during the ceremony, or might be read in a more private setting.

"If the children are older, sometimes they also write a letter to their soon-to-be stepparent," Falk said.

Or if the couple is older, their adult children often walk them down the aisle, she added.

Rebekah Stewart of Avenue Events of Prescott said second-time couples often have their very young children serve as flower girls or ring bearers. With older children, she said, it is common to have them speak during the ceremony.

Both local wedding planners emphasize the value of planning ahead to engage the various family members.

"It is very important for people to involve the kids," Falk said, noting that younger children can sometimes feel the stress of the coming wedding. By involving them, and planning ahead for their participation, she said, the couple can help to deal with that stress.

"I've definitely seen it take a toll on kids," Falk said of children who



MarchettiPhoto.com

aren't involved.

Stewart added that it is also important to think ahead about involving any divorced-and-remarried parents of the wedding couple.

"It's a blending of their families," Stewart said of those situations. She suggests having someone on hand who can be an objective voice to deal with family dynamics that might arise during the event.

"Having someone there to be a buffer or run point is important, because it can sometimes be a little awkward," Stewart said.

To alleviate that, she says brides and grooms should be as organized as possible on details like seating charts and should try to "include everyone equally."

An article in Parents Magazine on the dynamics of blended-family weddings notes that involving kids in the ceremony can help to forge a bond between stepparents and their now stepchildren.

"In addition to the bride and groom exchanging vows with each other, the wedding ceremony can be a heartfelt time for the new stepparent to express his or her commitment to their new children," states the article.

For most people who are getting married for a second time, the wedding tends to be a bit more low-key than first-time nuptials.

"In general, the second time around seems to be more simplified all around," Falk said.

For instance, second-timers might opt to omit the cake-cutting and garter and bouquet toss. "They usually want it to be more about enjoying their time with their guests," Falk said.

Still, sometimes, if a bride or groom didn't have a big wedding the first time, they opt to go for their "dream wedding" for their second wedding, Falk said.

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fect person to spend the rest of your life with, now what?

Planning a wedding involves a lot of decision making: choosing the date, where to have it, who to invite, open or cash bar and a myriad of other decisions. But one of the first choices couples should make is, who should be the photographer?

Wedding photographers are worth their weight in gold, not just for their photo talents but also because of their knowledge of venues, wedding planners, florists, disc jockeys and catering companies; they interact with them all. They are normally the first to arrive and last to leave on a wedding day.

When choosing a wedding photographer, couples should first do some research and look at the websites of anyone they might be considering. It will give them an idea of the photographer's style and whether it fits into what they are envisioning.

Christopher Marchetti, of Marchetti Photography (www. marchettiphoto.com), a professional of over 35 years says "we have seen a great turn towards a photojournalistic style in contradistinction to traditional, formal imagery. One is new and the latter is tried and true. My personal style is a combination of both."

Brooke Stevens-Patrick of Brooke Photography (brooke-photography.com), an 11-year veteran of wedding and portrait photography, says, "A lot of the trends have fallen away. When I started there were a lot of editing styles, and now I am seeing a lot more of a classical nature. I like to describe my style as bright, colorful and timeless."

They also shared a few unique wedding/portrait







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Stylish weddings possible for both

By SUE TONE



raditional church weddings can bring a great deal of happiness and fulfillment to couples and their families, with religious ceremonies and traditional vows.

Contemporary weddings, with fewer restrictions and often theme-based, can be casual or formal. The more formal event may still include all the extravagant attire for both the bride and groom, fancy invitations and sit-down dinners.

Planning a "contemporary" vintage-themed ceremony, for instance, necessitates a time period that is decades old and may include a gown in the style of the 1920 or 1930s, with hairstyles, decorations and music to match.

A garden party theme, especially a spring or summer wedding, brings a more casual, yet romantic, atmosphere to the ceremony with greenery, flowers, and lace tablecloths in an attractive outdoor venue. To make table decorations more eco-friendly, some couples opt for small plants in color-coordinated pots rather than cut-flower centerpieces.

Light-hearted couples can plan a more whimsical wedding with bright colors and decorations such as balloons and streamers in a backyard setting. Many hotels, museums and vineyards now offer weddings complete with buffet dinners and, of course, a variety of wines.

Perhaps rustic, especially here in the

Megan Sims and Homer Kennedy opted to have their wedding at the Chapel of the Valley at Fain Lake after deciding to go from a really big wedding to a very small one with about 15 family and guests. (Heidi Dahms Foster/Courtesy)

Southwest, can be a good match with ceremonies taking place on a ranch or in an orchard. Burlap, buckets and hay bales can still complement the white gown and tuxedo apparel of the participants. Boots, hats and denim with a Western dance band go well with this theme.

If a destination wedding to Cuba or Martha's Vineyard isn't possible, the right decorations can produce a beach theme. Palm trees, pineapples and flamingo table décor, or a more nautical blue and white stripes, anchors and sand dollars will

Traditional weddings with a black and white theme - think white dress and black tux, dark tablecloths and white table settings - can offer a classic feel on a happy occasion. Add an ornate wedding cake, some silver or gold glitter, and a dazzling flower arrangement on each table, and this "conventional" celebration will shine.

A formal wedding may require guests to wear formal attire. "Black tie" dictates either a tuxedo or a formal dark suit and tie for men, and long evening dress or chic cocktail dress for women. A white tie event is even more formal with tails and bow tie for men, ball gowns and jewelry for women.

Regardless whether a traditional or contemporary wedding, guests should forego wearing white, ivory, or champagne-colored clothing. If the bridal party colors are known, avoid wearing the same shades; family members can wear clothing in the same color palette, however. Red is still considered a no-no.



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Train ride in Disneyland Paris (Andrei Dan Suciu/Wikimedia Commons) Seven Mile Beach, Negril, Jamaica (Chaoleonard/Wikimedia Commons)

Honeymoon destinations depend on tastes

It's about getting a shoe that fits, local travel agent says

By JASON WHEELER

hen it comes to honeymoons, most people in the Prescott area look at getting away to sunny, beachy places like Jamaica or the Caribbean, said Stan Kephart, travel agent with HomeTowne Cruise & Tour Center.

Emily Chokri, a travel agent with the AAA office in Prescott, echoed Kephart, noting that people usually want a tropical destination such as Hawaii, the Caribbean or Mexico.

"It kind of just varies," Chokri said.

However, for couples who want something different, it is all about their tastes and budgets, Kephart said. There's a place and budget for everybody, Kephart said.

"We usually talk to folks and find out what their likes are," he said. "We try to counsel somebody on all the destinations in the world. The dividing point has to do with when they can go and how much they can spend."

Maybe they want the Rocky Mountains, something traditional like Niagara Falls or even an adventuresome honeymoon at Machu Picchu in Peru, Kephart said. Wherever it is, it is akin to coming to a shoe shop and getting a shoe that fits, he said.

Chokri said the best honeymoon destination also can depend on the age of the couple and how active they are.

At the same time, when couples have an idea, it comes down to fitting the idea into their tastes, Kephart said. For instance, if they like Disney, then Disneyland or Disney World are not their only choices. Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disney Resort or a Disney Cruise also are possibilities, Kephart said.

"They can take an international destination and fold it into a Disney experience that they might otherwise not have thought about," he said.

Using a local travel agency for a honeymoon brings additional benefits as well, Kephart said. For instance, a travel agent has the experience in knowing what to look for on the internet and can act as a discerning filter, he said. Further, a local agent presents opportunities for face-to-face meetings and accountability as opposed to engaging in the giant game of telephone that comes with contacting multiple different people after searching on a website, Kephart said.

If cost is a stumbling block toward a honeymoon, HomeTowne Cruise & Tour Center can open a gift certificate account, with the couple indicating in their invitations they have a wedding registry for their honeymoon through the agency, he said. Every month the couple receives a report, and after the wedding they are given a final total that also shows names and addresses of who contributed, Kephart said.

"We apply the money for those gift certificates to the honeymoon of their choice," he said. "Even if they had the money to go on a trip to Hawaii for their honeymoon ... this can make it nicer."

After all, Kephart said, a honeymoon isn't like an annual summer vacation; it is a special trip.

For more information about HomeTowne Cruise & Tour Center, visit www.hometownetravel.com or call 928-776-7188.







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