February 2016 A Special Supplement to the **Winchester Press**

"I do"



Wedding Decor

Local event decorator, Francine Duncan, has "joy to share."

The Ring

Annable's Jewellery helps young couples choose the perfect diamond ring.

The Cake

Grahame's Bakery offers cakes that taste as good as they look.

Don't forget the bling at Annable's Jewellery

Top three diamond cuts to enhance sparkle

Alicia K. Gosselin

WINCHESTER

Finding the perfect diamond ring for your beau in a small town could be a tricky task – but not in Winchester.

For nearly 38 years, Annable's Jewellery on Main Street has provided couples, young and old, with the sparkle they need to make their spouse-to-be smile (read: jump up and down with glee).

But scouting out a diamond isn't just as simple as walking into the store with an idea.

And according to store owner Gary Annable, gone are the days when men would find the engagement ring themselves, choosing what they think their significant other wants.

"Now, the girl might do the scouting first, and narrow it down to a couple [of rings], and about half of my customers come in together," he said. "That way it ensures the woman gets what she wants – she's the one that's going to wear it, so she might as well get something she loves."

With a little coaching, Annable finds out whether couples are looking for a single stone or multi-stone engagement ring. The general price range runs anywhere from about $499 to $3,500 – "I don't carry anything that I wouldn't buy," he added.

"The trend of engagement rings has really changed in the past 10 years," said Annable. "It's going toward Canadian-created cuts from Canadian diamond mines. I carry more Canadian-cut diamonds because of that."

The cut of the diamond is one of the most important elements when picking out a ring, as it has the greatest influence on a diamond's beauty, and determines what we generally think of as sparkle. Annable said there are a few cuts that come a notch above the rest. Check out the top three diamond cuts that are available at Annable's Jewellery:

Round cut

For the last century or so, the round cut diamond has been the "poster child" of diamond jewellery throughout the worldwide market. Due to its symmetrically balanced shape, the level of light reflected by round brilliant cuts surpasses any other shapes. It is no coincidence that the round cut diamond is the default choice for couples who are choosing a proposal ring.

Princess cut

Developed in the 1960's, this particular cut is favoured by women looking for a more modern look in their diamond engagement ring. It generally comes in two shapes – square or rectangular. Princess cuts have sharp ends, which do require some extra care, according to Annable. For that reason, you should always opt for a setting that provides protection to the edges.



A round cut diamond has a symmetrical shape, and reflects light like no other diamond.



A princess cut diamond generally comes in two shapes – square or rectangular.

Emerald cut

The emerald cut was originally developed for – surprise, surprise – emeralds. However, the cutting style was so successful with emeralds that it was soon picked up by diamond cutters. This diamond cut is referred to as a "step-cut" in a rectangular shape, as it has a pattern similar to a hall-of-mirrors effect. They also have large facets that show off the diamond's clarity and color.



Gary Annable, owner of Annable's Jewellery on Main Street, offers couples the option of picking out the perfect diamond ring without the trip into the city. According to Annable, the top diamond cuts most couples look for are round cut, princess cut, and emerald cut. *Press Photos – Gosselin*

Bridal shower beginnings

The modern bridal shower may trace its origins the 1890s. "The Old Farmer's Almanac" says the first bridal shower hostess filled a paper parasol with small presents and turned it over the head of the bride-to-be. Soon the concept caught on, and many other women began "showering" future brides in such a manner. Naturally, as presents became larger and heavier, the tradition of literally showering the bride with gifts was modified — but the name has stuck.

Bridal showers are designed to equip couples with many of the necessities to start their new life together. This custom is believed to have evolved from an old dowry system, in which a bride was expected to bring valuables to the marriage. The dowry was originally intended as compensation for the burden of supporting a wife placed on the groom. Some parents were not rich enough to afford an ample dowry, so friends and family would offer gifts to help offset this responsibility.

Today, both the bride and groom are equal partners in the marriage, bringing together their collective wealth. However, showers are still held regardless of the financial need of the couples as a way to offer good wishes.

Did you know?

Historically, June has been the most popular month for getting married. But some numbers now indicate that July and even October have begun to edge out June as the most popular months to tie the knot.

The June wedding tradition may be traced back to the ancient Romans. Romans honored Juno, the goddess of marriage and childbirth, and the month of June was named after her, so it is fitting that weddings take place in her namesake month. As centuries passed, June remained a popular month to get married. June weddings meant children conceived after betrothal would be born close to or during the following spring. This helped assure youngsters' survival during the rough and often lean months of winter.

Even when weddings began shifting from pragmatic business transactions to romantic affairs, June remained popular.

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The 12 essentials of a dream wedding

A wedding is the event of a lifetime. This special day has to be perfect, hence the importance of taking care of even the smallest of organizational details. You don't want to forget anything, whether it's a reservation, a fitting, or a trial run for your menu and hairstyle. Here's a checklist of the 12 key elements you'll need to take care of along the path to your dream wedding.

1. The ceremony, the officiant, and the reception

Are you going to have a civil or religious wedding? Have you asked your best friend to unite you in wedlock? And will the reception be in the country, on a cruise ship, or in a hotel ballroom? Make sure the location you choose can easily accommodate all your guests. You'll also want to think about signing a marriage contract or prenuptial agreement.

2. The meal and the wedding cake

There are loads of things to think about when organizing the meal: the format; the menu; a children's menu; the bar; and the wedding cake. Say, why not set up a candy bar? And don't forget to ask about your guests' food allergies.

3. The atmosphere

What theme will you choose to set the tone for your wedding: a colour, a culture, a historical period? Which DJ will get your guests out on the dance floor? Will you surprise everyone with a unique first dance?

4. Photographer

How will you immortalize your wedding: photos, videos, or both? Remember to plan for an indoor photo session in case Mother Nature doesn't cooperate on your big day.

5. The invitations

Don't wait until the last minute to send out your invitations if you want all the important people in your life to be with you for this celebration. Remember to indicate the theme and dress code. And do think about including self-addressed stamped envelopes for those essential RSVPs.



6. Wedding bands

Your wedding bands are the symbols of your love; choose them with care. Do you both want gold, silver, or with diamonds? Discreet or extravagant? With or without an engraving?

7. Beauty appointments

Hairstyle, manicure, waxing, and makeup: leave nothing to chance if you want to be stunning on your big day. Make your appointments for just the right time; you don't want your roots to be visible under your veil!

8. The dress, suit, and accessories

The outfits of bride, groom, and wedding party should be coordinated. Will you be a vision in white or will you choose to add a colourful note? And will the perfect dress feature something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue?

9. Flowers and decorations

Have you chosen a colour scheme for your flowers and decorative accessories? What are your favourite flowers? How will the tables be dressed?

10. Transportation

Will you arrive by boat, car, horse-drawn carriage, or maybe even by parachute? Whatever your choice, be sure to take your dress and the weather into consideration.

11. Guest favours

A personalized trinket, a gourmet sample, or a home decor object: have you found the perfect wedding favour to thank your guests for joining you?

12. The honeymoon

A truly idyllic honeymoon shouldn't break your budget. Are you tempted by an exotic island or a vibrant city? Choose the destination and the timing carefully to stay in line with your means.

Reserve early

Get out your calendar, get set, and reserve! Make your reservations early in order to secure the top experts in every domain. Remember that their talents are in big demand.



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Inspiration boards bring wedding plans to life

Making the wedding of your dreams a reality may require some creativity. It can be challenging to organize all of the creative ideas swimming around in your head, but inspiration boards may be able to help.

Inspiration boards, sometimes referred to as idea boards, are commonly used by interior designers, artists, writers, and even wedding planners. Such boards can serve a great purpose when starting a new project, especially if all of your creative ideas seem to lack cohesion. Sometimes seeing things together, rather than in bits and pieces on their own, can fuel even more creativity.

Inspiration boards can include magazine clippings, photographs, fabric swatches, quotes or literary passages, and color swatches. As the idea board grows, you may find a common denominator among your inspirational elements. This can help determine a theme for your wedding or jump-start other planning.

While poster boards may be more traditional idea boards, creative ideas also can be compiled in binders or scrapbooks, which work especially well at keeping all items organized and concise. Plus, they're portable, which means you can take a scrapbook to a meeting with a wedding vendor and show him or her your concepts for the wedding.

Later, when photographers, florists and other vendors have been booked, you can attach receipts or agreements to the inspiration board for future reference. This keeps all of your important wedding information in one place rather than requiring you to search through different folders or files for important documents.



In addition, if friends or family members ask for advice on vendors and planning their own weddings in the future, you can readily access your inspiration board.

To start building your own board or book, take clippings of photos or articles that resonate with you. As you visit bridal shops and other stores, take fabric swatches and pictures of particular looks. Attend bridal shows and take home promotional materials. Remember, inspiration may not always come from bridal-related resources. Anything you come across in your daily life – such as window-shopping at a furniture store or passing an art exhibit – may inspire some creativity.

Inspiration boards are used by top design professionals and can be a handy resource for couples planning their weddings.

Ceremony, officiant, and reception

It's never too early to reserve

Have you made the big decision to get married? Then there's no time to lose, especially with regard to the venue for both the ceremony and the reception. It's no secret that the best dates get snapped up quickly, especially for the most beautiful settings. Even the services of the marriage officiant should be reserved early.

The first step is to determine whether you want a religious or civil wedding. Then comes the choice of reception venue. The possibilities abound: reception hall, conference centre, restaurant, hotel, country inn, golf club, outfitter, ski resort, spa, vineyard, orchard, farm, sugar shack, museum, botanical garden, marina, cruise ship, or cottage. The options depend only on your imagination.

Narrow down your list of choices by finding out if they can accommodate everyone on your guest list. Ask about the services and equipment available, such as tables and chairs, decorations, catering, entertainment, liquor license, bathrooms, kitchen area, and audio and video equipment. Be sure to check what is and what isn't included in the package.



The legalities

You want to unite your destinies abroad? Find out about marriage legalities in your destination country so you can be sure your union is legally watertight.

You and your fiancé should also discuss a marriage contract that clarifies your financial contributions and responsibilities to each other, especially if either of you has children from another marriage. It may not seem very romantic, or one of you may feel the other is preparing to abandon the marriage before it even gets started, but that's not what it's all about. A prenuptial agreement shows that you take marriage seriously, as a legal and moral commitment. A future spouse who is well informed before saying "I do" is a worthy counterpart.



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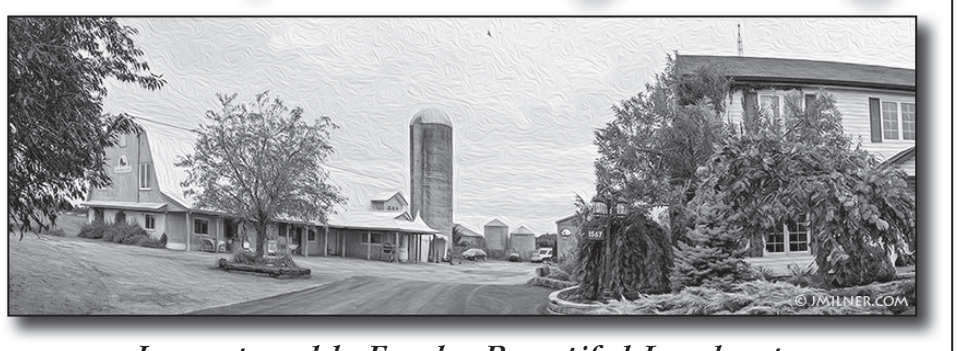

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Wedding rings are symbolic gestures of commitment

Couples adhere to many traditions on their wedding days, including the exchange of wedding rings. Wedding rings symbolize the union of two people and their pledge to remain faithful to each other.

No one is exactly sure just when the tradition of exchanging wedding rings originated, but some say it can be traced back to ancient Egypt, when the oldest recorded exchange of wedding rings was made. Reeds growing along the Nile were twisted and braided into rings and given during betrothal ceremonies. The round ring symbolized eternity, and the hole within the center meant a gateway to things unknown. Since reeds were not very durable, soon ivory, leather and bone were used to create wedding rings.

As new lands were explored and territories expanded, traditions from one culture were adopted and modified by other cultures. The same is true with wedding rings. According to the Diamond Source, wedding rings were adopted by Romans and incorporated into Western wedding ceremonies. Romans' rings were highly decorated, and some historians believe wedding rings were given to represent ownership over brides instead of symbolizing love. These rings were made of iron and called "Anulus Pronubus," or "betrothal ring."

Rings have been simplified since those days and ultimately made of many materials. Throughout history, wedding rings were worn on various fingers and even both hands, whereas many married people in Western cultures now wear their wedding rings on the left hand and on the fourth finger. Romans once believed that this finger contained a vein, called the "Vena Amoris," that ran directly to the heart. Though that is not true, the tradition has prevailed.

Other legends say that, when blessing a Christian marriage, priests would bind the marriage by saying, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," simultaneously touching the ring to the recipient's thumb, index finger and middle finger, before slipping it on the fourth finger while saying, "Amen."

Another theory on ring placement is that wedding rings are worn on the ring finger because that finger isn't used as much as the rest of the hand, ensuring delicate ring materials won't be damaged.



Exchanging rings is an important wedding day tradition for many couples.

Gold is still the most popular metal choice for wedding rings. Whether it's yellow, pink, or white, gold is always a safe bet. The price varies according to the number of Karats (abbreviated by K or kt).

Some couples opt for other metals that are more durable than gold. Platinum is popular because it is long-wearing – but it also tends to be the most expensive. Platinum is a dense metal and can feel heavy in hand.

Tungsten carbide is another durable metal that has grown in popularity in recent years. These rings can not be re-sized so they must be ordered in the correct size. It is a common myth that tungsten carbide rings can not be removed during an emergency, however, they can be removed in the event of an emergency using regular jewelry removal tools.

Titanium is both lightweight and durable, and it's popular because it is hypo-allergenic, making it practical for those with allergies to other metals. Titanium wedding rings are available in a wide range of prices. Titanium doesn't scratch or fade, but it isn't as shiny as gold or platinum. Because titanium rings are so strong, resizing and repairing the rings can be expensive.

Outdoor wedding plans

Are you dreaming of a wedding in the sunshine and a reception under the stars? For your big day to be as magical as you'd hoped, you're going to have to think of everything beforehand.

The evening could be cool, so providing shawls or blankets for your guests is also a good idea. And don't forget that mosquitoes could turn up at the party uninvited; it's another thing to think about and prepare for.



The site

Choose an easily accessible area that is as flat as possible to avoid wobbly tables or runoff if it rains. Also, be sure to notify any neighbours of your plans so they can be respectful of your need for a peaceful ambiance.

The weather

Choose heavy decorations that will stay in place if it gets windy. For a summer wedding, make sure you have some shady corners, parasols, and cold refreshments.

In case of rain, a marquis tent or other shelter is essential for guests, musicians and caterers. Be sure to organize a supply of umbrellas at the entrance, as well as mats and towels.

The facilities

Toilets, water, and electricity: do you have everything you need? The caterers may need to rent a refrigerated truck, so be sure to let them know which facilities will be at their disposal. Set up a sturdy dance floor as well for all those ladies in stiletto heels.

Next comes some ambient lighting: strings of fairy lights, candles with covers for the flames, and lanterns will set the mood. And don't forget to light the paths to the toilets and parking area.

Make sure you plan enough time and helping hands to set everything up. Transforming a backyard into an idyllic reception area isn't something that can be done overnight.



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Veils complete bridal look

The perfect dress is on the wish list of many a bride-to-be, but no bridal ensemble is truly complete until the bride chooses her veil.

Veils have been worn by brides at their weddings for centuries. Veils can be traced back to the Middle East, where veils helped protect against the weather while also preserving the modesty of the bride. In Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, veils were used as protection against evil spirits.

According to popular wedding website The Knot.com, until Vatican II, all Catholic women were required to have their heads covered in church, including during their wedding ceremonies. Veils were worn for this purpose, but they also symbolized trust in the groom and his love and companionship. Some Christians also see the veil as a visual representation of submission to the Church and to God. Others think of the veil as another beautiful accompaniment to their bridal gown, without attaching any additional meaning to the veil itself.

Veils come in various lengths and can complement the style of a wedding gown. They also tend to add glamour to brides' looks. Here are the types of veils from shortest to longest.

• **Blusher:** Blushers cover the face, though some extend only to mid-cheek on the bride.

• **Flyaway:** Flyaways cover just the back of the head. Shorter veils may work better on petite women.



Bridal veils come in many different lengths and can complement personalities and gown styles.

• **Shoulder:** Shoulder veils are about 20 inches in length and will hit at the bride's shoulders or just below.

• **Waist:** Waist-length veils cascade down to the middle of the bride's waist.

• **Fingertip:** These veils extend down 38 to 42 inches, brushing against the bride's fingertips.

• **Waltz/Knee:** For a dramatic look, many brides may opt for waltz-length veils, which fall to the back of the knees.

• **Chapel/Floor:** Veils that extend to the floor may be referred to as "chapel" or "floor-length" veils. Such veils cascade slightly behind the bride.

Veils can complete brides' wedding day looks. Shorter veils may be comfortable to wear throughout the day and evening, but brides may want to consider detachable veils if they are selecting lengthier options.

Tame wedding day nerves

When couples tie the knot, many changes are in store, many compromises will be made and many lasting memories will be created. But in the weeks and months before their big days, couples can easily get caught up in the whirlwind of wedding planning, never taking inventory of their feelings until their wedding days have arrived.

Come their wedding days, couples should not be surprised if some nerves set in. The following are some ways to tame wedding day nerves.

• **Keep an open dialogue.** Speak with your future spouse about the things that may be causing your anxiety. Maybe you have doubts on financial choices or where you will be living after the wedding. Communicating openly and honestly is one of the foundations of a strong relationship.

• **Slow down and breathe.** Wedding planning involves making many decisions, and sometimes couples move at breakneck speeds. Make slowing down a priority. Try to enjoy a quiet dinner with just the two of you. When enjoying peaceful moments, take deep breaths, which can be calming and revitalizing. If need be, consider signing up for a yoga or tai chi class to force you to slow down.

• **Address performance anxiety.** It's easy to build up the big day in your mind and hope that everything goes according to plan. But it's impossible to plan for each and every outcome on your wedding day. Focus on everything that can go right, rather than worrying about what might go wrong. Also, realize that your guests are your friends and family members who will be forgiving of any hiccups along the way. You're bound to recover gracefully from any mishaps.

• **Work on confidence.** Wedding fears may stem from inadequate self-confidence. Give yourself a pep talk and surround yourself with positive people. Keep the worry-warts at arms' length for the time being.

• **Recruit more help.** Weddings are huge undertakings, so it's no surprise that couples sometimes feel overwhelmed. Ask reliable relatives or friends to double-check all of the last-minute details. This way you don't feel it is all on your shoulders.

Wedding days nerves are to be expected and often have little to do with the decision to get married. Planning such a big event can be nerve-wracking, but there are ways to combat any anxiety that builds up as the big day draws near.

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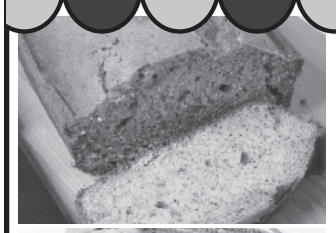
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At Durant's Flowers on Main Street, local florists offer custom bouquets, flower arrangements, corsages, boutonnieres, floral cake decorations, and centerpieces to beautify a bride's big day. Whether it's for the reception, the ceremony, or for the wedding party, it's all just matter of picking the right blossom for the occasion. One of the store's most popular arrangements, "Isn't It Romantic," includes selections of light pink roses, white roses, lilies, lisianthius and sweet pea. Pictured is store employee Robinlee Larabie, who has been arranging flowers at the Winchester location for five years now.

Press Photo – Gosselin

Five tips for finding the perfect wedding dress

As the bride, you will be the focus of everyone's attention on your big day, including all the guests as well as your beloved, of course. But in order to be the most beautiful woman in the room, the star of the celebrations must choose her dress carefully. Here are a few tips to help you.

1. Think before you shop. It's exhausting trying on dozens of dresses at random in the hopes of finding the perfect one. Before going shopping, be sure to browse some magazines and search the Internet to narrow down the styles you prefer.

2. Shop well in advance. Most people get married in the summer, so dressmakers' agendas soon fill up and the prettiest dresses fly off the racks quickly. Make sure you plan enough time for the fittings.

3. Choose carefully who you shop with. Don't shop with a crowd of friends who will confuse you with all their comments and diverging opinions. Choose one or two people who know you well and who have good taste. You'll want them to be able to give you some honest feedback.

4. Choose a dress that you like. Your dress should make you feel good and allow you to be yourself. You also want to be comfortable walking up the aisle and dancing. Naturally, you'll also want to choose a model that flatters your figure.

5. Bear in mind the general atmosphere. Your outfit should harmonize with the wedding theme and the reception hall. For instance, a formal sequined dress is not really appropriate for a country setting.

One last tip: decide how much you want to spend on your dress before you begin your search. That way you won't ruin your whole wedding budget by splurging on an expensive dress.

The art of choosing flowers

From the bridal bouquet to the decorations, flowers are going to be a major feature of your wedding. And not only do they create an atmosphere that is both festive and harmonious, they have to do it without breaking your budget. But don't worry; it's possible to achieve that goal with a bit of ingenuity.

Choose your wedding dress first; it will influence the creation of your bouquet. A patterned dress, for instance, will require a fairly discreet bouquet. You should also take into account your figure: if you are petite, you should avoid cascading bouquets, which are more suitable for tall, slender brides. And make sure your bouquet isn't too heavy, as you'll be carrying it for a long time.

You have a limited budget? Choose native flowers that are in season or exotic flowers that are readily available. Think foliage; it will add volume to your bouquet and it's inexpensive. When choosing flowers, you may also want to consider their meanings. For example, you may prefer red roses (love) or white roses (pure love) rather than yellow roses (infidelity) and daffodils (coldness). Choose flowers that don't wilt quickly, that don't stain and that don't have an overpowering scent.

Once you've decided on your bouquet, it's time to consider the buttonholes, bridesmaids' bouquets and the reception hall decorations. All these elements should take inspiration from your bouquet. You could use one of the flowers from your bouquet for the groom's buttonhole and similar but smaller bouquets for the bridesmaids and table centrepieces.

Need some inspiration? A professional florist is sure to have lots of great ideas to help you.

An invitation like no other

The countdown has started; sending out your wedding invitations makes it all seem official. It is an important step indeed. In addition to announcing your wedding, this little piece of cardstock, tucked so neatly into its pretty envelope, gives your guests a taste of the celebrations to come.



Your invitation should include:

• the names of the bride and groom (include those of the respective parents if you want to follow the tradition of the parents hosting the wedding)

• the location, date, and time of the ceremony

• RSVP cards and envelopes (encourage your guests to confirm their presence by including a pre-stamped reply card)

• an invitation to the reception (feel free to invite only certain guests to the party following the ceremony; specify the theme, dress code, location, and menu choices)

Send one invitation per address, whether it's to a single person, couple, or family. Invitations should be mailed at least three months before the big day. If you're inviting your guests to join you abroad for your wedding, or if some of your guests live outside the country, try to send your invitations as early as eight months in advance. Keep a few spare invitations, just in case.

Need some inspiration?

When it comes to invitation design, it isn't always easy to transform your ideas into reality. Turn to websites or wedding magazines for help. If you're not very artistic, choose a template or hire a graphic designer to create a unique wedding invitation.

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Heritage bakery's wood-burning oven makes for tasty wedding cakes

Alicia K. Gosselin

KEMPTVILLE

Established in 1885, Grahame's Bakery in Kemptville operates one of the oldest commercial wood-fired brick ovens in all of Canada.

Third-generation bakers, Rick Grahame and Debbie Wilson, took over the business from their father Ken in 2005, and are well-known in the area for their fresh breads, cinnamon rolls, donuts, butter tarts, and yes, even wedding cakes.

Whether a couple has an idea in mind, or a picture of what they want their cake to look like, Grahame and Wilson always accommodate with simplicity in mind.

"We're fairly simple – I don't believe in doing a lot of fancy fondant cakes because it's not the greatest tasting, and we make our cakes to taste good," said Wilson. "We want people to eat them, not just look at them. So not only do they look good, they taste good."

Wedding cake flavours offered at Grahame's Bakery include basic chocolate, basic white, and carrot cake. They also offer the option to add filling into the cake such as raspberry, cherry, or cream. One ingredient they definitely don't use in their cakes is butter.

"We don't use butter because we don't have the refrigeration here for the cakes, and most weddings are done in the summer. In the summer, butter cream will just slop right off," said Wilson. "We do our cakes to withstand temperatures like that. Our icing is a sweet shortening icing."



Debbie Wilson (pictured), along with her brother Rick Grahame, are third-generation bakers at Grahame's Bakery in Kemptville, which operates a wood-burning oven to bake all of their goods. They also offer wedding cakes, which are created to "taste good, not just look good," said Wilson.

Wilson specializes in creating flower adornments for tiered wedding cakes, and will even use real flowers to add final touches. She also mentioned that she can create tiered cupcake displays for the ceremony. Sometimes, brides and grooms just want a massive amount of butter tarts or donuts for their guests.

All of the baking is done onsite within their wood-burning oven, which retains some of its heat for up to four days after the fire has gone out.

"Our baking has a distinct taste because of the oven," added Wilson. "That's what keeps people coming back – the locally baked, heritage experience."



Wilson and Grahame created a rustic-style wedding cake for one of their customers.



A simple and modern white cake is sometimes all it takes to make the bride and groom happy.
Courtesy photos

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Local event decorator has joy to share

Alicia K. Gosselin

SOUTH MOUNTAIN

After years of collecting one-of-a-kind décor, accessories, and antique pieces, local entrepreneur Francine Duncan decided it was time to embark on a new creative new journey this year as the official owner of Joy to Share Decorating.

She took over the longstanding event design business from former owners Joyce Boyd and Shari Martin in mid-January, and most recently bought out supplies from another decorating company – North Augusta's Touch of Elegance – that she will incorporate into her stockpile.

With the volume of inventory from both companies, as well as her own collected items, Duncan now has a solid selection of wedding décor available for brides and grooms to rent, buy, or use as a package deal along with Duncan's decorating services.

"I've always loved decorating, putting the final touches on, and after helping with [two events] last year, I thought, 'I can do this,'" she said. "It fell into place this year, and it's been exciting to get [the business] going."

She has been working hard for the past few weeks organizing and cataloguing all of the pieces she owns – including glassware, arches, chandeliers, chairs, lanterns, candles, vases, backdrops, flower arrangements, and much more – so she can put them on her website-in-progress (www.joytoshare.com) for potential customers to check out.

She also has a portable horse-trailer-sized beverage cooler, and two portable bars (currently being crafted) available for rent. Her stepson, Eric Duncan, has been helping her out to make the website live as soon as possible.

Duncan will be operating out of a business trailer on the property of JED Express in South Mountain, where she also lives with her husband, Ed, and two teenage daughters, Megan and Martine.

The trailer will house two separate showrooms set up to display her vision for the pieces she can provide for weddings. One room will be made up to include rustic-style pieces, such as wooden accents and vintage vases, while the other will be fashioned as her "bling bling" room, with items like crystal glassware and silver centerpieces.

Living in the country has given Duncan an eye for decorating rustic-themed weddings – a popular nuptial style requested by brides in the area – but she doesn't limit herself, and has the pieces to populate any kind of wedding style, including Victorian, winter wonderland, black-and-white, and princess-themed.

"Most people out here want the rustic look," she said. "Things like old suitcases for card holders, hanging birdcages, wooden wagon wheels…But every wedding venue is different, and the pieces will always look different, and be arranged for a unique look."

Duncan added that if a bride and groom want her to decorate their whole wedding venue, she first finds out what style they are going for. Then, she will take a look at the venue's floor plan. Depending on whether the ceremony is to be held outdoors, indoors, in a hall, or in a church, her design is based on the landscape.

"It's good to know how much room I have to work with," she said. "I will always bring extra pieces with me when I'm decorating, just in case I need to fill anything out, or if the [venue] needs something extra."







South Mountain resident Francine Duncan (pictured above) recently took over a longstanding event decorating business, Joy to Share Decorating, and offers unique décor and accessories to beautify any wedding ceremony. She is pictured with one of her birdcage cardholders – a popular accent for rustic-style weddings.
Press Photos – Gosselin

For the do-it-yourselfer brides who want to design most of the venue on their own, but have a few missing pieces, Duncan will be able to provide whatever they need.

She also has items to decorate any kind of special event, including birthdays, anniversaries, and baby showers.

As Duncan is just in the beginning stages of starting up Joy to Share Decorating, she said she expects that her first year will be busy, but that she's looking forward to every moment of it.

"This is something I love, and, yes, it will be busy, I knew that coming into it," she said. "I'm excited to see where this goes."

The first wedding décor project she has on her radar for the upcoming year is for her stepdaughter, Jill, who will be getting married in the summer. The wedding will incorporate pieces to create a combined Victorian-rustic-style ceremony.

Duncan has also been recently fashioning a new logo for the company, refreshing the look and making the business her own.

For more information, email info@joytoshare.com or call 613-720-6133.

What's your style?

The style for a wedding all depends on what the bride and groom can dream up. Here are some of the most popular themes demanded for the big day, and the essential pieces to go along with it, according to Duncan.

Rustic: Rustic weddings are filled with textures, natural organics (think bark and trees), vintage patterns, and handmade accents. Décor could include wooden crates, old-style furniture, mason jar centerpieces, and baby's breath flowers.

Victorian: There are few historical periods that are more romantic than the Victoria era, and Victorian weddings are filled with nostalgic pieces. Décor could include mismatched china, cast iron accents, lace table runners, and blush pink roses.

Cinderella: Princess-themed weddings are full of sparkle and shine, and the Cinderella wedding may incorporate fantasy-inspired pieces. Décor could include white pumpkin accents, fencing backdrops, silver lanterns, and hanging vines with Wisteria flowers.

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Customize your ceremony to give it a unique touch

Steeped in tradition, weddings have featured many of the same components for centuries. Those about to tie the knot may feel somewhat limited in their ability to shape their weddings into unique celebrations of their relationships and love for one another. Although it may not seem like there are many opportunities to put your own stamp on the wedding, there are plenty of ways to do just that.

When looking to personalize your wedding ceremony, determine if there might be anything blocking you from doing so. For example, if yours will be a religious ceremony, there may be certain rites that need to be followed. Secular ceremonies may offer more opportunities to customize.



Incorporate some custom elements into the wedding ceremony to give it a unique flair.

• **Vows:** Vows are one of the easiest ways to put a personal touch on your wedding. You can select the words you want to exchange during the ceremony as well as any readings during the service. Work with your officiant to narrow down particular phrasing or sentiments that fit with your vision of the wedding and relationship.

• **Participants:** Wedding party members fulfill certain roles during the ceremony, but they are not limited to those tasks alone. Consider asking wedding party members or other friends or family members to take on specialized roles in the wedding. They may be able to do certain readings, escort guests to their seats, light candles, or sing and participate in other ways.

• **Musical interludes:** Choose music that connects with your personalities as a couple rather than selecting standard songs merely because they are the easier route. Work with the organist or other musicians and request that they perform or play musical pieces that you enjoy.

• **Candle lighting:** Many couples like to incorporate candle-lighting components to their ceremonies. Lighting unity candles blends two families together into one in a symbolic way. Other couples choose different traditions, such as mixing two different-colored sands in a new vessel, to represent the joining of two lives together. You can consider these types of additions for your wedding ceremony or come up with your own unique tradition.

Impart a special touch to a wedding ceremony in any number of ways. Doing so will help set this special day apart in the minds of guests and make it even more memorable to look back on as a couple.

Wedding good luck charms

Perhaps due to superstition or tradition, many couples employ some wedding day strategies to increase their good luck. The following are some of the symbols that couples may want to keep an eye out for on the day they walk down the aisle.

• It's good luck for the bride to see a dove on the way to the wedding because doves symbolize peace and prosperity. Because doves mate for life, this symbol is doubly beneficial on a couple's wedding day, as it can be a harbinger of a long, happy marriage and home.

• Hindu tradition states that rain on a wedding day is good luck. Rain is believed to be a symbol of fortune and abundance, especially after times of drought. What's more, rain can foretell a strong marriage. That's because a wet knot is more difficult to untie.

• Ancient Romans were so concerned with ensuring good luck that they actually studied pig entrails to determine the luckiest time to marry. If they consulted with the English, they might determine that a wedding shouldn't take place on a Saturday, which is unlucky. English tradition states Wednesday is the best day to get married.

• In Holland, well-wishers would plant pine trees outside of newlyweds' homes as a symbol of fertility and luck.

• Grooms may want to give a coin to the first person they see on the way to their weddings. This is another symbol of good luck.

• Some couples plan to marry during a full moon, because that can symbolize good luck and good fortune.

• On a couple's wedding day, tears from a bride or a child during the ceremony is considered lucky. English folklore suggests that brides who discover spiders in their gowns are in for some good luck.

• The Chinese believe that lighting fireworks at their wedding ceremonies chases away evil spirits. A red umbrella also might be held over a Chinese bride to keep bad spirits at bay.

• Many grooms do not see their brides in their wedding gowns before their wedding ceremonies, feeling it is bad luck if they do.

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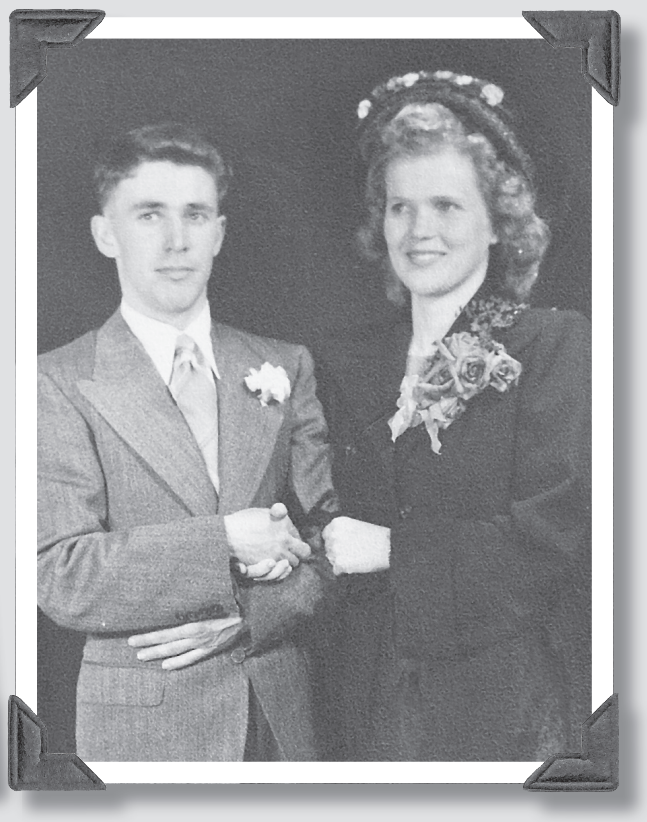
Wedding Anniversaries



50th Anniversary

Earl and Darlene Windsor
will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary
on Saturday, June 4, 2016
at Kenmore Community Centre, from 2-4 pm.
All welcome. Best wishes only.

Best wishes from
Derk, Krista, Kira, Kodiak,
Trent, Tracey, Lawson and Ethan.



67th Anniversary

Bert and Doreen Larocque
will celebrate Bert's 90th birthday
on March 20, 2016
and their 67th wedding anniversary
on May 14, 2016.



30th Anniversary

Stephen and Karen (Wilson) MacDonald
will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary
on June 7, 2016.
They were married at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church
on June 7, 1986.

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Forthcoming Marriages



Heuving - Lawrence

Mike and Rita Heuving of Osgoode and
Garfield and Heather Lawrence
of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland,
are happy to announce the forthcoming marriage
of their children
Erica Michelle Heuving to Jonathan Garfield Lawrence.
The wedding will take place on August 19, 2016
in St. John's (Conception Bay), Newfoundland.



Nolan - Gervais

Terry and Marj. Nolan of Osgoode,
are pleased to announce the engagement
of their daughter, Leanne Kelly
to Jason Phillip Gervais,
son of John and Debbie Gervais
of Carlsbad Springs, Ontario.
The wedding will take place on October 1, 2016
at Our Lady of the Visitation Church,
South Gloucester.

The most beautiful bride from head to toe

The excitement, joy, and anticipation you'll feel on the big day will make you radiant with beauty. To further enhance this glow think about consulting some beauty professionals.

1. The hair stylist

A stunning bride needs a fabulous hairstyle. Whichever style appeals to you, you'll want to entrust your hair to the expert hands of a real hair salon professional. Make two appointments: one to try different hairstyles, and another for the big day.

2. The esthetician

Manicure, pedicure, hair removal, facial, eyelash extensions, and massage: a wedding is the perfect excuse to pamper your body. Not to mention that stray body hairs, dry skin, and damaged nails are not on the guest list! Don't forget to make two separate appointments for your makeup as well.

3. The dentist

Because laughter is the right of every newly married couple, treat yourself to a teeth whitening treatment for a sparkling smile.

A beautiful and organized bride

• Make your appointments as soon as possible.

• Carry a photo of your dress and accessories to all your appointments, along with inspiring images from magazines.

• Find out the best time to pamper yourself with the various treatments. This way you won't have any regrets, such as hair colouring done too early (hello, roots!) or a microdermabrasion done too close to your big day.

Compiling the guest list

Drawing up a guest list for your wedding can be very stressful, especially when you start thinking about your extended family and your limited budget.

What's the best way to tackle this difficult job? Two options are available to you.

First of all, you can list the names of all the people you would like to be present at your wedding, and adapt the reception or your budget accordingly. Obviously, the longer the list, the more costly it will be. Or, if you feel that the presence of all the people on your list is essential, there are ways of inviting everyone without breaking the bank. You could opt for a more affordable menu or a no-frills reception or a cash bar, for instance.

You can also do the reverse. Choose the reception hall and determine your budget, then adjusting your guest list accordingly. You'd love to get married in a specific place that can only accommodate 80 people? Compile your list according to your priorities until you reach the maximum number of guests. Start with family and close friends, then add extended family and friends, and end with acquaintances and colleagues if there is room. Don't forget the spouses (and the children, if invited) of all these people.

Whichever option you choose, keep in mind that it is your big day; don't succumb to the pressure of inviting people you don't really want to see. Instead, surround yourself with people who are important to you.

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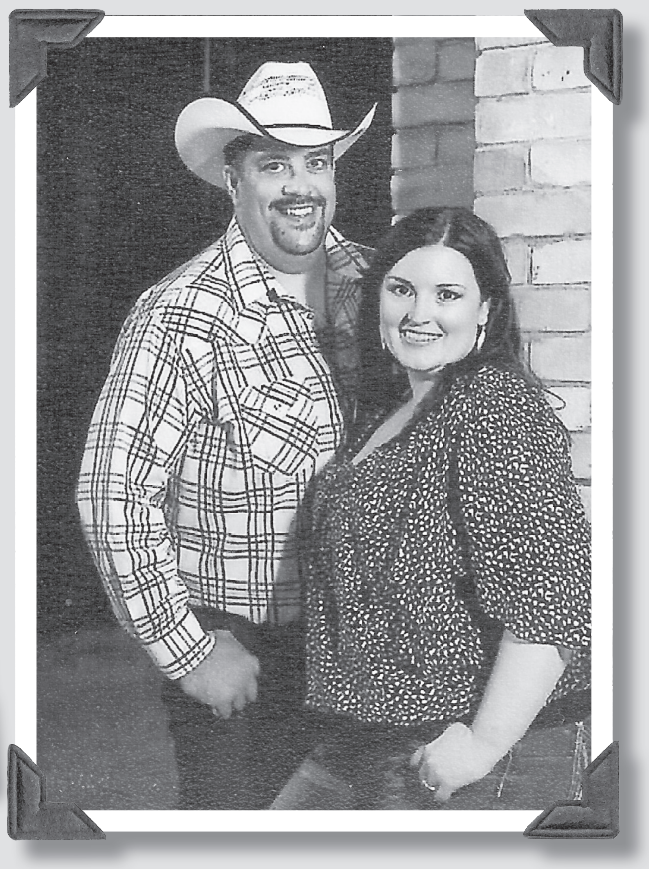
Wedding Announcements



Berends – Dewan

Ben and Anja Berends
are thrilled to announce the marriage
of their son Ryan to Tracy Dewan,
daughter of Cathy Honeywell and Gerry Dewan
of Greely, Ontario.

Their wedding took place on June 27, 2015
at the family farm in Reids Mills.



Fisher - Beechey

Floyd and Mary Fisher and
Garry and Janice Beechey
announce the marriage of
Donald Fisher and Nicole Beechey
on February 6, 2016.

The wedding took place
at Blackstock, Ontario.



Heuving – McDougall

Rebecca Jane (Becky),
daughter of Jeff and Bev McDougall of Marvelville
and Randy Michael,
son of Mike and Rita Heuving of Osgoode,
were married on January 24, 2015
at the Kemptville Christian Reformed Church,
followed by a reception in Marionville.
They reside in Osgoode (Dalmeny)
with their new baby son, Eli.

Happy 1st Anniversary
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Clever takes on a popular wedding tradition

Wedding day tokens of good luck come in many forms, but "the something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue (a sixpence in your shoe)" adage remains one of the most popular luck-enhancing wedding traditions. According to the bridal resource "The Knot," this tradition stems from an Olde English rhyme. Something old represents continuity; something new is for optimism for the future; something borrowed stands for borrowed happiness; and something blue is for purity, love and fidelity. The sixpence in your shoe is a wish for good fortune and prosperity, but this is not a tradition widely celebrated outside of the United Kingdom or British territories.

These traditions can add some creative flair and personality to wedding ceremonies. There's no end to the inventive combinations of items brides can carry to increase their good fortunes.



Something old

Something old is one of the easier mementos to obtain. There is a good chance that someone in the family is willing to pass an item down to the bride that she can include in her wedding wardrobe. It also can be something the bride may have in her own memory box. Beads taken from a grandmother's dress or a swatch of fabric from a beloved toy doll are creative ideas that can be sewn into inconspicuous places on gowns.

Something new

Brides already purchase many new items for their wedding day looks, so "something new" should not be too hard to find. Couples may want to work together to find something new they can both carry so they have a matching set upon tying the knot. Interlocking charm bracelets or keychains may work. What about the groom carrying a small padlock and the bride the key? Get clever and have fun.

Something borrowed

Much like something old, something borrowed is yet another way to pay homage to a friend or family member. It's also one way to add a sentimental twist to everyday items. Borrow a grandfather's handkerchief to wrap around the stems of the wedding bouquet. Exchange vows with parents or grandparents wedding rings. Flatter a close friend by wearing the same veil she did.

Something blue

There are many ways to incorporate "something blue" into your wedding ceremony. Brides can paint their toenails blue or wear blue shoes under their gowns. Sew a patch from a pair of denim jeans into the bodice of the dress. Paint the bottom of your shoes bright blue so they stand out when kneeling at the altar. Blue sapphire or topaz jewelry can add an exotic look to the wedding wardrobe.

Creating atmosphere is the secret to your reception

What makes one wedding more fun than another? There's no need to look far: the secret is in the atmosphere. Here are some tips on how to organize a memorable wedding reception.

The theme

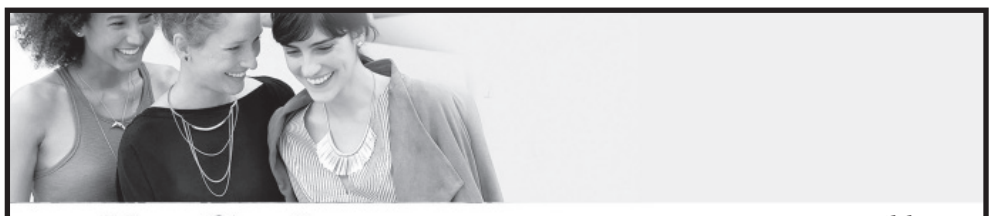
Begin by choosing the theme that will be the foundation of the wedding. This will guide you through your clothing and decorating choices, and it will even determine the wedding favours you offer and the meal the caterer serves. The theme can be a colour or combination of colours, an era or a season, a country or a culture, an object or a shared passion. Above all, it should reflect both your personalities.

Entertainment and music

If you hire an entertainer along with your DJ or musicians, you'll have more fun at your own wedding. You'll both be able to circulate amongst your guests, and there won't be any uncomfortable lulls. A good DJ is a facilitator who can adapt to the age and tastes of the guests and keep the momentum going. Just be sure that anyone you hire can entertain according to your theme.

Some ideas

- Plan a unique arrival at the reception.
- Set up a photo booth with wacky accessories.
- Provide a guest book that can be a decorative item in your home after the reception.
- Work out a dance routine to perform together or with your wedding party.
- Have a karaoke machine for later on, at the reception.
- Release disposable lanterns into the sky when it gets dark, or plan some fireworks.
- Hire a magician, a croupier with casino tables, or a caricaturist to entertain your guests.
- Serve custom cocktails, poured by a professional flair bartender who can juggle bottles and do some spectacular bartending tricks.



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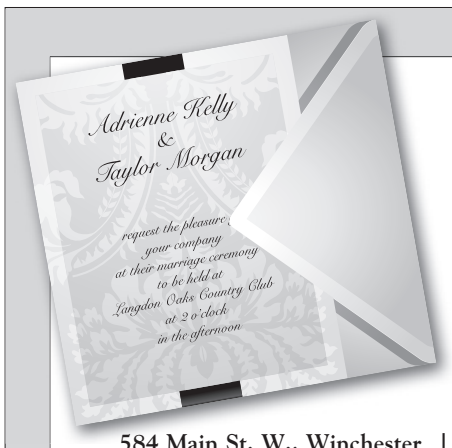

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Special transportation for a special occasion

The arrival of the newlyweds at the reception launches the fun part of the wedding celebrations. After saying "I do" to your significant other, how will you go about surprising your guests when you make your grand entrance?

Arriving in style

You're allowed to impress your guests any way you want when it's your wedding. So the aim is to find a unique way to arrive that reflects your personalities and the theme of the festivities. Here are a few suggestions.

• For a waterfront reception, arrive on a boat to cause a real sensation.

• You prefer to stay on terra firma? Join your guests on two wheels, making your appearance on a motorcycle.

• You like a bit more comfort? Show up in a classy limousine, race car, or vintage car.

• You're both green at heart? Opt for an entrance in a horse-drawn carriage, on a bicycle, or even better, on a tandem bike.

• For an extravagant touch, dare to make a theatrical arrival by helicopter, parachute, or hot-air balloon.

If you want your wishes to come true, don't wait until the last minute to make your reservations. When the time comes to decide on your choice of transportation, be sure to take into consideration the reception venue, the weather forecast for your big day, and the bride's gown; it may even be wise to plan a second outfit for the trip.

Wedding favour ideas for your guests

Your guests have honoured you with their presence and it's now time to thank them. Ideally, your wedding favours will include the names of the bride and groom and the date you exchanged your vows.

Gourmet favours

Chocolates, sugared almonds, or other treats will delight those with a sweet tooth. You can personalize your assortments by adding your initials or an illustration that represents you both. For a winter wedding, a hot chocolate mix is a comforting gift that your guests can enjoy to their heart's content.

Favours from Mother Nature

Nature lovers, this gift is for you: a pretty box filled with potting soil and some tiny succulents so your guests will leave with some genuine greenery. Or, opt for seeds to symbolize the beginning of your new life together.

Scented favours

Scented candles are perfect for most weddings, as they're available in all shapes and colours. You could also consider giving bath salts or shell-shaped soaps for a nautical theme, or rose potpourris for a vintage wedding.

Decorative favours

A magnet for the fridge, coasters, photos, or snow globes: think traditional souvenir trinkets. They'll feature a photo of you both that your guests will treasure.

Luxury favours

Be warned, small budgets should steer clear of this suggestion. Some brides and grooms go all out in order to impress their guests; if that's you, why not offer a box of cigars, a small item of jewellery, or a bottle of good wine. This is especially suitable for smaller weddings.



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Repeat customers get rewarded at Bridals

Alicia K. Gosselin



Staff at Bridals by Al-Mor want to give back to the local clientele by launching a bridal loyalty program, which offers discount cards for repeat customers. Pictured are co-op student Walker Baldwin (left), store employee Jen Lecours, Kristie Billings from Barkley's Shoes and Accessories, and store owner Kim Carruthers.

Press Photo – Gosselin

WINCHESTER

The cost of being a bridesmaid doesn't come cheap.

After everything is said and done – the custom gown, the high-heel pumps, the matching jewellery, not to mention, the professionally done hair and make up – it's hard to imagine being in more than one wedding without breaking the bank.

That's why staff at Bridals by Al-Mor came up with the idea to launch a bridal loyalty program that offers discounted prices for repeat customers coming back again and again to the local dress shop.

"We want to pay back to the people who keep coming to us all the time – we depend on local people to keep us going," said store owner Kim Carruthers, who has been helping local brides and bridesmaids find their dress for nearly a decade. "They could go anywhere else, but they decide to shop locally. We want to show them how thankful we are."

As soon as a bride or bridesmaid makes that first purchase at the Main Street store, staff members will offer them a discount card for any future dress purchases. The card will be stamped each time a customer comes back for a dress, increasing the discount by 10 per cent each time.

For example, a second purchase would make a customer eligible for a 10 per cent discount, and the sixth dress would run for 50 per cent off the ticket price.

"It's great for those bridesmaids who are in multiple weddings," said store employee, Jen Lecours. "It can get pretty expensive buying dresses for different weddings. But we know how loyal our customers are, so [the discount] is like a bit of a break for them."

At Bridals, the customer experience is the most important part of the business. With the snazzy décor, comfy couches, and modern open space, brides and bridesmaids get the "big city feel" with the small-town service.

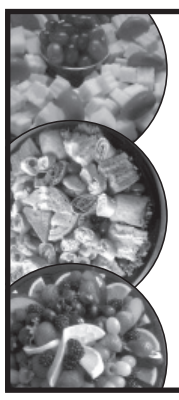
With more than 160 designer sample dresses in store, along with nearly 200 sale dresses (which run from $100 to $800), brides and bridesmaids don't need to go far to find the perfect gown. The store has also recently become a "one-stop shop" with the opening of Barkley's Shoes and Accessories within its doors, where owner Kristie Billings offers the latest accessories, jewellery, and shoes for special occasions. On-site alterations are also available at Bridals by Al-Mor, as well as tuxedo rentals for the gentlemen.

"We want to make the best experience for our people," said Carruthers. "The loyalty program is just one way to do that –it's a program that no one else [bridal shops] has done before, and our customers really appreciate it."

Along with the loyalty program, Carruthers also said there has been some ongoing renovations taking place at the shop to improve the customer experience as well. The current fitting room upstairs will be opened up to the entire floor, complete with a sitting area with a couch for family and friends to hang out, and a fireplace at the centre. A steam room for the dresses is also currently under construction.

"It's just something to make their time here really nice," added Carruthers.

Going forward, the loyalty program will become a regular incentive for customers to return again and again – without going bankrupt.



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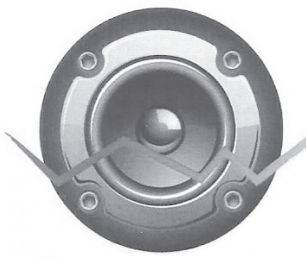

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