

Congratulations YOU'RE ENGAGED

NOW THE REAL WORK BEGINS

You are wedding planning and seeking inspiration. Maybe you are attending weddings, visiting bridal websites, scrolling through Instagram or Pinterest collections, creeping on photographer photo albums or watching reality TV shows for ideas and inspo. No matter the source, your goal is to create a special and unique wedding day not only for yourself and your fiancé, but for all involved.

THE PRESSURE IS ON

Don't stress. Saint Louis Best Bridal is here to help. Saint Louis Best Bridal Planner and stlouisbestbridal.com contain the resources you need to plan your dream wedding. We've included many helpful tips to move you through the planning process. Flip through tips on choosing your florist, baker, officiant and photographer. Easily obtain your wedding license and pick the wedding dress that's the right fit for you, and much more.

On behalf of the entire team at Saint Louis Best Bridal, we hope you create the wedding of your dreams.



VOLUME 16 - NUMBER 02
FALL & WINTER 2019

EDITOR

Teresa Griffin
tgriffin@stltoday.com

CONTENT

Natalie Macias
nmacias@stltoday.com

DESIGN

Natalie Barbieri
nbarbieri@post-dispatch.com

Francesca Eales
feales@post-dispatch.com

CONTACT US

Saint Louis Best Bridal
901 N. Tenth Street
St. Louis, MO 63101
www.stlouisbestbridal.com



Sign on the DOTTED LINE

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS TOP 'MUST DO' LIST

Before two people head to the ceremony and run off into matrimonial bliss, they must apply for a marriage license. A legitimate officiant will not marry a couple without one in hand. Rules vary between states, as marriage is considered a civil contract between a state and two people initiating it.

A marriage license should be secured based on where the wedding takes place, and not where the couple lives. If the ceremony destination is not Missouri or Illinois, the website usmarriagelaws.com can be consulted for any other state.

Marriage license requirements can change by state, even between counties, so it is MOST important to verify ALL information with the local marriage license office or county clerk where you will be married before making wedding or travel plans. Each county also directs its own schedule for a courthouse marriage by a judge.

GETTING MARRIED IN THE SHOW-ME STATE

The state of Missouri requires that both parties be single and not blood-related. 2018 legislation raised the minimum age of marriage to 16, and 16- and 17-year-olds must receive parental permission to be married. It also bars a person 21 or older from marrying anyone 18 or younger.

Before the ceremony, even on the same day, a couple must appear together at the recorder of deeds office in any Missouri county or the city of St. Louis. No blood test is required.

Each must show a valid form of government issued identification, such as a current passport, state ID or

driver's license, which lists date of birth. Unless the Social Security number is on the ID, a Social Security card is also required in Missouri. A person without a Social Security number must sign a form of verification.

The marriage license is valid in any county, but only in Missouri. The ceremony must take place within 30 days of the license being issued. If an individual is divorced, a final decree must be at least 30 days before application, although some counties allow variations.

A cash-only, non-refundable charge of about \$50 must be paid with the application. For an extra fee, a certified certificate may be given as proof of marriage or as a keepsake.

Using a new name on the marriage license does not legally change it. To change it on a Social Security card, bring marriage documentation with you. Also, inform your employer so the name corresponds with Internal Revenue Service information

NUPTIALS IN THE LAND OF LINCOLN

Getting married in Illinois differs on some details. A bride-or-groom-to-be still needs to be single, not related and at least 18 years old. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds must have parental consent. No one under the age of 16 can marry.

The fee for a marriage license varies by county. For example, Madison County requires a non-refundable cash fee of \$30.

WHO CAN OFFICIATE THE CEREMONY

Missouri and Illinois also differ in criteria for an officiant to fulfill these duties.

According to the law, marriage in Missouri may be performed by any clergyman, active or retired; a judge, municipal judge; a religious society, institution or organization when either party is a member. Paperwork must be returned within 15 days to the recorder issuing it. In Illinois, an officiant may be an ordained minister, active or retired judge, or public official empowered to perform marriage. The signed license with information filled out should be returned to the recorder of deeds within 90 days of issuance.

If considering someone besides clergy or a public official to take charge, check with the county recorder of deeds where you will be married to assure authorization-for-a-day will be valid.



REGISTER NEW NAMES

Before marrying, a couple should decide what names to use later.

After the wedding, registering a new name on documents and records may require a certified marriage license and a proof of residence bearing current name and address. Check each authority's specific needs.

BASIC SEVEN TO START

- Social Security card
- Driver's license or state ID card
- Passport
- Bank accounts and checks
- Credit cards
- Insurance policies
- Post office address

IN MISSOURI

FRANKLIN COUNTY | (636) 583-6367
Union

JEFFERSON COUNTY | (636) 797-5414
Hillsboro

LINCOLN COUNTY | (636) 528-0325
Troy

ST. CHARLES COUNTY | (636) 949-7506
St. Charles

ST. LOUIS CITY | (314) 622-3257
St. Louis

ST. LOUIS COUNTY | (314) 615-7180
Clayton

WARREN COUNTY | (636) 456-9800
Warrenton

IN ILLINOIS

MADISON COUNTY | (618) 692-6290
Edwardsville

ST. CLAIR COUNTY | (618) 277-6600
Belleville

MONROE COUNTY | (618) 939-8681
Waterloo

JERSEY COUNTY | (618) 498-5571
Jerseyville

CLINTON COUNTY | (618) 594-6620
Carlyle

The style **THAT FITS**

5 MIRRORED SHAPES TO FIT ANY FIGURE



Gown shapes are as diverse as brides themselves. Multitudes of options balance unique contours for the short, the tall, the lean or curvy, so guests exclaim over how marvelous the bride looks - and she is confident she does!

Start in the gown shop. Try on gowns with someone who is positively objective.

Bring favorite ideas plus an open mind. A professional gown consultant's expertise can pull a matching style for you.

Look in the mirror from all angles. Snap pictures and take notes to sort features that flatter or detract.

Compare these five body shapes with yours. Build a base to discover a gown structured for your desired look and comfort. Each design complements a bride's normal silhouette, but a professional may shape a dream gown into a fit you never thought possible.

HOURLASS

A defined waistline sits between hips and shoulders similar in size. This figure indulges easy enhancement. All necklines seem to work. Glamorize an indented waist and let natural curves contour this figure-hugging silhouette. A mermaid gown delights in the line, a sheath accents it, a cinched waistline on a ball gown puffs into double (or triple) layering of fluffy tulle, crinoline or the like, and a low-flaring style guides an elongated central line. The drop waist features a bodice that fits to the mid hip.

INVERTED TRIANGLE

Shoulders are wider than hips. A scoop neckline outlines a lovely neck. Off-shoulder draping minimizes a generous bustline. Popular modesty and illusion pieces balance a slim bodice to move the eye down along neck-to-knee embellishment. A ball gown with a full skirt encourages flow, but a confident bride's short gown

or high-low skirt exudes fun with alluring attention to shapely legs and spectacular shoes.

RECTANGLE

Straight line extends from shoulders to waist to hips. Exult in a long, lean line or create geometric roundness with an A-line, frothy and flirtatious skirt or elevated empire waist for more skirt flow. Off-the-shoulder styles widen a top tier. Illusion pieces of embroidered lace play peekaboo with what may or may not hide under sheer fabric. A nipped waist artistically balances high and low canvases. New curves flow with soft, breezy fabric. A slit elongates a tall bride's legs and contrasting sash trims a wide middle.

APPLE

Slimmer thighs counter a fuller chest, broader shoulders and less defined waist. The waistline, wherever drawn, grabs the eye. An empire waist eases lower flow, but a cinched waist slenderizes the silhouette to balance proportion. With or without sheer illusion, a deeply plunging neckline draws attention away from wide horizontal shoulders to flatter the bustline. A wide ribbon, slightly dropped waist, asymmetrical pleating or ruching focuses waistline interest.

PEAR

Hips, and perhaps thighs, are wider than shoulders. Simple vertical, rather than horizontal, lines evenly shape curves. An off-the shoulder or "V" neckline frames the face. An A-line gown highlights an indented natural waist so an added detail, such as studded waistband or flowing sash, accents the top and lets the skirt flow gracefully. A trumpet gown is fitted throughout the bodice and the volume begins at mid-thigh.

How to HIRE A FLORIST

7 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR FLORIST

CHECK SOURCES

If you have attended a wedding with flowers you adore, ask about the florist. Get referrals from people whose wedding flowers have pleased them. They will be flattered!

DO A LITTLE RESEARCH

Bridal and gardening magazines provide a feel or create a look. Cut out and collect floral images you like. Check all the attractive bouquet designs in St. Louis Best Bridal Magazine.

KNOW YOUR FLORAL BUDGET

If there is a flower you love, share the idea, but be open to seasonal options which bloom closer to your budget. A florist who brainstorms ideas and realistically helps get the most for your money wants your business.

BRING LISTS AND PHOTOS

Come prepared to meet a florist amid his/her products. List who should have flowers. Photograph ceremony and reception locations from different angles. Imagine flowers on a cake or other prop. Photos or swatches of gowns and dresses develop colorful details. Photos of what the florist did at similar ceremony/reception sites help evaluate if that

perspective truly matches yours.

ASK QUESTIONS

A major part of your look or theme is planted with a florist's competence, so you should feel comfortable asking anything. Suggest stopping by to see a cooler with bouquets and centerpieces ready for a wedding. Be specific about which decorations – aisle runner, trellis, centerpieces and even potted plants – cost extra, where a florist would recommend sourcing them, and whether you must order them directly. Check on flowers which might already be displayed, such as for a holiday, that provide inspiration – or even a free backdrop.

COMPARE PRICES AND IDEAS

Reserve a florist at least four to six months before the ceremony, allowing longer time for a popular florist or in-season wedding of May through October.

WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING

A contract details specifics: date, time, ceremony and reception sites. It lists items the florist will supply, naming color, type and cost; alternate blooms, if necessary; arrival times for setup at ceremony and reception; total cost and payment terms, plus tax, delivery and other fees; cancellation and refund policy.

Money MATTERS

TARGET FUNDS, MANAGE WITH VISION HELD ON THE BOTTOM LINE

First, you must decide a budget. All wedding plans hinge on what you plan to spend. Whatever the total, you must resolve together what you want and what you can afford to create those wedding details you want. These decisions lay a creative base for lifetime collaboration.

The annual average amount spent on a St. Louis metro wedding (not including honeymoon) in 2018, according to The Wedding Report, was \$24,785, slightly retreating from the 2017 high. No matter who provides statistics, brides and grooms want to celebrate this occasion with family and friends.

Ranges provide a starting point to help figure what your wedding might include. To accommodate expenses ranging toward the high end of a percentage, all categories together must add up to 100 percent.

Should a bride and groom squeeze the budget to extend fun after the reception or the next day? They must weigh their role as welcoming hosts against who might pay and/or attend.

50% RECEPTION

Site fee, valet parking, catering costs, bar expenses (bartender & beverages), wedding cake, groom's cake, cake cutter, cake topper, napkins, favors, etc.

11-15% PHOTO & VIDEO

Engagement, videography, wedding, photo booth

7-10% WEDDING ATTIRE

Wedding gown/headpiece/veil/lingerie, hair and

makeup, tuxedo, shoes, accessories, jewelry

6-8% FLOWERS

Ceremony – decor; bride's, attendants' bouquets; boutonnieres; corsages for mothers, grandmothers, readers, special guests; Reception – centerpieces, cake topper (if using flowers) and bouquet to toss

4-6% MUSIC

Ceremony and reception, transition backdrop for single-venue wedding

4-6% WEDDING RINGS

Purchase to wear comfortably forever

4-5% REHEARSAL PARTY

Site rental, food, beverages, tips

2-3% CEREMONY

Marriage license, site/officiant fees, aisle runner, canopy, candelabras, unity candle

2-3% STATIONERY

Announcements/save-the-dates, invitations with envelopes and enclosures, programs, reception place cards, thank-you notes, postage

2-3% GIFTS

Bride and groom, attendants, parents

2-3% TRANSPORTATION

To ceremony, photos, reception, after-party, wedding night venue; provisions for special guests

1-2% EXTRAS

Décor, mementos for guests, fees for on-location photos

Get ORGANIZED

SET PRIORITIES, DECIDE WHO PAYS, LIST TRANSACTIONS

The process is not magical and heavenly intervention should not be expected. From start to finish, organization is imperative. A few management priorities help keep wedding planning in check and on schedule.

TAKE TIME TO THINK

Becoming married takes an “I do.” No rule about who pays for what is set in stone.

Be selective and prioritize for smart balance of budget. Prime areas to weigh: number of attendants and guests, food and drink, stationery, gifts, handmade details, exotic flowers, takeaway gifts.

SIT DOWN AND DECIDE

Before setting plans in motion, decide who can pay for what. Whether a couple is established or starting out, financial priorities must be considered as the vision of the wedding unfolds. For smooth planning, there should be give-and-take plus thoughtful consideration in a discussion between a couple and all others who will contribute payment. Couples, particularly older brides and grooms, often pay a major part or all their wedding expenses. Parents may play a less traditional role by paying for an item like flowers or offering a specific amount toward a single or total bill.

MAKE A SPREADSHEET

Organize a spreadsheet with three expense columns: Estimated, Modified, and Actual. Color-code, divide and title it in any way that makes sense to you. Make a commitment to tracking expenses as you go so that if paperwork is misplaced, your budget will stay up-to-date. Use free online tools to create the spreadsheet.

LIST EVERY DETAIL

Not knowing what is due and when a bill should be paid disorganizes bride and groom and any other person responsible for making payments. Record each purchase. Note how it was bought – by check, credit or cash. Was it paid online? Extra columns show how much is due, by when and how you expect to pay. Immediately list an expense when incurred and paid even in part, filling in appropriate columns with details.

SAVE ALL RECEIPTS

Print out every receipt for the wedding and designate a large envelope to hold them. Knowing where each nickel and dime goes lets you envision the path your budget should follow. Receipts avoid overlooked minor expenses. Even a few dollars misplaced here and there can overrun a careful budget.

Videography

EMOTION + MOTION

SNEAK A PEAK BEHIND THE SCENES

From a quick five-minute focus to more than an hour, a highlight video may be the most overlooked item on the wedding-day agenda. It allows a bride and groom to see what they missed behind the highlighted scenes they meticulously planned on this, the busiest day of their lives.

CHECK THE FIELD

Research early and meet prospects. Zoom in on a videographer's style as a match to you and your wedding. Just like the photographer, a videographer will be near throughout the wedding day, so he/she should be compatible to you.

CONSIDER STYLES

A video usually incorporates music and voices. See what delights you and ask prospects how they interpret their own style. A documentary or journalistic video uses more natural sound and mimics the order of the day's real happenings. Vintage style photos require effective styling. Cinematic video places wedding day scenes to tell your story.

HIRE WHEN HAPPY

Early hiring may offer a bonus like an engagement video shoot to indicate if further collaboration on your wedding day will work. Don't rush into a contract. Talk to prospects to hear if they like what they do. Ask what equipment they use. Find out if they seek in-the-moment participation or ask guests for messages or advice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If considering a friend's resource, ask how intrusive shooting was, particularly if you don't want a drone hearing your every word. Also, ask to watch videos from that wedding. View them with an eye toward uniqueness.

Find out if photographer and videographer know and respect each other's work. On your wedding day, they must form an unintrusive team to provide you with fond memories.

SERVICES

Just like a photographer, a videographer offers packages with outlined services. Similar guidelines apply. Know who will come to film and his/ her experience in wedding videography. Outline how many people will participate where and when, who is the planning contact and an emergency backup plan. Will time sequences provide more action? Words in current technology to focus on better angles and higher quality: drone, jib, slider, Glidecam.

PHOTO BOOTH

fun

INSTANT MEMORIES FOR ALL

A photo booth is an equalizer. All ages are welcome to experience photo booth fun. Photo booth images compose guest books, may appear on a couple's website for private showings and even stream out to let the world know who got married and who attended. It fills the bride and groom's guest book with images of all present. Plus, lucky guests take home memento photos of themselves and, if desired, relatives, friends, bride and groom. Celebrants may pre-implant their names, wedding date and a gracious expression of welcome or gratitude directly to the photo card.

OFFERINGS

Photo booths offer a wide range of services varying in appearance, photo quality and style. Images come with or without video, may bear sage advice from pictured guests. Setup varies from one person with a camera and screen alongside a printer or may include an actual booth, partially open or enclosed, with props guests can wear or signs to hold for photographs. A full-time attendant should dress appropriately, monitor equipment and encourage all guests to participate.

STYLE

While a photo booth can be as much fun at a black-tie event as in a rustic location, it should mesh with your wedding's style. Allow for its space and exterior, including backdrop and props, so it enhances the atmosphere. Once guests get a feel for what they do and receive in return, toddlers to grandparents likely will come back smiling broadly and pose for another sitting – all part of the happy entertainment plan.

EXTRA FEATURES

Do guests see what happens inside the booth? How many fit inside? Do guests receive a photo strip or single shot? Do bride and groom take home a CD or flash drive with all photos or a scrapbook that night? Can they be downloaded to an exclusive online site? Ask to see options in finished products.

TIMING

Determine time frame, allowing estimates for setup, take-down and removal. If the site lacks space for dancing at the same time during the reception, start the party with a photo booth as an ice-breaker during pre-dinner cocktails.

QUALITY

A qualified provider determines results. Look behind the screen for competence. Be certain the company has insurance and runs background checks on the people it provides. A company's rating with the Better Business Bureau may differentiate the field beyond price and options.

To customize the wedding, ask for props not readily seen in friends' reception photos or bring your own to fulfill a theme. Ask the venue in advance where a photo booth usually sets up for best use of space.

Photos

THAT CAPTURE THE MOMENT

You want to remember how your vows were sealed with a kiss, who was there and everyone's enjoyment of the day. These questions help focus on a photographer to tell your tale of memories.

SAMPLES

May we see more than one sample of your work? Can you show us a complete product like we want, start to finish, by the photographer we would have?

IMAGE PRESERVATION

How do you protect wedding photographs and for how long? Will we be able to return in five – or even 10 – years to replace or get more photos?

EQUIPMENT

Do you capture images with cameras of professional quality or do you use consumer-level equipment? What is available to back up a camera, lighting or power failure? What special effects – black-and-white, sepia, spotlights or other – might our photographs have?

COLLABORATION

Do we work directly with our photographer or an office assistant or other staffer? Who answers – or returns – our calls? How do we review, select and edit final images for online, album and print sets?

TIME

What is the maximum time until we see proofs? When do we see photos posted online? Once we select pictures, how long until final delivery of products? Do we get a CD with all the quality photos and when? How may we use them? May we earn bonus products?

DELIVERY

In what format do you deliver proofs? What does the price include? What other options or products are available? At what cost?

QUALITY

Does your company personally print or how do you provide finished photos? Are images guaranteed against fading? If so, for how long?

STYLE

What do you call your artistic style? Does your natural talent translate as traditional, photojournalistic or is it mixed? Do you like to shoot in a studio or in a meaningful (to us) environment? Where will you take engagement photos, if included? Who picks sites? Do you have bad-weather options?

EXPERIENCE

How long have you photographed weddings? How long are you in business? Can you provide references? If we choose companion services, who fulfills them?

ASSURANCE

How do you ensure satisfaction? What is backup plan in a delay or emergency? What is procedure if equipment fails or another issue arises? Do you carry liability insurance? Where is your contract with details we can read before we sign the agreement?

Get to know YOUR OFFICIANT

ON THE PHONE

Ask detailed questions to determine if you, as a couple, and a potential officiant make a match.

Is officiant available for first-choice date and time? If not, the conversation stops there, unless a recommendation is sought or date can be varied.

Do all sides fit the vision of the prospective bride and groom as a married couple? If not, can planning continue comfortably together?

Is printed documentation required for a first meeting? Religions often need certification of baptism or other life events, particularly if there was a previous marriage.

Are personalized vows, readings or music allowed? A setting may restrict music or readings and require traditional vows.

An officiant sets the wedding's tone, so choose carefully. If it is a friend or relative, find state and local rules and follow them. An officiant must ask for commitment of both parties, plus sign and return the license

Is pre-wedding counseling required? Will it be with the officiant? Vows with a religious theme or setting may require couples to attend a retreat or class before tying the knot and thus affect the wedding time line.

What are the fees? An officiant's fee often ranges

between \$150 and \$450 or a specified donation may be expected. Sometimes, a facility fee includes officiant and on-site planner, while others require a couple to provide an officiant. Musicians and other services charge separately.

FACE TO FACE

If trust grows between you and officiant by phone, schedule a meeting. Before sealing the deal, review details of both site and ceremony.

Tour the site. Envision size, capacity, accessibility, layout restrictions. Gauge if access is convenient for wheelchairs and walkers.

Suggest music, readings and vows for the ceremony. At the outset, be clear about what you want to plan, particularly if choices are more creative than traditional. An officiant may outline restrictions and suggest alternatives for future progress.

Understand any dress code. A religious site may ask that head or shoulders be covered or require other wardrobe essentials for women and/or men.

List what site provides versus what must be arranged. Extras may include runner, flowers beyond seasonal or weekend decoration, candles, dressing area, etc.

Note times and spaces allowed or available. Check if this coincides with time necessary to preserve memories of your event.

Discuss discourse that might be given. If apprehensive, ask if it may be read in advance.

Ask about documentation. Discuss delivery of marriage license and marriage certificate.