



Five of the area's top wedding consultants answer YOUR questions in *Ask the Experts*. See *Consultants in the Bridal Resource Guide* for contact information.

❓ My reception venue won't let us use candles. Any ideas to help create some ambience?

There are a variety of ways to create atmosphere without candles. Battery operated lighting can be incorporated into centerpieces such as a topiary plant. You can also add atmosphere without using lighting on the tables. Two other ideas: lighting strung in the trees, if you have an outside venue, or uplights around the perimeter of the ballroom or used to light trees (whether you are outside or inside). Lighting in a tent structure, lined with chiffon, whether you are inside or outside, creates a glow over a dance floor or over the cake.

- *Soiree Special Event Planning*

❓ Is there a way to politely say "please cut your mullet" to one of our groomsmen?

Two thoughts here...if he is a good enough friend that you've asked him to be a groomsman, you should be able to just ask for a haircut...OR...if he is such a great friend then the cut is part of who he is, thus you accept the man just as he is.

- *Another You*

❓ Is there a simple rule of thumb to know how many hors d'oeuvre and beverages we'll need for a cocktail reception of 300?

I recommend passing three different hors d'oeuvres, one of each type per guest. This a good equation that offers guests a light nibble without going overboard. Passing sparkling wine and cider is always a great idea for a cocktail reception. This gets a beverage in guests' hands immediately and helps prevent the nightmare of 300 people in line at the bar all at once. If you want to be a bit more extravagant, have the servers pass your specialty cocktail of the evening. Most guests will opt for the convenience at first and then will hit the bars when the lines lighten up.

- *An Affair to Remember*

❓ What is the argument for preserving my wedding gown or bouquet? I'm tempted to do both both. I'm not sure why.

Many people want to keep their wedding gown to pass on to a relative or descendent. There is also the possibility of selling the gown, in which case you will want the gown to have been stored in archival condition. This is where gown preservation comes in. Preserving the gown means the gown will be cleaned, stains removed, pressed or steamed, and packed to avoid creases in archival, acid-free tissue paper and box. And of course, some people just want to keep their gown as a memento of their wedding day. Just like your wedding photographs, when you show your wedding dress to family and friends in the years to come, you will want it to be preserved in the best condition and protected from stains, yellowing, and damage.

Flowers, on the other hand, can't be used again. But preserving flowers, either in diorama-type glass domes or by pressing them into works of art, can be a way of creating a décor piece for your new home that will always remind you of the gorgeous flowers you carried the day you got married. You may include poetry, the groom's boutonniere, gown remnants, and other mementos inside the case or frame. Preserving your bouquet is truly a romantic and sentimental gesture.

- *EJP Events*

❓ Help me avoid making more mistakes than I have to. What is the biggest mistake you see brides and grooms make in regard to their planning?

One of the biggest mistakes couples make is to begin making important decisions and signing contracts without having a full picture of their budget and their guest list. The size of the guest list directly affects appropriate venue selection while budget considerations affects all important decisions. In addition to a realistic budget, making a priority list is critical when making final site and vendor selections. Determine what means the most to you as a couple and allocate your funds accordingly.

- *Class Act, Event Coordinators, Inc.*