

# Essential Planning Checklist

## START EARLY

The fun begins as soon as you're engaged. Now that he's done the romantic part and asked for your hand in marriage, take the plunge and announce your engagement to the world!

- If he didn't propose with a ring, go diamond shopping. Get to know the 4 C's: Colour, Clarity, Cut and Carat.
- Set a date and a budget. Meet with parents to discuss their involvement.
- Start looking at ceremony and reception venues to suit your tastes.
- If you are choosing an outdoor venue, consider parking, noise, power, access and facilities.
- Consider hiring a wedding planner!

## ONCE YOU HAVE SET THE DATE

You can now start booking those suppliers whose diaries fill up six or twelve months in advance. Now is also the time to start looking for that perfect gown.

- Decide on the formality of your day and book ceremony venue/church and reception venues.
- If you are intending to marry on one of the Sunshine Coast beachfronts, consider tide and sunset times and make sure you book your venue with the local Council.
- Visit photography & video studios and book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.
- Choose your bridal party and ask them if they would like to be involved.
- Start visiting gown designers to get an idea of the styles and shapes that suit you.

## 6-12 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

Create your wedding style guide and choose your colour palettes. Don't forget to send save-the-dates so international and interstate guests can take advantage of early bird fares.

- Agree on the colour scheme and the style of your wedding. Start collecting images that reflect this style: invitations, florals, table settings and fabrics that work together.
- Order your gown. If you have chosen a made-to-measure gown, confirm your style and book the designer with a deposit.
- Often colour schemes tie in with bridesmaid dresses (although this isn't a fixed rule), so go shopping with your girls to find out what they feel comfortable in. Order bridesmaid dresses.
- Write and agree on your guest list and send out save-the-dates either by email or in the post.
- Design wedding invitations and stationery - consider the items best done by a professional and then do the rest DIY.
- Negotiate accommodation options for interstate and overseas guests and include within your invitation notes.
- Review transport options. On the Sunshine Coast there are many alternatives whether you are looking to arrive by gondola, classic car or limousine.
- Meet with florists to discuss floral designs. Check the seasonality of your favourite flowers.
- Choose the cake design and flavour to match your tastes.
- Consider a wedding decorator to design your ceremony and reception styling.
- Decide on what type of entertainment you want at the ceremony and reception. Organise PA systems for outdoor ceremonies, particularly if you have a large congregation.
- Choose your wedding gift registry, or perhaps a wishing well to save for that honeymoon or first home. There are some great online registries available saving you and your guests' time.
- Start your beauty, fitness and health regime.
- Congratulations! You now have your date, locations, style and themes complete, so go ahead and send the invitations!

### *Hot tip*

Gown shopping is meant to be fun. Call designers beforehand, book no more than four appointments in the day, and organise a girly lunch to break them up. Don't forget to take a pair of heels, white or nude underwear, a hair clip to change your hairstyle and a friend who's opinion you trust!

## 3-6 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

Now that you have your wedding style guide complete, it's time to send out the

- Send your invitations out within three months of the wedding, earlier if you have a number of interstate or overseas guests. Don't forget to put gift registry details in with the invites.
- Book a hair stylist and make-up artist.

# YOU'VE JUST GOT ENGAGED, NOW WHERE DO YOU START? THE WEDDING PLANNING PROCESS CAN BE DAUNTING, BUT WITH THESE SIMPLE STEPS YOU'LL FIND IT EASY TO MANAGE YOUR TIME. HAVE FUN! WORDS BY TRUDY CROAD, EVENTS BY DESIGN.

invitations and confirm all the little details with suppliers. This is also the time you should make wet weather plans if you intend holding your ceremony outdoors.

- Book and pay deposits on your florist, caterer, cake designer, entertainment and transport.
- Choose your wedding rings.
- Choose your ceremony words and if you are having a church wedding, compile your Order of Service and ask friends/family to be readers.
- Go groomsmen shopping - try out alternative hire/buy options.
- Collect ideas for your honeymoon & make initial bookings.
- Plan your bucks and hens nights.

## 8-12 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

Your suppliers are booked, briefed and ready to go, so it is time for your attention to return to more personal issues like your gown, accessories and beauty regime.

- Have your priest or celebrant file the Notice of Intended Marriage.
- Have your final fittings for your dress.
- Ensure the bridesmaid dresses are fitted and hemmed.
- Buy shoes, veil and underwear.
- Have a facial and body wrap to deeply moisturise the skin.
- Trial your make-up and hair style.
- Book in regular manicures and pedicures.
- Finalise guest list and rsvps. Send invitations to second tier guests if you have room.
- Book your honeymoon suite.
- Agree on songs for the Aisle, Signing of the Registry, Recessional, and First Dance.
- Check passports and visas. If you intend changing to your married name, make sure you apply to the Birth, Deaths and Marriages for an official extract of your Marriage Certificate.

## 2 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

Confirm your bookings and agree on the table seating plan.

*Hot tip*

Don't feel you have to stick to the rules when planning your seating arrangements. Including your bridal party's spouses on your table is a lovely way of making them feel part of the occasion.

- Finalise numbers and seating plan with venue. Ask them to arrange gift and cake tables.
- Organise place cards and bonbonniere. Try something unique for bonbonniere. Capture the floral essence of your day in individual crystal perfume decanters. Personal notes to each guest are a great way of saying thank you to everyone.
- Arrange a beautiful cake knife.
- Confirm your bookings with suppliers, pay final invoices and let them know delivery and pick-up addresses.
- Pick up wedding rings.
- Groomsmen to have haircuts.
- Finalise itinerary for your honeymoon, pick up tickets and arrange travel insurance.
- Think creatively on how you can incorporate something old, new, borrowed and blue into your wedding.
- Pick up all attire and hang or lay flat, as per designer's instructions.
- Start writing your speech.

## LAST FEW DAYS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

Rehearse, relax and enjoy time with friends and family.

- Rehearse at ceremony site.
- Write order of events and distribute to bridal party and close family.
- Have your engagement ring cleaned.
- Buy wedding gifts for your bridal party.
- Take ushers, readers and speakers through their timings.
- Arrange to have dresses and suits steamed and pressed.
- Have a relaxation massage.
- Catch up with family and friends.
- Have good night's rest before the big day.
- Pack for your honeymoon and arrange airport transfers.
- On the day, have a good breakfast, take a deep breath and enjoy it!