

# PLANNER

*Secrets to picking the  
Perfect Wedding*

By Christina Vercelletto

*Planning* a wedding is fun and exciting. It is also — let's face it — a potential stress fest. A wedding planner can bring your vision to life, handle all the crazy-making details, and solve problems before they happen. And no, they're not just for rich people. Fees vary greatly, depending largely on what you hire the planner to do, exactly, and how much experience he or she has. Some take a percentage of your total wedding budget; others charge a flat fee. So how do you pick the very best one for you? Take these five steps.

## *1 Understand what you're shopping for*

Planners aren't all the same. A full-service planner handles everything from beginning to end. Busy professional couples with no time to properly plan a wedding may find handing over the reins to someone whose judgement they trust is appealing. You can also hire a planner just for the month of the wedding to manage the myriad details of the home stretch, or just a day-of coordinator to man all the logistics on the big day. A wedding weekend coordinator can be indispensable for those with many out-of-town guests, greeting guests as they check-in to the hotel (even picking them up at the airport in a pinch), overseeing the rehearsal dinner, and managing the day-after brunch. You can also find planners who specialize in destination weddings. Some planners will let you come up with your own hybrid package, picking and choosing only the services you want, no matter when those would be needed. A word about venue coordinators: most big venues have them, but they'll only handle the basics during your time at their venue (and may even be assigned to two weddings simultaneously).

## *2 Be upfront about your budget*

Many planners won't work on wedding that costs less than a certain amount. Don't fudge your figures, telling yourself you'll make it work somehow. It won't end well. If your budget meets the planner's minimum, make sure to ask to see work in your range. Otherwise, you may fall in love with what you see in a portfolio, not knowing that it'll take twice as much money as you've got to pull off.





Long Island wedding planned by La Bella Planners.  
Photo by Elena Gorelik

### 3 *Stalk them online*

Well, not exactly, but definitely take a good look at all their social media accounts, especially Instagram. Do they engage with their followers? Are posts up to date? How do photos compare with those in their portfolio? A prominent digital presence that indicates an active rapport with their clientele, and work that aligns with your ideas, is a great sign.

### 4 *Ask for old-fashioned references*

Don't just look over the reviews page on a wedding site. Ask for a phone number of a recent client. Most couples will never leave a negative review about someone who worked on their wedding. Think about it: If your big day, the one you planned forever, and that everyone who matters to you attended, was kind of a disappointment, would you make your feeling an out-there-forever fact? Try to get someone on the phone: you'll be able to get a vibe of what their experience was really like.

### 5 *Look for someone you actually really like*

Unlike other service providers you hire, you need to "click" with your wedding planner. If you don't feel at ease chatting with him or her now, you surely won't be comfortable calling at 9 pm with your second freak-out of the month.

## What your wedding planner wants you to know

*Jeanenne La Bella, CEO & Co-founder of La Bella Planners in Port Washington, spills on what she'd love to say to every new client.*

### *You should really put Pinterest aside.*

We have probably seen the pin you sent us already. We would love to customize your wedding and make it truly about you. So, please, let's brainstorm ideas we haven't seen before.

### *We want to communicate with the vendors.*

We know it's a very exciting time and you want answers in an instant, but if you branch off and begin communicating with vendors independently, things will definitely be miscommunicated, and everyone will have to play a game of catch-up.

### *Service is where to spend our money.*

If you're working within a budget, put your money where it will make your wedding stand out. Hands down, that means hiring reliable vendors. A good example is if you are at a venue where you need to bring everything in, splurge on the caterer and wait

staff. You and your guests will notice the difference on the wedding night, and it will be worth every penny. Don't worry about the little things that you can purchase off of Etsy; instead, put your money into your vendors!

### *Your gut will never steer you wrong.*

It might be the first wedding dress you tried on, or the first venue you saw. But if you found something you absolutely love, just pull the trigger and move on. There are so many options out there that it can absolutely become overwhelming otherwise.

### *We want to earn our money.*

We know what works and what doesn't work – we also know timeframes and deliverables and really like to be the one in charge on the day of your wedding. A large part of the reason that you hired us was to take the pressure off of you and your close family on the day of the wedding, so let us run the show.



Courtesy of Elite Glamour Events of New York.

## Crisis Averted

*Being a real-life wedding planner bears little resemblance to J Lo's role in The Wedding Planner, says Lindsey Scannell, Head Event Designer and Planner and Owner of Elite Glamour Events of New York in Huntington. Here, she shares a few of her finest disaster-fixing moments.*

*“On the morning* of one wedding, a bridesmaid pulled her dress out of the garment bag — and it was the wrong color! She hadn't looked at it until then. It became our issue to fix.

Instead of allowing the store to dictate when the right dress would be delivered, we took the power back. We picked up a new dress at a time that wouldn't affect the day's schedule at all. Then the girl tried it on...and it didn't fit. But still had enough time to alter it ourselves with pins and fast sewing. Soon we were taking pictures and laughing.”

“A bride arrived at the church in a panic. Her dad, who had a seizure disorder, forgot his medication at home, miles away. We lined up the bride and bridal party, fluffed the bride's dress and sent her down the aisle, then got in the car. We picked up the medication, and arrived back at the church in time to greet the newly married couple and the family at the end of the aisle.”

“We have dealt many times with too few bridesmaid bouquets or not enough centerpieces. The delivery drivers routinely say they've brought the correct amount. But because we have all the contracts on hand, we

can calmly remedy the situation before any pictures need to be taken. Sometimes the numbers are correct, but the colors of the flowers are wrong. We jump into action then, too, getting the florist on the phone, and explaining that per the contract we have in front of us, new bouquets need to be sent immediately.”

“Out of 16 tables, 12 tables of people had the wrong tables on their escort cards. On top of this, the floor plan didn't have the same size shown for every table. Oh, and two uninvited guests showed up. This potential for mass chaos was discovered an hour and a half before the start of the 184-person reception. The maître D' said we had to deal with it. With a smile on our faces, we approached the bride's parents. Since they knew most of the guests, we were able to go person by person, table by table and re-assign everyone to the right table. It was high stress in a short amount of time, but not only did we do it, but the bride and groom had no idea.”



Courtesy of Elite Glamour Events of New York.

# SHINING examples

Your engagement ring has been catching compliments for what seems like forever now, and your wedding bands are chosen...

*It's time* to turn your eye toward the rest of the pieces that will perfect your big-day look. We went to wedding jewelry experts to find out what's going to look fresh and fabulous on brides this summer.

"Statement earrings are having a moment," Shelley Brown, Fashion Editor for *The Knot*, shared with *Long Island Living*. Indeed, designers, such as Naeem Khan, Marchesa, and Monique Lhuillier, have all shown elaborate earrings on the bridal runway. "Since strapless gowns, plunging v-necklines, and skinny straps are trending in bridal fashion, a great pair of earrings doesn't feel overpowering and is also a glam way to draw more attention to your face." (If show-stealing earrings are worn, though, consider forgoing a necklace.)

Brides are also looking for on-trend, versatile pieces that they'll be able to wear after the wedding. "Such statement styles look great on the bride, but are also perfect for everything from honeymoon nights to friends' weddings,"

Andrew Brown, President of WP Diamonds in Manhattan told *Long Island Living*.

Adding a pop of color to your wedding day look also feels very now. "Many brides are choosing to do this through jewelry. Incorporating sapphire or blue topaz has become increasingly popular, with brides often utilizing a pair of earrings as their something blue," observes Andrew Brown.

If bling isn't really your thing, though, a small diamond pendant, a lariat, or light stacking bracelets with clear stones like diamonds or quartz add a touch of sparkle without looking over-the-top. No matter your taste or your dress style, you'll find accent pieces worthy of the occasion this season.

## Mateo

Mateo 14K cultured pearl and diamond lariat. \$850; Bloomingdale's.  
Credit: Courtesy of Bloomingdale's

## Jonas

18k Margaret earrings with five carats sky blue topaz. \$850; PhoebeJonas.com.  
Credit: Courtesy of Phoebe Jonas

## Bridal Reflections

Thomas Knoell Designs Flora Earring. \$300; Bridal Reflections stores.  
Credit: Courtesy of Thomas Knoell Designs

## Coin

Roberto Coin 18K "Love Letter" diamond pendant. \$580; Bloomingdale's  
Credit: Courtesy of Bloomingdale's

## Freida Rothman

Freida Rothman rhodium-plated sterling and cubic zirconia bangles. \$295/two; Bloomingdale's.  
Credit: Courtesy of Bloomingdale's





**Modcloth**

Glitzy Garden Statement Necklace. \$25;  
Modcloth.com  
Credit: Courtesy of Modcloth

# Spellbinding SCENT'S

*These gorgeous perfumes for summer hit on a range of notes, all with a romantic feel*

*brides* used to turn to a classic fragrance they grew up with. But now, they want their wedding day scent to reflect their individuality, says fragrance expert Sue Phillips, founder of The Scentarium, a custom fragrance studio in Manhattan. "Brides are breaking that rule, indulging their preferences. As she walks down the aisle, the fragrance trail will personify her." Phillips has seen an uptick in brides looking to create a one-of-a-kind fragrance. "We offer personality tests to discover their scent styles. Brides have been combining fresh citrus notes with sensual amber and woody scents, which is not a typical 'bridal fragrance.'" For inspiration, look to these unique summer fragrances that have instant allure.



#### **Tiffany & Co. Eau de Parfum**

Iris flower is the hero ingredient in this sparkling musk. The glass flacon is inspired by the 128.54-carat Tiffany yellow diamond. A girl can dream. \$100 for 1.7oz; Bloomingdales and Tiffany & Co. Courtesy of Tiffany & Co.

#### **Flower Turquoise**

Drew Barrymore crafted this citrus-woody, serene scent. Pink peppercorn, salted fennel, and honeydew blossom are among the intriguing top and mid notes. \$20 for 30ml; flowerbeauty.com. Courtesy of Flower Beauty.



**Stash Sexy Scented Hair Mist**  
by Sarah Jessica Parker

Luscious-smelling locks are undeniably seductive. This vetiver and musk-laced mist releases its magnetic scent as you move and will last all night long. \$30 for 150ml; [sjpbeauty.com](http://sjpbeauty.com). Courtesy of SJP Beauty.

**Twilly d'Hermès Eau De Parfum**

Its ginger, tuberose, and sandalwood scent gives it a young and vibrant feeling without being too sweet. \$79 for 30ml; Hermès shops and select department stores. Courtesy of Hermès.

**Gucci Bloom**

This feminine choice gets its intoxicating floral notes from Rangoon Creeper, an Indian vine used for the first time in perfume. \$94 for 1.6oz; Saks Fifth Avenue. Courtesy of Gucci.

**Vilhelm Parfumerie Don't Tell Jasmine**

A seductive floral, it has top notes of lemon and kir, and dries down to petal musk that enhances, rather than competes with, the jasmine. \$245 for 100 ml; Barneys New York. Courtesy of Vilhelm Parfumerie.

**Christian Siriano Silhouette in Bloom**

The heart of this new scent is jasmine and noble rose, with a warm base of mysterious patchouli. The bottle is designed after Swiriano's famous ombre bridal ball gown. \$92 for 3.4oz; [so-avant-garde.com](http://so-avant-garde.com). Courtesy of Christian Siriano.



# SHOES

Statement

*Most brides say yes to the dress months before they select their footwear. But bridal shoes this season are show-stoppers, and deserve to be more than an afterthought.*



*“pretty much* anything goes in bridal shoes these days, especially as weddings — and wedding fashion — become less traditional and more personalized to the couple,” says Shelley Brown, Fashion Editor at The Knot. “And, because many summer brides are dressing not just for their wedding day but for an entire wedding weekend and all of the events leading up to it, there are plenty of opportunities to show them off.”

Embellished shoes are having a fashion moment in general, and that trend naturally translates to bridal. “The embellishments don’t just have to be jewels — feathers, 3-D florals, bows and pearl details are also hot,” Brown says. Pearls, especially, are traditional wedding staples, but designers are making them feel fresh.

With modern brides rethinking the old wedding rules, many don’t want a matchy-matchy white shoes-white dress look, instead going for a pop of metallic or color. The white shoes that are happening

now — Jimmy Choo, for example — have a distinctly fashion-forward feel, notes Brown.

Flip-flops, especially for a beach or destination wedding, shouldn’t be overlooked. “If a bride isn’t into heels or wants to change into something more comfortable for the reception, bridal sneakers and sandals are also a great option,” agrees Brown. “There are lots of fun, sparkly pairs out there.”

Your lifetime together starts with your first step down the aisle. Start here to find the pair worthy of the moment.



*Page 42:*

**Alterre**

Alterre Pixel Glitter Elsie Mid Heel, \$199; AlterreNY.com. Credit: Alicia King Photography

*LEFT, top to bottom:*

**Ruby Shoo**

Ruby Shoo Statement Mary Jane Heel, \$85; Modcloth.com. Credit: Courtesy of Modcloth

**Zanotti**

Giuseppe Zanotti Glittered Leather Slingbacks, \$675; Bloomingdale's. Credit: Courtesy of Bloomingdale's

**Mischka**

Badgley Mischka Hooper Embellished Sandal, \$215; Bloomingdale's. Credit: Courtesy of Bloomingdale's

*RIGHT, top to bottom:*

**Jimmy Choo**

Jimmy Choo Romy 100 Glitter Leather Pointed Toe Pumps, \$675; Bloomingdale's. Credit: Courtesy of Bloomingdale's

**Chinese Laundry**

Kristin Cavallari for Chinese Laundry Ankle Wrap Satin Sandals in Summer Nude, \$145; ChineseLaundry.com

**BCB**

BCBGENERATION Joanne Washed Metallic Heels, \$89; Macy's. Credit: Courtesy of BCBGENERATION

**Havaianas**

Havaianas Slim Bridal Cinderella Sandal, \$98; US.Havaianas.com. Credit: Courtesy of Havaianas



# Just **DESSERTS**

*It's a common sight at receptions: slices of a painstakingly selected wedding cake languishing at empty seats, barely tasted by anyone...*



*But these days,* couples are coming up with ideas for treats that not only feel fresh and modern but are sure to get gobbled up.

"A lot of our summer brides are requesting a spectacular sweets bar, donut walls, passed shots of milk and cookies, and s'mores stations instead of doing the traditional wedding cake," says Tracy Koenig, owner of Platinum Party Planners in Wantagh. Indeed, brides are decidedly having more fun with the dessert course. "Whether it's a parade with hors d'oeuvre-type desserts passed around the dance floor or dessert martinis at the bar, the trend is to do something different and engaging for your guests, without stopping the party," says Alyson Joubert, co-owner of Above All Events NY in West Islip.

Guests love a personalized touch and these hand-picked details are sure to make your affair stand out. One idea is to incorporate retro candy reminiscent of your childhood. "People love novelty candy," says Joubert. "Or bring in a special dessert that you always loved to indulge in, regardless of whether it seems like 'wedding dessert.'"

Desserts transformed into late-night snacks or the next day's breakfast, even doubling as the favor, are

popular too. "With food trucks all the rage, we've been seeing brides enlist donut or zeppole trucks to bake fresh treats as their guests leave for the night."

Of course, none of this means you can't cut into a wedding cake if you like that tradition. Cakes aren't disappearing; they're being reimaged. "The trend is definitely a show-stopping, tall, thin cake with multiple tiers of different flavors," notes Joubert. "And don't be afraid to mix styles, like metallic and naked cake." Ivy Jacobson, senior editor at *The Knot*, agrees. "Think outside the box with bold, unexpected filling and frostings like cookies and cream, bourbon, mocha, or matcha green tea," Jacobson told *Long Island Living*. She suggests passed cake bites. "By the time the cake is cut, the dance floor is in full swing, so bring the cake to your guests to ensure it's enjoyed," she adds.

Experiential dining is huge when it comes to dessert in general in 2018, and so we're seeing that in wedding receptions as well. "Presentation and experience is everything," concludes Jacobson.

**Displays from Above All Events NY.  
This page:**

A lollipop tree.

Credit: Lassana Photography.

A cupcake tower.

Credit: Lassana Photography.

A take-home sticky bun display for guests.

Credit: Matthew Adams Photography.

An end-of-night dessert table.

Credit: Lassana Photography.

**Page 52:**

A candy and cookie bar gets a unique touch  
by utilizing a vintage dresser.

Credit: A Day of Bliss Photography.

