**Whimsical Wedding Services**

**Congratulations on Your Engagement!**

Are you ready to take the next steps to start planning your wedding?

Whimsical Weddings knows how important your wedding day is to you and to the guests who will be there to celebrate with you. There are so many details to manage, and people to coordinate, but we are here to help! Please enjoy this free resource to help you with the first major decision you need to make – **selecting your venue**.

Step One: Theme, Vibe

Do you want something simple with a few details? Or extravagant with every detail accounted for? The venue should match the theme and vibe of your wedding. For example, a traditional religious ceremony in your small town, local church is a very different vibe from the large wedding event venue. It is harder to recreate Middle Earth in a warehouse or barn than in a country or mountain venue.

Step Two: The Budget

Before you start making decisions, be realistic about your budget. This will be the guide for making every decision – where to splurge, where to cut, and what to make by hand.

The venue will take up the bulk of your budget, so be prepared as you start looking.

Step Three: Preliminary Guest List

Take some time and make a full list of all the people you want to invite to the rehearsal, the wedding and the reception. This will determine the size of venue you are looking for and ultimately helps determine décor and catering as well.

Step Four: Time, Effort and Energy

Unless you can take off a lot of time in the coming months, you will want to consider how much time you realistically have to prepare for the wedding and how much effort and energy you are willing and able to put into your big day. DIY weddings may appear to be a cost saver, but is it worth it to be exhausted by the time you walk down the aisle?

Step Five: Traveling, Distance, Transportation

How far are your guests traveling from? How far are you willing to travel from your home? Will you need to reserve a hotel room block for out-of-town guests? Will you be renting Air BnBs for the respective wedding party? Limo vs taxi vs Uber? If you have a lot of out-of-town guests, it will be important to consider their accommodation and transportation needs to and from the venue, reception and post-wedding brunch.

Other Considerations for Venues and Great Questions to Ask:

* Parking
* Bride and Groom changing areas
* Bathrooms (well stocked, clean and ready!)
* Provisions for vendors (Caterer, DJ, Florist, Baker, Photographer, Videographer)
  + Kitchen, Electrical Outlets, Refrigerator/Freezer, Extension Cords
* When is venue available for set-up? How much time do we have for take down?
* What is included? Décor, event staff, food, tables, chairs, stage/altar, etc…
  + Are tables set up for us?
  + Will there be someone on site to assist with technical issues or questions?

**Comparing Venue Types**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Venue | Pros | Cons |
| Churches, Religious Spaces | Sentimental, Traditional  Officiant Included  Typically free or donation for members | Reception – may or may not be an option, no alcohol, may have reception in 2nd location  Pre-marital counseling required (could also be a pro)  Little room for customization |
| Parks and Outdoor Public Spaces | Free or low cost | Parking  No bad weather alternative  Some ban alcohol  Reception off site? Rental costs could outweigh savings  No privacy |
| Restaurants  Restaurants continued… | Cost of food included to use the room.  Typically enough parking for small gathering  May fit better into your theme | 25 people or less  Noise and crowds from the restaurant patrons  Some do not allow the ceremony but will host the rehearsal or reception |
| Small Event Venue | Professionals with events, may have staff to assist  Parking available  Low-Mid range pricing  Personal, cozy  Ceremony and Reception in same building | May need to provide own décor, set-up and take down |
| Large Event Venue | Professionals with events – event staff typically included  Parking available  Room to move around  Ceremony and Reception in same building  Basic event décor included | Costly\*  Can feel cold, industrial, plain  May need to provide own additional décor |
| Venues that specialize in weddings  (ie Wedgewood) | Specific wedding packages available that provide coordination services and a variety of vendors included  Parking available  Basic event décor included  Ceremony and Reception in same building | Costly\*  Can feel cold, industrial, plain  May need to provide own additional décor |
| Destination Wedding | What can we say … the wedding of your dreams!  Highly recommend a destination wedding planner, or a planner local to the area | Time consuming to coordinate – need a wedding planner!  Costly to yourself and guests  Little ability for contingencies in the event of something going wrong (no plan B) |

***Whimsical Weddings is here to help! I can go with you to visit venues and help you make your decision with our customized checklist specific to your wedding needs. Cheers!***