

MARTHA STEWART weddings

THE STYLE ISSUE

700+ WAYS
TO WOW!

THE BEST NEW
DRESSES

AMAZING IDEAS
FOR EVERY
BIG-DAY DETAIL

SAVVY SPENDING
SECRETS

Now available
on the iPad!

FREE WITH A PRINT
SUBSCRIPTION

THE NEW RULES

Gone is the era of the cookie-cutter wedding, where he dons the tux, she the white dress, then they both meet at the end of the aisle and call it a big day. Now you can celebrate your own way. Simply forget the "have tos," "shoulds," and "musts" about nuptials. There are no hard-and-fast rules. Except one: Be a gracious bride and groom while letting your true style shine.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY José Picayo
TEXT BY Eleni N. Gage

No. 1

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WEAR WHITE TO TAKE CENTER STAGE.

No matter its hue, you'll look radiant in a knockout frock. Here, the bride is in a gold French lace "Long Ariel Dress," by Temperley London, so stunning it can only be a wedding gown (\$2,725, bergdorfgoodman.com). She's not just in good taste, she's also on trend: This season bridal designers showed scene-stealing creations in blush, pale blue, and even rich red.

No. 2

YOU CAN ASK ANYONE TO BE IN YOUR WEDDING PARTY.

Your poor mom may have had to line up friends to pair off with your dad's groomsmen, but you two needn't be so matchy-matchy. Have anyone you want stand up with you both—a man of honor, groomsmen—and don't worry about having an equal number of him and hers. They can walk up the aisle solo or in groups of three. Besides, asymmetry is all the rage.

No. 3

AND THEY DON'T ALL HAVE TO WEAR THE SAME THING.

Put an end to the "will she wear it again" debate by letting attendants choose their own ensembles—that's what the ladies here did. What keeps it from looking like a hodgepodge is that they all picked outfits that complement the couple's wedding colors of burgundy and gold. For your own day, devise a palette of up to three hues, hand your 'maids swatches or paint chips, and let them shop away. If they stick to the colors, even prints are fair game.

THE DETAILS (from far left): Vivienne Westwood Anglomania dress (\$470, viviennewestwood.com). Heirloom Tailored by Billy Reid "Campbell Patch" suit (\$1,395, 212-598-9355).

John Varvatos "Austin" suit (\$2,598, johnvarvatos.com). Amsale Bridesmaids dress (\$280, Wedding Library, 212-327-0100).

Southwick for Todd Snyder suit (\$1,295, barneys.com). Tadashi Shoji gown (\$488, tadashishoji.com).

> SEE THE GUIDE FOR MORE STORY DETAILS

OUR JOY IS
MAGNIFIED BY HAVING
YOU HERE.

PLEASE TAKE
THIS TOKEN OF OUR APPRECIATION
AND FIND YOUR SEAT



No. 6

YOUR FLOWERS AND FAVORS
CAN DO DOUBLE DUTY.

Less really is more when you combine two elements. Ceremony flowers can reappear at your reception, for example, and gorgeous escort cards will work as favors, too. Here, awesome orbs help guests find their tables by magnifying the type on the seating cards underneath. Offer them as thank-yous that will dress up any desk after the party's over.
THE DETAILS: Axis Promotions paperweights (\$9.25 each, axispromo.com)

No. 7

YOU CAN MAKE YOUR
RECEPTION VENUE
FEEL MORE LIKE HOME.

You probably can't spend lots of time with each guest. But you can promote an intimate at-home dinner-party atmosphere by surrounding invitees with a few of your favorite things. Create a unified table with the same flatware and china at each place, then fill the center with an array of beloved objects—from registry gifts to a stash of personal curios.

THE DETAILS: Yamazaki Tableware "Byzantine" flatware (\$60 for a 5-piece setting, yamazaki-tableware.com). Baccarat "Mille Nuits" wineglasses (\$130 each, us.baccarat.com). Herend "Fish Scale" dinner plates (\$265 each, herendusa.com).





No. 8

YOU CAN SERVE WHATEVER YOU WANT WITH DESSERT. CHEESE, ANYONE?

If your sweet tooth is satisfied by the cake, offer something savory, like cheese, after dinner. "Cheese looks divine, and it's rich, luscious, and inviting," says contributing editor Peter Callahan of Peter Callahan Catering, in New York City, who created this spread. To set up an appealing array, order a mix of mild and strong flavors, different textures, and cheeses made with goat, cow, and sheep milk. Add name tags so guests know what they're diving into, then pair them with breads, stone fruits, and nuts, and display on pedestals of varying heights. "If a cheese has a gorgeous center, cut it open for all to see," suggests Callahan. "If it's runny, wait until just before serving." Finally, introduce an element that will surprise everyone. Callahan's favorite: a honeycomb.

HAVE Q'S ABOUT WEDDING DO'S AND DON'TS?

Find expert advice and answers at marthastewartweddings.com/etiquette-advisor

Created by Kate Berry, Cassidy Iwersen, and Michael McCormick. Hair by Carmel Bianco and makeup by Christina Reyna, both for raybrownpro.com