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Q & A

Our team of experts answer your wedding dilemmas

Write to us

If you have a question you'd like to ask our panel of experts, write to Q&A, Your Surrey Wedding magazine, Kline Davis Ltd, Broseley House, Newlands Drive, Witham, Essex CM8 2UL. Alternatively, email your questions to editor@countyweddingmagazines.com.

Our Expert Panel



John Rahim is one of Surrey's leading wedding and portrait photographers. John has been working as a photographer for over a decade and set up his wedding photography business in 2003. Adopting a photojournalist approach John captures the day as it unfolds and works in an unobtrusive manner. John is a member of the MPA and SWPP and has had his work published in all of the major national and regional wedding publications.



Elfrida Spooner is in charge of Conferences and Banqueting at Denbies Wine Estate in Dorking. Denbies is England's largest vineyard set in 265 acres, a unique and spectacular venue for a wedding. Contact Elfrida on 01306 876 616 or visit www.denbieswineestate.com.



Kim Neville is the director of The Pink Pumpkin wedding design, based in Surrey. The Pink Pumpkin is a wedding design, planning and coordination company, who will turn your wedding day dreams into reality. Whether your ideal wedding is a chic informal gathering or a fantastically flamboyant party, The Pink Pumpkin will relieve you of all the hassle and stress of the planning, but none of the fun.



Sarah Holland advises people on all aspects of flowers and plants at the Flowers & Plants Association. She has been in the floristry industry for over 10 years, where she began working in a flower shop on Saturdays. Since then, she has taught floristry at Jane Packer flower school and worked on trade publications.



Heart and Country

Q I am lucky enough to have managed to book my wedding on Valentine's Day! I'm so excited and really want to have a romantic theme. I'd like a heart-shaped bouquet and heart-shaped decorations. It's a country wedding so I'd like to tie in the two themes. Is there anything cottagey and cute that you can think of?

A Sarah Holland says: To avoid this looking too ostentatious, I'd avoid red flowers. Go for soft hues of pink, or an all-white selection, and choose vintage-looking flowers to tie in with the country theme. Your florist can make you a heart-shaped bouquet inside a wire frame, and heart-shaped table arrangements are easy to make. A white arrangement from hydrangea, with an unusual border of bulbs, brings in the country theme. Or for something completely different, try a heart-shaped arrangement of kalanchoe frozen inside the ice (pictured here). If you prefer something more traditional, you can opt for a beautiful mixed-rose heart cushion instead, and ask your florist to re-create the look for your bouquet.

Child's Play

Q Our wedding budget will not extend to inviting children, but we don't want to upset any of our friends, most of whom now have kids. What can we do?

A Kim Neville Says: This is a tricky one as you probably want as many of your friends there as possible on your special day but don't want them to feel offended if they have children or are worried about paying for childcare.

If you explain that it was not an easy decision for you to make a good friend will understand. For others, even if they can afford it, they still choose to only have adults at their wedding. Again if this is the case, it's equally as important to stick to the decision.

You may well find that your friends with children will be happy to have a "day off" so that they can let their hair down without the children there!





COLOUR CHOICES

Q I'm getting married around Valentine's Day, and wanted to go for red and white flowers. People tell me this is unlucky and I should steer clear of the colour choice, but I had my heart set on it! What would you suggest for me?

A Sarah Holland says: It is important that your favourite colour overrides superstition when selecting your wedding flowers. Your choice of blooms should be personal to you, and not dictated by associated meanings. Red and white flowers together are frowned upon in parts of Europe, being viewed as representing 'blood and bandages' of the war and of clunky barbers of the late 19th and early 20th century.

However, in Tibetan symbolism and pagan traditions, red is the colour of the female sun, and white symbolises the male moon. The two colours combined suggest the joining of opposites and the power of creation. This just demonstrates how colour is personal to unique cultures and has a language of its own, so ensure you adore the colours you choose for your wedding flowers. Red and white roses are always a popular choice - as chosen by Gwen Stefani in her Los Angeles wedding.

Food for Thought

Q We want to have something different to the traditional champagne and canapés for reception. What options do you have?

A Kim Neville says: For a wedding, there are lots of alternatives. Try Pimms or cocktails of which are great served with kebabs or, for really hot days, smoothies and creams with lots of colourful fruit. Cocktail glasses can usually be hired from your caterer and there are also ice-cream van companies for hire. You could go for a Victorian style reception with sandwiches and cake. The look can be created using antique crockery and pretty floral line hire. Visit our website www.idyllicdays.co.uk for a selection of props for hire).

www.johnrahim.co.uk



STYLE GUIDE

Q I am not sure what style of wedding photography to go for. What are the main types and how different are they?

A John Rahim says: When couples get married most of them, not unsurprisingly, don't know a huge amount about wedding photography, or the various styles. We have come a long way from the day when all wedding photography was formal and simply documented the key events of the day. Nowadays most couples prefer a more relaxed approach and detail photos such as the bride getting ready and photos of the shoes can set the scene and help to create the overall atmosphere of the day. Ultimately though couples need to choose a photographer on the basis of their style and portfolio. It's also imperative to get on with the photographer as in most cases they will be working with the bride and groom for the duration of the day and will be capturing some very intimate moments.

Once you have chosen your photographer, deciding on the style that you want should be very straightforward as in most cases you will want something similar to the photos that you have seen in their portfolio. The main wedding styles are Traditional, which mainly focuses on staged and set up photos, while The Wedding Book style has become very popular over the past few years. With this style the photographer will produce a custom made book for the couple with the pictures being printed directly onto the page. The third photographic style is Reportage which is sometimes grandly described as Wedding Photojournalism. This is where the photographer captures the day as it happens and focuses more on the general ambience rather than focusing on the "traditional" set up pictures. In reality most couples like a combination of Reportage and Traditional pictures; however, it will be down to the couples beforehand to explain to the photographer what they are looking for to ensure that they are happy with the end results.

Spot the Difference

Q What is the difference between English wine and World wine?

A Elfrida Spooner says: English wine is becoming more popular with the general public, a major survey indicated an annual increase in sales of a massive 12%. World wine is also increasing in popularity, with Australian wine the biggest selling New World wine due to the range of styles available. New World wine can have a tendency to be high in alcohol. English wine is aromatic and, is almost always lower in alcoholic volume, making it the perfect drink for formal dinners and celebrations.



Polly Alexander

Front Runner

Q What is the most popular wine for wedding receptions and how should I choose something all my guests will love?

A Elfrida Spooner says: Without a doubt, anything that is a hit. To avoid headaches, ensure that you choose a quality fizz to accompany it. Sparkling wine is always a safe choice to make the sun shine!