

The Northern Echo Advertising Supplement, Wednesday, March 11, 2009

# BRIDES'09

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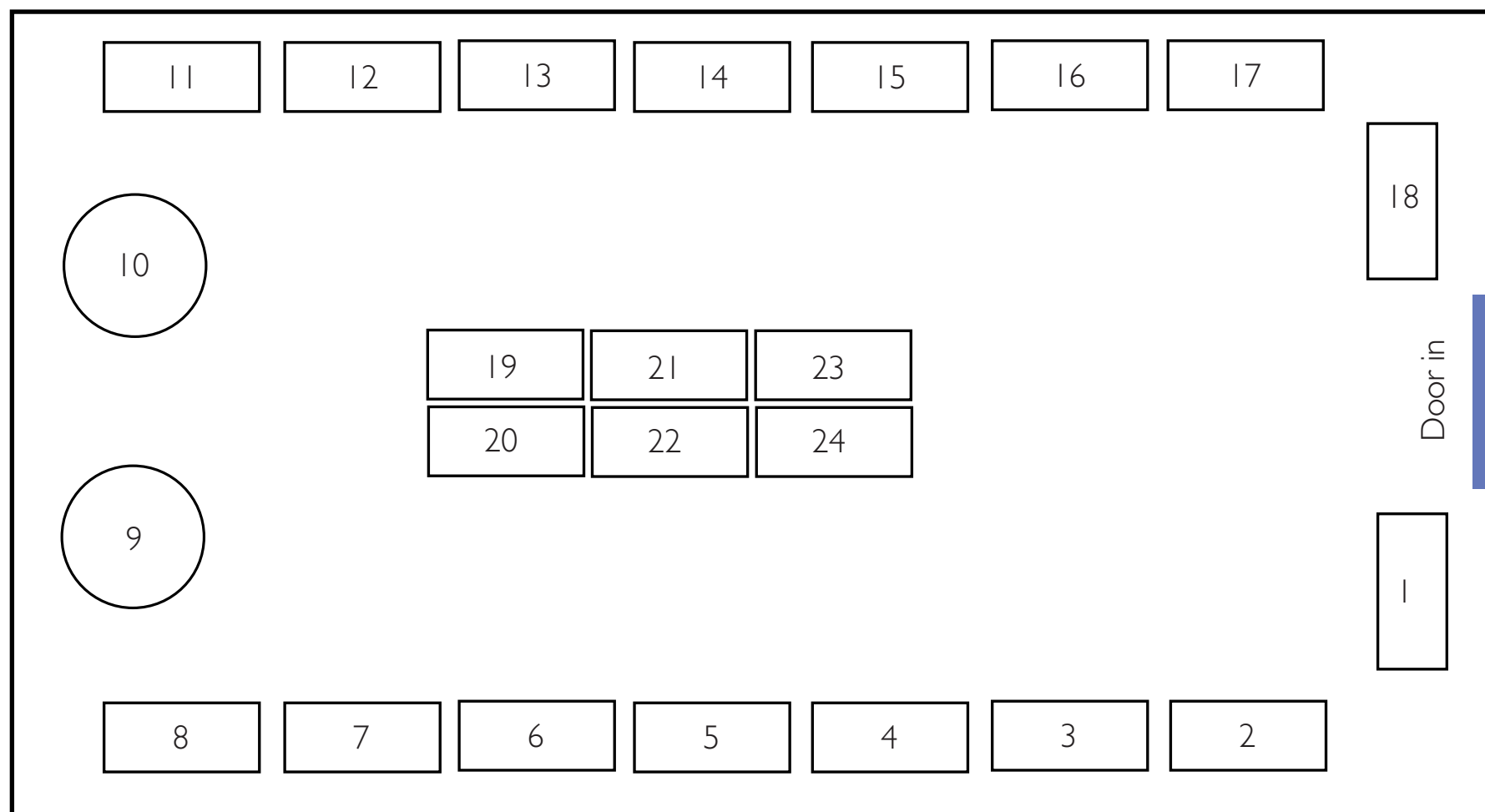
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## The Northern Echo

# Bride & Groom

## SPRING EXHIBITION

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
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| <b>2</b> Hotel Bannatyne         | <b>12</b> Simply Flowers             | <b>22</b> The Croft          |
| <b>3</b> Rings by Design         | <b>13</b> Liberty Productions        | <b>23</b> Bakers Formal Hire |
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# Will you marry me?

How to pop the question and get the answer you want



**S**UMMER is the peak season for weddings and all things amorous, and with the distinct whiff of romance in the confetti-laden air, many of us are inspired to seize the moment and finally pop the big question: Will you marry me?

It will come as no real surprise that most Britons stick pretty close to tradition, with nearly two-thirds of engagements in the UK still beginning in the time-honoured fashion of boy proposing to girl, says a recent GMTV Wedding Survey.

But successfully asking your beloved to spend the rest of their life with you is certainly no easy task. As the pressure mounts, many attempts at overblown romantic proposals don't exactly go as planned.

A case in point is the US man who certainly made an unforgettable impression when he decided to ask his girlfriend to marry him during a private chartered flight. No sooner had the nervous man slipped the ring onto his fiancée's finger, than the plane crashed on landing. Despite having a broken leg, she still said yes. David Lethbridge of online wedding specialists Confetti ([www.confetti.co.uk](http://www.confetti.co.uk)), believes you don't necessarily have to be outrageous to impress your future spouse.

"All it takes is a bit of planning, creativity, and common sense," he says.

"Be aware that not only do you have to get your head around the 'lifetime commitment' thing, but also the whole politics of the proposal," explains David.

"Do you really have to ask her Dad first? What about the ring – should you choose it together or be traditional and buy it by yourself? How much should you spend on it? What are her favourite stones? Where should you ask her? In the pub? Over a curry? There are so many decisions to be made!"

That most important thing, David believes, is to stay calm and make sure that you're well prepared.

"In terms of good long-term diplomatic relations, do ask her dad for her hand?"

"Have you ever wondered why there are so many in-law jokes? It's because they're true – so manage them," says David.

"The next concern is the ring. The ring is crucial. No girl wants to wear something for the rest of her life that looks like it fell out of a Christmas cracker, so take advice from mutual girlfriends."

When it comes to choosing a location for the all-important proposal, David recommends keeping in mind that you are doing the groundwork for making memories – and her expectations are always going

to be high.

"When I say high, we're talking stratospheric so select your location with care," he says.

"Your local curry house is a thought, but only if you want to leave wearing your vindaloo. It's all about location, location, location. Think her favourite beach as a child, her favourite restaurant or over a sunset on some exotic island.

"The 'miles from anywhere' approach is a nice touch. Proposing in public often backfires, so drop the chat show, radio request and PA system ideas," he advises.

"Always keep the ring receipt, just in case, and do propose face-to-face. In America, e-mail seems to be an increasingly popular way for shy Romeos to pop the question, but it's not exactly romantic, is it?"

Finally, when it comes to the question itself, David believes that this is the easiest part.

"Once you're on the beach, cliff top or restaurant, you'll be so psyched up you'll probably just blurt it out – but at least it will be out there.

"Remember the K.I.S.S. rule – Keep It Simple and Sincere. A banner unfolding along Tower Bridge saying: 'Will you marry me?' may have worked in Hart to Hart, but let's face it you are not a 70's TV detective couple.

"Just think, once you've proposed, all you have to worry about is the wedding..."

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**W**HATEVER else 2009 promises in terms of top wedding

trends, the two which are set to have the most influence on bridal parties this year are the economy (surprise, surprise!) and eco-chic. Pulling in the purse strings while planning a wedding may seem a contradiction in terms to many brides, and having a small budget can obviously have its downside. On the upside, however, this often makes for greater ingenuity and creativity. This is entirely appropriate given that, for 2009, there is a major move towards keeping things simple; opting for smaller, more intimate weddings and not being afraid to go for unusual, personal, quirky ideas. According to the wedding pundits, green weddings are both glamorous and more affordable. Choosing to stay in season for food and flowers, using the internet (paper-free) to send out invitations and having your ceremony and reception in the same location are all highly fashionable, eco-friendly and mainstream concepts for 2009. Many of this year's bridal fashions are inspired by the vintage, retro-look, with the 1920s promising to be especially hot. Brides wearing birdcage veils and fascinators, for example, look stylish, whimsical and classic – all at the same time – without adding hugely to the cost.

*For 2009, there is a major move towards keeping things simple; opting for smaller, more intimate weddings and not being afraid to go for unusual, personal, quirky ideas*

Using a friend's veil and headpiece is another style-savvy way to save, particularly as it can also double-up as the 'something borrowed' item. Hair and beauty is going retro too, with modern beehives – known in the trade as 'undone updos' – and dewy Priscilla Presley eyes setting the trend. This year's brides are tipped to go for truly re-wearable, affordable bridesmaids' dresses, while opting for sweet, simple wedding decorations and centrepieces in place of all the fluff and excess of previous years.

The very best way of cutting your budget, however, is to cut your guest list, bearing in mind that small, romantic ceremonies are definitely in for 2009. This way you can still treat your guests to a beautiful wedding with the unique and

wonderful things you want without blowing the budget. You can always throw a bigger, less formal, bash for everyone else later in the year. As for destination weddings, just make them closer to home and keep the guest list down to closest family and friends.



**DARE TO BE DIFFERENT:** Hold an outdoor wedding and reception (top), get your groom to bake your wedding gown (as baker Valenty Shtefano did for his bride, Viktoriya, using 1,500 cream puffs) or borrow a friend's veil and headpiece to save cash



*Beauty guru John Gustafson believes you should stick to what works best on your wedding day. "Wear what you know looks good on you and feels comfortable. This is not the day to experiment with a completely new look. This is a day to make yourself look the very best version of you," he says.*

# Beautiful brides

**W**hether the wedding is a big celebrity-style bash or a low-key knees-up in the local pub, every bride wants to look and feel her best. There's nothing worse than a bride tinted an unflattering shade of orange or wearing garish lipstick – especially when she'll be preserved for posterity in the photos. Expert make-up artist Mailin Haddow has helped hundreds of brides to look gorgeous on their big day. Glasgow-based Mailin says that while some brides want to look completely natural and others want to be very glamorous, they all want make-up that lasts all day and looks great in photos. "Thanks to my work on fashion shoots I know what looks best in photographs and what will look great throughout the whole day," she says. "I don't particularly like to use foundations and lipsticks that are specifically marketed as being long-lasting, as these can tend to look dry and tired on the skin as the day wears on. "Instead I like to use primers under the base, anti-shine lotions, radiance boosters where necessary, lightweight talc-free powder, waterproof mascaras and eyeliners, so that the make-up still has a radiance to it," she says. Even if you feel confident about doing your own make-up, Mailin suggests having someone else to apply it as this will give you time to relax and

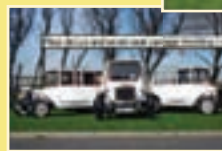
enjoy being pampered. Be wary of putting yourself in the hands of a friend though – both your face and your friendship might be better off if you enlist a professional. "An experienced make-up artist will listen to your ideas of how you want to look and will recreate your perfect look," Mailin says. "Ultimately the bride must be absolutely comfortable with the make-up and feel confident, so it's a good idea to have a trial beforehand to ensure you get a look that you are happy with. "If you see any pictures in magazines of make-up you like, it's a good idea to tear them out and show them to your make-up artist at the trial. These don't have to be bridal pictures, just any make up you think is what you might be looking for." Mailin suggests having a trial run about six to eight weeks before the wedding – but adds that you shouldn't forget to factor in things like getting a fake tan. "Different fake tans can suit different skin types so it's worth knowing in advance of the big day which one is right for you," she says. "If you can, try and coincide your trials for hair, make-up and fake tan as this will give you an idea of the overall finished look." Make-up guru Bobbi Brown also has plenty of helpful advice for brides who want to create their own wedding day look. "If you're a bride-to-be, my best advice is to go for a make-up look that enhances

your features so you look like yourself at your most radiant," she says. "Your wedding day is not the time to experiment! You'll be showing off your wedding album for the rest of your life so keep your look timeless. Stay away from anything trendy or complicated and stick to classic shades." Bobbi advises that you start by getting your concealer and foundation perfect. "Choose a shade of concealer that's not too white or too light since it can wash out your face, especially when you're wearing a white dress. For natural warmth, choose a yellow-toned foundation and face powder that compliment your skin tone. Face powder is a must, so set concealer and foundation with powder applied with a powder puff." To make your eye make-up last, Bobbi suggests using an eye pencil to line eyes, then applying shadow in the same colour on top with an eyeliner brush. "My personal favourite is gel liner, which gives you the dramatic look of liquid liner but is infinitely easier to apply," she says. "Definitely wear waterproof mascara in the shade of blackest black you can find. "When I need to ensure that lipstick stays on, I line and fill in lips with a lip pencil, then layer the lipstick over it. If you want to give your lips a pouty look, dab a touch of gloss on the centre."

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# A touch of glamour

**T**HE overall bridal look may be vintage-inspired, but wedding fashions for 2009 are set to give brides some real choices based on their sense of style, flair and personality.

Brides-to-be who like traditional styles will be delighted to hear that big ball gowns are all the rage. The key to the right look this year, however, is choosing the right fabric. Consider layers of tulle for summer, satin for spring and autumn, and ultra-soft suede for a wintertime wedding. This year's gowns feature a special love affair with frills, layers of ruffles, tulle and net, all dressed up with diamanté, drop-waists, and plenty of intricate, textured detailing for masses of gorgeous glamour.

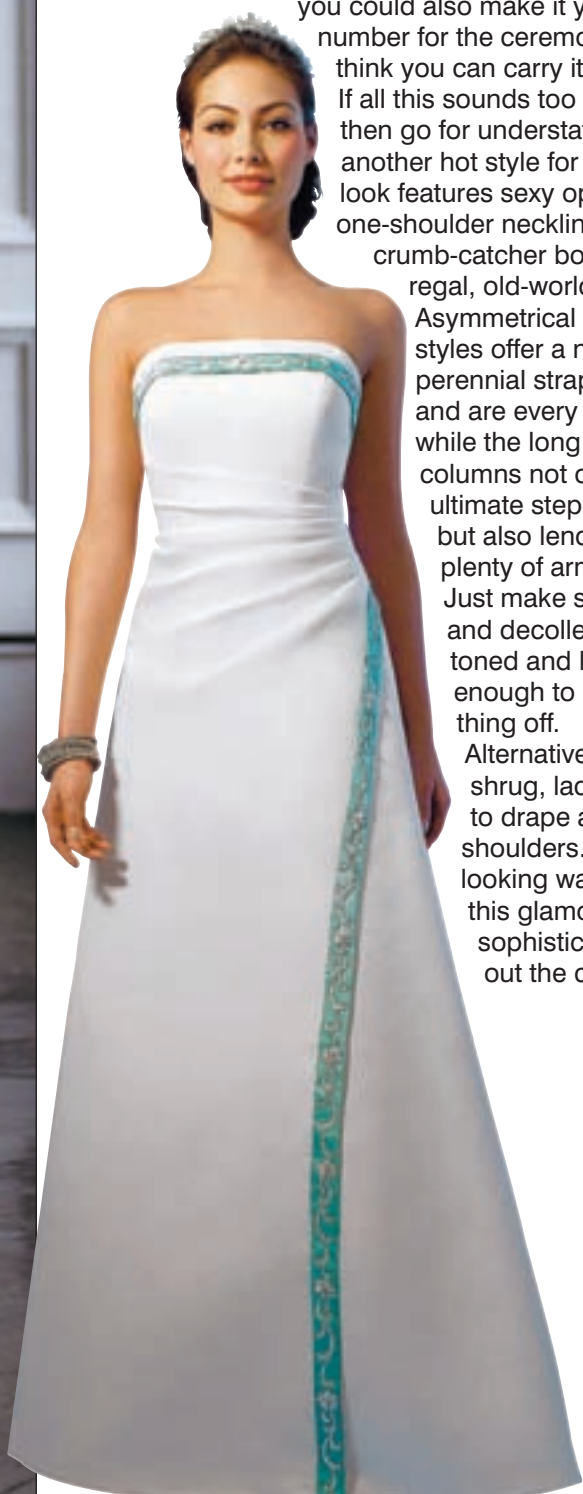
The mini makes its debut on the wedding scene in a big way this year – but it will also have layers, ruches and ruffles aplenty. Perhaps more suited to a less formal, outdoor wedding or as a second gown to dance the night away in, you could also make it your headline number for the ceremony itself – if you think you can carry it off with aplomb.

If all this sounds too much for you then go for understated glamour – another hot style for 2009. This look features sexy open backs, one-shoulder necklines and crumb-catcher bodices for that regal, old-world design twist.

Asymmetrical or one-shouldered styles offer a nice alternative to perennial strapless favourites and are every bit as spectacular, while the long Greek goddess columns not only take the ultimate step back in time but also lend themselves to plenty of arm bling.

Just make sure that your arms and décolletage are perfectly toned and look gorgeous enough to carry the whole thing off.

Alternatively, invest in a shrug, lacy bolero or stole to drape around your bare shoulders. It's a great looking way to give all this glamour a touch of sophistication and keep out the cold.



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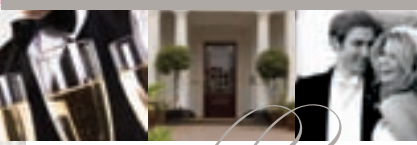
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# Great ways to save cash and still have the wedding of your dreams

**W**ITH the credit crunch forcing many of us to tighten our belts – and the average wedding reportedly costing £20,000 – a recent survey by online jeweller [www.jpdiamonds.co.uk](http://www.jpdiamonds.co.uk) claims that nearly 75% of betrothed couples have put their nuptials on hold due to a lack of funds.

Wedding costs can easily soar – especially if you follow the example of celebrity couples like Wayne and Colleen Rooney, who were rumoured to have spent about £5m on their lavish Portofino bash last summer. With careful planning and a bit of effort, you don't have to bankrupt yourself just to declare your love for each other. Mark and Helen Raynham are one couple who drove a hard bargain to get the wedding of their dreams last November.

"We wanted to do it on a budget because we didn't want to be spending £15,000 or £20,000 as some people do," Mark explains. "We have a young child and weren't going to spend his inheritance on one day. We aimed for £6,000, but this rose to around £7,000. I think we got what we wanted and I like to imagine the guests thought we spent more than we did.

"A lot of things came from eBay. Even for things we didn't purchase on the site we were able to use it as a bargaining tool. "When it comes to your venue, you can't save much – especially as when you mention it's a wedding they start suggesting more and more.

"To hire a room, for example, we had to spend £12 per head on canapes. After some hard bargaining we agreed we would spend £12 per head, but it would be £4 per person for canapes with the rest put towards the evening buffet. We still had to pay the £12, but we felt we got value for our money.

"The other thing is not to cater for everybody. We had around 70

people in the evening, but we only catered for 60. There was still enough food for everyone." The Raynhams also saved on alcohol costs by buying the wine well in advance during a supermarket promotion. Edinburgh couple Mandy Jamieson and Danielle Smith also went for a DIY approach to their wedding to save money. They rented a village hall for their ceremony, decorating it with fairy lights and church candles, then bought all their flowers from a supermarket on the morning of the wedding.

**Check out these tips on how to have the wedding of your dreams without spending a fortune.**

**GO GREEN:** Recycling can work for weddings too. Check out [www.the-wedding-co-op.com](http://www.the-wedding-co-op.com) to find what you need at a great price.

**CALL IN FAVOURS:** Ask a family friend to make your wedding cake instead of buying a gift, or get a mate with a nice car to be your chauffeur.

**SHOP SMART:** Forget designer stores and check out the high street for your wedding dress or a suit for the groom.

**PERFECTLY MADE UP:** Ask a friend to do your wedding make-up. You can spend hours practising beforehand – and you'll be able to reuse the products afterwards!

**SNAP HAPPY:** Get friends to take photographs rather than hiring a photographer. Informal, unposed shots will capture the true feel of the day.

**HONEYMOON AT HOME:** Find a romantic bolthole in the UK. It'll cost less and you won't have to deal with jetlag or sunburn!

"Basically, for us it was never about the money," said 28-year-old Danielle. "It was about remembering what the day was for – celebrating our relationship with our loved ones.

"There are so many assumptions about weddings – that you must have this, you must have that, everything must be perfect, and that the more money you spend, the greater chance you have of achieving your dream. We simply didn't agree.

"We figured the hall (even in its most basic form) and the village itself were so beautiful on their own that it would actually spoil the setting to make things 'perfect' with matching tables, chairs, linen and flowers."

Capturing the big day on photo and video is another big sinkhole for money, but there are ways to get a permanent record of your wedding without breaking the bank.

Website [www.Studentgems.com](http://www.Studentgems.com), which helps students to find work in their field while they're studying, can be a real help. Co-founder Sue Harrison says couples can use the site to find a student to meet their needs, then negotiate with them directly.

"What we advise is to take into account the level of experience the student has and what the customer wants," she says. Sue agrees that wedding costs can easily spiral out of control, but says you don't have to get into debt to get the day you want.

"From a personal point of view I feel that when you mention the word wedding people add a nought on the end of their bill. People assume you have a lot of money to spend – but that's not always the truth.

"A lot of people come to us because they can't afford a professional photographer. Others don't want a professional photographer because they think they will be told what the photographs will look like."



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# Add a touch of colour to your day

**T**HE coming year heralds a major departure from the 'it' colours of the last two years – from an abundance of pinks and browns or blacks and whites to the new hip neutral of grey or bright, bold, jewel-like colours. The most popular selection will probably be a combination of the two.

For some, grey may seem an odd, drab choice – especially for wedding fashions. In reality, it can be a handsome foil for brighter, more daring accent colours. And therein lies the key to its success: when pairing grey and other bright colours, use the brighter hues in your accessories and details. Other hot colours this year include the ever-popular and versatile pink – from delicate, pale pastels to screaming, psychedelic neons. One of the hottest colour combinations this year is hot pink and grey, while another is silver and purple – a right royal selection and the perfect choice for an early spring or cool winter event.

Sunshine yellows and oranges (and all the shades inbetween) are also expected to be popular wedding colours for 2009. Warm and welcoming, they can be used for everything from bridesmaids' dresses to flowers, and can even be introduced as seasonal flavours in a reception meal. They are the perfect selection for an outdoor spring or summer wedding.

If none of these grab you, then mix it up a little with the following colour combinations: steel grey, buttery yellow and raspberry; cantaloupe, navy and lime; or navy, plum and creme brûlée. Finally, swap chocolate brown for bronzes, coppers and even black.

A final note for brides on the colour front is that the 2009 take on 'something blue' is navy. So forget the pastel blue garter and don a navy necklace or earrings, or wrap your bouquet in navy lace.



# Create a floral fantasy

**T**HE Flowers & Plants Association produces four seasonal flower guides every year to help discerning brides choose the best bouquet and floral

arrangements for the most magical day of their life. According to the association, 2009 is the year in which weddings 'go green', with flower styles celebrating the natural energy, vibrancy and ritual aspects of flowers, fruits and even vegetables. The most fashionable spring flower for 2009, and therefore an extremely popular wedding flower, is the tulip. They come in a range of colours, have a wonderfully natural form and movement and look spectacular – whether packed tightly in a modern handtie with hyacinths or wild and natural in an over-the-arm bouquet. Summer 2009 is set to go tropical with the emphasis firmly on the tactile and sensually-evocative aspect of flowers such as the anthurium, a touchy-feely flower which can be displayed either by itself in a handtie that'll be the talk of your wedding day, or teamed with other interesting flowers for a classic look. Introduce vintage tradition and scent with freesias; pretty country-style with peonies; water-lily opulence with dahlia;

regal simplicity with arum or calla lilies; and soften the whole look with dill. As with all vintage fashion, the chrysanthemum is firmly back in fashion and will be the star of the show for autumn 2009 – entirely appropriate given that autumn is the best time for this tall, versatile and elegant bloom. For your bouquet, mix chrysanthemums with a pretty garden-like mixture of scented purple phlox, orange asclepias, funky snapdragons and fluffy purple liatris. Real daredevils can add gladioli into an over-the-arm sheaf bouquet for a hark-back to the 1960s. The rich, sensual colours for winter 2009 are deep and mystical – burnt orange, aubergine, deep reds and striking cerise. The alstroemeria is the main flower to look out for now, especially for medieval-style weddings. For a real show-stopper of a bouquet, why not mix burnt orange calla lilies with spiky, dramatic heliconia; cerise vanda orchids; fuzzy kangaroo paw and bright orange carnations.




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# The perfect speech

**C**RAFTING then delivering the perfect wedding speech is a task that reduces many men – and women – to quivering wrecks. Or at the very least sees them frantically searching the internet for ideas. For bridegrooms and best men unused to standing up in public, the anticipation can overshadow the entire wedding day and see them reduced to a bag of nerves stuttering through badly-written notes. That's why more and more people are logging on to a growing number of websites for 'inspiration'. The only problem with that is that everyone else has had the same idea! London-based Lawrence Bernstein, 37, is a professional speechwriter and guardian angel for those struggling with wedding scripts and jittery nerves. "People often call me after they've been to someone else's wedding and seen it go horribly wrong," said Lawrence, who exudes a quiet confidence that

makes him exactly the sort of person you'd want to help you write a script to bring the house down.

He believes that preparation is the key to success.

"What is underestimated isn't the time it will take to write a speech," Lawrence says. "Like any form of public performance, your wedding speech requires rehearsal and some very specific things people don't often think of – such as the type of paper or card they want the speech printed on, or bolding up things they particularly want to emphasise."

As rule of thumb, it should take one hour to prepare a one-minute speech. If your speech is going to be seven minutes long, you'll virtually need to spend a full working day on it.

Most people who contact Lawrence fall into one of two groups. They are either well prepared, organised and ringing months in advance, or desperate for last-minute help.

"I have had guys ringing me on a Friday morning saying: 'It's my daughter's wedding

tomorrow' so I'll spend half a day helping them get it right." Lawrence's website ([www.greatspeechwriting.co.uk](http://www.greatspeechwriting.co.uk)) is full of glowing references from happy clients who have surprised even themselves with their polished performances – which goes to prove that everyone can overcome their butterflies to deliver the speech they've always dreamed of. Speechwriting services range from either a quick perusal of a written script to check for content and style, right through to meeting with a client, interviewing them and writing a speech from scratch. Lawrence's fees range between £100 and £500 – very much in line with other wordsmiths.

For those who don't want to spend that kind of money, he has created a website called [www.chargeyourglasses.com](http://www.chargeyourglasses.com). Constantly updated, it allows visitors to put together their own wedding speech for free. Lastly, he warns people not to lift speeches verbatim from free websites, as guests will soon tire of the same recycled gags.

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## Lawrence's top tips to help you get it right

**PREPARATION:** Unless you're a well-practised speech writer and give it's almost impossible to stand up unrehearsed in front of a group.

**BREVITY:** The easiest trap to fall into is to write long sentences or stories that begin to ramble. I tell people to try and write sentences that are no longer than six words. If you're building a story, keep it short and punchy.

**KEEP IT SENSIBLE AND LIGHT:** Don't try to turn your speech into a stand-up routine – get the basics right. Before you start getting into funny stories, consider every relative in the room. Granny might not enjoy hearing the same things as the guys who were on your stag do. I advise the best man not to mention the stag do or ex-girlfriends. The groom is sitting there with his new bride and family, so people shouldn't talk about the million girls he went out with at

university. You can imply things, but should never actually say them. Imagine you're on the BBC before nine o'clock.

### ONE LINERS TO AVOID

■ In time-honoured tradition I will now do my best to give the groom the most uncomfortable five minutes of his life. The most uncomfortable five minutes of the bride's life will come later this evening.

■ Ladies and gentlemen, this is the second time I've been asked to be a best man. I hope I did a good job the first time. The couple in question is still talking to me. Unfortunately, they're not actually talking to each other...but I'm almost certain that had nothing to do with me.

■ The trouble with being the best man at a wedding is that you never get to prove it.

# Plan for fun, sun and an exotic wedding



**F**OREIGN weddings used to be the reserve of selfish – or arguably sensible – couples who wanted to opt for a stress-free escape from seating arrangements and interfering relatives. In a way, exotic beach nuptials were just a sunnier version of eloping to Gretna Green.

But with the cost of UK weddings escalating each year, a foreign wedding can be a cost-effective way of saying I do – even though it's not the greenest!

According to a recent report from market research firm Mintel, the average cost of an overseas wedding is £6,000 – that's a whopping £14,000 less than the average cost of a wedding in the UK. Savvy betrothed-to-be have obviously taken note, with one in six British couples now choosing to tie the knot abroad. That's 16% of the total number of British weddings last year.

This market is now worth about £333m, up 43% since 2003. To make matters easier, the required red tape has decreased, or even in some cases been abolished altogether. Now, rather than having to be a resident in the country for a period of time before their wedding, couples can get hitched as soon as they arrive – or one or two days after. Aside from the cheaper price tag, there are also a number of obvious advantages to marrying abroad: the sun is more likely to shine and surroundings will almost certainly be more photogenic than the local parish church.

Guests also have the option of integrating the honeymoon into the package, saving even more money overall. But there are several things to

consider before you ditch your veil and train for a bikini and flip-flops. Bear in mind that not all your guests will be able to attend the ceremony. If they can make it, do you really want to spend your honeymoon next to Uncle Jim and Auntie Bess on the sunlounger? Also choose the time of year wisely. Kuoni recommends Mexico, the Caribbean and the Maldives for weddings between

relevant local documentation, visa requirements and travel insurance. The next tricky task involves flicking through brochures and deciding on a location. Marrying abroad traditionally conjures up images of palm-lined, coconut-strewn stretches of white sand – and beach weddings are still a popular option. Kuoni says Sri Lanka is its most requested wedding destination, with its packages promising

a 'unique and unforgettable ceremony' with dancers an elephant escort for the bride. The only obvious drawback of far-flung locations is the practicality of transporting guests. For this reason, wedding parties are often small, making them ideally suited to those remarrying or renewing their vows. Couples on a budget might want to investigate the Caribbean, where wedding packages are often thrown in free. Don't expect to be greeted with a fanfare, however, as ceremonies tend to be simple and informal. According to the FCO & ABTA 2009 Travel Trends Report, long haul destinations such as Sri Lanka, the US and Kenya are becoming increasingly popular.



November and April, and the Pacific, Mauritius and Kenya between October and May. Most wedding packages include a planner to make all the necessary arrangements, but you need to do your homework if you decide to organise the wedding independently. The Foreign Office is a good source of advice. Visit the overseas weddings and civil partnerships section of [www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel) to find out more about sourcing

New wedding hotspots this year include Costa Rica, The Cook Islands and Bali. Another trend sees Britons sticking closer to home, with short haul destinations such as Italy, Greece and Cyprus tipped for 2009. With the world increasingly shrinking, it's now easier than ever to elope and come back with a ring on your finger – and a fantastic tan. Just don't forget to pack your wedding dress.



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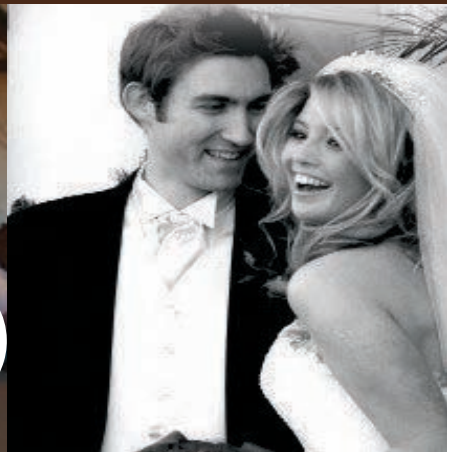
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