

## Wedding Advice for Self-Planners

By Patrice Manget  
The Montana Concierge

For many reasons, ranging from economic to simple personal preference, many brides and grooms choose to be self-planners. And many people, although not professionally so, are excellent organizers. It falls easily to them, therefore, to take on the wedding planning without a second thought. And therein lies my tale, for taking second thought is essential for self-planners.

To wit: The largest single pitfall for self-planners is that they don't think about stepping out of the role of organizer-director for the wedding events themselves. I can't tell you how many times a bride's mother, for example, when asked if she plans to be working during the reception, has responded, "Oh! I didn't think about that!" When the bride and groom appoint themselves or their family members to be responsible for tasks during the rehearsal, ceremony or the reception, their focus fractures when things go wrong and they're denied the opportunity to fully experience and enjoy the day. Those mothers realized that immediately! And as everyone begins partying and celebrating - as well they should! – carefully planned elements inevitably get derailed.

**A professional wedding host** is a very smart choice to direct, supervise and host all three of your major wedding events:

- **The Rehearsal:** The bride and groom cannot direct their own rehearsal, much less their own wedding ceremony. They just can't be the directors and the stars at the same time. A wedding host, as an impartial professional, directs your rehearsal according to your plans and also knows many subtle details for everyone's comfort, comportment and staging that you don't. Likewise, the complexity of family relationships always comes to the fore during a wedding and negative undercurrents can develop if you're faced with choosing one family member over another to be in charge. Your professional host can direct your ceremony participants in a calm and upbeat manner that everyone accepts, thus accomplishing your wishes to the letter without stressing family or friendships.
- **The Ceremony:** Having the same professional direct the rehearsal and cue the ceremony procession, ceremony elements and recession provides continuity, cohesion and calmness for everyone in the bridal party. The bridal couple should only be focusing on their vows, their commitment and love for each other, and this relieves quite a bit of pressure for everyone involved.
- **The Reception:** By confirming and coordinating all your reception arrangements, including vendors, your wedding host assures that everything happens smoothly and on time. The host cues, coordinates and often MC's elements like the toasts, the cake cutting, the couple's first dance, the garter and bouquet toss, and the newlyweds' departure from the banquet, etc. – all according to your wishes and at your command. No matter how informal, the timing of reception events benefits from planned orchestration with one specific person in charge. Failing that, guests drift and depart, unfocused while someone in the bridal party tries to marshall everyone for whatever is supposed to happen next. It's a live show that stumbles without direction and I've seen too many disappointing results reflected in a bride's dismay not to emphasize how much happier she would have been to have a professional in firm control of her dream plans. The next thing that happens is that, without a host, many on-site vendors are invariably asked to take on

tasks that are not their responsibility and that they have little time to accomplish in addition to their own. To a one they greatly appreciate the presence of a professional coordinating everything. They know the invaluable advantage of having another professional in charge who knows all the plans, all the details and is empowered to work out solutions to last minute problems. Just ask them!

- And lest we forget: the aftermath. As your banquet is progressing, your wedding host will be confirming arrangements for where everything goes at the end of the day: Who's responsible for transporting your wedding gifts? Your special reception elements like your toasting glasses or cake cutting implements? The instant cameras distributed on the guest tables? Are all the vendors paid? What are the rental return arrangements? Does the florist need the vases returned, the baker the cake display elements? Who's returning the tuxedos? Who will be receiving the banquet floral arrangements? What do you want done with leftover guest favors and decorations? Have you saved the top layer of your cake and who's taking it home for you? These are only a few examples to illustrate that there is still a lot to be done at the end of the day – and as the bride and groom blissfully glide away in the limo, they should not have to be concerned with any of these tasks at all!

Now take a moment to think about how much assistance a wedding host can also provide in the weeks leading up to your wedding:

- You will find that with all you have to do, you might be losing the details. Your wedding host can help you regain your overview, track and monitor those details that are getting away from you, review your priorities and relieve you of the stress of worrying about them.
- Being a neutral professional can be your wedding host's single most important role – the person you can call anytime to vent your frustration, relieve your doubts, suggest alternatives, provide a sympathetic ear, raise your spirits and cheer you on by reminding you that this is your day, the beginning of all you dream for your marriage to come. And every single detail should be what the bride and groom want - above all and anyone else. So saying, your wedding host can deal respectfully on your behalf with those who would distract and dismay you with their personal hints, suggestions and, all too often, demands. This is no small role to fill for you!

As self-planners, you are clearly confident of your ability to realize your dreams for this day. You believe in your skills and talents to carry you through. And I applaud you. It's a huge job! You have my wholehearted support and best wishes for a splendid outcome – an outcome that will be much more assured with a professional wedding host acting on your behalf throughout your wedding events.

Give yourself the gift of a wedding host who will follow your directions to the letter so your enjoyment of the perfect day that you worked so hard to organize won't be overshadowed by worries or concerns. Your wedding host will handle all the problems while you, your families and guests live every moment of the magic!