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Your guide to the perfect wedding



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Hampshire

Bride & Groom

Your guide to the perfect wedding.

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Honeymooners are opting for the romance, adventure of cruises

There are 2.5 million weddings in the United States each year, and the weddings business is a \$40 billion annual industry, including the ceremony, reception, bachelor(-ette) parties and honeymoon.

Increasingly, newlyweds are opting for a cruise for a cost-effective and carefree honeymoon. About 5,000 weddings and vow renewals happen on cruises every year, and cruises now account for 15 percent of all honeymoons.

The inclusive nature of a cruise is a leading factor in the decision. A cruise provides a week of great food, pampering and entertainment for about \$2,500 or less per person.

Most newlyweds say they prefer a week in a fun-and-sun destination. That makes cruises doubly attractive, since they visit several ports and offer a selection of shore tours.

Though the Hawaiian Islands remain the all-time favorite honeymoon destination,



many newlyweds are choosing cruises in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean.

And there's no more romantic way to experience the wonders of the Med or Caribbean than a weeklong voyage aboard a tall ship. Star Clippers' three sailing ships only carry up to 170 or 227 guests, and visit some of the world's most exotic destinations.

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Star Clippers' relaxed yet elegant shipboard atmosphere is the perfect antidote to months of wedding planning. Yet, the emphasis on beach time and water sports, and the array of soft-adventure excursions offered provide opportunities for couples to share new experiences as they start their life together.

Whether it's a fabulous honeymoon sailing through the Greek Isles, a barefoot wedding set on a Caribbean beach or a sunset vow-renewal ceremony performed by a ship's captain, Star Clippers offers the romance of a true sailing experience. For more about Star Clippers, visit www.starclippers.com. (NewsUSA)

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Wedding gifts for grooms: A tradition brides shouldn't ignore

The answer is: Yes, it's expected. But it's also a chance for all you brides out there to truly show you know that not everything is about you on your wedding day. That there really is another person involved (that would be the groom) who deserves a bit of recognition, too. We're talking wedding presents -- specifically, yours to your husband-to-be. Tradition does, indeed, hold that both you and he exchange gifts. And while it's true that some guys are initially shocked to learn your engagement ring doesn't also count as a "present," that's no excuse for you to waver. "Giving him something that's just for him will make him feel really special," advises BrideBox.com.

Here's what you need to know now that it's prime time for weddings:

- **When to exchange them.** Etiquette dictates that the hand-off occurs at one of three times: the night before the wedding, the morning of the ceremony, or right before leaving on your honeymoon. Think it's bad luck to see the groom before the nuptials? "Many



couples choose to courier gifts via bridesmaids or groomsmen just before the ceremony," says Brides.com.

- **There's a thin line between "romantic" and "mushy."** Some of you may be tempted to compile a "love notes" journal of every bit of correspondence you've ever sent your groom. Even assuming he's the type who wouldn't consider that a bit "over the top," there's always the chance he might be left wondering, "Okay, where's my real present?" -- especially if his gift to you is a serious piece of jewelry.

- **The consensus choice.** There's a reason a watch invariably makes everyone's

short list: It's the perfect statement of who he is or aspires to be. (It's also a lot more impressive than a flask, which for some reason also gets a few votes). No less a taste arbiter than MarthaStewartWeddings.com favors Baume & Mercier's Clifton line -- as elegant as the original 1950s model that inspired it -- for the way it "easily transitions from big day to every day."

Like the Swiss watchmaker's timelessly charming (and affordably luxurious) Classima line, it comes

with a choice of straps, dial faces and a variety of what's known as "small complications" that go way beyond just telling the hour. You can shop them at the Baume & Mercier e-boutique or by calling 1-800-MERCIER, where free engraving and wrapping are available.

- **Fun fact.** One writer at AskMen.com says he's "heard of women giving their husbands watches in the ceremony instead of a wedding ring." If so, the answer is: No, just like your engagement ring, that wouldn't also qualify as a wedding present. (NewsUSA)

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5 golden rules of planning a group destination wedding

Soft sand warms the soles of your feet and the smell of sweet flowers fill the air. The salty mist of the ocean kisses your cheeks while the laughter of friends and family brings joy to the heart. This isn't just an amazing vacation for your loved ones, it's your wedding day. Images like this are inspiring more brides than ever before to forego traditional weddings made popular by their parents' generation in exchange for dreamy, relaxing destination celebrations. It's the ultimate way to customize a wedding, and often it's more affordable than going the traditional route.

"Once intimate affairs, destination weddings are no longer just for small groups," said Cheryl Cox of Grand Strand Bridal Association. "The most intriguing and prominent wedding trend of 2016 is couples expanding the guest list for their destination weddings to include people beyond immediate family."

The reason this trend is growing so rapidly is that it provides guests more than just the opportunity to see a loved one tie the knot. It really gives them a mini-vacation that they'll never forget. It's a vacation with a purpose, and plenty of time for fun and activities are built into the experience. However, brides and grooms who want to embrace this growing trend have a few unique considerations. To ensure everyone

has a great time, follow the five golden rules of planning a destination wedding for big groups:

▪ **Rule 1: Select an accessible location.**

You'll get more RSVPs if you select a destination that is easy and affordable for everyone to access. Consider air travel and drive times from guests' locations. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, is a great example that is a four to eight hour drive from many Midwest cities, plus has an international airport, with plenty of non-stop flights from major cities. Furthermore, a domestic locale like this means guests don't have to worry about passports and complicated travel logistics out of the country. Learn more at <http://www.visitmyrtlebeach.com/>.

▪ **Rule 2: Look for myriad of lodging options.**

Getting a block of hotel rooms is a common practice, but go a step further to provide guests with a variety of lodging options so they can pick what best suits their tastes and budget. Traditional hotel rooms, B&B style accommodations at historic plantations and even vacation home rental options let guests choose what makes them most comfortable. Be sure to mention accommodation info on your wedding website and/or invitation.

▪ **Rule 3: Opt for a city with variety.**

Some people adore spending days on

the beach or hours golfing while others crave visits to landmarks and amusement parks.

Consider what a location has to offer beyond the ceremony. You're giving guests a reason to splurge on a mini-vacation, so a place like Myrtle Beach with more than 100 golf courses, plentiful shopping, 60 miles of pristine coastline and lots of attractions for kids means there's something for everyone.

▪ **Rule 4: Be involved but don't micromanage.**

Provide guests with important information about the location, such as popular attractions, transportation specifics and amenity details. It is custom for the couple to pay for one or more events in addition to the wedding celebration, so let guests know what you've planned.

However, keep it to no more than one activity per day to allow time to explore as they please.

▪ **Rule 5: Make gifts optional.**

Guests spend more money to attend a destination wedding than a hometown affair. Be a gracious host and make gifts optional. By allowing their presence to be your wedding gift you're showing good etiquette and understanding. This thoughtful gesture opens more funds to enjoy their vacation to the fullest, which is what you wanted when selecting a destination wedding in the first place. (BPT)

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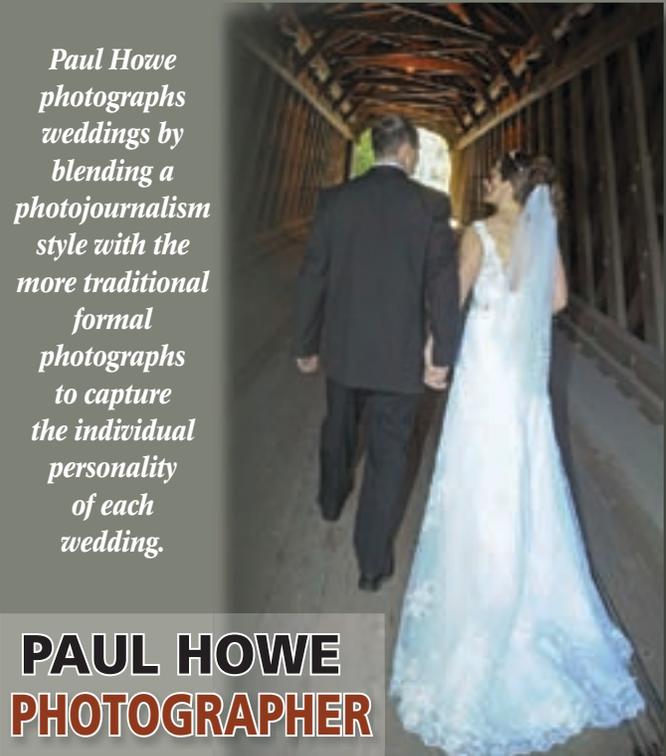
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Ways to make your 'I Do' last forever

In between the guest list, the flowers and the perfect three-tier cake, it can be hard to find time to shop for your wedding rings. However, it is important to remember that most of the wedding details are fleeting and gone after a few hours of enjoyment, while your rings are enjoyed forever. So, whether you are having a smaller gathering or a more traditional affair, this important to-do on your event checklist should not be overlooked, especially since your rings mark your commitment to one another and will last a lifetime. Jewelry and style expert Michael O'Connor has a few tips that are sure to help you find matrimonial bliss when it comes to ring selection:

- **Create a budget.** There are many details to consider when planning a wedding that can quickly drain your budget. It is important to set aside money for a lifelong symbol like your wedding bands. Not sure how much to budget? Consider that in 2006, couples spent an average of \$2,079 on wedding bands, according to the CN American Wedding Study. And since the age-old rule for purchasing an engagement ring is to spend



two months salary, plan to spend one month's salary for the two wedding bands. Check out the "Budget Calculator" at www.TheKnot.com.

- **Shop together.** It is a good idea to shop for rings together. In fact, 80 percent of couples do, which isn't a surprise since your rings, which don't have to match, should reflect your personal styles and tastes.

- **Plan ahead.** Don't wait until the last minute to go shopping for your wedding

bands, they're simply too important. Plan to start shopping for your rings six months prior to your "I do's." Not only do you need time to research and shop, but you also need to allot time for custom orders, sizing and engraving.

- **Invest in quality.** Because you want your ring to last a lifetime, it is important to put thought into the quality of metal you choose. Platinum 950 is the most durable precious metal and will last a lifetime. It's 30 times more rare than gold, and for wedding bands set with diamonds, its natural whiteness will ensure the diamonds sparkle and stay secure. It is no wonder that Hollywood's A-list designers such as Tacori, DeBeers, Ritani and Kwiat are all choosing Platinum in their designs. But don't worry, you don't have to be a star to own a Platinum ring. Platinum engagement and wedding rings are available for a wide variety of budgets, making it an affordable luxury. Some resources that offer popular price points include Lieberfarb, Scott Kay and Blue Nile. For more information, visit www.engagementguide.com and www.preciousplatinum.com. (NewsUSA)

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DIY Wedding Trends

Pinboards are buzzing with endless inspiration, bringing clever and colorful projects to life. For brides to be, the hottest looks in wedding decor can be yours with just a bit of creativity.

The evolution of touch is underway, with fabrics and embellishments featuring texture and intrigue becoming huge hits this bridal season. Take materials such as burlap, chalkboard finishes, monogram letters and mason jars to the next level by mixing and matching with the season's colors.

Picture your big day with pretty petals adorned in lace offset by rustic trimmings. This understated yet feminine look can be yours with these trending projects from the crafting experts at Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores. Take these ideas and gather your girlfriends for a pre-wedding craft session. You'll love unleashing your creativity as well as the extra bonding time with the girls, all in preparation for the big event.

For more ways to add trending touches to your wedding, visit www.joann.com.

Burlap Cone Floral Hanger

Crafting time: 1-2 hours

Skill level: No experience necessary

Supplies and Tools:

Cutting utensils

Thin wire

Wire or boutonniere pins

Panacea burlap garland

2 Styrofoam brand foam cones

Glue gun

Glue sticks

Ribbon of choice

Hydrangeas: 1 green and peach, 2 peach and cream

Green mini bundle

1. Cut wire into hairpin shaped pieces or use boutonniere pins.

2. Cut 1 yard of burlap per cone. Fold burlap in half and wrap cone from bottom to top. Pin burlap to cone. Not all of it will be covered. Run glue along seam; press to secure.

3. Attach ribbon to create hanger. Glue in place.

4. Trim hydrangea short. Glue to top of cone. Trim several clusters from hydrangea. Glue to cover exposed foam, creating a dripping ice cream affect.

5. Trim half of mini bundle and glue in center.

6. Trim blossoms of green hydrangea. Glue



to both cones.

Note: Refer to photo often for placement of items.

Burlap and Lace Wrapped Floral Centerpiece

Crafting time: 1-2 hours

Skill level: Some experience necessary ▶

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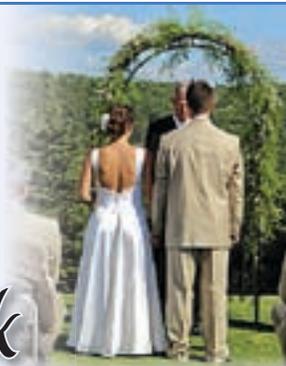


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- White hydrangea bush
- Light blue small bush
- Pink small bush
- Teal small bush
- Teal tall bush
- Cream wisteria garland
- Panacea cloth-covered wire
- Glue gun
- Glue sticks
- David Tutera burlap ribbon
- Mason jar
- David Tutera lace ribbon
- Panacea crystal clear resin

1. Trim stems, removing lower foliage.
2. Form a hand-tied bouquet.
3. Tie off with wire.
4. Dribble glue around wire to secure. Let dry.
5. Wrap burlap ribbon around Mason jar, overlapping 1 inch.
6. Wrap lace around jar and tie in knot.
7. Pour resin in jar. Follow package instructions.
8. Insert bouquet. Allow to dry.

Note: Refer to photo often for placement of items. Source: Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores. (Family Features)



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6 tips for planning your wedding photos like a pro

With everything that goes into your wedding day, those once-in-a-lifetime moments will go by in a blur, which is why hiring a professional wedding photographer is a must. After all, the last thing you should be worrying about is whether your photographer will be able to capture your big day. The key? Prepare yourself so that you can accurately evaluate the "right" photographer for you. "The best photographer will take the time to build a rapport with you and use his or her experience and creativity to capture the mood, personality, ambiance and even the geography of your wedding," says PPA (Professional Photographers of America) photographer Berit Bizjak. "The finest wedding photography is more than a series of still pictures. It's physical poetry -- it tells the story of the day and portrays the essence of both people and place."



To this end, PPA, the largest international nonprofit association created by professional photographers, has taken the guesswork out of the process by offering six tips to help you plan your wedding photos like a pro:

■ **1. Book far in advance.** The best photo-graphers get booked quickly -- sometimes as much as a year in advance -- so don't wait until the last minute to book your photographer.

■ **2. Show them the money.** Now is not the time to skimp on your photo budget. Call around and get a price range for services, and remember: after the cake is long gone, and the

dress is stored away, your wedding photos will be the only things left to share and enjoy for years to come, so don't cut too many corners on your photography budget -- you'll end up regretting it.

■ **3. Make sure your photographer is a real pro.** Only hire someone who has liability insurance, experience taking the style of photos you want, backup equipment and a plan for when things go south. Ideally, he or she is a PPA photographer. PPA photographers do more than just snap pictures. They have the technical expertise and artistry to make you look your best and bring your vision to

life. They also abide by a strict code of ethics that makes a real difference.

■ **4. Request to see a full gallery of real weddings.**

Look at full wedding coverage (not just a small selection of each wedding's best moments) to see a photographer's true style and get a sense of how he or she might tell your "story." Do you prefer more artistic or traditional poses? Would you rather have a photojournalist approach or a mix of all styles?

■ **5. Work with your photographer to create a detailed shot list.**

PPA wedding photographers can also help you create that shot list, as they know what key moments tell a wedding story and can prepare for those. But talk about your must-haves, and walk through the entire program with your photographer ahead of time. Share your expectations ahead of time to ensure that he or she captures the key shots, while remaining attentive and available to catch the best candid moments.

■ **6. Plan your post-wedding photo strategy ahead of time!** Almost as soon as the festivities are over, you'll be eager to look at the photos so you can relive your big day over and over again. Ask your photographer for teasers or a "sneak peek" and a timeline for when the rest of the pictures will be available. Will they give you an online gallery for family and friends to choose the images they want? Again, knowing these things ahead of time will make things easy on the back end, sparing you any heartache. (NewsUSA)



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Beat planning pressure: 5 tips for an intimate wedding

The terms wedding and money go hand in hand. The average wedding cost is now up to \$31,213 according to theknot.com, and that's not even including the honeymoon. Because of increasing costs, more and more couples are looking to plan a smaller, more intimate ceremony. While there's no universal way to define a small wedding, it typically involves a limited gathering of family and close friends.

No matter the size of your guest list, you're bound to feel the stress of planning as you want your day to be perfect. But opting for a modest-sized wedding opens the door to endless options and possibilities. Here are some tips for making your small-scale wedding the event of the year:

▪ **Whittle down your guest list**

If you can keep your guest count low, the cost for just about everything you need for your wedding will significantly decrease. There's always going to be more guests you could invite, but if you're making a point to have a small wedding, people will be understanding. Set limits and stick to them.

▪ **Rent what you can**

Rental stores offer a wide range of products to fit weddings of any size or theme. A smaller wedding opens up your options when it comes to venue and personalization. You'll likely need tables and chairs, tents, a dance floor and maybe even china, tableware and linens. Start by searching on RentalHQ.com to find a store for all your decorating and setup needs.

▪ **Keep the menu simple**

One of the biggest costs of a wedding is the food, so try to shy away from extravagant and fancy menu items. All you need are a few key dishes and one or two desserts to keep everyone satisfied. Your guests aren't coming to ogle over a lavish spread, they simply want to be there to celebrate with the happy couple.

▪ **Stick to your budget**

Create a budget using money you already have in the bank. There's no need to go into debt when planning an intimate wedding. If you have \$1,000 to spend, then plan a \$1,000 wedding. If you stick to a moderate budget, you're more likely to keep the planning and actual event in control.

▪ **Think outside the box**

A small wedding may require a bit of strategic thinking and DIY projects. For example, you can make your own invitations and party favors to not only save money, but

to reflect your unique personality as a couple. You can also get creative with the venue, like a small bed and breakfast, restaurant or historic home. There's no need to book an entire banquet hall.

Let these straightforward ideas take some of the stress out of your wedding planning. After all, your wedding day is supposed to be one of the happiest occasions. For more wedding planning tips and helpful options visit rentalhq.com/weddings. (BPT)



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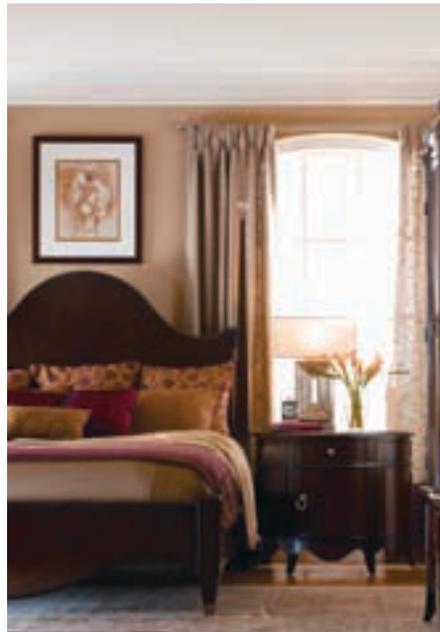
Meld and merge a perfectly accessorized home

Ideally, decorating a first home together begins with the furniture and accessories near and dear to both the bride and groom. But if a bride-to-be can't live with her fiance's 1970s thrift store coffee table and orange bean bag chair, chances are he won't be thrilled with her antique oak hope chest and ornately carved sleigh bed. Can these two conflicting schemes co-exist after the couple has crossed the threshold?

Designer Home collections make it easier than ever to meld female and male sensibilities in home decor by offering products to suit a variety of styles. Bedding, furniture, fabrics, area rugs, flooring, storage accessories, table linens and window coverings are all designed to work in traditional and more updated settings. For the latest in designer styles for the home, couples can check out the Liz Claiborne Home collection on www.jcpenny.com and www.qvc.com.

▪ **Setting the tone.** Choose a color scheme together, and creatively arrange furniture and accessories around it. Find a neutral ground to meld his love of earth tones, for example, with her love of soft fabrics.

▪ **Splish, splash.** Create an understated,



clean look in the bath for him, but add accessories with a dash of color to satisfy a bride-to-be's lively outlook. Bold shower curtains, wastebaskets and vanity items inject freshness and personality.

▪ **Boudoir basics.** Usher in a new home with a fresh set of bedding; couples can look for a variety of styles and colors designed to be dressed up or left as is for a classic look. Decorative pillows, shams, coverlets and throws complete the look and are a great way for wedding guests to add to the couple's cozy love nest.

▪ **Staples of style.** If he loves a more modern style, but she wants a retro feel, furniture options in leather, fine fabrics, hardwood and wicker can readily mesh both personalities.

▪ **Merging moods.** She's a homebody; he likes beaches and picnics. For bedrooms and living rooms, couples can combine sensibilities with bedding and furniture lines that bring the outside in, and vice versa. Try mixing a table from one line with a chair from another -- mixing it up is a playful way to punch up the personality of a room.

Just like in the corporate world, mergers can either run smoothly or be a headache. By considering the sensibilities the bride and groom share -- rather than just the differences -- creating a first home together can be one merger full of fringe benefits. (NewsUSA)



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Shedding for the wedding: Your 3-month guide

(BPT) - The dress, the tux, the guests, the honeymoon - there are so many details that go into your wedding day. All eyes are on you from the moment you walk down the aisle until the last dance of the night. Understandably so, brides and grooms often feel a lot of pressure to look their best on this important day - there's nothing like a wedding to motivate you to get serious about your health and fitness goals.

But crash diets or extreme exercise programs are never the answer. "It's usually best to start thinking about your specific goals three months before your wedding day to allow plenty of time to establish your routine and adjust to a healthier lifestyle," says Steve Bronston, certified personal trainer with Life Time, a healthy way of life company that operates more than 115 health and wellness centers nationwide. "This creates a great opportunity for the bride and groom to support each other and get in shape together."

Bronston and Life Time offer a three-month countdown plan to get you ready for the big day:

Weeks 1-4

Focus on changing your unhealthy habits.



Nutrition is key when trying to lose weight, decrease body fat and increase your overall health. Work with a professional to lay out a detailed nutrition plan that consists of carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats at each meal. Then, begin with a fitness program that incorporates weight training and cardio intervals. Arm exercises like overhead press, tricep push-ups and bicep curls, and back exercises like rows and rear flies help brides looking to tone up for a strapless or low-back dress. Bronston suggests starting with two or three days of weight training, two or three days of cardio and one day of Pilates or yoga.

Weeks 5-8

Now it's time to switch up your exercise

routines. It's a good idea to work with a personal trainer or join a group fitness class once or twice a week to shake up your routine and stay motivated. Your workouts should include one to two weight training exercises per body part throughout the week. If you can, try to shift the amount of weight you use and number of repetitions you do to help stimulate change within your body. Continue a cardio routine of two to three days per week and add in another day or Pilates or yoga.

Weeks 9-12

It is important to keep up with your developing healthy habits as the weeks progress, but as your wedding day approaches, you're sure to feel the stress of planning. "A new focus on rest and relaxation during this time period is key," Bronston says. You can eat well and exercise perfectly, but without sleep, stretching, rest and recovery, your body is at risk of not functioning properly.

Planning a wedding can be stressful and tiresome, but if you commit to a healthy diet and fitness plan, you'll walk down the aisle feeling confident and ready for your new life ahead.

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Tax tips for newly married couples

"In between the flurry of wedding planning, dress shopping and bridal showers, few engaged couples stop to think about how getting married will affect their income taxes," explained TaxAct spokesperson, Shaunna Morgan. "While it's important to understand the tax consequences, keep in mind that you can still do your own taxes. TaxAct, a leading DIY tax solution, asks simple questions about life events like marriage to guide you through the tax implications and help you get all of your deductions to maximize your refund."

▪ **Name changes**

Your name(s) and Social Security number(s) are critical elements of your tax return. Both identifiers must exactly match the information the Social Security Administration (SSA) has on file. That means if you legally change your name after you get married, the SSA needs to know about it. To get a Social Security card with your new name, you'll need to provide proof of identity, such as a marriage certificate, fill out an application and either mail it or deliver it in person to your local SSA office.

▪ **New address**

If you're moving, remember to report your

new address to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The fastest way to make the change is to complete Form 8822 available on the agency website at www.irs.gov.

▪ **New filing status**

Once you've said, "I do," you'll have the option to claim one of two filing statuses on your tax return: married filing jointly or married filing separately. If you and your spouse each earn an income, you might consider running the numbers to determine if you have a lower combined tax by filing one way versus the other. Some tax software packages do the calculations for you so it's easier to make an informed decision when selecting a filing status. TaxAct Deluxe, for example, gives users a Joint vs. Separate Analysis report that does all the calculations so you can see your estimated refund amounts for each filing status.

▪ **Changing your tax withholding**

Any time you have a life change you should revisit your Form W-4. If both you and your spouse work, you'll likely have a higher combined income, which may put you into a higher tax bracket. In order to ensure the right amount of tax is withheld from your



paycheck, you'll want to update your Form W-4 to ensure you aren't having too much or too little tax withheld.

▪ **Affordable Care Act premium tax credit**

If you or your spouse receive health insurance through a government-sponsored marketplace and receive advance payments of the premium tax credit to help offset the cost of your premiums, you'll want to review your coverage after the wedding, and notify the marketplace of your newly married status. Reporting this change will help you avoid having too much or too little premium assistance paid and ultimately, help you steer clear of owing additional money or getting a small refund when you file your taxes. If you elect to keep your coverage "as is," separate from your spouse, or wish to add your spouse to your coverage, you should notify the marketplace of your special changes in coverage. (BPT)

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Wellness-gearred getaway travel is on the rise

Studies show that a yearly vacation is invaluable for health, with benefits varying from lower stress levels to cardiovascular improvements. Adding to these benefits, many travelers are now combining traditional vacations with wellness-gearred getaways.

A panel of experts at the annual International Travel Mart in Cannes, France, predicted that, by 2040, 90 percent of luxury tourism will include some aspect of health and wellness.

The global market size of the wellness tourism industry is growing rapidly -- faster than travel in general -- and is predicted to account for \$678.5 billion by 2017, compared with \$438.6 billion in 2012, according to Statistica Inc.

Much of this growth can be attributed to the maturation of the baby boomer generation, which is more health-conscious than preceding generations. These travelers look for a vacation that integrates their daily healthful routine with traditional aspects of travel. But it's not just baby



boomers who are looking to travel in good health -- the active family travel market is burgeoning and is expected to continue to grow as well.

So, what is wellness travel? The trend covers all aspects of health, including nutritious menu options, spa offerings and fitness activities. Across the globe, tourism professionals are responding to growing demands by introducing whole food, vegetarian and vegan menus, spa packages and

active excursions. Hiking, cycling, paddle boarding and kayaking continue to gain popularity.

Tall ship cruise specialist Star Clippers is one travel company that offers a complete wellness experience. Shoreside the cruise line features complimentary water sports and adventurous shore excursions that include mountain biking and kayaking in some of the most beautiful destinations in the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

Onboard, guests are invited to participate in yoga on deck under billowing sails on select

yoga-themed sailings, and most cruises afford the opportunity to climb the mast for an exhilarating workout. Massages are available on each ship, and flagship Royal Clipper features a full-service spa. Healthy gourmet meal options are available on all three ships in the fleet for breakfast, lunch and dinner. For more information, visit www.starclippers.com. (NewsUSA)

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Relaxation, sophistication trump tasteless 'traditions' for bachelorette parties

“Bachelorette parties are as unique as the women they celebrate,” says Michael Belot, general manager of Destination Kohler – home to AAA five-diamond and Forbes five-star hotel that hosts scores of brides, bridesmaids and weddings each year. “We’re seeing an emphasis on relaxation for the bride and companionship with her friends in today’s bachelorette parties.”

Belot points to five in-demand elements:

■ **1. Spa time:** Parties are looking for spas that offer a comprehensive list of salon services, familiar and new massages and body treatments, and easy access to luxury accommodations.



■ **2. Great food:** Modern bachelorette groups are looking for dining options that are luxurious and delicious, or that accommodate lifestyle needs such as gluten-free or low-calorie diets.

surveyed brides said they wanted a bachelorette party that was deeply personal and tailored to their individual tastes and interests. (BPT)

■ **3. Bonding activities:** From yoga classes and golf outings to wine and chocolate pairings, brides-to-be are looking for more diverse, sophisticated activities they can do with their girlfriends.

■ **4. A location “away from it all”:** Nearly a third of respondents in the Bridesmaid Census said they didn’t want to go crazy for a bachelorette party, they just wanted to enjoy time with their friends.

■ **5. Personalization:** Twenty-three percent of

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