



“Once only”

All you need to know for the big day — Matthew Stubbs

I am not sure that anybody reads editorials, but if you happen to have read mine, you may have noticed some cynicism. However, as in C S Lewis' wonderful book “Surprised by Joy,” I too have been “surprised” that there are many perfect weddings. How can you have a perfect wedding when perfection is an ideal? Here are some tips:

Fulfil Your Dream

Make sure that the wedding is yours – not Mum's or anybody else's. Above all, don't try to impress anybody. If this becomes your objective, you will have missed the point completely. Instead of revelling in the joy of the occasion you will find yourself looking for



details that don't meet your exacting standards. Look hard enough and you will most certainly find something that will disappoint you.

Budget

Start with the money you have saved, and then calculate by how much the two of you can top this up – saving a little each month until the day of your wedding. At Oakfield Farm, we are using this idea very successfully by calculating the cost of the wedding and dividing it by the months left until the wedding day. We debit the account each month and “hey presto,” 10 payment of R1500 each for the bride and groom, and the wedding is paid for before the big day.



As you set about booking your venue, remember that the venue may be only half the cost particularly with the smaller function, where fixed costs such as the venue hire, disco, dress, cake etc will be the same for both large and small functions. The good news is that the additions to your guest list make only a small difference to the overall budget.

Spend Wisely

Choose the venue with your heart, but the wedding date with your head. Attempting this the other way round will simply leave you devastated as you discover that either the date is not available or the date chosen is more than you can afford. Be flexible – at Oakfield Farm, a wedding of 100 guests on a

Saturday in December will cost R39 000, whilst a winter wedding on a weekday is only R18 600 – same venue, same food, but half the cost.

Obtain loose quotes for most of the items before you commit to any specialist. You need to balance your budget according to the overall impact of each aspect. The best example is the speeches. These cost nothing and yet the overall contribution is enormous. Be reassured that every bride looks fabulous on her wedding day – it is the occasion, not the trappings that make the bride glow.

Strive for Perfection, Plan to Succeed

The problem with dreams, is that they are of little use unless they can be captured. Identify exactly what your dream looks and feels like. Put your ideas down on paper and then list them in order of importance. Get help from people you respect including of course the experts, your chosen wedding specialists and the wedding venue co-ordinators. They will not only inspire but will help to pull your bundle of ideas into a cohesive plan. At this point some ideas will have to go – they simply do not fit. Plan the perfect wedding, but remember that perfection requires a master plan.

It is vital that you sit for at least an hour with the co-ordinators and better still the maitre'D as your function. Ensure that these people will actually be at your wedding so that your precious day will not be handed over to someone that you have never met.

It's All About People

A wedding is not a wedding without people. No experience is fun if it is not shared.



Involve your family and friends; and girls, please do not forget that the man you are about to marry will be at the wedding too. You will soon discover that this applies as much to your specialists as to anyone else. Apart from the knowledge, expertise and service excellence that you expect from these professionals, you will be surprised at the amount of energy they expend in getting to know you on a personal level. Until a relationship of trust is forged you will not open your heart to them. Without this they will not, as professionals, be able to meet your needs. You need to know that these are usually very special people who have chosen a profession because they love what they do. You will also spend a great deal of time together on the day and you need to be comfortable with each other.

Although the point sounds so obvious, don't forget about the guests. They need to feel honoured too. Whatever you do don't sacrifice their comfort for your own vanity. Don't keep them waiting for hours while you have your photos taken and remember that good food is the essence of any successful occasion.



Remember the Big Picture

After months of hard work you can eventually indulge in all the effort that you have gone to, to make the day special. Remember that almost everybody, including the venue staff, your friends and parents will be doing their absolute

best for you on the day and it is easy to let nerves spoil the atmosphere by offending someone dear to you. Don't waste time nitpicking the things that no one else would even notice. Ban all negative thoughts. The perfect wedding has more to do with the joy of sharing the occasion



with family and friends than anything else. A guest at the Daryl and Mel Kingwill wedding had this to say. "The perfect wedding is not made up of perfect flowers, a perfect setting, and perfect food, but rather it is the love that the bride and groom project and the glow from them that makes it special. Mel and Daryl had that plus the perfect flowers, perfect setting, perfect food and all the attention to detail, which is what made it a perfect day."

Believe in Marriage

In a time when relationships have become so superficial, we have come to expect more and more from the marriage relationship. This means greater demands and even greater rewards. The modern marriage is still the best investment anybody can make and the wedding is the most exciting way to start your journey. It is strange that all the things which contribute to a great wedding will make for a great marriage as well. Fulfil your dream – it is all about your relationships – spend wisely – strive for perfection – plan to succeed – remember the big picture.



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