

# Bridal Guide

Spring 2022

*Satin, silk or lace*

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*Preserving wedding flowers*

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PHOTOS BY SARA LAWSON | STAR-JOURNAL

Ivory and Lace Bridal Boutique in Downtown Warrensburg carries a selection of more than 100 wedding gowns.

## *Satin, silk or lace* 10-month window recommended when selecting a wedding gown

**By Sara Lawson**

saral@warrensburgstarjournal.com

Traditional to trendy, shopping for the gown is a pivotal moment in planning a wedding and should be one of the first things brides consider.

“One of the biggest things is that a lot of brides just don’t realize just how long it takes to get dresses,” Rachel Mifflin, Ivory and Lace Bridal Boutique owner, said. “Especially in a COVID world, inventory is a little bit more difficult.”

Mifflin said she used to recommend choosing a dress eight to 10 months before the big day, but now the ideal time is no later than 10 months.

“That gives us enough time for the gown to be special ordered and for any alterations to get made, because our gowns are special order gowns, which is what the majority of wedding gown shops are.”

Gowns are typically made from scratch after it is selected in the store, which takes time.

Ivory and Lace does offer wholesale and sample sale gowns, but that limits the selection of gowns.

“We’ve been having a lot more quick-turnaround brides, which is great,” Mifflin said. “We can help anybody. We can make it work, ... but if a bride wants every single option available to her, 10 months before her wedding to come in and shop is the ideal time.”

Ivory and Lace, like many bridal boutiques, is by appointment only and more time before the wedding means more options available to the bride.

“A lot of girls come in four or five months and to them that’s a really long time, but in the grand scheme of ordering and stuff, it’s really not that much time and they’re kind of limiting themselves on what they can get,” Mifflin said.

Mifflin said wedding gowns can have

trends but are rarely trendy.

“One of the trends that’s been going on for quite a while now is definitely more of the clean and classic vibe, so crepe, mercado, just an all-over ivory fabric that has very little adornment on it,” Mifflin said.

Mifflin said multiple trends happen at the same time and what is in style can cycle through.

“Long sleeves are really popular again, people like that boho feel,” Mifflin said.

“We very much cater to the boho vintage bride, we always have and it’s still very much what a lot of brides want right now. And then sparkle, like bling and sparkle definitely is a trend that’s starting to come back.”

Mifflin said it is common for a bride to only visit one boutique to find their gown and others want to visit multiple shops.

“A lot of it depends on how the bride is as a shopper,” Mifflin said. “Some girls want to go to like four or five different places. Some girls think they want to go to multiple places but then they find their dress the first time. It’s just a matter of the bride as a shopper and how many choices she wants. It tends to get a little overwhelming the more places you go.”

Mifflin said there are no specific terms brides need to know before making an appointment, but it is helpful to know the basic silhouettes: a-line, soft a-line, fit and flare, mermaid, sheath and ball gown.

“It’s always good to have a general idea, however, what you look at on Pinterest and what you try on your body are two completely different things,” Mifflin said. “Most of the time, what girls think they want is very rarely what they get, but it’s still nice to have a jumping-off point. ... Looking on Pinterest is always great for ideas, but keeping an open mind is always the better way to go.”

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The only decision more difficult than which gown is who to bring to the appointment.

“With COVID and with our bridal suite size, we request that brides don’t bring any more than six people with them,” Mifflin said. “I have girls that would like to bring a lot more than that all the time, but in my opinion the fewer people you bring, the better. It’s just a lot of voices, it’s a lot of opinions. A lot of these brides, they care what other people think and they want to be people-pleasers ... at the end of the day the only thing that matters is what the bride wants to wear and what she wants to have pictures in and what she feels pretty in.”

Mifflin said having an open mind is the most important aspect of the appointment.

“Price point and quality-wise, we kind of made ourselves a destination shop,” Mifflin said. “We are also the only place in all of Missouri that has a collection of vintage dresses as well.”

Mifflin opened Ivory and Lace in February of 2014 in Downtown Warrensburg.

*Sara Lawson can be reached at 660-747-8123.*



Different silhouette styles and kinds of lace are displayed at Ivory and Lace Bridal Boutique in Downtown Warrensburg.



Belts and accessories can add a bit of sparkle and change the overall look of a gown.



While the gown is pivotal, tiaras, headbands and veils can be selected to enhance the features of the bride.

# Picture perfect wedding day photography tips

Few things document weddings more effectively than photographs. Carefully curated wedding albums and portraits hung on walls serve as daily reminders of a couple's special day.

Photography is often left in the very qualified hands of professional photographers. However, couples can pitch in to make their photos really pop. These picture pointers from industry insiders can help couples put their best smile forward.

## Leave ample time

A carefully orchestrated timeline can ensure photos are the best they can be. Why? Because a couple who is relaxed and not overwhelmed will notice that attitude translates to their photographs. When planning wedding timelines, couples should leave ample opportunities for getting dressed, chatting with the wedding party and going through various photography settings

to grab great photos, advise the experts at Martha Stewart.

## Put together a short list

The photographer will have his or her ideas of which shots to cover, but a couple with specific goals in mind should relay that information to their photographer. For example, if a grandparent is getting up in years, request some solo photos of that person so you can look back on happy times together. Certain couples want to be snapped posing with a beloved pet. Putting that on the list helps ensure it will happen.

## Enlist a family photo coordinator

If the photographer does not have his or her own assistant, recruit someone who is assertive to help wrangle everyone for the family shots. Attempt to get family photos when family members are relaxed but not too far ruffled by dancing or having a good time.

## Play your style safe

A wedding day is not a time for the bride or groom to try a dramatic new style, according to photographer Amanda Lamb. Resist the urge for a daring cut or color. It's also likely not the place to try out new facial hair or heavy makeup. A couple unaccustomed to the way they look may be shy in front of the camera.

## Delve into the details

Prepare wedding details, like gowns, shoes, accessories, etc., in advance to save time once the photographer

arrives, suggests Desi Mendoza, a pro from Dez and Tam Photography. Invest in a beautiful hanger for the wedding gown as well, because you may want to photograph that on its own.

## Learn to pose

Couples can practice posing in front of mirrors to get a feel for body positions that put them in their best light. A photographer's advice in regard to posture is invaluable as well. Create space between arms and the body and learn how to angle the body so you look your best.

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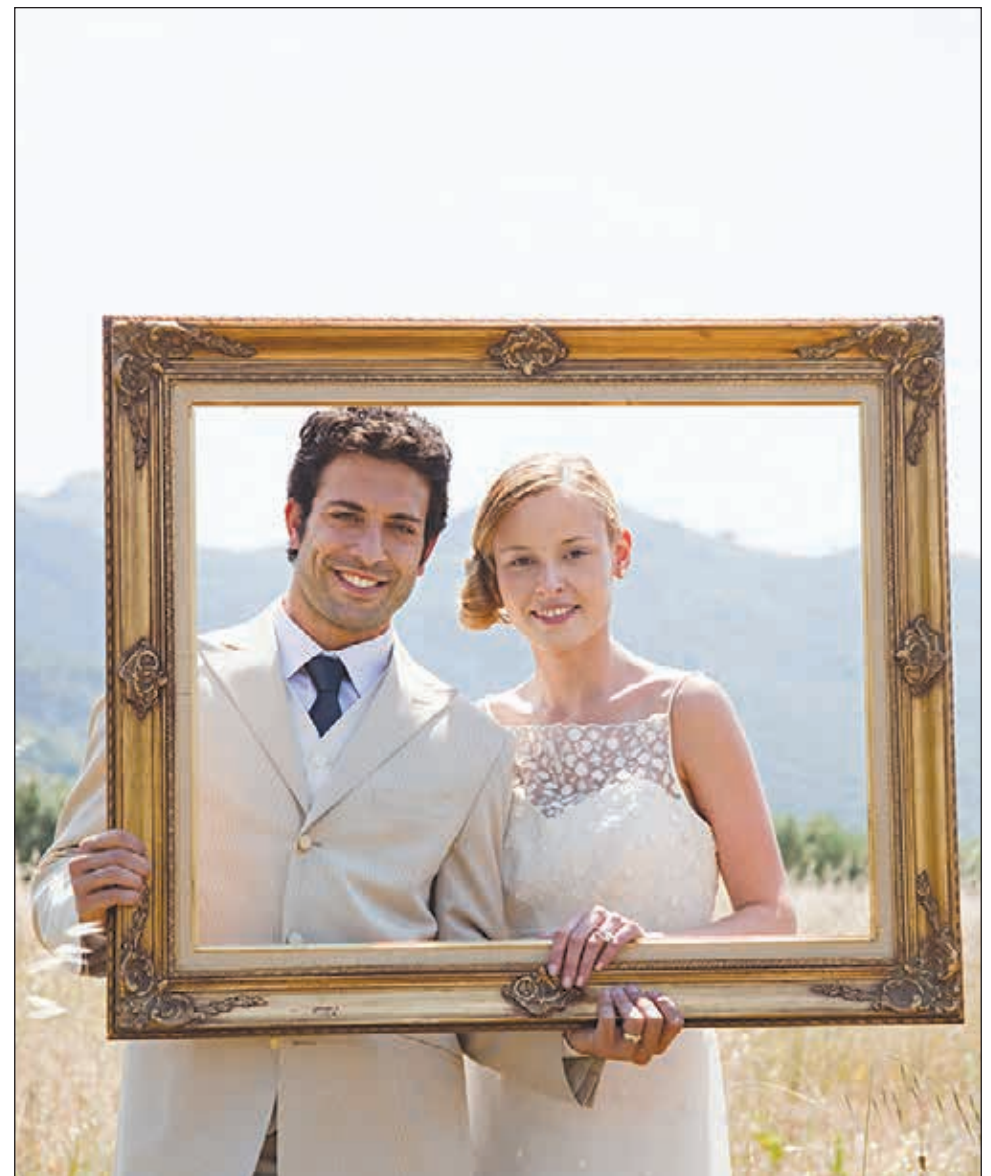
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# 4 tips

## for finding the right wedding venue

Wedding planning requires couples to make many decisions, including where the wedding will take place.

A couple's wedding day is typically broken into two parts: the ceremony comes first, and the reception follows soon after. Depending on couples' preferences and religious beliefs, ceremonies may take place at a house of worship or another location that is separate from the reception venue. In some instances, couples may choose one location for both the ceremony and the party to follow. Wedding venues are where the bulk of the day will unfold, and couples can consider these four tips to find a venue that suits their needs.

1. Consider your theme and wedding style. Most couples know which sentiments they want to convey during their weddings. The venue should match the theme so the entire wedding will feel connected to the space. A modern wedding, for example, will be at home in an art gallery or warehouse. A wedding with natural elements may work better on a ranch or in a botanical garden. Zeroing in on the wedding

style helps narrow down potential venue options.

2. Assess the budget. A couple may find what seems to be the perfect venue, only to realize that the cost of the space doesn't fit their budget. Ampersand Travel says the venue accounts for the most significant wedding expense, at an average cost of \$9,000. Finding a venue that will maximize dollars spent involves looking at what is included. Rentals for chairs, linens, lighting, a dance floor, and other extras can quickly add up. Couples should have a set limit they're willing to spend on the venue and let that dictate the location.

3. Availability of the location. When a couple wants to get married may determine their venue options, especially if they're planning on a budget. September and October are now the most popular months to get married, so venues will book up quickly during that time of year. Those who have their hearts set on specific days will have to begin the search earlier than couples with no attachment to a particular date. Concessions may need to be made if a certain date



is a must.

4. Estimate the size of your guest list. Price, date and style will factor into wedding venues, but the number of guests also is a major consideration. A trendy restaurant may seem like the perfect locale, but it must be able to accommodate everyone on the guest list. Couples should sit down with their families and come up with a list of potential guests and look for a venue that can accommodate everyone.

Couples also should visit potential venues in person to see which, if any, details might be missing from online or magazine advertisements. A host of factors, including accessibility, should be considered when looking for a venue.



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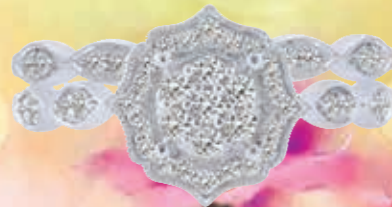
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Glasscock Jewelry Corner is located at 321 E. Young Ave. in Warrensburg. For more information, visit [glasscockjewelry.com](http://glasscockjewelry.com), email [baglasscock@yahoo.com](mailto:baglasscock@yahoo.com) or call 660-747-7466.

## Fun ways to utilize social media in your wedding

Young couples tying the knot today grew up with social media, so it's no great surprise that so many want to utilize various platforms when planning their weddings. In fact, the Brides 2018 American Wedding Survey found that 87% of brides turned to the social media platform Pinterest for inspiration when planning their weddings.

On the surface, modern wedding ceremonies and receptions may look similar to the nuptials of yesteryear. However, engaged couples have increasingly incorporated social media into their weddings, and the following are some fun and creative ways to embrace that trend.

- **Create a social media photo booth.**

Guests may take more pictures at modern weddings than the photographers who were hired to document the happy couple's big day from start to finish. Social media boards are digital screens that display social media walls. Live event social media boards collect and curate content from social media channels and display it on a single digital screen. Users, in this case a couple's guests, simply use a predetermined hashtag when posting photos and the images are then displayed on digital screens in real time. This can be a fun way to engage guests during the reception.

- **Live stream the wedding.** Live streams became very popular during the pandemic, when couples getting married had to pare down their guest lists in order to adhere to

social distancing guidelines. But live streams can continue to be used after the pandemic, as there will always be guests who can't make it to the wedding. Facebook Live was a go-to social media platform for live streaming weddings during the pandemic, and it can be utilized to involve loved ones in the festivities even if they can't be there in person. Live streaming via social media may be especially useful for couples who want to enjoy destination weddings, which tend to be small affairs due to travel constraints.

- **Hashtag the wedding.** A couple-specific hashtag can serve as something akin to a wedding album, only it's one everyone can easily access via the couple's chosen social media platform. Encourage guests to hashtag photos from the wedding so everyone can have a good time looking back on the ceremony and reception once the day has come and gone.

- **Plan with your party.** Social media can be as fun, inclusive and useful when planning the wedding as it can during the wedding itself. Brides and grooms can create their own private Pinterest boards and share them with the wedding party. Everyone can then use the private board to bounce ideas off each other. Couples can infuse a little fun into the Pinterest board by encouraging their groomsmen and bridesmaids to post outrageous outfit ideas or submit sing-along song requests to be played during the reception.

## Why a wedding planner can be a couple's *best asset*

The average cost of a wedding today is enough to make a sizable down payment on a home. According to The Knot's 2019 Real Weddings Study, the average wedding in the United States cost \$33,900 in 2019, though the price tag can vary widely from state to state. Canadians spend similarly, with Canadian Buzz stating a modest wedding will cost between \$25,500 and \$30,000 CAD, but more likely around \$42,400 CAD.

Though love may not cost a thing, weddings certainly do. One of the best ways to maximize wedding budgets and ensure that all that money is well spent is to enlist the services of a wedding planner. Wedding planners wear many hats, which underscores how valuable they can be.

### **Sounding board**

An experienced wedding planner can help couples keep their worries at bay. Countless decisions must be made when planning a wedding, and some couples may feel as if they need to micromanage their nuptials. A wedding planner can take tasks off of couples' plates and serve as a sounding board as couples try to make the best decisions.

### **Financial guru**

A wedding planner may help couples score insid-

er deals and will know when a vendor's price is on target or inflated. That savvy saves couples money in the long run. Wedding planners also can advise on ways to save money and allocate funds so couples' biggest priorities get the financial attention they deserve.

### **Problem solver**

Wedding planners step in to save the day when hiccups threaten to derail plans. A planner will know what to do should a gown become torn or if a vendor fails to respond to calls on the day of the wedding. Removing some stressors allows couples to relax and more fully immerse themselves in their weddings.

### **Idea generator**

Pulling together ideas from every corner requires a creative eye. Couples can rely on a professional wedding planner to help with brainstorming and putting different elements



together. He or she likely has seen a vast array of celebrations and can make suggestions based on what's worked before.

### **Time saver**

Wedding planners already have a bevy of industry contacts and can pull together wedding details in much less turn-around time than couples with no wedding planning experience.





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## Questions to ask prospective wedding officiants

Couples make many decisions when planning their weddings. Everything from the design of save-the-date cards to the color of the napkins at the reception tables requires couples' input. Choice of officiant is another decision that's worthy of significant consideration.

Many couples may have an officiant in mind before they begin planning their wedding. In such instances, couples may choose an officiant who's affiliated with their place of worship or even a friend or

family member who's been ordained or certified to officiate weddings. Couples with no such option can ask the following questions as they look to hire an officiant for their wedding.

### **Can you legally officiate our wedding?**

Each state has its own requirements regarding who can sign the paperwork necessary for couples to be considered legally married. An officiant should meet these requirements.



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**What services do you provide?**

Some officiants will do more than officiate the wedding. Some will help couples obtain their marriage license and even submit the documentation after the wedding. Those services can be important, but many couples are more concerned with what officiants will do before and during the ceremony. Ask if the officiant will write his or her own remarks to be delivered during the ceremony. Some couples may want to write remarks for the officiant, while others may need help crafting the message they want to convey.

**How flexible are you?**

Ask how officiants handle feedback and how willing they are to deliver remarks they did not necessarily write themselves. Some officiants may have a template they customarily follow, but that doesn't necessarily mean they won't stray and personalize the ceremony based on couples' wishes. Couples should ask such officiants how far they're willing to stray from their routine if necessary.

**Do you have a portfolio?**

Written testimonials from past clients can be invaluable, but couples can get a

true feel for an officiant's style by watching video of ceremonies they've officiated in the past. Ask prospective officiants if they can share video of weddings they've presided over. It's not a red flag if officiants have no such video, which couples may have forgotten to share. But video can help couples get an accurate idea of how officiants may preside over their ceremony.

**Will we work together prior to the ceremony?**

Many officiants will ask to meet with a couple at least once before the wedding so they can get to know them as well as possible. Ask each officiant if this is their policy. Pre-wedding meetings can be conducted in person or via Zoom. When discussing meeting before the wedding,

ask the officiant if he or she will attend the wedding rehearsal. It's not customary for officiants to do so, though some might be willing to attend the rehearsal, especially if the ceremony will feature any elaborate components that require their involvement.

**Miscellaneous considerations**

Couples also may want to broach some additional topics when questioning prospective officiants. Such topics may include:

- Officiant's attire
- Backups if the officiant falls ill prior to the ceremony
- Officiant fees, and if extra services like attending the rehearsal incurs additional charges
- Officiants' experience



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# Preserving wedding flowers is a popular trend

**By Faith Bemiss**

fbemiss@sedaliademocrat.com

A popular bridal trend for 2022 is wedding bouquet preservation, whether it's the whole bouquet

or individual flowers from the bouquet. Online searches can help with preservation tips and techniques while local artists can also preserve them as art.

Brides are finding flowers can be pressed, preserved in epoxy resin, dipped into wax

or painted as an art piece or replicated as crepe pa-

per flowers.

Lincoln artist Rhonda Snyder, who often shows work at NoBro Art Events in Sedalia, said she's recently taken up painting wedding flowers as gifts for family. Along with painting florals, she also creates realistic flowers from crepe paper and noted this is another excellent way to recreate a wedding bouquet.

"And that is an art form that I feel pretty confident in," she said of crepe paper flowers. "I've been doing that for a while."

She did explain creating crepe paper flowers is

time-consuming and at present, she doesn't create them for brides but did note there are many crepe paper artists on Etsy who specialize in this technique.

She added another idea for brides who want to preserve their flowers is to create a combination of both a painting and crepe paper flowers, which then can be framed.

"Which I have not done exactly," she said. "I have done paintings with crepe paper in like a 3-D format, but I haven't done a bridal bouquet ... But that's another idea."



To preserve wedding flowers as artwork, one can have a local artist paint the flowers and also create crepe paper flowers for the painting and then frame them together. This creates a 3-D effect.

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Snyder added she can paint the actual bridal bouquet but what she's done in the past is make a "representational painting."

"The first two that I did, I did them representationally," she explained. "I used the flowers that were in the wedding and sort of the theme of the wedding."

For one painting, she used the theme of red and white carnations from the wedding but they were placed into a pot. For a wedding that had a rustic theme, she painted sunflowers in Ball canning jars, which were used as centerpieces at the wedding.

In her most recent painting, she asked the bride if she could paint the wedding flowers in a container garden theme. The bride agreed.

"She loved the idea," Snyder said. "So there's all kinds of ways you can preserve wedding bouquet flowers and the theme of that. Whether it's in a painting or crepe paper replication."

"I can work with the bride or gift-giver to fine-tune the details," she said of painting the flowers. "Cost depends on detail and size but would start at \$125 for an 8x10."

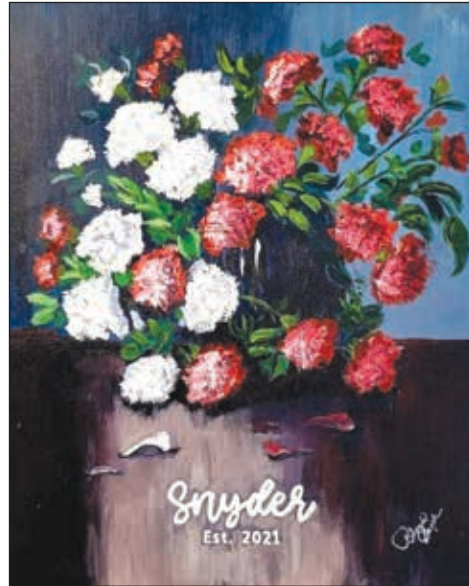
Websites such as [www.brides.com](http://www.brides.com) can also give suggestions on how to keep bridal flowers for years. Shannon Morrow, in the article "6 Ways to Preserve Your Wedding Flowers," noted brides are always looking for ways to make their wedding flowers a keepsake.

To preserve flowers, she suggested pressing flowers, air drying them by hanging them upside down, drying them in silica gel or preserving them with epoxy resin. Flowers may also be dipped into wax or as Snyder noted, painted.

To press flowers, they should be spread out on clean wax paper. This will help them "lift" easier after pressing. It's best to arrange them like one would want them to look before pressing since after they're pressed they retain their shape.

The wax paper and flowers can be pressed inside the pages of a heavy book along with an additional piece of wax paper. Then the book needs to be weighted down with other books and the flowers left to dry for seven to 10 days. Once the flowers are dried they can be framed.

To air-dry flowers, one can unwrap the bouquet and hang the flowers individually one by one. They should be hung in a "temperate area" such as a closet where they will be undisturbed. The flowers should be



**One way to preserve a wedding bouquet is to commission a local artist to paint the flowers. Lincoln artist Rhonda Snyder often paints wedding flowers as gifts for family.**

dried in about a week. After drying, they can be arranged in a vase or made into a wreath.

Silica gel is porous sand that absorbs water. It will dry flowers within a week. Morrow said the silica gel "freezes the bouquet in time." Silica gel can be purchased at any craft store for an economical price. The gel is poured around the flowers until the container is filled. Once filled, it should be sealed with an air-tight lid. After the flowers are preserved, spray them with hairspray.

To make a resin flower paperweight, one can purchase a mold for a craft store. The mold is filled with epoxy resin and the flowers are arranged in the liquid. Once it's dried it can be used as a paperweight or other decoration.

Wedding flowers can also be dipped into wax, but they only last up to six months when preserved this way.

For more information on having a painting of wedding flowers created, contact artist Rhonda Snyder at [nonnyart@yahoo.com](mailto:nonnyart@yahoo.com), through her Etsy shop at [www.etsy.com/shop/NonnySnyderArt](http://www.etsy.com/shop/NonnySnyderArt) or on Instagram @nonnysnyder.just.art.

Snyder will have an exhibit of her work available on Saturday, April 30 at the Benton County Art Walk in Warsaw.

Faith Bemiss can be reached at 660-530-0289 or on Twitter @flbemiss.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RHONDA SNYDER

Artist Rhonda Snyder can paint the whole bouquet or create a representational image of the flowers.

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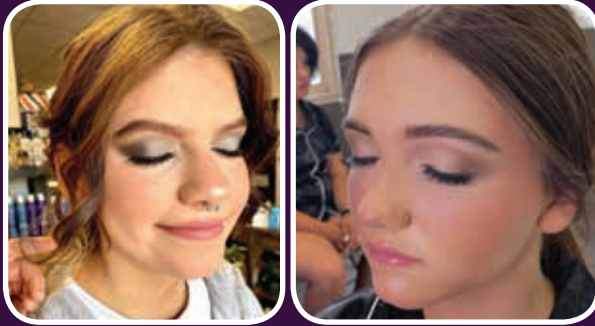
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## DID YOU KNOW?

Modern weddings are increasingly multicultural affairs. According to The Knot 2019 Real Weddings Study, 51% of all couples tying the knot involve partners from a different race or ethnicity or from a different geographic area. Those couples are still incorporating their heritage into their weddings, as 46% indicated they wore something with special meaning to

their families during their weddings. In addition, the survey found that 38% of couples incorporate cultural/ethnic or religious elements into their ceremonies.



# Explore various wedding styles during planning

Every wedding is different, even if many share some common components. As couples plan their weddings, learning about some popular wedding styles can help them create a ceremony that suits them.

### Classic wedding

Classic weddings are the storybook traditional weddings that many people dream about for years. Key elements include a tuxedo for the groom and a white gown for the bride. Formal attire is reserved for the rest of the wedding party. The ceremony is conducted in a place of worship before everyone retires to a fancy catering hall for the reception.



Traditional weddings also may include the time-honored customs like toasts, cake cutting, bouquet toss,

and parent-child dances.

### Beach wedding

Beach weddings often are casual, laid back

affairs. Dresses may be less structured and flow with sea breezes, while guys may even don shorts with linen shirts or jackets. Guests can expect the party to be much more free-flowing and the traditions of classic weddings may not be part of the celebration.

### Bohemian wedding

Free-spirited individuals may dive head first into a bohemian style wedding. According to wedding planner David Tutera, a boho wedding is casual and comfortable. It tends to come off chic but appears that way with minimal effort. Decor is typically humble and blends harmo-

niously with nature. A boho wedding may take place outdoors or in another less traditional venue, such as a farmhouse or botanical garden. Wedding party attire may be mismatched and showcase each person's individual style.

### Modern wedding

Brides and grooms who crave contemporary and current trends may prefer a modern wedding. Graphic color schemes, clean lines and minimalistic flowers might be part of a modern wedding. Attire may be angular and edgy, and the venue may run the gamut from sleek museum to a city rooftop.

### Destination wedding

Couples who love to travel and don't want to worry about the minutiae of wedding planning may find a destination wedding is a good fit. Destination weddings last more than one day and focus on relaxation, activities and lots of fun. Destination weddings tend to be less formal and less traditional than classic weddings. Due to the remote locations, destination weddings also can be smaller and more intimate, as many invitees may be unable to attend. Yet those who can attend often get to enjoy tropical islands or mountain retreats.



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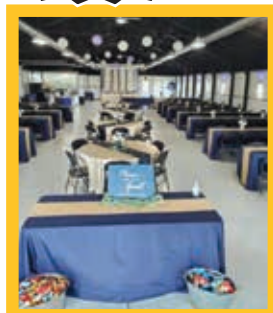
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Kay's Bridal & Tuxedo has everything to dress you from head to toe with tiaras and veils, bridesmaid's dresses, necklaces, garters, and shoes. Your entire bridal party can be gorgeous with gowns from Kay's where you will find an extensive selection of bridal gowns and dresses for bridesmaids, mothers, and flower girls.

Kay's Bridal and Tuxedo can make your man look as good as you with a tuxedo rental. Classic styles are available as well as more contemporary. Go with black, gray, navy, white or ivory, and add a splash of

color. You decide!

Kay's Bridal & Tuxedo specializes in catering to the bride on her wedding day by providing that special touch for the perfect wedding.

Everything you need to make your day beautiful is available at Kay's Bridal & Tuxedo. They provide wedding rental services, bridal consultant services and event designing/coordinating with reception decoration rentals, table covers and overlays, centerpieces, silver and brass candelabras, flower bouquets, specialty lighting of your reception hall, and much more.

With more than 34 years of experience in helping thousands of brides, Kay and her staff are great at listening to you to make sure you have the wedding you have dreamed of. They have what you need to transform your dream event into reality!

Kay's Bridal & Tuxedo has been a part of historic downtown Sedalia for 34 years, however, we are excited to announce our new location in the State Fair Shopping Center in the former Hallmark storefront, 1400 S. Limit Ave. Kay's will be moving to its new location soon, so follow us on Facebook for updates.

For more information or to make an appointment, call 660-620-5481, email [kaysbridalandtuxedo@gmail.com](mailto:kaysbridalandtuxedo@gmail.com) or visit [www.kaysbridalandtuxedo.com](http://www.kaysbridalandtuxedo.com).



# Find the ring to fit your love at Reed & Sons

You've found each other, and now it is time for the symbol of that love and commitment: the ring. Whether you purchase the engagement ring together as a couple or you buy it on your own, there are several things to consider:

If the engagement ring is going to be a surprise, think about her taste in jewelry:

- Does she like the antique look or more modern styles?
- Does she like larger pieces of

jewelry or small and delicate?

- What color of metal does she wear more – white, yellow or rose?

- What type of work does she do and will it be hard on her jewelry?

- There are many shapes of diamonds. She may have already voiced an opinion about the shape she likes or keeps admiring someone else's engagement ring. Keep these thoughts in mind when considering shapes. If you are uncertain about her diamond shape

preference, stick to the classics such as round or princess cut.

Another option for the center is a Lab Grown Diamond. Lab-grown diamonds are an excellent choice for center and are budget savers. The difference between the two is the origin. Earth-mined, gem-quality diamonds are rare and come from the Earth as they are hundreds of millions of years old. Lab-grown diamonds take six to eight weeks to grow with the latest technology and start from the

seed of a diamond. A big consideration when going lab-grown is what its value will be in the future.

Many rings can have different shape centers so don't be afraid to ask the jeweler if you see a ring you like if it can have a different shape center.

There are also several color stones that are popular in engagement rings today. Sapphire and ruby are the top two picks.

If considering a stone other than a diamond, talk to your

jeweler about the durability of the stone that you are considering, as not all stones are going to hold up to everyday wear.

Do you want a ring that is one-of-a-kind and designed by you? Do you have stones from family jewelry you want to use in the engagement ring?

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# Your wedding timeline guide

Wedding planning involves many movable pieces that ultimately need to come together on the big day. Planning is typically a months-long process, and adhering to certain monthly benchmarks can help couples stay the course.

Brides magazine offers that the perfect engagement period is 12 to 14 months, which affords ample time to get organized and work with vendors. With that in mind, here's a 12-month timeline for couples getting ready to say "I do."

## 12 months out

At the start of the planning process, establish your budget, hire a wedding planner (optional), choose the wedding party, pick a date, and start to assemble a cursory guest list. This also is a great time to begin touring venues to get a feel for potential ceremony and reception locales.

## 11 months out

Now is the time to get a firm handle on the theme and scope of the wedding. Start picking wedding colors and overall design. Also, interview and hire vendors, such as photographers, bands and videographers. These vendors tend to book up quickly as wedding season draws near, so it's never too early to book them.

## 10 months out

This is a good time to start shopping for a wedding

gown because it might take some trial and error to find the perfect dress. You also can start shopping for wedding party attire at this time. Check with formalwear vendors to see how long it will take for the gowns to arrive in the shop for alterations. If you haven't already done so, be sure to book the wedding venue.

## 8 months out

Reception halls may have their own schedules, but you should think about setting your menu at this time, including deciding if you will host a seated dinner, a buffet or something else.

Eight months out also is a good time to finalize the guest list and send save-the-date cards.

This also is a good time to visit stores to create registry gift lists.

## 6 months out

Meet with potential florists and other vendors, like transportation companies and hotels, to secure these arrangements. Your place of worship also may require certain classes or preparatory meetings, so be sure to inquire about these.

Meet with a makeup and hair stylist and book a trial. Choose attire for groomsmen and give them a deadline for fittings and orders. If you will not be getting married in a place of worship, hire an officiant at this time.

## 4 months out

Grooms traditionally arrange the honeymoon, so this is a fine time to get those travel plans in order. If you need passports, you should secure them as early as possible, and no later than four months prior to the wedding to ensure processing times. Book cake tastings and order the cake if it is not part of the venue food and beverage package. If you haven't already done so, the bride should have an initial gown fitting, and wedding invitations should be ordered at this time.

## 2 months out

Secure your wedding license and buy wedding party gifts. Address and mail the wedding invitations. Undergo a second gown fitting and work with the seamstress for the final fitting date just before the wedding. Finalize any song selections with the DJ or band.

The final details will occur in the last weeks before the wedding. Buy all the small accessories and items, undergo final fittings and check in with all vendors for final payments and to ensure they are on schedule. Notify the reception hall of the final guest count.

Once the wedding day arrives, couples who have done their best to stay on schedule can relax and have a great time with family and friends.

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