

Homespun from page 4

to make a dozen boutonnières, arrange centerpieces, encircle the wedding cake and wine bar with flowers, and make my bouquet -- all in about half an hour.

Hint: Buy some flowers ahead of time and experiment with them.

Sealing the deal: the ceremony

How often in this life do you get to write your own script? Once you get over the idea that you have to follow a ready-made set of lines and gestures, creating a wedding ceremony can be a liberating -- and learning experience.

The first question is: What do you want to say to your guests and to each other? Think about themes you may want to include, such as family and friends. You may want to include some poetry or speakers who can tell stories about each of you.

Consider involving your guests in some way. At the end of our ceremony, for example, we opened some bottles of wine, distributed cups and invited our guests to join us in a toast.

When creating your vows, note that the only element a Michigan marriage ceremony must include is a solemn declaration to take each other as husband and wife, before two witnesses and the official.

Hint: Imagine the ceremony as a play and write it out as such. Print it out in its entirety and paste it into a book that your speakers and official can use as a guide.

Honeymoon escapade

Some honeymoons, such as a backpacking or kayaking trip, take the idea of doing-it-yourself literally.

Sure you'll transport your home, food and supplies as well as do your own cooking and housekeeping.

Unglamorous, perhaps. But an outdoor jaunt can be a good way to work off steam and stress built up over the planning of the wedding itself, and a noble way to work off extra calories from the wedding cake and champagne.

Plus, with no television, phones, or very many other people close by, an adventuresome honeymoon offers ample time for reflection.

For the first leg of our honeymoon, we took a four-day hike into the Yosemite wilderness with close friends and family. It provided us with unforgettable sights, a refreshing way to begin a new life together -- and a way to share that beginning with others.

Hint: Continue celebrating in a city after you hike or paddle out.

Epilogue

Not all of us are a mini-Martha, or have a Martha among our friends and family. And while it may sound intimidating, or crazy, creating parts of your wedding yourself it is not as difficult as one might think. After all, Martha Stewart's success is based on the premise that you CAN do it.

And hey, if we could do it, anyone can.

Website from page 5

Volunuous city information is available on Web sites such as Citysearch.com

- Recommendations for special clothing, gear and other necessities guests may need to bring (if your wedding celebration will be held during extreme hot or cold weather, for example, or it includes sporting or outdoor activities)

- Pictures and a story, such as how you met or why you chose the location you did for your ceremony (remember, this is your chance to share meaningful yarns with your loved ones!)

- Graphics. Clip art web sites will often allow you to download their wares for free. Do an Internet search under -- what else? -- clip art.

- E-mail addresses, phone numbers and home or work addresses for yourself and/or whomever is helping you coordinate the wedding

- If your wedding is out of town, a phone number where you and/or your helpers can be reached during your stay

- Updates as plans change and the event draws near.

Finally, don't forget to send guests and other friends and relatives your Web page address. Often the easiest way is to send the address within the text of an e-mail message, since Web addresses can be long. Explain that they can then just click on the address within the e-mail message to be connected to your site.

For relatives or pals that aren't computer-savvy, try to find someone that can help them log on. For those that don't have computer access, make a copy of your page and snail-mail it to



Internet invitees: Guests coming from all parts of the country prompted the bridal couple Kara, kneeling in front, and Sean, fourth from the right, to create a wedding website to keep everyone informed.

them. They'll enjoy it just the same.

Finally, don't forget to post pictures after the fact. People will enjoy seeing the fruits of your efforts and, of course, you'll want to show off. You can post your wedding pictures on your original wedding Web site, or try a service such as photographic archive provider Zing.com, which helps visitors set up free "photo albums" on its site. Zing.com also allows visitors to order prints or gift items, such as mugs, mouse pads and stickers sporting the archived pictures.

By allowing people to post their images, "It's an easier way to see the pictures and capture the memories," says Zing.com On-line Advertising Manager Bill Flitter. "We're giving people a way to share them with family and friends across the world."

Park from page 10

- El Tovar, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. Opened: 1905. Perched on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, the low-slung, turreted El Tovar carries the feel of a European villa along with an American hunting lodge. El Tovar was built by the Atchinson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway company as a regal western destination and is dotted with native American decor. In the evenings, the sun's rays wash the dark structure with a golden hue. Contact:

Grand Canyon group sales, 520-638-2565.

For further explorations try: Great Lodges of the West, by Christine Barnes; Great Lodges of the Canadian Rockies, also by Christine Barnes; The Complete Guide to the National Park Lodges, by David Logan Scott and Landmarks in the Landscape: Historic Architecture in the National Parks of the West, by Harvey H. Kaiser.

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