

2022

Wedding

Album

The Mendota Reporter
Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Featuring...

Jarred Johnson and Alyson Contreras will be married on Saturday, Sept. 10, 2022, at the Mendota Civic Center.

Dos and don'ts of caring for wedding and engagement rings

Jewelry is a key component of weddings. The financial resource Credit-Donkey notes that, in the United States, the average amount spent on an engagement ring is \$5,500, while Canadians spend an average of \$3,500. Jewelry costs can add up, especially when adding in the cost of wedding bands, which can cost as much as \$1,000. The cost of jewelry only underscores the importance of learning how to care for it and preserve its value.

The best way to maintain jewelry depends on the makeup of the rings. The online jewelry guide Jewelry Notes says gold rings without gemstones can be cleaned effectively with only soap and water. Simply prepare a solution

of lukewarm water and mild dish soap in a small bowl. Soak the rings for 20 to 30 minutes. Use a soft brush or cloth to clean the jewelry of dirt. Rinse the residue under clean water.

Rings with diamonds can be treated similarly with a mild soap-and-water solution. The Diamond Information Center also says to soak the diamond ring in equal parts cold water and ammonia for half an hour and let it air dry. Brand name jewelry cleaner also is another good option. This method only should be used with diamonds; ammonia can't be used with other gemstones.

Maintaining jewelry also should include twice yearly visits to a jeweler who can check the prongs

and make sure the setting is not loose; otherwise, the diamond can become dislodged.

Avoid touching diamonds and other gemstones as much as possible when putting rings on and taking them off. Precious stones often are magnets for dust, dirt and body oil. Grab the ring by the band.

Use discretion when wearing rings while engaging in hands-on activities. Activities like cleaning dishes, moving furniture, gardening, or diving through waves at the beach warrant caution; otherwise, you risk damaging or making jewelry unnecessarily dirty. Store the ring in a safe location until you can safely wear it again.

One of the most important steps to safeguard wedding and engagement rings is to insure the jewelry. The description of the ring, its cut, carat weight, metal, and other information offered through a certified independent jewelry appraisal will be needed to insure the ring. Take a close-up photo of the jewelry as well. Other items like laser inscription or a home security system can qualify jewelry owners for discounts on insurance. Consumers also can add a jewelry rider to a homeowner's or renter's insurance policy.

These are some ways to care for wedding jewelry. Always consult with a jeweler before attempting to clean items made of various materials.



The cost of jewelry only underscores the importance of learning how to care for it and preserve its value.

Jesse Arellano of Eureka Savings Bank discusses the mortgage options available to Alyson and Jarred when they become new homeowners.

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Tips on navigating an interfaith wedding

Celebrating family histories and traditions is a major component of weddings. During a wedding, two families come together and begin to merge their unique takes on life.

When couples tying the knot come from the same cultural or religious backgrounds, fitting the pieces together may be relatively easy. However, when a wedding must incorporate two different religions — each with its specific traditions and requirements — a couple may not know where to start. These tips may help the process along.

Communication

It is important to open a dialogue with all involved parties at the onset to be able to craft a ceremony



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and subsequent celebration that aligns with the faiths of the couple and their families. This dialogue shares what everyone expects. Ask everyone to rank the rituals they would like to be

included by order of importance, and then use this as a guide when planning the ceremony.

Discuss options

Certain houses of worship may be strict in regard

to what they allow during interfaith ceremonies. Conservative congregations may even frown upon marrying outside of one's religion. That may spark an entirely new conversation about converting so couples can be married in the eyes of the church, temple or mosque. More reformed places may be open to blending certain traditions from both faiths. Couples often lean toward having one officiant from each faith at the ceremony to incorporate key rites into the wedding.

Neutral ground

Interfaith couples may opt to have the ceremony at a neutral location so they do not appear to be paying favor to one faith over another. Determine if religious

Interfaith weddings require extra planning and finesse, but millions of couples get married in such ceremonies every year.

officiants can oversee the ceremony outside of a place of worship and still have the marriage recognized by the tenets of that faith.

Secular officiant

In instances when it may seem like there are too many obstacles to having faith-guided ceremonies for interfaith weddings, wedding planners may suggest some creative solutions, including working with a secular officiant. Traditions such as lighting a unity candle or blending two different sands together to signify the

blending of two faiths and families can be part of the ceremony, suggests the lifestyle company Sheerluxe.

Give others tasks

Couples may be unfamiliar with each other's religious traditions. Sharing faith-specific wedding planning tasks can help couples and their families become more familiar with these customs.

Interfaith weddings require extra planning and finesse, but millions of couples get married in such ceremonies every year.

Kurt Bruno of State Farm Insurance gives details on the various types of insurance Alyson and Jarred may want to contemplate after they are married.

Kurt Bruno

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Picture perfect wedding day photography tips

Few things document weddings more effectively than photographs. Carefully curated wedding albums and portraits hung on walls serve as daily reminders of a couple's special day.

Photography is often left in the very qualified hands of professional photographers. However, couples can pitch in to make their photos really pop. These picture pointers from industry insiders can help couples put their best smile forward.

Leave ample time

A carefully orchestrated timeline can ensure photos are the best they can be. Why? Because a couple who is relaxed and not overwhelmed will notice that attitude translates to their photographs. When

planning wedding timelines, couples should leave ample opportunities for getting dressed, chatting with the wedding party and going through various photography settings to grab great photos, advise the experts at Martha Stewart.

Put together a short list

The photographer will have his or her ideas of which shots to cover, but a couple with specific goals in mind should relay that information to their photographer. For example, if a grandparent is getting up in years, request some solo photos of that person so you can look back on happy times together. Certain couples want to be snapped posing with a beloved pet. Putting that on the list helps

ensure it will happen.

Enlist a family photo coordinator

If the photographer does not have his or her own assistant, recruit someone who is assertive to help wrangle everyone for the family shots. Attempt to get family photos when family members are relaxed but not too far ruffled by dancing or having a good time.

Play your style safe

A wedding day is not a time for the bride or groom to try a dramatic new style, according to photographer Amanda Lamb. Resist the urge for a daring cut or color. It's also likely not the place to try out new facial hair or heavy makeup. A couple unaccustomed to the way they look may be shy in

front of the camera.

Delve into the details

Prepare wedding details, like gowns, shoes, accessories, etc., in advance to save time once the photographer arrives, suggests Desi Mendoza, a pro from Dez and Tam Photography. Invest in a beautiful hanger for the wedding gown as well, because you may want to photograph that on its own.

Learn to pose

Couples can practice posing in front of mirrors to get a feel for body positions that put them in their best light. A photographer's advice in regard to posture is invaluable as well. Create space between arms and the body and learn how to angle the body so you look your best.



Photos will capture wedding day memories forever. Couples can put themselves in the best positions for success by following some photography guidelines.

Alyson and Jarred peruse the many fine dining selections offered at Main Street Station, which is a perfect venue to hold a rehearsal dinner prior to the big day.

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Fun ways to utilize social media in your wedding

Young couples tying the knot today grew up with social media, so it's no great surprise that so many want to utilize various platforms when planning their weddings. In fact, the Brides 2018 American Wedding Survey found that 87 percent of brides turned to the social media platform Pinterest for inspiration when planning their weddings.

On the surface, modern wedding ceremonies and receptions may look similar to the nuptials of yesteryear. However, engaged couples have increasingly incorporated social media into their weddings, and the following are some fun and creative ways to embrace that trend.

- Create a social media photo booth. Guests may take more pictures at modern weddings than the photographers who were hired to document the happy couple's big day from start to finish. Social media boards are digital screens that display social media walls. Live event social media boards collect and curate content from social media channels and display it on a single digital screen. Users, in this case a couple's guests, simply use a predetermined hashtag when posting photos and the images are then displayed on digital screens in real time. This can be a fun way to engage guests during the reception.

- Live stream the wedding. Live streams became very popular during the pandemic, when couples getting married had to pare down their guest lists in order to adhere to social



Social media can be as fun, inclusive and useful when planning the wedding as it can during the wedding itself.

distancing guidelines. But live streams can continue to be used after the pandemic, as there will always be guests who can't make it to the wedding. Facebook Live was a go-to

social media platform for live streaming weddings during the pandemic, and it can be utilized to involve loved ones in the festivities even if they can't be there in person. Live streaming via social media may be especially useful for couples who want to enjoy destination weddings, which tend to be small affairs due to travel constraints.

- Hashtag the wedding. A couple-specific hashtag can serve as something akin to a wedding album, only it's one everyone can easily access via the couple's chosen social media platform. Encourage guests to hashtag photos from the wedding so everyone can have a good time looking back on the ceremony and reception once the day has come and gone.

- Plan with your party. Social media can be as fun, inclusive and useful when planning the wedding as it can during the wedding itself. Brides and grooms can create their own private Pinterest boards and share them with the wedding party. Everyone can then use the private board to bounce ideas off each other. Couples can infuse a little fun into the Pinterest board by encouraging their groomsmen and bridesmaids to post outrageous outfit ideas or submitting song requests to be played during the reception.

Social media is a big part of modern couples' lives, so it makes sense for them to find fun ways to incorporate various platforms into their weddings.



Kayla Adams of First State Bank goes over the different options Alyson and Jarred have when opening a new savings account after they become bride and groom.



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The increasing popularity of the microwedding

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been far-reaching. People from all walks of life have had to confront the pandemic and the changes it wrought, and many of those changes could have some staying power.

Wedding industry experts note that one of the more noticeable and potentially long-lasting effects of the pandemic has been the rise of microweddings. The 2020 Real Weddings Study (COVID-19 Edition) found that 58 percent of couples who planned to get married in 2020 ended up reducing their guest list by a significant percentage. The average reduction was 41 percent, and some suspect small ceremonies may be

the new normal in the years ahead.

Microweddings

Microweddings are not necessarily a new trend, as couples have always had the option of getting married with only a small number of family and friends in attendance. However, microweddings could be an emerging trend, and cost may have a lot to do with that. The Wedding Planner Institute notes that microweddings cost anywhere from \$1,600 to \$10,000, though the group notes that most microweddings fall somewhere in the middle of that range. A 2020 survey from TD Ameritrade found that 47 percent of respondents felt that cost of living was the biggest threat to their financial security

and long-term investments. Engaged couples confronting the well-documented post-pandemic increase in cost of living, including an unprecedented rise in housing costs, could see expensive weddings as luxuries they simply can't afford. Microweddings could be viewed as a cost-effective way to combat the rising cost of living that still allows couples to share their big day with their closest friends and family members.

The WPI has urged wedding planners to offer microwedding packages in an effort to capitalize on this emerging trend. Data from The Wedding Report indicated that the total number of weddings would rise to 2.77 million in 2021, an increase

of roughly 650,000 over the yearly average. Even if only a fraction of couples who tie the knot in 2022 opt for a microwedding, a preexisting microwedding package can help wedding planners secure their business. Couples who opt for microweddings may do so to save money, but also to avoid the effort and save the time required to plan more lavish affairs. Such couples may be especially excited to work with wedding planners who can plan their weddings regardless of how small the affair may be.

What goes into a microwedding

Nothing should be off the table when planning a microwedding. The fewer the people who will be there, the



more freedom planners and couples may have. The WPI notes that microweddings afford planners and couples the chance to get personal in ways that may not be possible when organizing larger affairs. Planners can focus on small details and allow couples to make their ceremonies and receptions as personal as they would

like. Couples who prefer microweddings tend to emphasize minimalism, so keeping things simple is something to keep in mind when planning microweddings.

Microweddings are an emerging trend that make for a realistic option for couples and the people they hire to help them plan their big day.

Let Sullivan's Foods Create the Wedding Cake of Your Dreams!

What is a wedding reception without a cake? Alyson and Jarred look over some of the wedding cake choices that are offered at Sullivan's Foods.



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Giving of wedding favors has evolved over the years

Wedding favors have changed — and in many cases for the better. Favors have evolved from the inexpensive trinkets purchased in bulk into more personalized mementos that guests can cherish.

Today's couples are interested in customizing their weddings and offering guests something meaningful, or at the very least, edible, so that favors don't immediately get relegated to the trash can. According to Heather Jones of Wente Vineyards in California, favors have moved from "goodie bags" toward items that are experimental and fun. Wedding planners from across the country offer these wedding favor trends that couples may want to incorporate into their own celebrations.



Welcome bags

Rather than take-home bags, welcome bags have replaced the traditional favor trinket at some weddings. Many weddings have be-

come multi-day events that ask guests traveling from out of town to attend a wedding weekend. To help greet them and make their experience memorable, couples may fill

a gift bag with items guests can use or enjoy during their stay — like a bottle of locally sourced maple syrup or some handmade soaps from a nearby shopkeeper.

Experience gifts

Instead of a candle or a monogrammed cake server, think of experiences to offer guests. A coupon for free drinks at a nearby brewery, a tour of a local attraction while guests are in town or a group excursion for guests attending a destination wedding can be fun and will help guests create lasting memories.

Charitable donations

Some couples feel that favors are wasteful and would rather set aside a portion of their wedding budgets toward giving back. In such situations, a donation to charity in guests' names can be the way to go. Guests can vote on two favorite charities advertised on a special table at the wedding reception. The one with the most votes

will get the proceeds.

Late-night snacks

After a night of celebrating, some guests may want the festivities to continue, but may need some extra sustenance to make it through a few more hours. Some couples are eschewing traditional favors in lieu of making room for extra food or beverage expenses that can include after-party treats. These may run the gamut from wood-fired pizzas to food truck vendors to extra desserts. A tasty take-home option also may be given, such as fresh zepopolis or beignets, or even a personalized bottle of wine. Even if the food and drink is not consumed right away, there's a good chance it will hit the spot when guests return to their hotel rooms.



Jackie Near of First State Insurance shows Jarred the types of insurance to consider for the wedding ring that he will be giving his new bride on their wedding day.



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Music is an important component of wedding celebrations

Few things set the mood of a wedding more effectively than music. Beautiful songs often are incorporated into wedding ceremonies, and romantic or upbeat songs intermingle to create a festive mix at receptions.

Playlists curated specifically for weddings can be found online to help couples narrow down their options. According to Wedding Forward, a wedding planning guide, wedding planning experts and modern couples agree that wedding playlists should have a 60/40 split of classics and new wedding songs.

Music is a personal choice, but couples may benefit by considering who will be in attendance at their weddings. In so doing, couples can ensure the music played at their weddings reaches as many people as possible there:

- **Wedding processional song:** The wedding processional is the moment the wedding party walks down the aisle. Music may be a traditional

hymn, classical music or a favorite contemporary song.

- **Bridal processional song:** In many traditional wedding ceremonies, the bride walks down the aisle separately, with her father or both parents. She customarily will have a different song from the rest of the wedding party. While “Bridal Chorus/Wedding March” is a traditional choice, some brides may prefer a different tune.

- **Wedding recessional song:** Again, depending on the ceremony location and choices, the recessional may be a classical piece or a hymn. Some couples choose an upbeat song for their first official promenade as a married couple.

- **Wedding party entrance song:** Couples can ask their music vendor to put together the majority of the songs for their reception, but they may want to choose their own wedding party entrance. This song typically is a fast-paced, upbeat song that gets

the crowd pumping and ready for a fun night. Think “Dynamite” by Taio Cruz or “Can’t Stop the Feeling!” by Justin Timberlake.

- **First dance:** The first dance song is another personal choice for the couple. Slow songs traditionally are chosen, but couples who want something a little different have increasingly selected faster songs and paired them with rehearsed choreography. “Thinking Out Loud” by Ed Sheeran has become a popular first dance song.

- **Other songs:** Couples also will select songs to complement dances with their parents, cake cutting, garter toss, and any other special traditions or moments. They also can make requests to include songs of different eras to appeal to guests of all ages.

Music is an important component of wedding celebrations and deserves some extra consideration to ensure everyone has a great time while cutting a rug.



Wedding planning experts and modern couples agree that wedding playlists should be have a 60/40 split of classics and new wedding songs.



Alyson and Jarred enjoy the comfort of a love seat with console from Meyers Furniture, one of the many choices of furniture available to decorate the home of newlyweds.



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Make a statement with your wedding cake

Brides and grooms may pour over every detail of their weddings, but few components of the festivities may be as fun, especially for foodies, as deciding what the wedding cake will look like. Couples who want to deliver show-stopping visuals often express some measure of their creativity and personalities through statement wedding cakes.

Many couples now eschew the classic three-tiered white cake in favor of a dessert that garners instant attention. Whether the cake is brightly colored or hand-painted, a towering architectural marvel or shimmering in metallics, couples are opting to make a statement with their confections. Apart from clever cake-toppers, here are ways to stand apart when dessert is served.

• According to the Perfect Wedding Guide, a rising trend in cakes is to cover a white or naked cake with translucent glaze tinted in

the couple's wedding colors. This artistic expression can be especially stunning in boho-chic weddings.

• Statement tiers also are popular. The cake may be traditional in nearly every way, but couples then set the cake apart by featuring an elaborate design or a different hue in one tier.

• Martha Stewart Weddings advises that more than just color can be used to make a statement. Lifelike sugar flowers can really set cakes apart. Guests may not be sure if they can consume all aspects of some cakes. But delicate sugar flowers taste as good as they look.

• Hand-painted tiles on a cake are another way to add panache. A bride and groom may be inspired by a European vacation or the stained-glass effects of religious windows and want to add that feel to the tiers of the cake.

• Sometimes a statement comes by way of texture. Even an all-white cake can be dressed up with interesting textural effects. Ruffles, lace, embossing, and 3-D rosettes are different textural components that can be incorporated in cake designs.

• Couples also may want to tell their unique stories with cake. Individual tiers designed to reflect various milestone moments from the couple's relationship can be quite engaging.

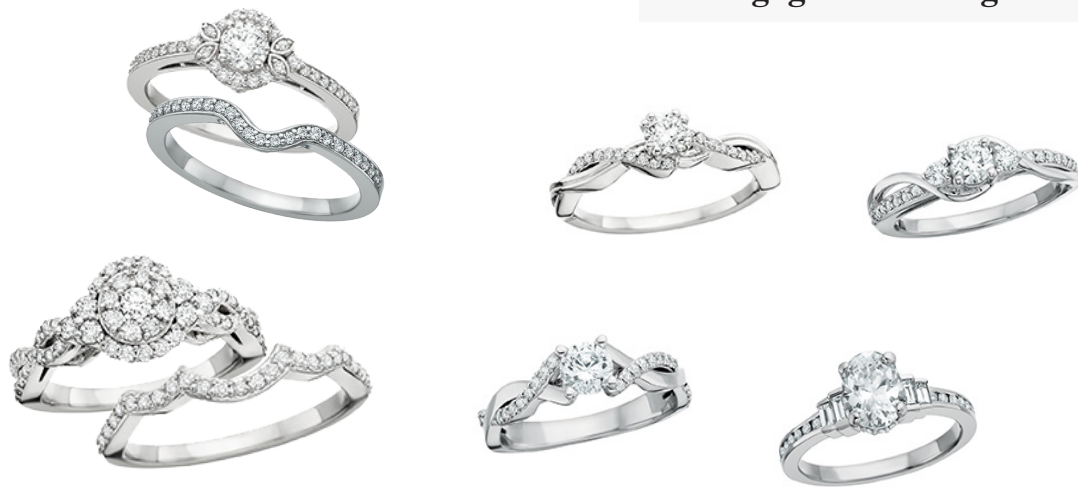
• Capitalizing on the trend of edgier weddings, couples may opt for darker hues on their cakes — even a black tier — or nontraditional geometric shapes to the cake itself or its design elements.

Statement cakes can really say something about the couple getting married. Much like other wedding elements, cakes provide a window into the minds of happy couples.



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Wedding planners are a great asset for couples

The average cost of a wedding today is enough to make a sizable down payment on a home. According to The Knot, the average wedding in the United States is about \$33,900, though the price tag can vary widely from state to state.

Though love may not cost a thing, weddings certainly do. One of the best ways to maximize wedding budgets and ensure that all that money is well spent is to enlist the services of a wedding planner. Wedding planners wear many hats, which underscores how valuable they can be.

Sounding board

An experienced wedding planner can help couples keep their worries at bay. Countless decisions must be made when planning a wedding, and some couples may feel as if they need to micromanage their nuptials. A wedding planner can take tasks off of couples' plates and serve as a sounding board as couples try to make the best decisions.

Financial guru

A wedding planner may help couples score insider deals and will know when a vendor's price is on target or inflated. That savvy saves couples money in the long run. Wedding planners also can advise on ways to save money and allocate funds so couples' biggest priorities get the financial attention they deserve.

Problem solver

Wedding planners step in to save the day when hiccups threaten to derail plans. A planner will know what to do should a gown become torn or if a vendor fails to respond

to calls on the day of the wedding. Removing some stressors allows couples to relax and more fully immerse themselves in their weddings.

Idea generator

Pulling together ideas from every corner requires a creative eye. Couples can rely on a professional wedding planner to help with brainstorming and putting different elements together. He or she likely has seen a vast array of celebrations and can make suggestions based on what's worked before.

Time saver

Wedding planners already have a bevy of industry contacts and can pull together wedding details in much less turnaround time than couples with no wedding planning experience.



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Wedding day tipping guidelines for the newlyweds

Vendors may be in the background during a wedding, but the roles they play are vital to making ceremonies and receptions memorable for couples and their guests. It's customary to tip wedding vendors who provide great service. The wedding experts at The Knot note that the following guidelines can help couples determine how much to tip the unsung heroes who make their weddings so memorable.

• **Photographer/videographer:** Photographers and videographers are unique among wedding vendors because their work will be looked at for decades to come. The Knot notes that it's not necessary to tip wedding photographers

and videographers who own their own studios. Their fees are all the compensation they need. However, many photographers and videographers do not own their own studios, and the efforts of such professionals are worthy of a little something extra at the end of the night. The Knot notes that a tip between \$50 and \$200 is standard for these professionals, and that tip can be given at the end of the reception.

• **Reception staff:** The reception staff works as hard as anyone during the wedding, and those efforts merit a good tip. Many reception venues include gratuities in their food and drink fees, and couples can check to see if they have

already tipped staff and if they think the mandatory gratuity is sufficient. A tip between 15 and 20 percent of the food and drink fee is standard. Maître d' fees also may be built into the wedding contract. If not, a tip between \$200 and \$300 is standard and can be delivered at the end of the night.

• **Band/DJ:** Music features prominently at many wedding receptions. Bands and/or DJs can set the tone for a fun night couples and their guests will remember for years to come. Tipping

musicians is optional, but it's the norm to do so when they provide exceptional service. Couples who have a band playing can tip between \$25 and \$35 per musician, while DJs generally receive a tip between \$50 and \$150.

• **Drivers:** Many transportation firms also include gratuities in their contracts, so couples should check to see if they've already tipped limo or bus drivers before paying them a little extra. If the tip is not included and the drivers arrive on time and get guests to the wedding

on time, then a tip that's between 15 and 20 percent of the total bill is standard.

• **Delivery personnel:** Individuals who deliver items like cakes and flowers are typically given a gratuity upon delivery. A tip between \$5 and \$10 per person is standard, though individuals who deliver items like tables, chairs and portable restroom facilities and then set those items up may be deserving of a little extra.

• **Officiants:** Officiants who are affiliated with a church or synagogue where

the ceremony will take place are not typically given a gratuity. However, The Knot notes that a donation to the place of worship between \$100 and \$500 is standard. Couples who still want to give the officiant a little extra can tip between \$50 and \$100. Independent officiants who receive fees directly from the couple need not be tipped.

These figures can serve as guidelines, but couples also can give a little extra if they feel their vendors have gone above and beyond.

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Questions to ask prospective wedding officiants

Couples make many decisions when planning their weddings. Everything from the design of save-the-date cards to the color of the napkins at the reception tables requires couples' input. Choice of officiant is another decision that's worthy of significant consideration.

Many couples may have an officiant in mind before they begin planning their wedding. In such instances, couples may choose an officiant who's affiliated with their place of worship or even a friend or family member who's been ordained or certified to officiate weddings. Couples with no such option can ask the following questions as they look to hire an officiant for their wedding.

Can you legally officiate our wedding?

Each state has its own requirements regarding who can sign the paperwork necessary for couples to be considered legally married.

An officiant should meet these requirements.

What services do you provide?

Some officiants will do more than officiate the wedding. Some will help couples obtain their marriage license and even submit the documentation after the wedding. Those services can be important, but many couples are more concerned with what officiants will do before and during the ceremony. Ask if the officiant will write his or her own remarks to be delivered during the ceremony. Some couples may want to write remarks for the officiant, while others may need help crafting the message they want to convey.

How flexible are you?

Ask how officiants handle feedback and how willing they are to deliver remarks they did not necessarily write themselves. Some officiants may have a template they customarily follow, but that doesn't

necessarily mean they won't stray and personalize the ceremony based on couples' wishes. Couples should ask such officiants how far they're willing to stray from their routine if necessary.

Do you have a portfolio?

Written testimonials from past clients can be invaluable, but couples can get a true feel for an officiant's style by watching video of ceremonies they've officiated in the past. Ask prospective officiants if they can share video of weddings they've presided over. It's not a red flag if officiants have no such video, which couples may have forgotten to share. But video can help couples get an accurate idea of how officiants may preside over their ceremony.

Will we work together prior to the ceremony?

Many officiants will ask to meet with a couple at least once before the wedding so they can get to know them as well as possible. Ask each

officiant if this is their policy. Pre-wedding meetings can be conducted in person or via Zoom. When discussing meeting before the wedding, ask the officiant if he or she will attend the wedding rehearsal. It's not customary for officiants to do so, though some might be willing to attend the rehearsal, especially if the ceremony will feature any elaborate components that require their involvement.

Other considerations

Couples also may want to broach some additional topics when questioning prospective officiants. Such topics may include:

- Officiant's attire
 - Backups if the officiant falls ill prior to the ceremony
 - Officiant fees, and if extra services like attending the rehearsal incurs additional charges
 - Officiants' experience
- Asking questions can help find the right person to officiate your wedding.



Mendota Civic Center

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