

Choosing your specialists is the first challenge. The second is managing all the various aspects in such a way that you are as free as possible to enjoy your last days of singledom.



The Final Cou



After the Engagement

- Look and see—get a feel for prices, try to understand your needs; plan your budget
- Consider your provisional guest list
- Select your dream venue
- Choose your date according to your budget
- Get a full breakdown of expected costs and factor in unavoidable beverages such as cocktails and toasts
- Pay your deposit for the venue and diarise scheduled payments
- Confirm with the venue a date for the final appointment

Immediately you have confirmed your venue

- Refine your ideas as to the style of wedding you want, including the formality of the occasion, etc
- Discuss specialists requirements and allocate a budget for each
- Consider floor plans so that you have something to take to your décor specialist
- Book any décor items and facilities you wish to hire from the venue
- Contact specialists to determine availability and cost

and to get some idea of what each one has to offer. It is important to book those specialists who have to be at your wedding and can only do one wedding a day:

- Photographer
- Videographer
- Minister
- Décor (most will do more than one wedding per day, but obviously there is a limit)
- Invitations are less of a problem as far as availability is concerned
- You may want to see a mock up before paying
- Pay deposits for your specialists
- Create a monthly payment schedule and check this against your budget

As soon as it is convenient

- Firm up your couture requirements, but don't hurry this—have fun
- Confirm your menu—remember that the menu price is subject to change until confirmed. Factor in price increases for certain venues.
- Visit the venue during the planning to firm up your starting time and to understand how best to use the facilities on offer

3–6 Months prior to your wedding

- Consider your honeymoon options and, if travelling abroad, ensure that your passports are in order. Keep in mind that South Africa boasts some of the most spectacular honeymoon destinations in the world
- Streamline your guest list and send a note to anyone abroad so they have ample opportunity to make travel arrangements
- Order your invitations and ensure the theme you have chosen for your wedding is brought through into the design, thereby setting the tone for your wedding
- Order your wedding rings
- Select your bridesmaids, flower girls, page boys, groomsmen and Master of Ceremony and check their availability
- Arrange a mock up for the décor at the venue if possible
- Visit the venue at the same time your wedding will take place to give you an idea of the lighting for photographs at the time of your service
- If your photographer has not worked at the venue, it would be a good idea for him/her to accompany you to get a feel of the place
- Update your appointment diary with the venue and all specialists including your hair and make up appointments. Confirm these requests with your boss. It will be hectic just before the wedding. You will have several appointments that can only be made during working hours and you don't want to upset your colleagues.

- Discuss details and procedures of the wedding day with family, friends and retinue
- Set a date for your wedding rehearsal if necessary (usually 2-3 days prior to the ceremony)
- Confirm honeymoon reservations

1–2 Weeks prior to your wedding

- Take leave in the last week if you can. Gentlemen, only Superman works on the day of his wedding!
- Complete a full list of specialists, their contact details and requirements of the venue in preparation for your final appointment with the venue
- Meet with your co-ordinator and banqueting team for your final appointment to confirm all details and procedure for your function
- Send final procedure to your specialists such as the DJ
- Finalise your floor plan and seating arrangements
- Familiarise yourself with a walk through the venue with your procedure
- Drop off any 'goodies' such as wedding favours etc. at your venue
- Pack for your honeymoon
- Send reminders to the relevant parties regarding the rehearsal
- Confirm your make up and hair for the wedding day

The Day Before

- Visit your beauty salon for a manicure and pedicure

The Night Before

- You will have been absolutely frantic in the months and weeks leading up to your wedding, so it is important to have a relaxing evening the night before your big day.
- Possibly invite your bridesmaids to stay over the night before
- Take into consideration they must take care of you and spoil you, yet it is imperative you get a good night's sleep
- Enjoy a quiet evening with relaxing, soft music and take a leisurely candle-lit bath

The Big Day

- Try to eat breakfast, even if you don't feel like it.
- Enjoy having your make up and hair done—preferably at your venue as this will be far more relaxing (remember to wear a button-up shirt)
- Pack a change of clothing if you are leaving directly to go on honeymoon
- Most importantly—relax and enjoy your special day. You have planned this for so long, so do not stress, and savour every moment
- Get me to the church on Time!

6 Weeks prior to your wedding

- Confirm your RSVP's and call those who have not responded (their invitation may have got "lost in the post")
- The following must be finalised:
 - Guest numbers and dietary requirements
 - Confirmation of all optional extras required
 - Liaise with your co-ordinator so that your account can be finalised
- Final dress fittings for yourself and your retinue
- Contact your specialists to ensure that all arrangements are still in order
- Collect your wedding rings
- Confirm all transport, including honeymoon details
- Confirm all requirements booked to date with the venue in writing

3 Weeks prior to your wedding

- Have a special meeting with your matron of honour to discuss how she can help you over the next three weeks—you will need help!
- Meet with your DJ/Musician for a pre-function meeting and give them a copy of your final playlist



ntDown

30

24

31

The problem with so many weddings is all the various parties are so focused on their own zone they fail to consider the big picture. The starting time of your wedding is the very thing that is central to the planning of the entire wedding. The traditional starting time of weddings all over the world is around 16:00. The fact that the sun sets at 20:30 in Cape Town and 19:30 in Johannesburg is not even considered. This means your wedding can easily become a 'sweaty tuxedo affair' which only gets worse as guests are kept waiting in stifling afternoon heat for the photographer to finish the photoshoot.

Start your wedding at the right time and your guests will enjoy the end of a lovely summer day sipping sundowners as the sun goes down

Every wedding is obviously different, but as a professional and experienced wedding photographer needs no more than 1 1/2 hours to complete the photoshoot and, depending on the length of the ceremony, no wedding need start more than 2 hours before sunset.

This is the timing we would expect at Oakfield in summer. Remember the location of each venue is different and even at Oakfield the ideal starting time of function at the Chapel would be different to that of the Conservatory.

On the south side of a mountain your starting time may easily need to be 2 hours earlier. In Cape Town add or subtract more than hour depending on the season.

In winter you need to bring these times forward, remembering you want to be in the venue before it gets too cold outside.

Lighting

The single biggest contributor to awesome pictures is lighting and biggest enemy harsh summer light which requires both shade and skill for the photographer to achieve brilliant pictures. This programme gives the photographer the best and softest lighting for the pictures and the opportunity for beautiful sunset pictures.

Weather

You may be able to control the lighting, but not the weather. Overcast weather will bring times forward half an hour. My advice is to arrange with your photographer well in advance to do your photos as a couple before the ceremony. Of course, this idea will horrify you, but take heart. Firstly bad weather is extremely unlikely. Secondly, overcast weather and especially light rain make for gorgeous pictures and thirdly, doing your couple pictures before the ceremony simply guarantees awesome pictures without the stress.

If you decide to do this, then you have the option of a truly unique wedding. If your important photographs are safely on the disc before the ceremony starts, then you might want to consider an awesome sunset wedding where you are even able to join your guests for cocktails and sundowners. Imagine how magnificent your candles and fairy lights are going to look when it is darker. Dinner is at dinner time and your guests will still all be on the dance floor at the stroke of midnight!

Get me to the church on Time!

- 17:00** Official start time (December/January)
- 17:10** Bride arrives (giving time for late comers to be seated)
- 17:45** Ceremony ends—we recommend the couple don't do congratulations outside of the church as it is simply one delay too many.
- 17:55** Group photographs commence
- 18:10** Retinue pictures
- 18:40** Bride and groom pictures
- 19:10** Twilight and sunset pictures
- 19:30** Bride and groom make their grand entrance



Photo: Patrick Furter

photographic window

START TIME

NIGHT

DAY

00-19:25

FEBRUARY

SPRING



AUTUMN

WINTER

18:07-18:30

APRIL

16:30

18:39-19:03

MARCH

16:30

17:39-18:03

MAY

15:30

17:24-17:49

JUNE

15:00

17:28-17:53

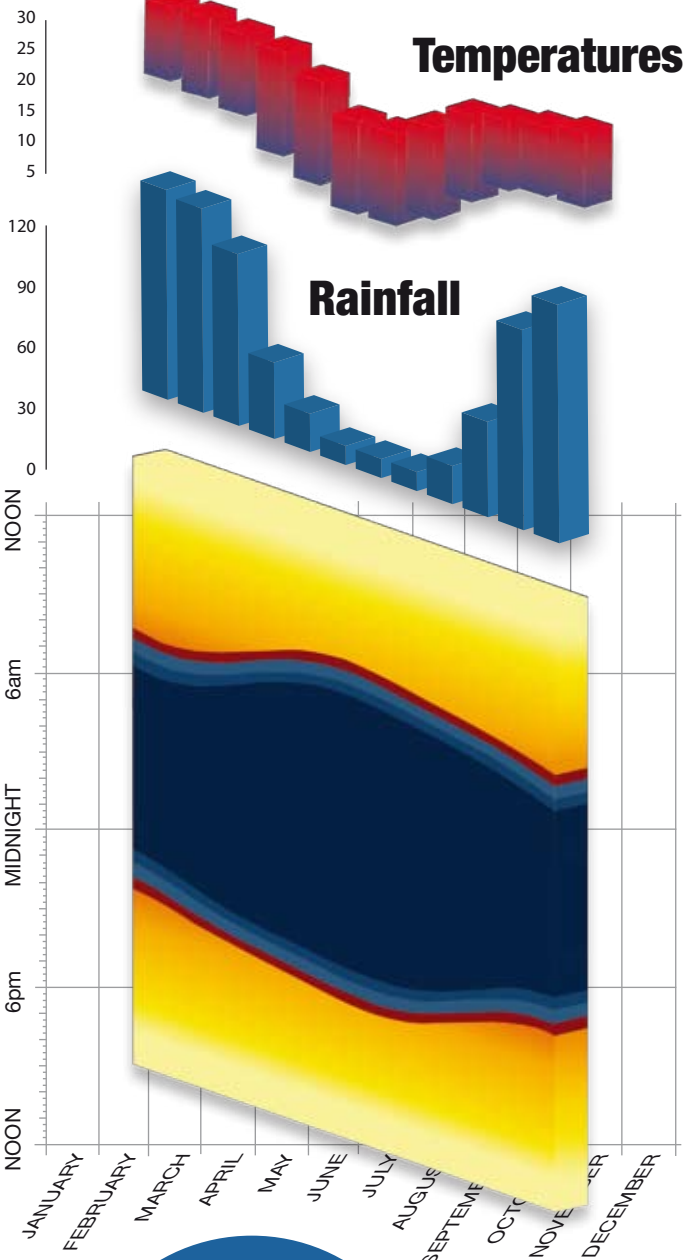
JULY

15:30

17:42-18:06

AUGUST

16:00



SUNSET

TWILIGHT