

# Walking Down The Aisle Soon?



## FEATURE

Wedding bells are ringing and love is in the air. It's June and wedding season is officially here! If you're among the happy couples to take that leap forward with your Significant Other, congratulations! You're about to embark on a wonderful yet tiring journey. No, I'm not talking about your life with your soon-to-be husband. Before you even get to that part, you need to plan your big day! Attending a wedding as a guest is a lot of fun, but as a bride, there's a fair bit of hard work that goes into putting together the marriage ceremony and reception. From your wedding dress to cakes to decorations to entertainment, the list is endless and can often leave you anxious and overwhelmed. But, planning your special day shouldn't have to be exhausting. With a little guidance and a whole lot of inspo courtesy Pinterest, you will be well on your way to breezing through flower choices and dealing with your in-laws. **SHEHAM BASSAMALI** talks to wedding and events planner, Charm De Silva, Director at Magical Moments for the low down.

# Don't Let Wedding Prep Turn You Into Bridezilla

**M**ost brides never know where to begin when it comes to wedding prep. When you start weighing the many options available, you may feel incredibly overcome by the sheer magnitude of what you have to do. It's perfectly alright if all you know at this point is that you want to get married. A little time, direction and the right advice are all you need to help you and your fiancé get started on organizing one of the most important days of your lives. Here are a few tips that will help you on your way.

### Talk it out

Wedding planning is no walk in the park, and a fair amount of pre-planning is involved. But, it is important that you and boo sit down and talk about what you *both* want. Often, it's primarily the brides who organize, while the grooms get sidelined...and most men are perfectly happy with this arrangement! However, since the two of you are taking this step forward as one unit, it's best to include him from the get-go.

"Decide if you want to get married in your hometown, in the suburbs or at an exotic destination. Also, figure out if you'll have a religious or civil ceremony," recommends wedding and events planner



Charm. "Do you want an outdoor or indoor wedding? Would you prefer a small, intimate gathering or a big tamasha? These are important questions you need to ask yourselves." Figuring out your priorities well in advance will kick-off the planning process on a positive note.

### Money Matters

Let's be real, this is a sensitive subject, but it's a discussion you and your fiancé need to have, pronto. Determine if your parents will be generous enough to foot the bill or if the two of you prefer to cover the expenses yourselves. "Quite a few families of brides still pick up the entire tab, but lately, the groom's side participates, too. So, talk to both parties to

establish if they're agreeable towards contributing towards your budget," suggests Charm. "Alternatively, it may be easier to ask each set of parents to finance a particular aspect of the wedding (such as alcohol, floral decor or catering), instead of just committing to a fixed monetary amount. The two of you should also decide how much you can contribute between now and the wedding."

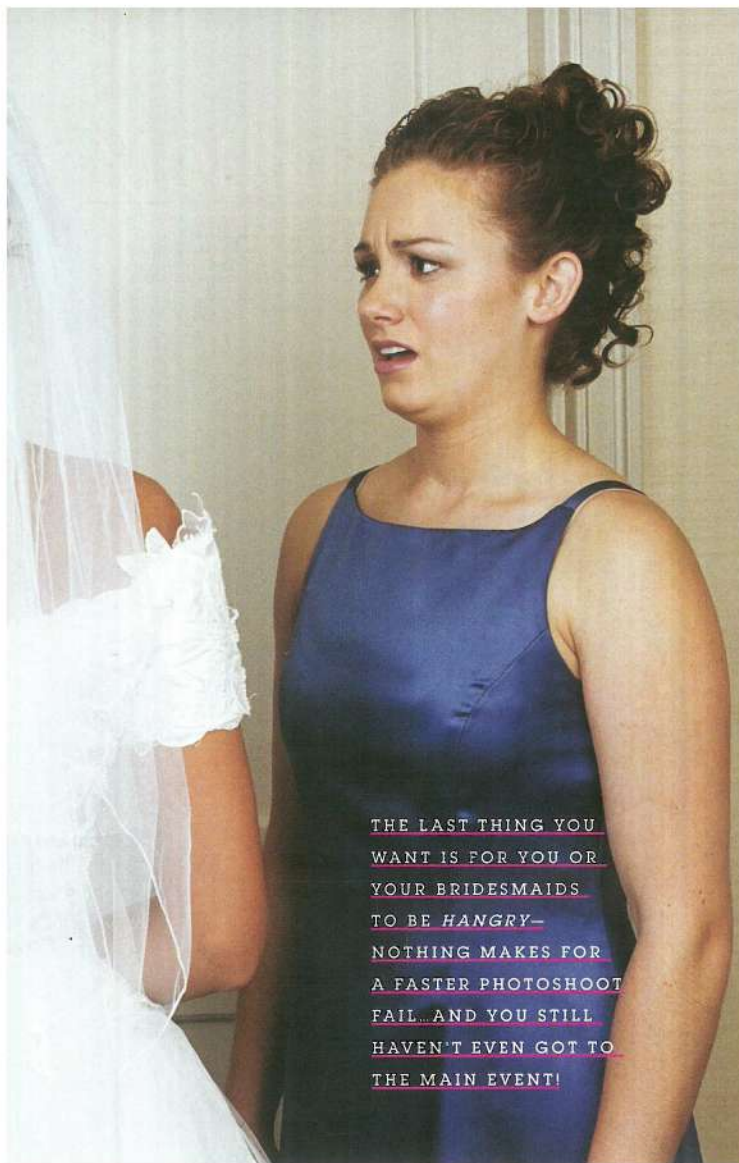
It's important to bear in mind that the more formal your function, the more expensive it will be. "You'll have to match the site, food, music, speciality linen and dramatic floral arrangements to add more oomph," says Charm. Conversely, a casual, simple and elegant wedding

will require a much smaller budget.

Once you've figured out how much you'd like to spend, start brainstorming and listing out (hello, Excel!) all the items you'll need—for example, location, outfits for the couple and retinue (if any), bouquets, cake, lighting, décor, and hair and make-up. This will help you understand if your wedding visions fall in line with your budget, or if one or the other has to be tweaked.

### Be organized

Writing everything down will keep you from losing your sanity, let me tell you! So, open a folder, book or binder dedicated to your wedding prep—you'll thank yourself later. Charm recommends that you envision what your



THE LAST THING YOU WANT IS FOR YOU OR YOUR BRIDESMAIDS TO BE HANGRY—NOTHING MAKES FOR A FASTER PHOTOSHOOT FAIL...AND YOU STILL HAVEN'T EVEN GOT TO THE MAIN EVENT!

day will look like. Perhaps you're lusting after an outdoor event by a lake with soft lights and an intimate gathering, or an elaborate indoor setup with all the trimmings. Really narrow down what sort of theme or colour scheme you want. This way, you'll know exactly what to keep an eye out for in your search for inspiration. "Look for ideas online and in magazines, then put together a mood board prioritizing the areas important to you like the dress, floral décor, lighting etc.," suggests Charm. If you'd rather not have a physical mood board, Pinterest is always a good digital option for inspiration. What's more, boards can be made private and select individuals can be added. Including your besties to

your boards is a great way to ensure additional, super creative ideas that are just so *you*.

### Pick the venue and date

If you don't have to follow any auspicious times, Charm recommends first choosing the venue and *then* the date. "You'll have more options and flexibility if you make your decisions in this order," she explains. Occasionally, couples will pick a place in their hometowns or in the city in which they work. Banquet halls in hotels are quite common, but all the add-ons can easily eat away at funds.

Considering an outdoor wedding? Bear in mind the unpredictable weather

in Sri Lanka, and pick your location and dates accordingly. For small numbers, villas and boutique hotels with beautiful courtyards along the coast are gaining traction. Make a list of venues and start scheduling visits with your beau. Plus, all the weekend getaways will be a great way to give yourself some time off from the stress of wedding planning!

### Think numbers and a guest list

Do you want bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls and page boys as part of your retinue? If so, figure out how many you can have that's in line with your budget. Then, focus on the guest list. Remember, there's not just your side to consider, Lover Boy's got his family and friends to list out, too.

Sri Lankan weddings are such that extended family members might take offense if they aren't invited. Try and avoid conflict as much as possible, but do remember that you aren't compelled to invite anyone you really don't want. "The per-head cost for food is typically the biggest expense for the entire wedding," explains Charm. "So, changing the size of your guest list is the surest way to increase or decrease your costs. Additionally, the smaller the guest list, the more you'll save on all other aspects, including décor, stationery, wedding favours and rentals."

In terms of when you need to start inviting your friends and fam, Charm suggests waiting a while. "It's best to hold off on any announcements until you finalize your date, venue and budget. This way, you'll make educated decisions when it comes to the list," she advises.

### Give yourself enough time

Ensure you have adequate time to plan everything. Charm recommends giving yourself 6 to 12 months to prepare. "The most popular venues and vendors get booked approximately a year in advance. So, if you wait for too long, you might have to settle with a vendor or venue that is available, rather than that which you had your heart set on," she explains. Planning a wedding within a short span of time is possible, but in all likelihood, figuring out all the details might be more expensive. So avoid the mad rush and give yourself enough time to work out the finer details. You'll wind up with a beautiful wedding without losing your sanity in the process!

### Think about hiring a wedding planner

Planners already have established relationships with vendors and locations. If obtaining the assistance of a pro is within your budget, speak to a planner for their insight and experience before confirming any services. "Apart from budget constraints, a planner can help with legal contracts, work towards your vision, and keep everything on-track and stress-free. No matter how small, every decision can help make some serious savings, especially if the planner knows what he or (she) is doing," says Charm. So, gorgeous brides, if you feel like you won't be able to pull this off without, what may seem like, divine intervention, it's really okay to ask for help.

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