



Wedding Bells 2019

Featuring two local weddings:

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GASCONADE
COUNTY
Republican
FEBRUARY 13, 2019

Short & Sweet

JJ and Leah Leicht, June 23, 2018

by Roxie Murphy, Gasconade County Republican Feature Writer

Leah Bohl was a senior at Owensville High School in 2011 when she first noticed JJ Leicht.

“So he was from Hermann and I went to Owensville,” Leah said. “We knew each other through mutual friends, and one night he asked me for my number via Facebook and we started hanging out and dating.”

Leah’s first impression?

“I thought he was really cute and has cute dimples,” she laughs. “It turns out he was a good guy too.”

JJ’s interest in Leah was instant.

“My first impression of Leah was that this girl is a lot of fun and beautiful,” JJ said. “It was awesome dating a girl who enjoyed

doing the same things I liked to.”

The couple both love to hunt, fish and be outdoors.

“It made everything that much better,” JJ said.

JJ was a freshman in college at the time, and the talks just tapered off.

“We didn’t talk for a while, and six months later he popped up on my Facebook again,” Leah said.

He says the gap in their dating relationship had a lot to do with where they both were in life at the time.

“Leah and I both had a lot going on when we first started talking and getting to

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INSTEAD OF a unity candle, JJ and Leah planted a Hibiscus tree to symbolize planting their roots and growing their love.

Wedding photos by BLK Photography, Brittany Gentry

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know each other,” JJ explained. “She was working on her bachelor’s degree at Maryville University and I was going to Linn State and working a lot of weekends.”

But when Leah asked JJ to visit her at school, things changed. “Everything started to fall into place,” JJ said. “I found myself in Chesterfield alot over he next several months.”

They were going steady by 2012.

A Patient Man

Four years later, Nov. 2016, JJ and Leah were on their way to a Blues game and stopped to do some “looking” at a jewelry store.

“While she was taking a look around the store, just before we were getting ready to leave, I was in the next room buying the ring. I just hoped she wouldn’t catch on to what I was doing. Ha,” JJ laughs.

Even though he had the ring, JJ planned to wait until spring to propose.

“But Leah had a lot going on during that time,” JJ said. “She was finishing graduate school and preparing to take her boards. I didn’t want to overwhelm her with an engagement, so I decided to wait until September, a day before her birthday.”

For Leah, she didn’t have a doubt that they would get married.

“We figured we would get married eventually, but I wanted to have my degree before then,” Leah said. “I got my doctorate degree and I was trying to finish school.”

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A special thanks to these newly weds for sharing their stories.

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Wining, Dining & Diamonds

Come Sept. 10, 2017, the day before her birthday, Leah is ready for some down time and a scenic view at the wineries in Augusta.

“He took me out for my birthday,” Leah recalls. “I was not suspicious of anything.”

But JJ knew one of these wineries would be the spot.

“In the months leading up to the engagement, she had mentioned wanting to go out to the Augusta area and visit a few of the wineries. So I decided that would be the place where I would propose. That day happened to be a very busy day at the winery, so I had to improvise.”

He couldn’t decide where to sit.

“Leah has always enjoyed and appreciated a good view,” JJ said. “I found us a quite spot just down the hill overlooking the valley, and that’s where I asked her.”

Leah says it was pretty perfect, and she didn’t suspect that day until they were at the table and he started getting nervous.

“He got down on one knee and at that point I didn’t even care about drinking,” Leah says. “I said yes right away.”

People were cheering in the background and a lady from England congratulated the couple, and said the proposal made her trip.

So who did they get to tell first? Well aside from the whole winery, his mom.

“His mom was the first person we saw,” Leah said. “Then right away, we told my mom.”

The September 10, 2017, proposal turned into a June wedding.

Rose Gold & Peach

Leah knew there were two things she wanted in her wedding. The first was her maid of honor, Rochelle Maples, an extremely busy local photographer. The second was White Mule as the wedding venue.

“The first thing we did was find the date, and that was challenging,” Leah said. “We found a date that worked with our wedding venue and after that, it was stress free.”

Leah had a picture in her mind of what her big day would be like, starting with a rustic, elegant theme, mixed with greenery and highlighted with rose gold and peach throughout.

“Most ideas were from Pinterest,” Leah said. “We shopped and found things here and there.”

It wasn’t until she hired wedding decorator Nancy Gann with “I Do Wedding, Events and Décor” that her day started coming together.

“The whole thing was beautiful,” Leah said. “I told her what I wanted and she made it come true.”

For JJ, the planning of the wedding was fun.

“Leah was constantly showing me new ideas and decorations,” he said. “My favorite part leading up to the wedding was the day



INSTEAD OF a guest book, family and friends were invited to sign their names to a cedar bench created for the new bride and groom by Kerry Klink. The bench now sits on their front porch.

before the wedding.”

But Leah’s favorite part was the dress.

Say Yes to the Dress!

To Leah’s surprise, she only went to one place, Mia Grace Bridal, before she found her dress. Alterations were by Princess Alterations by Ana.

“It was a spaghetti strap and fit and flare,” she says with a smile. “Lacy, but still pretty, with sequins all over it. It was what I thought I’d pick, which made it easy.”

But the dress was not the first one she tried on.

“I tried on a bunch. This was actually the last dress I tried on,” she said.

Her dress was ivory in color, which would be perfect against the gold and peach her ladies were going to wear, and a beautiful contrast to the groomsmen charcoal grey.

“I loved it. But then, I was like, let me try this other one back on.”

And nope!

“The other (ivory) one was the one. I said yes to the dress!” Leah said.

And for the shoes...

“My husband is fairly tall, so I needed to add height to it,” Leah said about her choice of wedges. Not to mention, the wedding would be outside, and walking in the grass with heels wouldn’t look very graceful.

She polished off her peaches and cream look a cathedral veil, dangley earrings and a simple necklace.

“I went with him to get his tux, but he picked it out,” Leah said about their visit to Wedding Creations in Washington. “But I think his favorite part was the cake tasting.”

JJ says Leah took care of almost everything. “But I did pick out the tuxes for the wedding.”

Shall We Dance...The Rehearsal Dinner

“Having all of our closest friends and family at the rehearsal, and getting ready

for the big day was a lot of fun,” JJ said of the day before the wedding.

What were his responsibilities for the wedding?

“She would show me ideas and we would decide together what we both liked or thought was best,” JJ said.

But he forgot about making an appoint-

ment to get a haircut. It was the day of the rehearsal dinner.

“He waited until that day and couldn’t get it cut,” Leah said. “He asked me to cut it, like I have many times. But my head is in the clouds because I am getting married tomorrow.”

JJ was waiting outside for Leah to cut his hair.

“He hands me the razor and I don’t look and there is no guard to it. I go up the back of his head and put a big landing strip like down the entire back of his head. Right in the middle. You can’t miss it — it’s bad,” Leah remembers

Leah said she could tell he is upset, but he is trying to calm her down.

“I’m freaking out. We are getting married tomorrow. Do I shave the rest. Can he wear a hat? No, he can’t wear a hat because he is going to be facing away from the audience,” Leah’s voice is a little panicky in remembrance of the moment. “I am picking up little pieces that came off. Can we glue it back? Absolutely not!”

So she calls her maid of honor, Rochelle.

“I’m like, what do I do, basically,” Leah says. “So she went to Walmart and bought a root touch up. We put the root touch up

See **Leicht**, Page 6B

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ATTENDANTS IN the Leicht wedding included maids-of-honor Katie Rogers and Rochelle Maples and bridesmaids Paige Jaworski-Jurgens, Abby Schleeper, Taylor Wenos, Katie DeBroeck, Janna Janssen, and Kallie Witthaus; groomsmen were Jordan Leicht (best man), Lucas Budnik, Kalip Davidson, Greg Wright, Jake Witthaus, Brady Ruediger, Cody Rogers and Josh Witthaus.

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Winter scene photo from Vail Colorado by John Martin.



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on the back.”

Then the day of the wedding, Leah’s hairdressers and make up artists Tyra Mangrum and Tina Heidbrink blended JJ’s hair to make it look alright. But what were JJ’s thoughts about the mishap?

“My first thought was I should have listened to Leah and scheduled an appointment to get my hair professionally cut. Ha,” JJ said. “At first I was shocked, then I thought it was hilarious. Leah did not.”

JJ said he had no idea what they were going to do.

“We even tried gluing some back on with eye lash adhesive. That obviously didn’t work,” JJ said. “So we had to resort to root touch up and a hat until the lady fixing the girls’ hair came and cut my hair to blend it so you couldn’t even tell.”

With the situation handled, the wedding must go on.

Day One...Of One Thousand Years & Counting

June 23, 2018, dawned beautifully at White Mule Winery — a wonderful intermission between the extreme heat the week before and the rains that would come the week after.

Rose gold mats were set up with peach candles and vases of flowers on each table by Old World Creations. Greenery of every kind gave the open field and pond a secret garden feel.

Leah and the bridesmaids were getting ready at the bed and breakfast on site, and enjoyed Mimosas as they got ready.

That afternoon, Leah waited with her attendants Katie Rogers, Rochelle Maples, Paige Jaworski-Jurgens, Abby Schleeper, Taylor Wenos, Katie DeBroeck, Janna Jansen, and Kallie Witthaus.

The guys had gotten ready at Leah’s parents house in Rosebud, about a mile down the road.

“I kind of stayed inside when the guys finally got there,” Leah recalls. “I tried very

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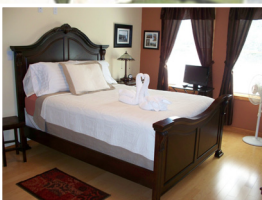
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ALL OF Leah's nieces were included in the wedding ceremony. Her twin nieces, Paisley (left) and Lainey Rogers enjoy an antique baby carriage.



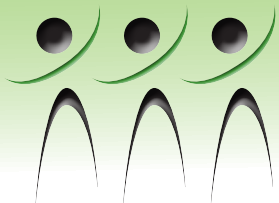
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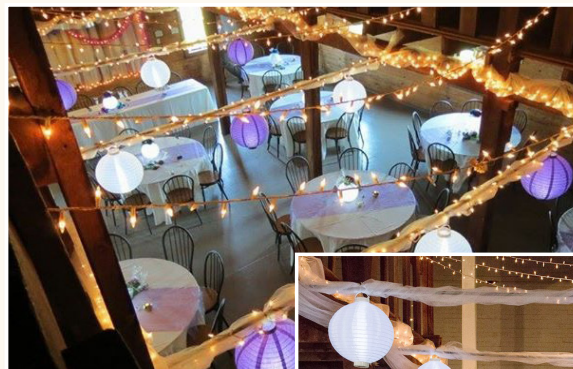


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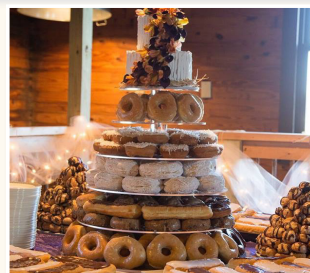
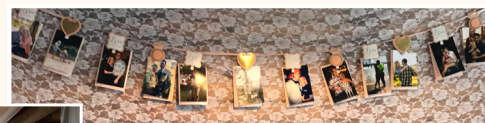


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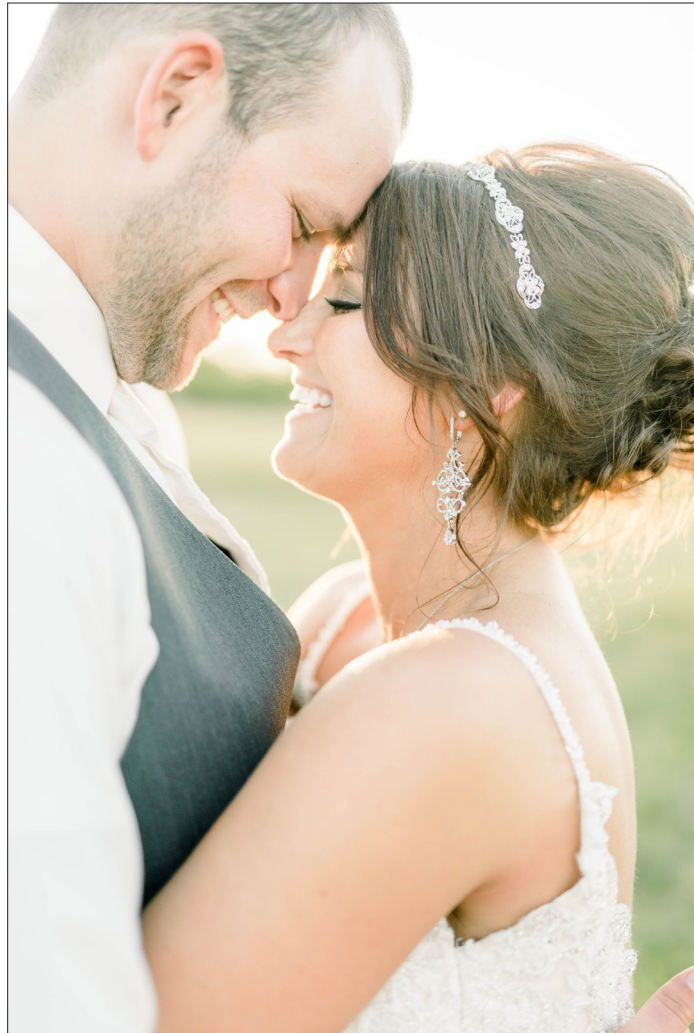
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Leicht • from page 4B

hard not to look out the window.”

Separate pictures of the guys and gals had already been taken by BLK Photography’s Brittany Gentry. The music started and candle lighters Kayla Marinelli and Alyssa Robertson did their work.

Ushers Austin Ruediger and Parker Puchta seated important family members.

Her dad, Jeff Bohl, waited to take his little girl on the longest and shortest walk down the isle while her mother, Rhonda Bohl, waited for him in the front row.

She watched her friends walk down the isle to groomsmen Jordan Leicht, Lucas Budnik, Kalip Davidson, Greg Wright, Jake Witthaus, Brady Ruediger, Cody Rogers, and Josh Witthaus.

Then the flower girls, Avery, Penny, Lainey and Paisley Rogers, all nieces of bride.

She had exchanged letters with JJ earlier.



“Today is the day I have been waiting for,” he wrote. “I can’t express how excited I am and how lucky I am to call you mine...I love your smile, your drive, your passion for your career and always trying to make yourself better. I have no doubt you will be a fantastic wife and even better mother. I can’t help but smile when you walk into a room...” I will do everything I can to keep you happy. Even use the right hand towel lol. I can’t wait to make you my wife. I will be waiting for you at the end of the aisle.”

JJ went on to say how Leah and her family have always been kind and generous and welcoming to him. He added how he couldn’t ask for a better family to be a part of.

A Thousand Years by Christina Perri

NANCY GANN with “I Do Wedding, Events and Décor” decorated the venue in the chosen colors of rose gold and peach.

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Leicht • from page 8B

began, and Leah walked out the front door of the bed and breakfast, and looked for her husband-to-be.

“Of course, the first thing I thought when I saw her was how beautiful she was,” JJ said. “Her walking down the aisle was a very memorable moment for me. Seeing the person I was going to spend the rest of my life with walk toward me was a scary but unbelievable feeling. Leah is my best friend, I had been waiting for that moment for a long time.”

And Leah couldn't wait to complete that walk.

“My dad kept telling me to walk slower when I was walking down the aisle, but I was like, I am in a hurry and ready to get down there,” Leah laughed. “He (JJ) was choked up. Kind of holding back the tears and trying to smile. When I got down there, you could tell he was nervous and he was sweating. That first moment when you see them you can tell they are holding back the tears and happy at the same time. It was a beautiful day.”

Their officiant, Pastor Joel Pike, did the honors. In front of her parents, his parents—Gary and Ann Leicht of Hermann—and 200 guests, they became Mr. and Mrs. JJ Leicht.

When I Said I Do —

The 30 minute service was over, and the couple were finally man and wife.

Instead of writing their vows, they said the traditional ones, and instead of a unity candle, they planted a Hibiscus tree to symbolize planting their roots and growing their love.

Their wedding cake was beautifully displayed by Kathy Echols and cheesecakes and strawberries by Pam Bohl were set out for guests.

The wedding party disappeared for pictures and to have a few drinks.

“That is when the fun started, and we began to relax and talk to everyone,” Leah said.

The couple hired a live band, “Holler “N” Swaller” who sang all of their “first

dance” songs.

“Our first dance was *When I said I Do* by Clint Black,” Leah said.

She danced to *Daddy* by Abby Anderson and JJ danced with his mother to *Boy* by Lee Brice.

Leah's sister Katie gave a speech that was both sentimental and funny for the couple. After the

speeches, JJ thanked everyone for coming.

Their videographer, Pure Sonic, recorded the day for them.

“Leah had this vision of how she wanted the day to be, and seeing it come to life was pretty awesome,” JJ said about the day.

While wedding planning and keeping track of so many RSVPs can be stressful, JJ said their wedding day didn't feel stressed or chaotic.

“I had been told too many times that your day will fly by so I was trying to take it all in and enjoy it,” JJ said. “It definitely went by too fast, I'd love to go back to that day.”

When everything was said and done the following morning, the couple opened wedding gifts and relaxed. Then said their

was to reel in a tuna!”

Everyone else there was on their honeymoon as well. “We met some really cool people from other countries,” Leah said.

Every Love Story is Special — But Ours is My Favorite

The couple are currently living in a small cottage style home and waiting to build on their land. They are also family planning.

“We were tying and planning to start a family,” Leah said about their plans after the wedding.

Then one day in December, JJ went to work and Leah decided to take a pregnancy test.

“I wasn't even excited cause I didn't really think I would be,” Leah said.

To surprise JJ, she bought a fishing lure that said “Daddy's New Fishing Buddy” and hid it in JJ's stocking.

“I put ‘To JJ From God,’” Leah said.

But the weekend before Christmas she couldn't wait any longer.

“I was like ‘we really need to open our stockings,’” Leah laughed.

JJ was reluctant and when he did open it, Leah said she had to keep telling him to read it.

“He was like, ‘really?’” Leah said.

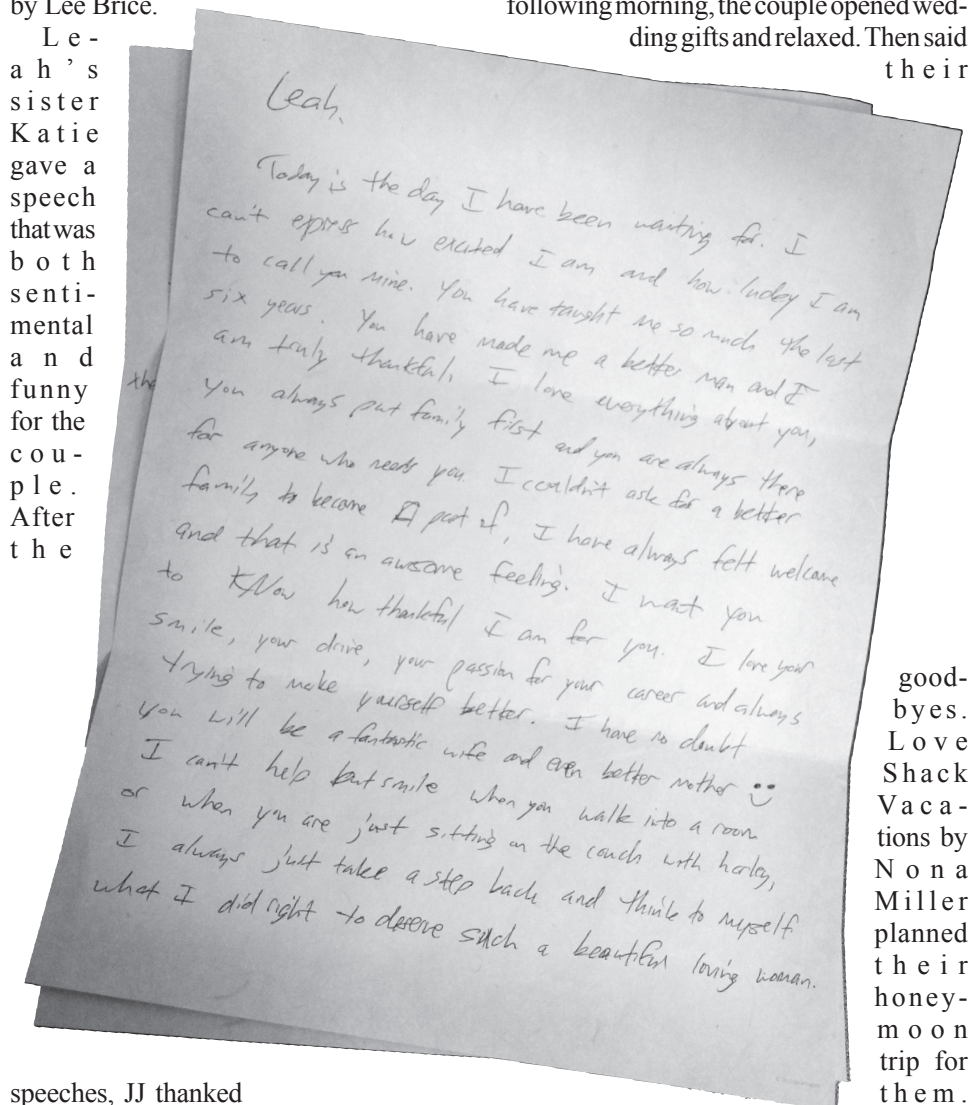
“I'm so excited,” JJ said. “A lot has happened over the past year, and this was the best news yet! Leah really surprised me when she told me we were expecting, I was shocked. We have five nieces, so spending time with them really makes you want to have a little one of your own. It will be challenging, but Leah and I are ready for August.”

What is JJ looking forward to doing with Leah the most?

“I really look forward to raising a family with Leah,” he said. “I can't wait to watch her be a mother, I know she will be great at it.”

JJ said building their home together will be a challenge he is looking forward to and he would also like to travel more with Leah.

“We always talk about going to all these new, crazy places,” JJ said. “Someday soon, we will make it a reality.”



good-byes. Love Shack Vacations by Nonna Miller planned their honeymoon. They stayed in St. Louis Sunday night and flew to Barbadoes Monday morning.

“We wanted to go to the Caribbean,” Leah said. “A friend said Barbadoes was pretty.”

The couple stayed at a resort. They went on a catamaran and deep sea fishing.

“We were on this huge ship and it was only the two of us,” Leah said. “It was like a private tour. I never realized how hard it

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On my way to you

Ben & Grace Jett, Oct. 20, 2018

by Roxie Murphy, Gasconade County Republican Feature Writer



October 20, 2018, dawned on the chilly, windy side for the Schlottach - Jett wedding — but that didn't dim the bride's day.

The fall leaves outside colored the rolling hills of Missouri in brilliant shades of yellow, oranges, reds and browns.

Inside the red brick structure of St. James United Church of Christ Charlotte, Grace Schlottach waited with her dad, Charlie, for *Here Comes the Bride* — to make her way down the aisle to Ben Jett.

"Dad asked me if I was ready for this, and I was like 'yeah, everyone is

here now,'" Grace remembers saying. "I knew there was something that made me laugh, but I don't remember what it is now."

A Perfect Introduction

Grace and Ben met at Owensville Project Graduation in 2013 during her junior year in high school.

"We have always kind of known each other," Grace said. "We were from neighboring towns. I have heard his name, he heard mine."

Grace attended the event with Dana Bloemke, and Ben, who attended Hermann High School, had been invited by a buddy.

"There was a mechanical bull there that I was riding," Grace remembers. "I was wearing a helmet and I fell off. Ben was the first one to tell me something was wrong with my nose."

Ben says he took notice of her because of her blonde hair. Then he really got to know her.

"She was so down-to-earth," Ben said. "She never tried to be anything but herself."

A few months later they started talking and even dated for a little bit.

"When we first dated in high school, that was my very first date and my

See **Jett**, Page 13B

Wedding photos by Rochelle Maples Photography

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GRACE ENJOYS a moment with her two flower girls Nolyn Gehlert (left) and Charlotte Okenfuss.



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BRIDESMAIDS IN the Jett wedding were Dana Bloemke (maid of honor), Clara Wehmeyer, Ashley Schlottach, Devon Schlottach, Emily Reinhold, Melissa Echols, and Randi Gehlert.; groomsmen were Wade Guffey (best man) Chad Hopkins, Zech Moore, Gus Schlottach, Woody Schlottach, Cory Seba, and Reven Newbound.



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Jett • from page 10B

parents weren't home," Grace remembers.

But her brothers, Gus and Woody were there.

"My brothers were at the winery and they were like, 'you have to bring him over here to meet us before you leave,'" Grace said. So she did.

"Gus said the first time he saw Ben he was impressed because Ben just went up to him and shook his hand," she laughed.

But it didn't last long that first time.

"Then we went our separate ways," Grace said.

They didn't talk again until 2016, and consider the 4th of July their dating anniversary.

"And we never stopped," Grace smiles. "We had known each other and I thought he was very handsome and we started talking one day and hanging out."

Grace said the first time they started hanging out, Ben felt like one of her really good friends.

"I could be myself, and he was silly," she said. "I don't know why but I didn't have to fake anything or act pretty or dress up."

See **Jett**, Page 14B



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Jett • from page 13B

It didn't take the couple long to start talking about forever.

Absolutely Positive About Forever

"I knew she was the one because I could be my absolute self around her," Ben said. "I knew she felt the same."

"Actually we started talking about marriage three or four months after we started dating," Grace adds.

Grace has always admired that when Ben makes a decision to do something, he does it. For Ben, it was waiting for the right moment to ask the question.

"I did not have a place or time in mind," Ben said. "It was a Wednesday. I was at work, and I was thinking about it and I said to myself 'why not just do it?' At this point I had the ring for about a month, but this day felt right."

That day, which happened to be the second day of spring, March 22, 2017, Ben called Grace to ask her to go on a walk with him.

"We were at his mom's house, which I thought was weird," Grace remembers. "We were walking down the county road to his house and he got down on one knee and proposed!"

Grace says she was shocked. Ben said he was nervous.

"Once I decided I was going to do it, that is when the nerves kicked in," Ben said.

While Grace says she figured a proposal was coming, she expected it to be somewhere around their anniversary. She didn't see it coming at all. It was a spring evening and the sun was setting.

"He is one of those people that if he has it on his mind, he is going to do it," Grace laughed. "And of course, I said yes!"

Ben knew what he was doing.

"That evening was perfect, I wouldn't have wanted it any other way," Ben said.

Seven Months & Counting

Since the bride-to-be had felt that the proposal was imminent, she had a thought of what she

See **Jett**, Page 15B



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Jett • from page 14B

wanted her big day to look like.

"I had been looking at wedding stuff before he proposed and I got most of the big stuff done first, then waited five or six months before the wedding to do the rest," Grace said.

Picking the colors and venue were easy. She went with champagne colored dresses and navy colored tuxes with wine colored ties. Of course, she would have the reception at the White Mule (the family business).

"We both knew we wanted to get married in our church," Grace said.

She knew October was what she wanted. "October is my favorite month," Grace said. "He didn't want that for deer season. But I love the trees and I knew I wanted color."

Their classic, rustic theme had white pumpkins and deer antlers. Nancy Gann with I Do Weddings and Events in Owensville was hired to create the day Grace had in mind.

"They did so good," Grace said of the decorators. "They made us a chandelier out of antler horns."

As the couple loves to hunt, Gann tied that into the decorations.

"All the sheds that were on the chandelier were from his and my families," Grace said.



GRACE'S MAID of Honor, Dana Bloemke, performed her speech with her own words to the tune Benny and the Jetts.

One big chandelier was full of Grace and Ben's antlers.

"But there was another one above our cake as well, and they are going to let us keep that," she said. "We are planning on hanging that chandelier in our house whenever it is finished."

The couple also began meeting with their

official, Pastor Van Lahmeyer.

"Our pastor knows both of us well," Grace said.

Picture Perfect

Knowing her wedding colors and the bridesmaids dresses, Grace set out to find that perfect dress for her walk to Ben. She found

it at Wedding Creations in Washington.

"The underlay was a gold champagne color and the lace on top was ivory," Grace said. "I chose the color because I thought it went well with the bridesmaids dresses. The back was all lace with a long lace train. There were little pearls all over the dress with silver sequins and a deep V neck."

Ben's tuxes also came from Wedding Creations.

**So baby put on that dress,
A little sweet perfume —
'Cause I'm on my way to you.**

The morning of Oct. 20, 2018, dawned on the chilly, windy side with an expected temperature of 63 degrees.

"The day started great, and I woke up in a good mood," Grace remembers. "My maid of honor, Dana, stayed the night at the house with me and we got ready at mom and dad's," Grace said.

But the morning crawled by and 3 p.m. couldn't come around soon enough. By the time all the girls were ready, nerves were kicking in. She didn't know it then, but Ben was trying to find a way to pass the time too.

"We drank beer and talked about the day," Ben said. "I was trying to calm the nerves,

See **Jett**, Page 16B

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Jett • from page 15B

and my groomsmen did a great job easing my mind.”

The guys were getting ready at the church hall.

“So we took pictures at the winery before we headed to the church,” Grace said.

Charlotte church is about a mile from the winery. Grace, Dana and bridesmaids Clara Wehmeyer, Ashley Schlottach, Devon Schlottach, Emily Reinhold, Melissa Echols, and Randi Gehlert, passed the time with photographer Rochelle Maples.

“We were taking pictures, and then we were done and I kind of forget what was going on,” Grace said.

Then it was time to go to the church.

**It was all worth the while,
When I finally saw your smile...**

The service was delayed because Ben’s grandparents were running a little late.

“A couple of days before the wedding, I was thinking if I would be nervous or freaking out,” Grace said. “But I wasn’t, I was very chill.”

Ben is standing at the front of the church with best man Wade Guffey and groomsmen Chad Hopkins, Zech Moore, Gus Schlottach, Woody Schlottach, Cory Seba, and Reven Newbound.

The wedding march begins, the doors open, and Grace’s smile lights up when she meets Ben’s eyes.

Ben thinks, “She is beautiful, and that I am the luckiest guy.”

“My first thought was, ‘what is Ben’s face going to look like?’ And I was trying not to cry,” Grace said about seeing Ben waiting for her.

Her mom, Karen, was waiting for Charlie in the front row across from Ben’s parents, Monty Jett and Theresa Taylor of Belle.

Grace started her walk and felt a sense of peace.

“All my nerves went away,” Grace said. “This is where I’m supposed to be.”

She was 22, he was 24. They said ‘I do’ and lit a unity candle in front of 200 guests with Pastor (Van) Lahmeyer officiating.

Ben’s favorite part about the ceremony, “Van talking about fishing and relating our wedding to our actual lives.”

Grace agreed.

“He knows Ben loves fishing, so he tied that into the ceremony,” Grace said. “Something about how men need respect from women and women need love from men. He said something about how I should let Ben go fishing. We



GRACE’S MOTHER Karen Schlottach helps her get dressed for the big day. The dress, from wedding Creations in Washington had an underlay color of gold champagne with the lace on top ivory.

were very blessed to have a pastor that relates to both of us.”

Grace’s uncle and cousin sang *Perfect* by Ed Sheeran and incorporated Grace and Ben’s name into the song.

“But my favorite part was when they announced us as husband and wife,” Grace said.

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Jett

With the couple wedded and the official ceremony done, it was time to celebrate.

“Another favorite part about the day was the party bus,” Ben said. “After getting married, it is nice to have friends and family there to celebrate with you.”

The group took pictures and went a couple of places before heading back to the winery. Grace had originally planned to have a s’mores bar outside, but it was very windy, and most outside things were moved inside.

“That was the day after the first frost,” Grace said.

They arrived to the reception at 6:30 p.m., and were running a bit behind.

Ben’s best man, Wade Guffey, also had a DJ business.

“He had quite a bit to drink with us, so someone else did the music,” Grace laughed. “The songs we came into (the reception to) were not the correct ones.”

Grace said she would have changed one thing.

“One thing I wish we would have had time for, right after dinner, but before the speeches, we were supposed to do a sunset shoot with Rochelle and didn’t get to because we were running behind,” Grace said. “Our photographer (Rochelle Maples Photography) did very good.”

They danced together to *On My Way To You* by Cody Johnson.

“I think it relates to how we dated in high school, then went our separate ways and came back to each other,” Grace said.

She danced with her dad to *Your Daddy’s Boots* by Dustin Lynch and with her mom to *Like My Mother Does* by Lauren Alaina.

Ben danced with his mom, Theresa, to *Boy* by Lee Brice.

Photo booth from Capture It by Ashley Lochirco was set up for guests, and videographer Sean Reid recorded their day.

“One of Ben’s buddies drank too much and ripped up his tux a lot,” grace laughed. “I never heard if he had to pay for that or not. He is just one of Ben’s friends who is really hard on stuff.”

The day was beautiful and went too fast.

“I was told a couple of days after the ceremony that my flower girls (Charlotte Okenfuss and Nolyn Gehlert) were just pistols,” Grace says. “One of the girls was throwing the flower petals and the other was picking them up and putting them back in the basket!”

“I couldn’t have asked for a more perfect day,” Grace says happily, “Nothing went wrong.”

A Honeymoon in the Making

That night, Grace and Ben stayed with her parents, as the out-of-state family was making use of the guest house. Sunday was a day to relax and Monday they flew to Riviera Maya, Mexico, to spend a week at the El Dorado Seaside Suits.

“It was absolutely gorgeous,” Grace said. “We had a waterfront view on the sixth floor and could see as far as the ocean met the sky. And surprisingly good food.”

See **Jett**, Page 17B

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Jett • from page 16B

Grace laughed when she said Ben was glad the resort had Coors Beer.

There was a festival going on, and a marketer talked Ben into buying cigars.

"I'm like 'you don't know what is in those! We are in Mexico,'" Grace laughed. "We were too chicken to take them on the plane, so we threw them away."

While they had a good time, they were ready to go home too.

"It was very relaxing after being around so many people," Ben laughs. "We were definitely ready to come home after the third day."

The temperature was in the 80s the

whole time, "But you can only go to the beach and get drunk so much," Grace adds. "We are homebodies for sure."

Married Up & Settled Down

Just shy of four months after their big day, Grace is working at the winery and Ben is at Osage Ambulances in Linn. The couple are staying with Grace's mom and dad and plan to break ground building their

new home in the spring.

"We will start building as soon as possible," Grace says. "On our property down Wehmeyer Road."

She is still cautious about making decisions, and Ben is still the "all in" kind of guy she fell in love with.

"We both love being silly, and our personalities are so different and so alike," Ben says of his wife.

"I guess he loved me for who I was, cause he married me," Grace says. "On some things, I like to take the jump."

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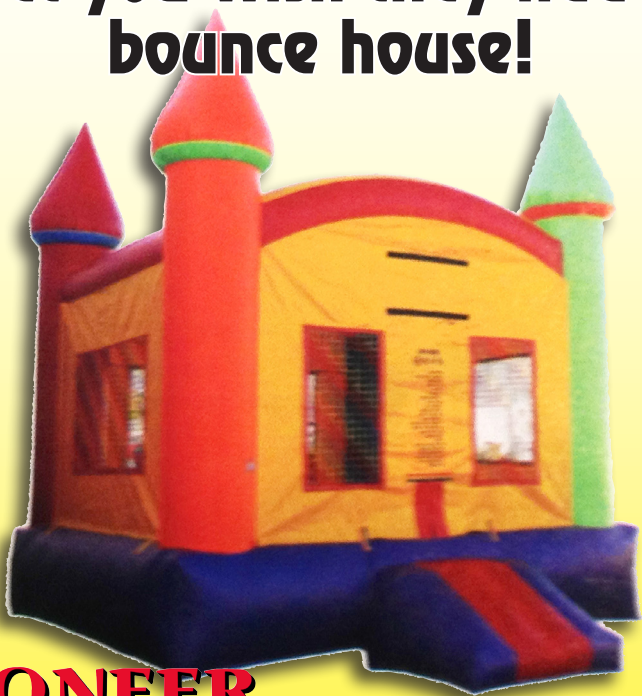
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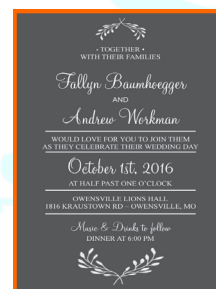
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Wedding dress fitting guide

Because fashion preferences were once ornate and dependent on precise fits, ready-to-wear clothing really did not become widely available until the early 20th century.

Because ready-to-wear clothing is so readily available, the average person may be unfamiliar with custom-made or tailored items. In fact, a couples' wedding may be the only instance in their lives when they require the services of a seamstress or tailor.

Fittings are a part of wedding planning, and here's how brides-to-be can navigate the process of finding and being fitted for a dress.

- Try on sample gowns. The first step is to make your rounds to various gown shops and try on the samples they have available. Most sample sizes will not be the size you wear every day, so expect them to be ill-fitting. Do not be discouraged. Once a gown is chosen, the dress shop will take your measurements and order the gown according to the manufacturer's sizing guide. Again, this can be shocking, since the size will likely be larger than what you wear in street clothes.

- Schedule the first fitting. The first fitting should be anywhere from eight to 12 weeks before the wedding date. This is the time it

takes to complete most standard alterations. Complex customizations can take even longer. Brides should also budget a minimum of \$500 for alterations, which may or may not be included in the price of the dress.

- Bring shoes and undergarments. Remember to bring along the exact shoes and undergarments you will wear with your gown. A change in shoes or bra/corset can result in the alterations fitting poorly the next time. Bring these items along to all subsequent fittings.

- Speak up. Martha Stewart Weddings suggests speaking up at fittings if anything is uncomfortable or needs tweaking. Seamstresses are masters at their crafts, but only if they understand the desires of the bride.

- Check the details. The second fitting is designed to check that all issues from the first fitting have been addressed, the gown is comfortable and you can move freely. At the last fitting, ask the maid of honor to come along so that she understands how to bustle or help you handle complicated straps or closures.

Open communication with a seamstress and bridal shop can ensure brides-to-be get a dress that fits like a glove.



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Unconventional wedding menu ideas

Traditionally, one of the more memorable aspects of wedding receptions is the food. Whether it was fun, tasty or something entirely new for guests, food tends to leave a lasting impression.

The experts at Boho Weddings say that, more than ever before, couples are seeking menu ideas that reflect their personalities as a couple as they seek to make a statement at their events. Celebrating with delicious, unique foods can make receptions that much more amazing.

Bite-sized bursts

Tapas and a movement toward small bites has started to take hold at wedding receptions. Such a choice allows guests to try many different flavors without filling up too quickly. From sliders to mini grilled cheese to soup shots to bite-sized pizzas, many of these small bites feature flavors borrowed from familiar comfort foods — just presented on a miniature scale.

Comfort stations and bars

Couples who love comfort food can put it

on display with a crostini station, a mashed potato bar, a chicken and waffles station, a gourmet popcorn snack station, or a ramen noodle bar.

Food trucks/carts

Outdoor weddings can be enhanced with the addition of trendy food trucks. These restaurants on wheels can inject burgers, sandwiches, international delights, crêpes, noodles, and so many more flavors into a wedding.

High-end options

Couples may want to give guests a taste of the lavish with olive oil and vinegar tasting stations, whiskey bars, French hors d'oeuvres, Kobe beef sliders, lobster tails, risotto stations, and more.

Childhood favorites

When it comes time for dessert, some couples opt to avoid or downplay wedding cakes in favor of something simpler. A cookie-and-milk bar, doughnut holes, soft pretzel stations, pie pops, or dessert shot jars push creativity and sweetness to new



levels. Do-it-yourself dessert stations, such as s'more-making and ice cream sundae stations, also can be big hits.

Couples are increasingly feeling less beholden to traditional wedding reception

menus as they look to infuse their personal tastes into the foods they plan to serve their guests. Many catering managers and chefs welcome the chance to work with couples looking to create unique reception menus.



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Living centerpieces set receptions apart

Weddings are special occasions for all involved. Guests may look forward to the ceremony and festivities to follow, and couples who are hosting do not want to disappoint. Brides and grooms often look for new and innovative ideas to set their weddings apart from ones they may have attended in the past.

While budget often determines what couples can and can't do at their wedding receptions, brides and grooms-to-be can prioritize certain components if they are looking to impress.

Centerpieces are one aspect of the reception where couples can get creative without breaking the bank. Flowers are popular centerpieces at weddings. But even with cost-cutting measures, such as choosing in-season blooms, bumping up the filler-to-flower ratio and opting for low-profile centerpieces instead of towering alternatives, couples can

expect to pay around \$2,000 on wedding flowers, offers The Knot, a go-to resource for wedding planning. But opting for the following clever living centerpiece alternatives might not only impress guests, but also do so on budget.

- Choose potted plants. Potted plants can serve as both favors and reception centerpieces. Live plants also can be an eco-conscious decision for couples who are interested in incorporating "green" elements into their weddings. Couples tying the knot in the autumn can place mums inside of a hollowed pumpkin or gourd. Spring and summer weddings can be enhanced by miniature rose bushes. Winter weddings may be dressed up with small evergreen trees or potted holly.

- Marine life draws attention. Couples can opt for inexpensive freshwater fish to add ambiance and a focal point for the reception

tables. Small goldfish bowls can be decorated with gravel that matches the color of the wedding theme. One lucky guest at each table can take home the miniature aquarium after the festivities.

- Butterflies are whimsical. Some cultures or religions view butterflies as a symbol of endurance, change, hope, and vitality. Incorporating butterflies into reception centerpieces can make guests feel like they are stepping into a living garden. Small, mesh-lined cages filled with foliage and butterflies might add that special touch.

Living centerpieces offer something different from floral centerpieces. However, because live plants and animals may be part of the display, couples need to account for their welfare. This means ensuring they will be cared for after the wedding, or in the event of butterflies, released into the evening sky.





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How to handle rain on your wedding day



Brides and grooms fear the prospects of rainy wedding days. But even couples who have contended with everything from a few drops to an all-out deluge on their wedding days look back fondly on the ceremonies and receptions. In fact, how couples handle any precipitation can affect how happy the festivities may be.

- Have a rainy day game plan. Rain affects outdoor weddings more than any other type of ceremony or reception. If the goal is to exchange vows outdoors, work with the venue to make this possible with a tent or gazebo. However, if the weather is especially foul and windy, move it indoors.

- Invest in golf umbrellas. Couples who live in notoriously damp climates can purchase golf umbrellas, which tend to be larger than the average umbrella, and keep them stationed in decorated stands to ease transitions between wedding sites and keep everyone as dry as possible.

- Wear waterproof cosmetics. Women in the bridal party, including the bride, can ask their makeup artists to use durable, waterproof products. This can help salvage beautifully composed looks should some drops begin to fall.

- Know vendors' rain policies. Some live musicians will not play in damp weather. Florists may need to make accommodations for arrangements blowing in the wind. Couples need to understand what they're responsible for and what may be covered if a weather event occurs. Wedding insurance may help cover the costs of nonrefundable cancellations.

- Move past it quickly. It is okay to get upset if the weather turns for the worse. But don't dwell on it. Guests will sense negative energy, and couples should set the tone of sticking it through despite a little adversity — which can be a good lesson for the marriage as well.

- Embrace the rain. While a couple probably won't wish for rain, there are some benefits to overcast skies, say the wedding professionals at Brides magazine. Flowers are less likely to wilt in rainy conditions. In the absence of bright sunlight, outdoor photographs can really pop. Rain is romantic and may compel couples and their guests to cuddle close.

Don't let rain on a wedding day become a drag. With preparation and perspective, couples can handle rainy wedding days.

Wedding insurance can ease nerves

Couples spend thousands of dollars on their wedding ceremony and celebrations. The cost of a wedding varies depending on geographic location, but according to the business and financial resource Business Insider and The Knot 2017 Real Weddings Study, the average wedding in the United States costs \$31,391.

Insurance policies can help couples protect their wedding investment. Special event insurance provides coverage for various scenarios, including extreme weather, damaged gifts, lost jewelry, vendor cancellations or no-shows, venues closing before the wedding, and canceled weddings, according to Travelers Insurance. Insurance also may cover other unforeseen scenarios, such as unexpected expenses from injuries during the wedding or spoiled food.

Policies will pay directly for any damage or injuries that occur, or reimburse the couple if the wedding is postponed or canceled. If weddings occur at home, some people's home insurance or umbrella policies may cover certain wedding liabilities. Most wedding venues carry their own liability insurance, so couples may not have to overlap there. However, for those who desire extra protection for vendor mishaps, it is wise to speak with an insurance professional about special wedding coverage.

Prices for wedding insurance policies can start at around \$100 to \$200 for minimum coverage and reach \$1,000 for more expensive ceremonies, according to the financial advisement website NerdWallet.

Speak with an insurance agent and read policies carefully before purchasing one. Non-covered issues typically include theft or loss of an engagement ring; rainy days that do not classify as extreme weather; switching vendors after a deposit is made; and risky entertainment, such as fireworks or live animals.

Protecting wedding expenditures with insurance policies can provide couples with added peace of mind on their big days.

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Tips for a successful marriage proposal



People ready to “pop the question” may wonder about the right way to initiate an engagement proposal. Because a marriage proposal is such a memorable moment in a couples’ lives together, those doing the proposing often go to great lengths to ensure things go smoothly. While there is no proposal playbook, these guidelines can assist those ready to take the leap.

- Add a personal touch. It’s easy to get caught up in making a marriage proposal a spectacle or something worthy of a social media post. But taking a sweetheart back to a special place that recalls a significant moment can set the backdrop for a memorable proposal. Incorporating the place you first met or a special song into the proposal can make

it that much more personal and meaningful.

- Embrace the old fashioned. It may be romantic to step back in time and followed the traditions of yesteryear. Show respect to future in-laws by speaking to them about intentions to propose and ask for their blessings. Get down on bended knee when asking for a sweetheart’s hand. Such gestures add up to meaningful expressions of love.
- Consider timing. A person may be so excited to propose that he or she fails to consider how the other person in the relationship is feeling. If that person is overwhelmed by work projects or stressed about upcoming events, consider waiting to propose at a more relaxed time.
- Enlist help from others. It can be a challenge to keep

your excitement hidden while collecting information about a future spouse’s likes and dislikes. Ask friends and close family members to be your accomplices so that information can be gathered without generating suspicion. This can be especially helpful when finding the perfect ring.

- Keep it simple. The more complex a proposal, the more opportunities for things to go wrong. Simplicity, even if it means keeping the proposal to yourself until the question has been popped, can make for an extra special moment.

Marriage proposals happen every day. With humor, confidence and a heart full of love, popping the question can be a success.



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Get the most out of bridal shows and wedding events



Recently engaged couples may be excited to get a jump on wedding planning. Bridal shows can be a great way for couples to meet and familiarize themselves with local wedding professionals, all the while introducing themselves to the terminology of wedding planning.

Though they're a great source of information, contacts and samples, bridal shows also can be a bit overwhelming. Learning how to maximize time spent at shows can help couples plan their weddings as efficiently as possible.

- Start small. If the idea of large crowds is unappealing, attend the more intimate, boutique shows that are often held at local reception halls and restaurants instead of the larger installations at convention centers and hotels.

- Scout out vendors. Check the bridal show's website for lists of exhibitors and see if your desired vendors are on the list. But even if they're not, keep an open mind and use the show as a chance to compare offerings. If an event map is available, marking off must-visit booths can help save time.

- Pre-register. Pre-registering for bridal events saves time at check-in, and doing so may make you eligible for discounted tickets.

- Come prepared. Chances are each vendor is going to ask couples for information so that they can follow up with a phone call or email with more detailed offerings and estimates. Couples attending the show can expediate the process by coming equipped with labels that feature their names, contact information and wedding date. They can then stick the labels on sign-in sheets or use them like business cards.

- Dress comfortably. Bridal expos involve a lot of walking and roaming around. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes. Consider a backpack or hands-free bag so you are not weighed down when collecting the swag and other handouts throughout the day.

- Ask questions. When face-to-face with vendors, rely on their expertise but don't hesitate to ask questions concerning themes, colors, recommendations for honeymoon locations, invitation paper suggestions, and much more.

- Stay for the fashion show. Many shows will offer a runway experience to present the latest gown and tuxedo offerings. This can be an entertaining way for couples to formulate their wedding styles.

Wedding shows introduce couples to vendors and set them on the path to making decisions regarding the planning of their weddings.

Bridal & Catering Showcase

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