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# Autumn Weddings

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## Tips to help you organise your big day

*WHEN you first start planning your wedding, there are things that are nice to know, like what the hot new colour trend is, but then there are things you need to know, the essentials. These are those....*

### Guests come first

Get an approximate number of guests you'll invite before settling on a venue.

This will ensure there's ample space for your crew. As a rule of thumb, allow for about 2.5 to three square metres per guest.

That may seem like a lot, but it's not if you count the space you'll need for the tables, bustling waiters, the band, and the dance floor.

### Keep a paper trail

Get any non-standard changes to your agreements in writing or send the supplier a confirmation email saying, "Hello, just confirming that you'll keep the venue open until 2am versus midnight."

Don't take anyone on their word — by the time the wedding day rolls around, your contact may no longer be working there to vouch for you.

### Call the fashion police

Don't go dress shopping on your own — all the gowns will start to look the same after a while and it will be harder to recall which style you really loved.

But be careful about who you take. If your mum or sibling can't

make the trip, ask a friend who is truly honest. This is the time when you really need to know which dress looks best.

### Write down your digits

Carry an emergency contact sheet on your wedding day. Keep the paper with names and phone numbers of all your suppliers in your purse and give copies to your bridal party. It will come in handy.

### Amplify your ceremony

Make sure your guests can see, and hear.

If people are seated further back than 15 rows back from your ceremony altar or podium, consider renting a mic and a riser.

This could range anywhere from \$50 to \$500, depending on the equipment used. You'll need to coordinate the delivery and set-up with your ceremony space, so put your wedding planner or best man in charge of this task.

### Release rooms

As soon as you have picked a date, start to look for hotels in a wide variety of price points.

Many hotels allow you to reserve rooms for guests under a special wedding block and a reduced rate.

### Get organisationally focused

Before you meet with any suppliers or sign any contracts, set-up your to-do list, budgeter, and guest list manager. Get a three-ring binder to compile all

your correspondences with suppliers, notes you make during meetings, and photos or tear sheets from magazines you want suppliers to see.

### Lighten your list

The easiest way to trim your wedding budget? Cut your guest list.

That might seem impossible to those with large families and friends from all over the place, but consider this: Half of your wedding expenses go to wining and dining your guests. If it's costing you \$100 per person, eliminating one table of 10 can save you \$1000. Not to mention, you just took away a floral centerpiece, 10 place settings, 10 invitations, 10 bonbonniere, and more, saving you thousands.

### Make a meal plan

Another unforeseen expense? Feeding your wedding day crew. Even if it's not in the contract, you should always plan to feed your suppliers (unless you're okay with the idea of a famished and woozy photographer!). Ask them what they prefer — the same meal as your guests or something different but equally as hearty? Figure this out before you sign the contract, and then plan accordingly.

### Make a uniform kids policy

You have four choices: You can welcome children with open arms; you can decide to have an adults only wedding; you can

include immediate family only; or, you can hire a child care service to provide day care either at the reception space, in a hotel room, or in a family member's home.

To prevent hurt feelings, it's wise to avoid allowing some families to bring children while excluding others (unless, of course, the children are in your bridal party).

### Listen to mother nature

Heed the weather and other potential annoyances.

Guests have been known to skip out early from hotter-than-hot summer tent weddings and improperly heated winter loft receptions.

If you're planning an outdoor wedding, make sure that you have a plan B in case of rain, and if you are planning a sunrise or sunset event, make sure you investigate the times.

### Investigate blackout dates

Know ahead of time if your wedding date falls on the same day as a conference, charity walk, or other local event that could affect traffic and hotel room availability.

If your wedding date happens to fall during a busy time, encourage your guests to reserve their rooms early.

### Check your credit

Take advantage of the high cost of weddings and sign up for a credit card with a rewards pro-

gram. Whether it gives you frequent flyer points or great shopping deals, consolidating all wedding-related purchases to one card will help you accumulate thousands of rewards points (which could be used for your honeymoon).

### Don't be afraid to ask

If you find a supplier you love who doesn't work in your price range, it never hurts to ask them for other recommendations.

Often, incredible photographers have assistants (with a similar aesthetic) who will work at a lower price point. The same goes for other categories.

### Be realistic with your time

When it comes down to the last month of your planning, look at your mile-long to-do list and cut three things, but not crucial things that you just don't feel like doing, such as picking a processional song or confirming final details with all of your suppliers.

Eliminate only the over-the-top tasks like hand-painting just married signs, or baking cookies for all of the welcome bags.

### Provide accurate directions

Make sure guests know where they're going. As easy as online map programs are to use, sometimes the directions are wrong — or there's a quicker, less traffic-prone route to take.

Ask your ceremony and reception sites for printouts of recommended driving directions,

which they often keep in stock for weddings and will give to you for free, and test out the routes yourself.

### Leave some room in your wallet

Your wedding budget should roughly follow this formula: 48 to 50 per cent of total budget to reception; eight to 10 per cent for flowers; eight to 10 per cent for attire; eight to 10 per cent for entertainment/music; 10 to 12 per cent for photo/video; three to four per cent for invites; two to three per cent for gifts; and seven per cent for miscellaneous items like a wedding coordinator.

It's essential to allocate an extra five to 10 per cent of your money for surprise expenses like printing extra invites because of mistakes, additional tailoring needs, umbrellas for a rainy day, and ribbons for the wedding programs.

### Classify your cash

Wedding budgets are all about balance.

Start your budget planning by making a list of the crucial details, like the music, your wedding gown, the invitations, the flowers, and the photographer, and assign a number to each — one being the most important and three being the least.

Invest your money in all your number ones and cut corners on your number threes.

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# Autumn Weddings

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## Tori and James Rowe

**Attendants:** Maid of honour: Gabi Hunt, Best man: Kenny Earl, Jen Jones, Liam Black, TJ Lines, Virgil Smith

**Parents:** Robin & Joanne Williams, Trevor & Sonia Rowe

**Venue:** Hardman's garden at Yarraman

**Reception:** James parents' place at Gwydirfield

**Guests:** Around 70 or 80

**Photographer:** Sonja Lines Photography

**Caterer:** Family members

**Menu:** Cold meats, salads, rice, bread rolls etc

**Music:** Precision entertainment

**Flowers:** No florist. We bought cheap bouquets off eBay just for photos and to throw as we had parasols for the aisle walk and for photos as well.

**Songs:** I walked down the aisle to "When you got a good thing" by Lady Antebellum. The first dance was "All of me" by John Legend, the bouquet toss was done to "Another one bites the dust" by Queen, the garter toss to "Dance with the devil" by Breaking Benjamin and the father daughter dance was "my little girl" by Tim McGraw.

**Dress:** Slim fitting mermaid shape with detailed lace. An ivory underlay with a small length train. I purchased it online from a website called JJ's house. I had an idea of what I wanted before I went shopping. I went to Toowoomba with my friend's family looking for her little sister's dress. I was told to try some on while I was there. I could not find any in my size. I then found the perfect one and tried it on. It looked amazing but it was pricey and we were on a budget. I had heard about a website which sells wedding dresses. I searched until I found one similar and went with that. I was not sure to begin with but once I tried it on it was perfect.

**Something old, new, borrowed and blue:** I had a set of earrings my mother lent me for the day. She tied them to a piece of ribbon and pinned them just on the inside of my dress. That way my nan would be with me the whole day. I had a couple of things as blue was my theme colour. My ribbon in my back piece of the dress was blue, my shoes, my parasol and my ribbon with the rings attached to them.

**Decorations:** We had a couple of ideas but didn't really source them, we just had different ideas in our head that we had seen in photos over time or had seen from other weddings. In all honesty we pretty much just winged it.

We got our inspiration from a couple of magazines and searching through photos of other peoples' weddings.

**Tips:** It is your day, do what you want and not what everyone else thinks you should do. Have it your way, because this is one day you will remember forever and you do not want any regrets. And if something goes wrong do not dwell on it, just as long as you and your husband are together that's all that matters.

**Honeymoon:** We went on a cruise to the Pacific Islands for our honeymoon. We had a great time but to be honest we were very much so over being on the cruise by the last couple of days.

## Alex and Brittany Madden

**Parents:** Wayne and Michelle Tucker, Russell and Donna Madden

**Venue:** St Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Moree

**Date:** October 19, 2013

**Reception:** The Artesian Spa Motel in Moree

**Guests:** 85

**Photographer:** Sonja Parnell from Sonja Lines Photography of Moree, we could not recommend her enough, she did such a beautiful job with our photos and made us feel so comfortable.

**Florist and flowers:** We used champagne and cream roses and they were supplied by Alma Lee's Florist in Moree

**Music:** "A Thousand Years" by Christina Perri

**Dress:** My dress was a strapless gown that had a corseted lace bodice that then flowed down into a full skirt that was made from silk and chiffon. I purchased my dress from Tamworth and then had Melinda O'Donohue do some beautiful alterations to the dress to ensure it was just perfect for the big day!

**Inspiration:** Wedding magazines, Pinterest, Etsy and Wedding Wonderland

**What was the best advice you were given in the lead up to your big day?** Enjoy every moment because it goes way to fast, which is absolutely true as I wish that we could go back and experience it all over again..

**Honeymoon:** We went on a cruise through the Pacific Islands which we organised through M&G Travel. We could not recommend them enough as they ensured we had a beautiful and stress free holiday where everything we could have possibly needed was organised.

**Tips:** Try and do as much as you can locally as we truly do have such amazing venues and businesses available to help make your wedding is the stunning and individual experience that you and your fiancée have always dreamed of.



## Daniel and Jaimee Ross

**Bridal party:** Haylee, Angie, Belinda, Samara, Brent, Andrew, Adam and Craig

**Date:** October 5

**Ceremony:** Mrs Hardman's garden

**Reception:** Moree and District Services Club

**Guests:** 100

**Photographer:** Sonja Lines Photography

**Music:** DJ Linden McGrady

**Florist:** Silk Flora, Parramatta

**Dress:** Fairy tale, purchased online - dresses mall.com

**Decorations:** Centrepieces from Gifts on Heber and eBay for all other decorations

**Tips:** Shop online, mostly eBay - affordable prices and more variety



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