

## Tips for Brides

First Edition—July 2012

Tracy Williams is an experienced wedding and lifestyle photographer and has had the pleasure of meeting many brides and other wedding suppliers over the years.

Along the way, she has collated tips from her recommended suppliers of whom she regards as some of the best in the business and even actual brides who have reflected on the planning of their big day to offer some advice to newly weds.

Tracy would love to share with you those tips and advice to help you with your Special Day.



The majority of the photographs in this booklet have been taken by Tracy Williams. If you wish to contact Tracy, please contact her on [info@twsp.co.uk](mailto:info@twsp.co.uk) or 07812 723103 and mention "Tips for Brides".

## Stationery

When you start planning a wedding, the first thing you probably do is book your venue and church if you're having a religious ceremony. You might then think about your dress and the bridesmaids' dresses. More often than not you've already decided on your colour scheme and possibly a theme. One thing that all bride-to-be's like to do is keep everything under wraps, so that they can have a big reveal on their Wedding Day.



However, did you realise the first experience of your wedding day that your guests will have is from their invitation? That will set the tone as to what kind of wedding you're going to have and the colours and theme you have chosen.



Wedding stationery plays an important but unassuming role in your wedding. It's contains all of the vital information your guests need to attend your wedding, but if planned properly can bring your whole wedding together. Wedding Stationery doesn't just mean an invitation, it can include the following items; Save the Date Cards, RSVP, Order of Service, Place Name Cards, Table Numbers, Favour Boxes, Seating Charts, Guest Books, Post Boxes and Thank You cards.

Consider your budget, you can either have them made specifically for you, this is called bespoke design, or you can buy ready-made stationery.

It is recommended that you send your invitations to your day guests a full 3 months before your wedding. Depending on your design and numbers, it could take up to 4 months for your stationery to be made, so you will need to plan ahead. It would be advisable to start planning your wedding stationery at least 9 months prior to your wedding, so that there is not a rush to have them made.

If you want to have your wedding stationery made, think about what colours you'd like to incorporate, whether you want them to be formal or fun. Information to consider other than the invitation wording itself would be an RSVP slip, accommodation information, directions and gift list.

Having all of your stationery items made by one stationer will ensure that your colours and themes remain consistent throughout and bring your whole wedding together. Having matching items can look breath-taking at your venue.

*Fred Foster, Founder & Creative Director, Yours Occasionally*  
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# Photography

When choosing your wedding photographer ensure that both bride and groom meet with him or her pre the big day and that you can relax and discuss exactly what you would like.

They are with you through a lot of your big day so its good to get to know them a little beforehand.

Many wedding photographers will offer an 'engagement 'pre shoot and these are ideal for getting you relaxed, both in front of the camera and with your photographer. It's also a great opportunity to discuss any concerns you have regarding having your photo taken! So many of my B&G's tell me they do not like having their picture taken and it's my job to put them at ease and for them to enjoy it so they love the final images!

*Tracy Williams of Tracy Williams Studio Photography*



You've planned your big day down to the finest of details; you don't want to leave anything to chance. So, make sure you get the perfect record of your wedding - use a professional photographer.

You only have one chance to get it right and a professional will have the experience and knowledge to cope with all eventualities and still present a great set of pictures, that you can treasure forever.

You may first consider using a friend of the family to take the images. While the financial

aspect of this may seem attractive, it's important to consider what experience they have and what they would do should it be raining, for example, and all the images have to be taken indoors. Also, how good will they be at organising people into groupings, if you should want them. A professional will obviously cost more, but it will be one less thing to worry about on the day.

Having decided to use a professional, you may also consider a part-time (semi-professional) wedding photographer. They will be cheaper than a full-time professional, but will probably not have the support network that comes with a full-time photographer. They may not have undergone any training and also may struggle when it comes to demanding conditions, such as harsh sunlight, winds, rain, dark skies or shooting into the sunlight.

Using a full time Photographer will be well worth the investment. Professionals also come in different levels of competence, but what is really important is that you a) like the pictures and b) get on well with the photographer who will be shooting your pictures on the day.

How do you know how good they really are? They shoot amazing, creative pictures. This will jump out at you when you view a number of different photographers' sample albums.

A good professional photographer will have professional indemnity insurance, should the worst happen. You may also take out insurance yourself to cover against photography failure.

They often hold a recognised qualification with one of the professional bodies such as the Master Photographers Association.

View samples of complete weddings, not just highlights of the best. This is very important, as most people would get one or two good shots from every wedding only, but you'll want most of your photographs to look amazing and make you look great on your wedding day!

Try to look at the pictures individually and judge them on their own merits and not necessarily on how they are presented.



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# Tips from Actual brides looking back on their big day!

Organise your day thoroughly, but then hand all responsibility of the day to family members, so you can just enjoy the day, with out a care in the world. I give a timetable of the day to my Ushers, so they helped move people around. I gave them notes with additional things I wanted them to organise. I found that everyone wants to be of help and it makes them feel a big part of the day.

Get family members to help with the photos as people don't want to stand around waiting and you don't get a lot of time to capture the day, it helps to have 1 member of each side of the family as they know the people you may need for the photos.

Photos are so important as everyone at your wedding will want to see them and get copies, so I made sure I could give every one of my guests a picture with us.

Make sure your caterer has experience with Weddings as they do so much more than just serve the food, and that goes for all the people involved in the day, they have to be people you can explain what you want and you get on with.



Keep something a secret, most guests have expectations of a wedding day and it was nice to surprise our guests with an Elvis Impersonator.

If you ask people to keep their speeches short, also ask them not to mention that you have done so in the speech, as it many come across that you have rushed people.

Don't forget to ask someone to collect all your presents and items from the wedding venue after the day.

Every bride wants every detail to be perfect, but if you are tight on a budget I would suggest spending a little bit more on the memorable things and a little less on the

rest. Like favour boxes, decorating the buffet table, post box or even the centre piece. I asked my friends if they could remember certain things about recent weddings they went to and I was surprised that all the little details Brides and Grooms spend a lot of time and money over, are some times over looked or easily forgotten. By asking around we decided not to spend extra money to get black napkins instead of white, and not to tie ribbon round them. We also saved money on centre pieces as many didn't remember what was on the table, but instead whether the wine was nice or not.

Think about the height and position of your centre pieces, when asking around I heard people had put centre pieces under the table as they could not see over or around the flowers to talk to the other guests.



Where to start?! It's all down to your individual personality isn't it. Most people would be far more prepared and organised than I was and would probably have the mind to not get married 3 months after having their 1st baby! Just make sure the wedding day is how YOU want it, it's your day and will be with you for the rest of your life.

First, remember it is *your* day (that includes the groom too!). Yes you do want your guests to be happy and enjoy themselves, but you need to enjoy yourself too.

Second, don't panic or get stressed if things seem to go a bit wrong. Something will not go according to plan - that's life. As you can't guarantee that everything will be perfect, pick a couple of things that are really important to you, be it food, flowers, photography or anything else, and really concentrate on getting those right. When you look back on the day you won't remember the little things that didn't matter, you will remember that those one or two things that really meant a lot were perfect.

Third, I'd recommend picking someone close to you, but perhaps not a parent, best man or chief bridesmaid (as they will be busy too), who you can let in on all your plans and tell them what it is you want to happen on the day. Then their role on the day will be to deal with anything that crops up - which it will despite your meticulous planning - and because you've already been through what's what with them, they can deal with it without having to come ask you. I didn't specifically do this, but on the day my brother stepped up and just dealt with things that I forgot (cos all the planning goes right out the window as you walk down the aisle!) or that randomly cropped up (toy cars posted in bass speakers by toddlers for example) and as he knows me so well he didn't have to come and ask all the time, he just dealt with them.

Some decisions will not be liked by all members of the family, but explain your decision and stick by it. Don't do or give up anything you want on your wedding day.



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# Flowers

It is a good idea to set a budget for wedding flowers. The florist can work within this budget and suggest the best arrangements for the cost. The cost will depend on your choice of quantity and selection of flowers.

Florists can be booked approximately 6-12 months before the wedding date. They will need to have plenty of time to source the stock and accessories for your wedding, especially if you are having something unusual.

Prepare some ideas before you meet the florist. Look in wedding magazines and on the internet for ideas. Look at different styles of bouquet designs, various colour schemes and individual flowers to get an idea of what you like. When deciding on wedding flowers, a good place to start is to think about using your favourite flowers.

Most flowers can be obtained all year round, but if they are out of season, they can be expensive. Try to choose flowers that are in season, as they are generally less expensive. Your florist can help with this.



Check to see if the florist knows your venues and has decorated them before, this always helps as it can determine where flowers may be required. A good florist will always have examples of their work to show you. They will have lots of different designs and can show you different seasonal flower varieties.

The Flower Mill is a floral design company based in Wickford, Essex We specialise in Wedding Flowers and offer a friendly, professional floral wedding service to couples. We prefer to offer a personal touch to creating your wedding flowers and this is why we only take on one wedding per day.

Choosing the right flowers for your wedding day is very important, whether it's a few choice blooms or an abundance of colour, we at The Flower Mill will work closely with you to achieve the floral combination of your dreams by providing beautiful flowers to compliment your special day.

*Karen Borden, The Flower Mill*

*"It is at the edge of a petal that love waits"*  
William Carlos Williams

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# Venue Styling



Once the venue is booked and chosen their colour scheme book a consultation with us to go through ideas/options. We offer a custom colour service so we can match in with their chosen colours and it's a lovely idea to bring your colour theme through into the venue styling decor for the wedding breakfast room.

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## Make Up & Hair

It's always great to get a recommendation, however this is not always possible, so once you have found a wedding professional that you like then it is always best to book as soon as possible to ensure that they will be available for your wedding date. Once this has been done you can then have a consultation/trial to see if you like what they do. Most artists work on a booking fee to reserve your wedding date and then this is usually deducted at trial.

Dawn Taylor Beauty uses conventional make up as well as Airbase airbrushing, both are fabulous but these have been tried and tested by me and I know that they will do the best job and testimonials from past brides speak volumes.

Obviously, you want to look great for your day, but preparation is also key so following are a few pointers to help make you look the best that you can whether or not you are using a professional: -



*Dawn Taylor*  
WEDDING MAKE-UP & HAIR

If you are going for a fake tan, then experiment beforehand (use it for a party or a hen do to get your monies worth).

Have your brows professionally shaped and tinted, again experiment beforehand, don't just turn up at a salon the day before and hope for the best. If you are going for lash extensions then again make sure you go at least 3 weeks prior to make sure you don't have a reaction or you simply don't like them and then have a top up ready for your day.

Get your skin in tip top condition, remember the better your skin, the better your make up will look. Drink plenty of water or foods containing water to make sure you look as fresh and hydrated as possible.

Don't change your skincare routine a week or two before your big day, and don't use products on the morning of your wedding that you haven't previously trialed beforehand, you do not want to risk allergy/discomfort on your wedding day. Do not squeeze any spots, a good make-up artist will be able to completely cover these as well as any blemishes or pigmentation, you could make it look worse.

*Dawn Taylor, Wedding Make Up & Hair*

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## Videography

Make a list of the things you would expect to see in your Wedding film.

Research videographers in your area and check out their websites and Facebook pages. From this you can get a feel for the ones you would like to shortlist.

When you've shortlisted at least 3 videographers ask to meet each one in person. Most should offer a free consultation in your home - like we do.

Establishing the right rapport with your videographer is important because you have to work with them all day long. It's about making people feel comfortable - we go to great lengths to make people feel relaxed and confident about what we can do with our unobtrusive style.

Compare pricing, packages and offers currently available. Some videographers are less expensive on a weekday than they are on a weekend. Also remember you get what you pay for so going cheap may not produce the professional results you are looking for.

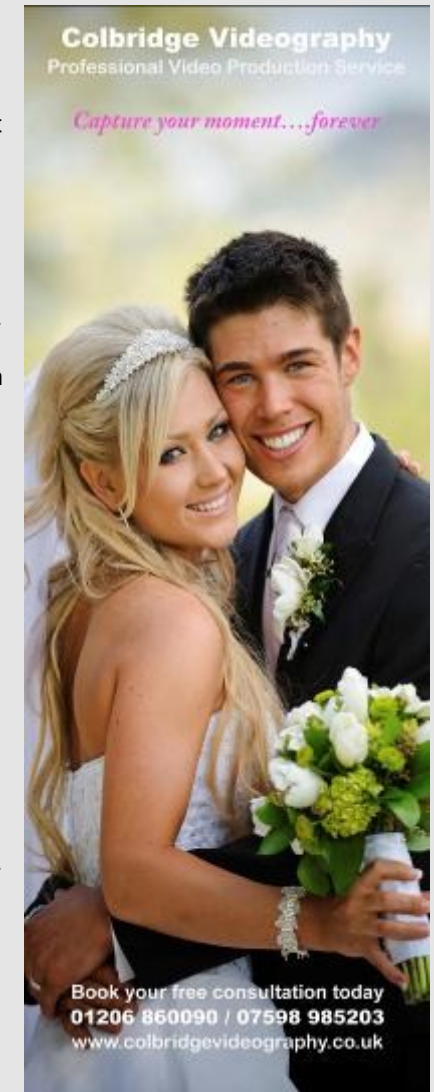
Ask to see samples of their work to see what they can do and make note of composition, creativity, pace and quality of the audio - we have clips on our website, Youtube and Vimeo but when we go to visit a couple we are always armed with a varied selection of Wedding DVD's they can play. We also give couples a full wedding video to watch so they can see what we do from start to finish.

Ask to see feedback from satisfied customers as you need to know they have delivered the goods to a high standard and have left a long line of satisfied brides.

Embrace the fact that all videographers have different styles and approach things differently so choose the one that matches your style and list of expectations.

Don't be afraid to ask some technical questions such as what microphones do you use (for example lapel mics for the Groom), if they have DSLR cameras to pick up low light, clarify if it will be recorded in High Definition and available on Blu-Ray, etc.

*Bridget & Colin Beattie, Colbridge Videography*



Cakes & Tiaras coming soon

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Have fun planning your big day  
and when it arrives enjoy the  
photography and don't forget to  
SMILE!

Best wishes

Tracy x

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*"out of any wedding photographers I have seen, Tracy was by far the best"*

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