

BY JACKIE FARAH-FERNANDEZ



Taking it one step at a time

Our wedding pro answers your Frequently Asked Questions

Q I fell in love with a venue near my church. It is absolutely perfect! It is the perfect setting for our Tuscan themed wedding. However the total cost for the rental of the venue is almost half of our budget. I am very excited about the venue and I would love to sign a contract (while the date is still available) but I am afraid I will not be able to pull this off with half of my budget already spent. Please Help! P.S. May 2011

A Budgets are always the most difficult topics to talk about. Every Bride and Groom's budgets are formulated differently that is why general budget calculators are not very realistic for every wedding.

Typically, I would sit with a client and ask them what their focuses are for their wedding. For example, location, food and beverage, and entertainment could be a client's focus. This is not to say that we would spend the majority of the budget on these categories, it means that we would try our best not to cut corners on these aspects of the wedding.

Having half of your budget go to the venue is a huge chunk and maybe not the best idea. It depends on how important the venue is to you and what other items are included in your budget. My best advice to you is to create a list of the items that are included in your budget (try to be as specific as possible) and make preliminary decisions. Scout out average pricing in your city/town for the things that would be left on your budget. For instance if you know that you like modern

style photographers, call a couple of photography studios you are interested in and see what their packages include and how much they average.

As you get all of the info, input it into your budget and see where you are. By doing this, you will be more comfortable and feel more confident about making the right decisions. Another thing I would suggest is to call a couple of wedding planners and see if they can offer some assistance in a venue similar to what you are looking for. It is always a great idea to have a Plan B. Remember to be patient and do not panic, with a little research and time on your budget, you will make it all work out.

Q I have a simple yet troublesome problem. I love color; all colors are my favorite colors. I am having a very difficult time choosing the main color theme for my wedding. I want to make sure that it is a theme that is "very in" however my wedding is over 20 months away. How do I choose my colors (since I love all of them) and how do I make sure the theme is not "played out" in the next 20 months? So Confused, L.K. November 2011

A I feel your pain. I too love color! It is difficult to say what colors will be "in" so far in advance but weddings have different trend periods than fashion. Fashion trends change more often than wedding trends, especially in regards to colors. At any time, you can open a magazine and find all different types of color trends. Typically the seasons of the year sets the color trends more than anything.

I would suggest that you search high and low for a color combo that you love over and over again every time you see it. Regardless of the trends in the industry, it's your wedding and it should be a reflection of your taste and style.

Timeless colors are another way you can go too. The newest trend is high fashion-bright colors since we are getting into spring and summer. Black, White, Off White, and Cream are colors that are always in style. If you feel like you would like to add a hint of color you can always do so in your napkin, stationary, etc.

So many of my clients mention to me that they want to see their wedding pictures in twenty years and not think "What was I thinking when I picked those colors?" The most important thing is that you love what you choose and that you do not do anything without being a hundred percent positive in your decisions. I am sure you will pick the right combination for your special day. Happy Hunting...

Q My mother is suggesting that I send out save the dates to our guests but I am so against it. I am afraid of a couple of things: We are hoping that at least 25 percent of our guests send a decline in attendance and if they know about the wedding they will make special plans to attend and also, what if we decide on taking certain guests off of the list later on to lower the guest count. My mother however thinks that there are many people we really want to attend that might not be able to should they not have prior knowledge of our wedding date. What should I do? G.B. January December 2010

A Your issue is one that I hear often. Your concerns are valid however your mother's concern is valid as well. In regards to etiquette, you have to be very careful. If you send the save the dates to some and not others invited to the wedding, those who did not receive a save the date might feel offended and may think they were not invited.

If you think you might want to drop your list, then perhaps you can create a plan A list and a plan B list. The plan A list would be the guests that would get an invitation first. As those guests start replying, you can send out invites to those on your plan B list. If you are hoping that some of your guests will not attend, you are in good shape. Hardly ever do more than 90 percent of your guests all show up. There is typically always a drop in numbers from your original guest list and your final numbers.



Also your wedding is in December and that is a month that many people go on vacation. My suggestion and advice to you would be to verbally tell your wedding date to those who you might fear would plan a vacation since you definitely want them to attend your wedding. Verbally telling your friends and family the date will make anyone else feel bad if they did not get a call, as there were not official save the dates sent out. It also gives you the freedom to cut or expand your guest list in the future months. I wish you the best of luck.

Q I want to incorporate a lounge area in my wedding decor. I have the option of putting the lounge area inside the reception or outside on the balcony. I am torn between the two locations. I want to make sure my guests get to enjoy the lounge as it is a beautiful fabric and matches my wedding decor perfectly. I know it will be the thing that pulls everything all together. Will it have the same effect if it was outside the ballroom? N.T. October 2010

A What a great question! It's so great that you have this dilemma; you are correct, it will pull the wedding reception together. There are a couple of things to take into account when deciding on the location of the lounge.

First, you have to be very careful if the location of the outdoors space is far from the ballroom. You do not want to separate your party into two locations that are not near each other. If you give your guests a reason to leave the ballroom they will leave to the lounge and the ballroom may look empty.

Another option is to use the lounge area as the cocktail reception and transform it to an after dinner lounge. You can change the lounge's overall look by changing pillows or adding perimeter lighting or patterns on the floor. You could have the after dinner lounge open after the reception is over to be an "after party" area if you are still concerned about the guests leaving the ballroom.

Finally, you can add a lounge to your ballroom decor. I would suggest placing the lounge areas near the dance floor so that your guests can still be part of the party even if they are lounging around. Good Luck!

For more information and answers to your questions, please visit www.AskJackieOhh.com. I have created this new website offering useful planning information and live chats with Jackie from Jackie Ohh... Events for no monetary charge. You can also visit Jackie Ohh...

Events at www.JackieOhhEvents.com.
Photography by: Unique Design Studios