

Wedding planning here we come

LETS GET YOU DOWN THE AISLE

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I SAID YES... NOW WHAT???

Yep it's a wild ride the planning gig and it's easy to get stuck with where to even begin.
Lets see if we can get you moving x

The wedding landscape is HUUUGE. You might be keen to have a massive backyard party, might want to exchange personal vows on a clifftop somewhere and then join your nearest and dearest for a party into the night, maybe you want to drink champagne and eat oysters just you two on the beach while your kids play. Maybe you want to book the most insane location ever where all of your friends and family can stay for a 4 day lollapalooza. Maybe its a stunning winery or a family farm... I've been lucky enough to witness so many special moments - celebrations big and small- in public and private - all can be so completely personal and unique if you just say no to the things that don't light you up.

The things that most impact the feeling of the day - having a great celebrant or priest (someone you vibe with 100%), having people present who fully support you both and appreciate that you both make each other better people, and making it a day that brings you joy. Want to dance? Pick your fav music. Love great food and wine? Invest there. Love breakfast margs? No-one said weddings had to be a nighttime affair!



KNOW YOUR NUMBERS AND WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Things add up VERY quickly when you get into the nitty gritty but if you focus on the main non-negotiables from our first step, you'll be fine! Put the blinders on if you need because there are a tonne of things that are nice, but aren't necessary to make your day better/funner/more memorable.

Key elements

Ok, ok the elephant in the room

Budget

Have a photographer? You probably don't need disposable cameras on the tables or a Photo Booth. Can afford all three? Than go ahead and live your best life.

Matching getting ready outfits for the bridal party? Nice but not vital. Printed undies or socks for the fellas? Cute but only you and your photographer will know about it. Can't afford the dresses for your tribe? Hire options are available, give them a colour and ask them to purchase in a style/material they love and will wear again.

Money saving options to consider;

- Turn your bridal party bouquets into table decor instead of paying for both
- If you're not a vehicle enthusiast, ditch the pretty car to get you there - will anyone see you arrive?
- Cocktail or banquet style meals are generally cheaper per head than a sitdown meal so ask for options with your caterer. Alternatively food trucks/BYO can work if you have friends/family who will help out (do NOT be running around cooking chicken wings before your wedding)

Key elements

Before you make any major decisions - approach a LOT of vendors to get a gauge on prices and what that includes. It's hard to know where to start when you don't know what the industry standard is.

Be honest, open and let the businesses know that you're still in the planning phase and aren't ready to book (unless you are ready). You don't want a stack of people thinking you're in their calendar when you're just in the scouting phase. Contrary to popular rumour, vendors don't add a 'wedding' tax when they hear that word - give your vendors as much information as you can and they can then tailor a package for exactly what your needs are. Once you have an idea of the industry standard, you and the other half can start crunching numbers and locking in some actual decisions.

The venue, food and beverages will be the highest costs generally, and the rest will be determined by your priority list. Some dresses for example may be a few hundred dollars, while you could alternatively spend tens of thousands in the same store, Research research research and set yourself up to make the decisions as easily as possible.

VENDORS TO LOCK IN

Not every wedding looks the same but a basic list of vendors you might be in touch with over this time



- Hairdresser
- Makeup Artist
- Photographer
- Videographer
- Florist
- Graphic artist (signage and invites)
- Cake Maker
- Bottleshop

- Celebrant/Priest
- Event Coordinator at Venue
- DJ/Musician
- Marquee or furniture Hire Teams
- Car Hire
- Hotel/Airbnb
- Caterer/Food Truck
- Tailor/Dress Shop

01

DO WE WANT A DIFFERENT CEREMONY AND RECEPTION LOCATION?

Sooo many venues offer both ceremony and reception options in the same location, but you might have your heart set on somewhere special to say I-do or party the night away.

Google the area and get an idea of your options because different venues means there's logistically more to think about. Same venue means you can move straight to cocktail hour from the ceremony and guests can mingle while you get your photos done.

If you're changing location you save on bar costs, but think about if there are elderly being asked to get themselves to another location, are you providing a bus to assist, who is in charge of telling guests where and when to meet at the new location (because people never remember the details on their invites) and is the second venue open straight away or do guests have to find something to do for an hour or two in between?

02

GETTING READY

Can you get ready onsite? Alternativeluy you can get ready in your own home or rent airbnbs/stay in a hotel.

Just ensure there is enough space for your whole bridal party + hair + makeup + parents + photographer + videographer and any other blow ins on the day of.. Open plan accomodation with lots of natural light is ideal and your makeup artist will thank you later.

Getting ready onsite helps with travel time for the photog/video team - Just remember that travel time adds up especially whem you have a set hourly package.

Location

03

PRIEST OR CELEBRANT

Yep this ties in here too. If you're religious and want to get married by your local priest than make sure you reach out and chat to them about requirements before locking in a location.

Many won't marry couples outside of the church which is great if you're planning a chapel wedding anyway but more and more couples are steering away from internal ceremonies in favour of garden events. If you have no religious ties, there are plenty of incredible vibrant, fun and captivating officiants who can walk you through the formalities of getting hitched.

If you dont know where to start, local photogs/venues and cake makers all have a bevvie of pro's to share with you so don't hesitate to ask.

04

WHAT CAN THE LOCATION PROVIDE?

The easiest way to plan a wedding is to find a full service location and simply pay for whatever they can do - catering, bevies, ceremony location etc. The old 'you either have time or money' adage is true for weddings - you either give someone else majority control and pay for that, OR you take on that juggle yourself.

There is no right way but you need to decide how much time you can dedicate to bringing it all together because taking on the burden of sourcing everything is a LOT. Not to scare you but just know that this is the decision you need to make - you can definately find cheaper options if you are prepared to pull it all together but if you both work full time, have kids, have family or sporting commitments - be self aware enough to know what you can and can't handle and what is going to help you enjoy the day the most.

Location

05

VENUE AND PHOTOS

It can't be over stated how much the choice of venue impacts the final photos you receive. No matter the style of the photographer, the colours, texture and lighting at the venue become the colours, textures and lighting of your photos. Because of this, you want to ensure the venue aligns with the aesthetic you're chasing. A dark and moody ivy covered courtyard is going to feel drastically different in photos to a white and bright morrocan style villa



KEY ELEMENTS

Location

Options

Venue Ceremony / Location / Both

Food package Yes/No Gettting Ready option Yes / No

Drinks package Yes / No Proposed Fees

Venue Ceremony / Location / Both

Food package Yes/No Gettting Ready option Yes / No

Drinks package Yes / No Proposed Fees

Additional Details

KEY ELEMENTS

Location

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Additional Details



PICKING A DATE

If there are certain vendors you can't get married without, then contact them as soon as you have confirmed your date, or when selecting the date to find out if they're free. There are only a finite amount of Saturdays in a season and if you love them, other couples will too.

Wedding peak season is typically March-April and then again in Spring, particularly September, and Saturdays get snapped up possibly years in advance. Consider opting for an off-season or mid-week wedding if you have the flexibility. It could open up savings opportunities with your vendors (some offer discounts to fill their slower months)

Cake

Yep we're big fans over here of the sweet part of the day and there are so INCREDIBLE artists who bring these delicious additions to the day.

First up - stalk some cake makers on socials. Follow their stories, favourite cake examples they've made and slide into their DM's to find out if they do cake tasting boxes. Most will, a few times a year, release a tasting box which gives you the chance to get a gauge of what you're buying.

MAKE A VISION BOARD

Canva online, pinterest, saved pics in instagram - they're all ways to collate a vision board for the day and cake needs to be included in that. Frilly princess dress? Maybe you should have a meringue beauty. Classic white and black formalities - white fondant might be your cake. Mismatched and bright bridesmaids, maybe cupcakes or lemon tarts instead of a cake?

DONT BE AFRAID TO SHOW SOME OF YOU

Mum throw together a classic mud for you every birthday? Have her make it again for this special day. Prefer pavlova? Make it the most giant pav you've ever seen. Retro vibes? Add some glace cherries on a heart shaped beauty. Not into cake? Dessert bar and share a hot choice with the love. Make it a signature cocktail or nightcap? Cigars and a whisky? There are no rules



THE DRESS

Yep I'm not going to say too much about the dress because there are NO RULES! Legit there is no right or wrong dress choice - whatever you love and makes you feel good is the right answer

If budget is a concern - try on dresses at a larger boutique and look for seconds/used options online or places like stillwhite.com

Dress styles are fairly timeless - to modernise looks play with cute shoes and accessories

Just one note with dresses (or suits) - discuss alternations and any fees associated BEFORE purchasing - these can creep up depending on the changes required and material type

Wondering how this all fits in the timeline?

A basic 4pm summer starting wedding to kick you off. In winter, earlier 2 or 3pm weddings are perfect so just bring everything forward. Remember this is just a guide

3.30pm - You want all the important kids (minus the person actually walking down the aisle) at the location. Celebrant, photographer, musicians and the crew waiting at the end of the aisle.

Guest will begin wandering in from 3.40/45ish. If you have transport organised for your guests, get them to aim for this time.

4.00pm Ceremony. If you're in the church and are having a full ceremony, basically bring everything forward by an hour to include the full service... or chat with your priest about timing. For anyone else, celebrants will usually keep things pretty tight so have a chat about vows and and personal inclusions. Typically your looking at about 20-30 minutes which is just long enough for the standing guests to cope. If your location is full sun, take into consideration that you may still want to provide some beverages during this time....even if it's just water/soft drinks.

Cue arrival, happy tears, heartfelt words... and buda-bing-budda-bang, your married!

***DONT FORGET THE PEN FOR THE SIGNING TABLE. Important stuff right there kids because you actually need those itty bitty signatures

Now for the confetti throwing (yes, make sure someone is in charge of actually handing that stuff out AND instructing people (men, always the men) that you throw it ABOVE the head and not AT peoples faces).

Congrats/hugs and chit chats follow and here is where we slip in the group photo - otherwise there is NO CHANCE that you will have everyone together again. Trust us - kids wander, fellas get chatting and the girls makeup starts to melt off - you want to nail it by around 4.45pm. This allows a smooth transition into any family photos.

If you have any must have shots of the family - please let them know. Tell Aunt Peg that you NEED her to have a shot with her siblings and not to wander off till it's done.

5pm - Canapes, drinks, a chance for the guests to put their feet up. Take 30 minutes with your guests and make sure the bar has prepared some snacks/bevvies for you to take on the road. Then we can sneak off for some portraits.... dont stress its not a huge chunk of time.

We aim for 30-45 minutes now and then a sneaky little duck out for you both at some point during the night - so your not missing out on the party but you still have some moments of just the two of you. We want to be back at the venue by 6.15ish.

This is where a quality MC comes in. You need someone confident and loud. If you're having a sit down function, encourage them to direct everyone to take a seat from 6.15pm in anticipation of a 6.30pm entrance of the bridal party.

Intersperse speeches and courses (if your having courses) and ideally pencil in a sneak out around sunset for you two. This is 30% because its when you get the crackin golden photos, but 70% because by this time you just need to take a big breathe and moment to soak in all that's happening. It really does go in a blur and its a pretty phenomenal moment between you both.

Return for speeches, dessert, cake cutting and first dance if that's your thing. Then cue the dance floor!
Bliss!

*Things that you don't NEED to do but you can if you wish. Cake cutting - this is generally pretty stilted so an awesome way to get it done while everyone is already involved is include it in your entrance - dance on over, cut it, kiss and then take your seat while everyone is still clapping you in. Same goes for a champagne tower if your having one.

Bouquet Toss/Garter throw - super awkward for most... basically only do this one if you are obsessed with the idea

Sparkler Exit - fun fun fun if your up for it - bonus points if you learn to dip/kiss for the end of the tunnel

checklist

checklist for the fellas

Lots of these things you will probably already have kicking around but if your getting ready out of your home, something always gets forgotten so a handy list

SUIT OR TUXEDO

If all the boys have the same - ensure the tailor labels them all clearly!
Playing pass the parcel with suits the morning of the wedding is the pits

UNDERWEAR

Jocks and socks. Special or not, make sure they're packed.

TOILETRIES

Shaving tools, hair styling products deodorant, fragrance (great chance to splurge on a gift here before the day), toothbrush and toothpaste.

SHOES

Shoes (double check if new that you have one of each (L/R) and they're the same size. SOOOO often the store gives the wrong combo. Grab some shoe polish as well just in case.

OTHER

Shirt, tie or bowtie, cufflinks.If you're having cufflinks/boutenierres for the boys or handkerchiefs - make sure the shirts are compatible when purchasing and youtube how to fold/pin/put on cufflinks etc beforehand. Everything you need to know is online x .

checklist

checklist for the Grooms

For whatever reason this list is so much bigger than the boys but dont feel like you have to spend money on all brand new items - dig up old favs, thrift or borrow off friends if needed.

DRESS

And the things that make the dress sit right....
Shapewear/underwear, Veil or hair accessories.

GETTING READY

Button-up shirt or PJ's for getting ready - something that can be pulled over your head at the very least and not ruin your hair/makeup... match with your crew or dont - whatever makes you feel most relaxed the morning of.
Vintage tees, Singlet and shorts, cute slip all work well if your not into satin PJ's

TOILETRIES

Same toiletries as the fellas but also include bandaids, double sided tape, a sewing kit just in case, shoe insoles/cushions, hair pins,

SHOES

If you have sky-high or new heels, make sure you have some killer flats because its a LONG Day... and we love a bride in kicks, slippers, boots or white crocs

OTHER

Jewellery, if your old school your items that are old/new/borrowed/blue, garter if your into that, and whatever the girls are going to be holding (flowers, bags, fans are all options)

invitations

You'll need: Save the dates, wedding invitations and thank you notes. Plus postage! .



HIRE A DESIGNER

Some crazy talented graphic designers exist who build beautiful invitation suites to send out - they will work with your vision, colour scheme, and timelines to send out save the dates and invitations.

PRE-DESIGNED OPTIONS

ETSY offers a huge range of downloadable templates and hard-copy options for pre-designed wedding invites

DESIGN YOUR OWN

Free programs like Canva are awesome for designing ANYTHING so if you have an idea of exactly what you want and you can print online and have it sent directly to your door

EMAIL

Yep, not unheard of to simply email your guests their invite and link it straight back to a website

HIT UP GOOGLE

Basically there is a never ending array of options available for wedding stationary so hit up google and find one that suits the amount of legwork that you are prepared to do . Some will send for you, others provide templates only and you do the rest. Aim to get them out with at least 6 months warning for guests Dontforget to add an RSVP option (website, text or call, or postal return tag) with e DATE. And be prepared to follow up the 45% of people who will forget to rsvp by said date - dont just assume their not coming if you havent heard back cause you may get some unexpected visitors on the day

Staying Organised



SPREADSHEETS

- If you're a spreadsheet or list lover, set some up so you have a To-Do list, a Doing and a Done.
- Just Add items as they pop up and move them around accordingly

Take this as you will, but a wedding can be as complicated as you want to make it. As long as everyone is fed, drinks are available and you marry the one you love - everything else is fluff. Pretty and fun, but fluff. So if its weighing you down, remember the basics and leave anything that isnt serving you

TO DO'S



RSVP's

YOUR GOING TO LEARN TO HATE THIS BAD BOY

Yep a requirement of every wedding invite, the dreaded RSVP. Why dreaded you ask?

Firstly people will just not respond. The invite goes on the fridge, life moves on and they pure and simply forget. **DO NOT TAKE IT PERSONALLY!** You may have even been that person before so be kind, patient and dont be afraid to flat out text people and ask if their coming

People will say no. The budget savvy part of you may secretly be hoping that you have a certain percetage that head down this route, but also please dont be dissapointed or take it personally when you get people responding with a no. Its not you its me! Legit lives are busy, people have kids, work commitments, money concerns, health juggles and relationship woes.... if they can't spring a weekend away even though you're giving them 13 months notice - its not YOU. Things happen and people arent perfect - give them some grace.

Your day may well be the most important thing happening in your life but not everyone will feel this way and that is OK. Your invite may layout everything they need to do, you may have a wedding website with all the nitty gritty, you may have a group chat confirming details - and people will still miss the memo. Don't place your expectations on people too high and be prepared to follow up, follow up and follow uup. It doesnt mean they love you any less.

The MC



THE REAL MVP - A QUALITY MC IS WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD

Find a friend, buddy, colleague, relative who you trust implicitly to help pull the evening together. Someone who can fill blank spaces in the timeline, someone who can have a joke at their own expense or at the very least read a run sheet to announce that the bridal party are about to make their entrance so please stand! They keep the action moving and stop every guest from asking - wait whats going on now?

They are responsible for announcing the speeches, letting people know the dinner requirements, pointing out where the bar and the loos are, and cracking some dad jokes when the bride needs an extra 5 to change outfits before the first dance. No pressure but this person has a huge impact on the mood of the night so put some real thought into this role.

The vision

START A PINTEREST BOARD

Right from the get-go, start saving pics that resonate with you... BOTH of you. Not just wedding photos but other things that draw you in - photography, architecture, fashion, art... what can you pull from these to make the event an experience that reflects the two of you

INSPO

Been to an incredible shindig -make sure you take inspiration rather than copy ideas

REMEMBER

Keep note on who's wedding it is... yep just yours. Be nice but firm on external commentary

VENUE

The actual place you get married or have your photos, impacts the vision hugely so draw inspiration from this when planning and you'll know what to expect when your gallery comes back in. A huge tree can remove the need for an arbour, a lake outlook or mountain views are a fantasitc backdrop. Want more modern lines, play with architecture, have photos down a lane lined with graffiti orhave photos take on a rooftop

Some helpful journal prompts while planning



In order to feel THIS on my wedding day, we should prioritise....



On our wedding day, we want to feel....



When I look within, I know that the most important aspect of my wedding day is...



To be a true celebration of our love, we would love for....



Our love is unique because...



A massive open online course is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the Web. In addition to traditional.

Guest List

- ✓ Be super clear from the get-go if kids are invited or not. The more decisive you are at the start, the less confusion down the track
- ✓ Tackle the guest list sooner rather than later. Your venue will need approximate numbers, as will catering, cake, transport etc
- ✓ Remember your budget. Sure it would be nice to have your 36 cousins but if it throws you into debt then is it worth it?
- ✓ A massive open online course is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the Web. In addition to traditional.
- ✓ Try to lump guest into non-negotiable invites and those with some flexibility, just in case you need to assess. And are partners invited if not married/you haven't met them? Some tough convos may need to be had
- ✓ A venue with strict number requirements can be a good excuse when letting someone know why they didn't get an invite
- ✓ If people are bringing drama or making you feel uncomfortable before the day is even here, bite the bullet and say no straight up. Linger and dwelling will make you dread the process even more.

TIPS & TRICKS

Details

If you've put a stack of effort in to the design of your invitations and colour scheme, make sure you're set up to have these details captured by your photographer. Before the day of, make a little box with the following;

- ✦ All the invitation components- with all their bits and pieces
 - ✦ A ring box
- ✦ Loose Florals - Check with your florist, they should be able to provide some of these!
- ✦ Wedding jewellery and your signature scent for the day
- ✦ Any and all extras - Ribbon, stamps, wax seals, etc”



Ways to personalise your day

01

Consider writing your own wedding vows or incorporating loved ones into the formalities. Tell the story of how you met, why your so perfect for each other or why today is so important

04

Incorporate family heirlooms into the day - Mums dress revamped as a reception dress, grandmas jewellery, your sisters veil or other items of significance

02

Dedicate a moment during the formalities to acknowledge those missing from the room

03

Play music that makes you feel good. Music is a huge contributor to mood and memory and tying in tunes to the day that mean something or purely just make you feel amazing will add a huge dimension to the day.

05

Display photos at the venue or where your getting ready for those who are no longer with us

06

Don't be afraid to play with the timeline. Breakfast ceremony and a day of adventuring after? Get your family portraits or group shots done before the wedding. Have a swim with the whole wedding the morning of and get married over brunch. Extend the wedding day to a wedding weekend and get married around a bonfire. No rules remember x

Champagne Tower

Yep we've never seen a champagne tower we didnt like but it can seem like a mammoth task to pull it together. A few tips and tricks we've learnt that will make it an easy and seamless part of your day

CHEERS

- An easy way to integrate a champagne tower into the action is to roll straight into it when you have your bridal entrance. That way the MC isnt making everyone pause. You want the action to flow. Spray some champagne if in a grass marquee or courtyard and get the crowd pumped
- Only pour one bottle - a large tower actually takes a stack of bottles to fill every glass. Mark the occasion by just the two of you filling the top glasses and then cheers between you both
- If sharing amongst ALL of the guests, have staff finish filling the tower for you while you dance or roll into speeches and then hand out
- Make it a private affair - have the staff set one up in a garden corner and pre-fill the bottom layers. Share a toast just the two of you in your private portraits and make a special memory
- Champagne tower can be a fun group element for those not keen on the old school/kinda naff bouquet and garter toss traditions. Involve the crowd without the embarrassment.

Responsibilities

When handing out tasks - dont overlook these ones. Your venue may help out or you may need to delegate the following tasks;

- Who collects the cards/gifts
- Provision of cake cutting knife
- Is the florist putting centrepieces on the tables?
- Who is ensuring the signane is in the correct places?
- Who is pressing play on the music and when?
- Who's handing out the confetti?
- Will the celebrant have a pen to sign the marriage certificate?
- Who are going ot be your witnesses?
- When will you start to serve drinks?
- Is anyone bringing snacks/bevvies for the bridal party during photos?
- Who's stocking the fridge (bevvies and snacks) in the accomodation - where your getting ready AND staying the night of the wedding
- The girls will most likely not have pockets - is anyone bringing their phones/wallets/tampons etc along on their behalf
- If your having candles who is lighting them?
- If you have kids who's taking them home and when?



BEVERAGES

- 01 Talk to your venue to find out if they offer packages or give you flexibility to bring from off-site
- 02 We lurve Dan Murphys - not only do they offer good bulk prices but they also do alcohol buy-back after the event in case you overestimate
- 03 If its a hot day, having plenty of flavoured waters/mineral water mocktails can help keep the booze budget lower by giving people an alternative
- 04 Bottles of water in ice buckets are great to have on hand at warmer ceremonies
- 05 Wine on the tables is a nice touch but if budgeting can lead to lots of open/half consumed bottles at the end of the night. Have people go to the bar to get their drinks if you need
- 06 A bar cart is a super cute and handy additon to your decor if in the budget . Photo op!
- 07 Ice buckets with some beers,fizzy drinks and water at the ceremony are a great idea
- 08 Basics on a TAB are a great option (wine and beer) but some signage saying cocktails/spirits can be purchased
- 09 Heaps of alcohol calculators exist online but you know your crowd best - are they similar to you both? How many drinks would you have over x-hours when hot/cold? Are you providing a tea and coffee station?

First Look

As weddings move away from tradition, more and more people are opting for a first look with the other half before the ceremony. Especially fun if you;



HAVE KIDS

Such an intimate way to get them involved especially before they get too strung out. A wedding is a huge day especially for littles who may miss a nap in the excitement of it all - a first look with Dad is a good way to lock in some gorgeous moments/snaps before the wedding itself so you at least have that in the bag in case they crash and burn after the ceremony

ARE HAVING A HUGE SHINDIG

130+ people on your guest list? Chock-full schedule after the I-do's? This may be the only calm and intimate moment you can squeeze into the chaos... and we love that you can see each other for more moments during the day

JUST WANT TO

Do it just because you can. It's your day after all

Yep planning a wedding - it's a LOT. But it can be a lot of fun as well so have fun with it and get as creative as you like.

Don't forget your vendors are huge sources of information. They've done this a million times, they have seen the best and the most awkward of events and if you need help, they love to enlighten you. Even just to be a sounding board for what you have laid out so far... think of your vendors as Switzerland... a nice neutral party to help make some tricky decisions.

'Think of it like your dream date day - do all the things that will make future you's look back and smile!

Ash



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Reach out

Always available on DM's -
@copper.cophotography or slide into my emails
info@coppercophotography.com

I hope this helps and good luck with the coming months! Ash xx