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# Bridal boutique lifts veil on choosing dress



Lagniappe Bridal Boutique operated by a Belton High graduate opened at 111 N. Main Street in Temple. Becca Sloane operates the day-to-day sales and service along with her mother Lynne Sloane.

“I got into bridal while attending Texas A&M University. Worked my way through college in a bridal store. I, also, assisted in opening a bridal store in College Station. We saw the need for a bridal store in Temple. We have space here where they have their own bridal suite to make their plan in private,” said Becca.

The store is simple and beautiful with separate areas for privacy. There is a large

selection of dresses on hand. Their big thing is custom ordering bridal dresses and accessories.

“We assist them in coming up with their bridal design. Where you are getting married is part of it so the dress matches the venue. What do you feel comfortable in? The look they want on their wedding day. Planning a wedding is stressful. We try to take some of the stress out of it,” said Becca.

“The designers that we currently carry in store are Madi Lane, Serene Bridal, Stella York, and Liv by Kelly Faetanini. We also carry Chantel Lauren and are the only store in Texas to carry her designs.”

“The days of buying something off the rack are long gone. We carry stylist and we plan on getting our own label,” said Lynne. “Most of the time they don’t know what to expect walking in. This isn’t like buying a dress for easter.”

“When we do find their dream dress we take their measurements and order it. There is a whole lot to this,” said Lynne.

They designed their sitting areas with enough room for close friends and family to be a part of the selection in a private setting. These areas are not changing rooms they are designed with seating with an elegant design. Lagniappe Bridal offers accessories from veils to gloves.

The building was once a café and has large open tented windows in front to allow natural light. “You don’t have to go to the big city for the perfect dress. Gowns take four to six months to come in. We can deal with short notice but there are limitations. Had one bride come in the day before her wedding after the gowns she ordered didn’t fit. We found something for her.

Becca and Lynne are a mother-and-daughter team. They saw a need and plan on filling that need. They know that not everyone who comes in their doors might order a dress. “We are about developing relationships whether they buy an item or not,” said Lynne.



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# Simple tips to plan a fun and relaxing cocktail hour



With so much on their docket in relation to wedding planning, engaged couples can be forgiven if certain components garner less attention than others. The ceremony and reception are bound to stay on couples' radar, but what about the time in between saying "I do" and cutting a rug on the reception room dance floor?

Cocktail hours are a great way to keep guests entertained between the ceremony and the reception. Many couples use this period to take their bridal party wedding photos, so offering guests a little food and some drinks during a cocktail hour can benefit everyone. Planning a cocktail hour is not a significant undertaking, but couples can keep a few pointers in mind as they plan this interim period between the ceremony and reception.

- Opt for an outdoor cocktail hour when possible. Couples tying the knot in spring, summer or fall at a venue with ample outdoor entertaining space can choose to host the cocktail hour outside. This reduces the likelihood that guests will feel cramped and it also sets a positive tone for the remainder of the evening. A balcony, patio or rooftop entertaining area can be great spaces for guests to mingle prior to the reception.

- Offer seating. Cocktail hours tend to be stand-up affairs where guests mingle with long-lost friends or relatives while enjoying some light hors d'oeuvres. However, older guests or guests with small children will appreciate some seating. Couples need not ensure there's a seat for each guest, but some strategically located high-tops and more traditional tables for guests with mobility issues can ensure anyone who needs to sit down can do so.

- Give guests something to do. If the cocktail hour will be a full hour or more, couples can consider ways to help guests

pass the time. Some may be content to relax and chat with friends and family over a drink, but others may grow a little bored as the hour drags on. A photobooth or selfie station so couples can have a ready-made wedding album before the reception begins can be fun for guests. For less formal affairs, consider providing some popular outdoor games, like cornhole and bocce.

- Set a tone with music. Music can help set the tone for a cocktail hour, which is not meant to get the ball rolling on the dancing-heavy revelry to come during the reception. Some simple instrumental music, whether it's provided by a live string quartet or pre-recorded, can establish the cocktail hour as a peaceful period to relax, chat, eat a little, and enjoy a drink before the reception begins. Reserve the dance music for when the reception hits full swing.

It's easy to overlook the cocktail hour when planning a wedding. However, some simple tips can ensure guests enjoy the time between the ceremony and reception.

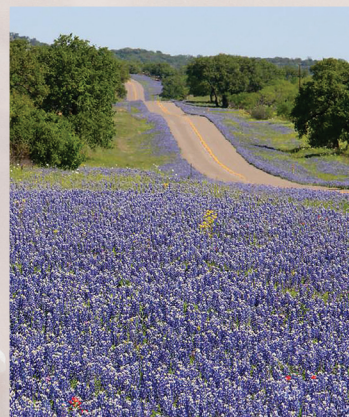
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# The responsibilities of bridal party members



A couple's wedding day is one they will never forget. Guests' focus is squarely on the happy couple on the day they're set to make their union official. However, happy couples are not the only ones with important roles to play during a wedding.

Being asked to be in a bridal party is a unique honor. With that honor comes responsibility, as each person in a bridal party can do their own part to ensure a couple's wedding day is a success.

## Maid or matron of honor

A maid of honor and matron of honor perform the same functions. The terms are simply unique because a maid of honor refers to a person who has not yet gotten married, while the term matron of honor is used for a person who has gotten married. Brides also may choose a man to serve as man of honor. Whatever title is appropriate, the person who serves in this capacity will help the bride plan the wedding, including being there to offer insight when shopping for a wedding dress. This person also may coordinate the bachelorette party and periodically speak with bridesmaids to ensure everyone is on schedule. The maid of honor will typically give a bridal toast during the reception.

## Best man

Don't let the title fool you, as many couples now choose to have a best woman. Like the maid of honor, the best man may be asked to help with wedding planning and is typically tasked with organizing the bachelor party and toasting the groom during the reception. The best man also can help to ensure groomsmen are on schedule with

tuxedo fittings.

## Bridesmaids/Groomsmen

Bridesmaids stand beside the bride during the wedding ceremony. They can help with planning and help to resolve any last-minute issues that may arise on the big day, such as a vendor arriving late.

Groomsmen stand next to the groom during the ceremony and may be asked to help the best man plan the bachelor party. Both bridesmaids and groomsmen also may be asked to help host events leading up to the big day, such as a shower or engagement party.

## Ring bearer/flower girl

The roles of ring bearer and flower girl are typically filled by young relatives of the couple, such as nieces, nephews or young cousins. The flower girl walks down the aisle in advance of the bride, spreading pedals as she goes. The ring bearer carries the wedding rings down the aisle.

## Parents

If they choose to do so, parents of the happy couple can help to pay for the wedding. The custom of the bride's parents paying the entire bill has largely fallen by the wayside, as many modern couples now pay for their own weddings. Parents can offer to pay for the engagement party and/or rehearsal dinner, but such generosity is not expected of them.

Serving in a wedding party is a unique and humbling honor. The roles of each person in the party vary, and party members who want to do their best for the couple can study up on their responsibilities in advance of the big day.



# Wedding planning requires couples to make many decisions, including where the wedding will take place



*Special to the Journal*

A couple's wedding day is typically broken into two parts: the ceremony comes first, and the reception follows soon after. Depending on couples' preferences and religious beliefs, ceremonies may take place at a house of worship or another location that is separate from the reception venue. In some instances, couples may choose one location for both the ceremony and the party to follow. Wedding

venues are where the bulk of the day will unfold, and couples can consider these four tips to find a venue that suits their needs.

1. Consider your theme and wedding style. Most couples know which sentiments they want to convey during their weddings. The venue should match the theme so the entire wedding will feel connected to the space. A modern wedding, for example, will be at home in an art gallery or warehouse. A wedding with natural elements may work better on a ranch or in a botanical garden. Zeroing in on the wedding style helps narrow down potential venue options.

2. Assess the budget. A couple may find what seems to be the perfect venue, only to realize that the cost of the space doesn't fit their budget. The

venue accounts for the most significant wedding expense, at an average cost of \$9,000. Finding a venue that will maximize dollars spent involves looking at what is included. Rentals for chairs, linens, lighting, a dance floor, and other extras can quickly add up. Couples should have a set limit they're willing to spend on the venue and let that dictate the location.

3. Availability of the location. When a couple wants to get married may determine their venue options, especially if they're planning on a budget. September and October are now the most popular months to get married, so venues will book up quickly during that time of year. Those who have their hearts set on specific days will have to begin the search earlier than couples with

no attachment to a particular date. Concessions may need to be made if a certain date is a must.

4. Estimate the size of your guest list. Price, date and style will factor into wedding venues, but the number of guests also is a major consideration. A trendy restaurant may seem like the perfect locale, but it must be able to accommodate everyone on the guest list. Couples should sit down with their families and come up with a list of potential guests and look for a venue that can accommodate everyone.

Couples also should visit potential venues in person to see which, if any, details might be missing from online or magazine advertisements. A host of factors, including accessibility, should be considered when looking for a venue.

## Dig into these wedding cake options for a unique experience

Something sweet comes near the end of a wedding reception and that is the joy the couple experiences knowing they have their entire lives ahead of them to enjoy together. However, there is another sweet treat that is shared near the conclusion of the wedding and it is typically served with tea and coffee: the wedding cake.

Wedding cake traditions can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans. Cakes represented good luck and fertility for the couples tying the knot. The first wedding cakes were rather bland and breadlike, representing purity and virginity. Some were quite like the fruitcake now enjoyed during the holiday season. Eventually wedding cakes transformed into the sweet confections that are known today. The modern wedding cake as most know it debuted at the 1882 wedding of Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany. His wedding cake was actually the first to be completely edible. Previously, some cakes featured wooden broomstick pillars covered in icing, but

the Duke's cake used a hardened type of icing, according to Edible Art Bakery and Dessert Café.

Couples today have many options when picking their wedding cakes. The following are some wedding cake tidbits to chew on.

- Couples can choose among various cake styles. Many opt for a classic style, which is typically a white or ivory tiered cake with simple, elegant decorations. Rustic cakes may be much less ornate, while modern cakes may be rectangular or square and feature clean lines and minimalist decoration. The cake should fit the overall theme and scope of the wedding as it is another complementary component of the larger celebration.

- Wedding cakes can be quite costly. Wedding Wire estimates the average wedding cake costs around \$500. One way for couples to save on their cake is to have a faux cake on display, with one tier that is made from cake and can be cut. Guests will then be served slices of

a sheet cake that is much less expensive.

- Couples have many flavors to choose from. Vanilla is classic and quite popular because it appeals to a vast number of people. Lemon, chocolate, and carrot are some other popular cake flavors.

- When it comes to frosting a cake, there are various outer coatings that will encapsulate the cake to make it both beautiful and durable. Buttercream, Swiss meringue, fondant, cream cheese, and ganache all can be used in various applications. Some bakers attest that Swiss meringue, due to the addition of egg whites, makes it a more stable option over traditional buttercreams, particularly during warm weather. Of course, couples can opt for a "naked cake," which usually has a scant amount of frosting so that the cake underneath peeks through.

- A groom's cake used to be tradition, but largely fell out of favor, although it is still alive and well in the American South. The groom's cake typically is less ornate than the wedding cake, and favors

the groom's choices in style, interests and flavors.

Couples and their guests look forward to indulging in wedding cake near the end of the reception. The looks and flavors of a wedding cake can be as unique as the couple saying, "I do."







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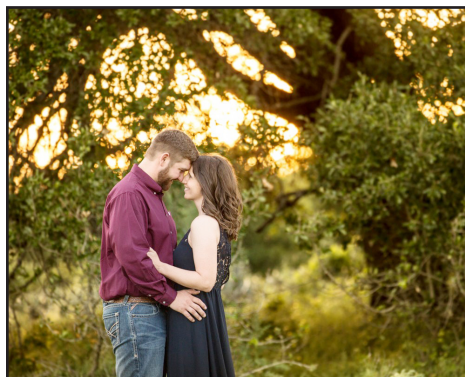


# Book an engagement session to feel like a pro on your big day

By: Steph & Chris Photography

Now that you have picked a date, a photographer, and probably a venue, let's celebrate! You have made some of the toughest decisions in wedding planning! Now on to the fun stuff... like your engagement session! We include engagement sessions in this magazine because we truly believe that they are a VITAL part of the entire process. During your engagement session, you'll have the chance to get to know us, experience how we shoot and how we handle posing and lighting. This session will make a HUGE impact on how the wedding day flows. We'll arrive on your wedding day already knowing how you two interact, what your best poses are and how to photograph you in a genuine way! What we learn about you during your engagement session is

invaluable! You will feel like a pro on your big day because of the great practice you had during your engagement session, and that's how it should be! Your engagement session can be scheduled anytime before your wedding day. I normally suggest booking at least 3-6 months in advance to avoid stress. Because our weekends are filled with weddings, we try to shoot most engagements on weekday evenings, normally from 5-7 p.m. depending on the light and the time of the year. In the winter months, 3-5 p.m. is a normal time frame. During summer, 6-8 p.m. is a good guess. As you start to plan for your engagement shoot, we can start brainstorming location ideas. If you can't think of anywhere specific that you would like to shoot, we can help you decide on a location! We've shot at farms, campuses, downtown alleys and even green houses! Do not shy away from what you think may be a crazy idea! The more creative, the better!



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# Ensuring safe travels for the wedding party

## Special to the Journal

Will you be traveling on your wedding day?

Maybe your venue doesn't have a bridal suite, so you're getting ready at a hotel. Or, perhaps you are having your ceremony and reception at different addresses.

If this is you, booking a party bus or limousine for group travel on a wedding day can keep your whole party together without having to worry about anyone getting lost, broken down, etc.

If your budget won't allow it, get super organized about everyone's transportation. Name a few of your bridesmaids and groomsmen as drivers and communicate with them ahead of time so they know exactly what time to arrive and where they are going, address and all.

Transportation and complications that come with it are the most significant timeline destroyers we've experienced. When people are late, or double trips have to be made to retrieve forgotten items, your timeline is interrupted and it can bring added stress to your day. The longer your travel, the more that can go wrong.

Giving some thought and planning to transportation now can keep you stress-free, happy and focused on what's most important.

Vehicle owner's manuals typically recommend maintenance intervals and should be drivers' first resource for information regarding how to take care of their cars and trucks. But the following are some preparations drivers can make

before you vroom vroom to far off dream wedding destinations.

Check fluid levels, including windshield washer fluid, coolant, brake fluid, transmission fluid, and power steering fluid. Top off if levels are low. Check tire pressure, inspect hoses (which should not be leaking or bulging) and of course clean the interior of the vehicle to ensure guests can be as comfortable as possible (and to be able to fit all of the bride's necessities)

Many vehicle manufacturers now recommend oil changes every 5,000 miles, or up to 10,000 miles if using synthetic oil. Check if you need to rotate your tires to ensure maximum traction, especially if you encounter rain. Ask the mechanic to check your fuel filters and batteries. Many may already do this as part of their comprehensive maintenance packages, but it's still good to confirm.

Drivers also can request that cabin air filters are inspected, they can generally last a year before they need to be replaced. If wiper blades show signs of wear and tear, including streaking on the windshield or scratching noises when in use, replace them.

One telltale sign that brake pads need replacing is a squeaking noise whenever the brakes are applied. Ask your mechanic to check the alignment of your vehicles. Though many vehicles won't develop alignment issues, it's best to check for such issues if a vehicle starts pulling in one specific direction.

The number one goal is to get everyone together, safely to witness the blessing of this new marriage.

## Did you know?

A number of variables affect how much engaged couples will spend on their weddings. Personal preferences, location and the season in which couples get married are just some of the factors that can affect the final cost of a wedding. However, one aspect couples can count on regarding wedding spending is the reception will likely require the most significant financial investment. The Knot 2022 Real Weddings Study found that the average cost of a wedding in 2022 was \$30,000. The study also found that the biggest investment couples make is the venue. Couples indicated they spent about 37 percent of their overall budget on a wedding venue. Though some couples may spend more than that and others may spend less, engaged couples currently planning their weddings should know that the cost of the venue where they will tie the knot will likely end up requiring the most significant investment of any component related to their wedding.



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# Harris Community Center, a local event venue rich in history

## *Special to the Journal*

The Harris Community Center in Belton is a local venue that is located near the scenic Nolan Creek.

With amenities that include spacious parking, a full-service kitchen, free wi-fi, and many different rental packages to choose from, it's the perfect location to host most any event. The Harris Center staff will also setup the room to your preferred liking.

Events such as family reunions, birthday parties, baby showers, bridal showers, company parties and legal depositions are just some other occasions that are held there.

The Evans room has a capacity of 220, the

Kinchion room holds 55, the Simpson room holds 40, and the Smith holds 32. You also have the option of renting out the entire center which holds 364 people.

The full-service kitchen comes with a large refrigerator/freezer, double oven, stove top, and microwave. You are permitted to have alcohol on the premises under the supervision of an off-duty Belton Police Officer.

Tours of the center are available Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you would like to take a tour of the facility or find out more information, feel free to call (254)933-5860 or visit their website at [HarrisEvents.org](http://HarrisEvents.org).

Formerly a schoolhouse, the building was

restored in 2006. The center has quite the historical significance to the community. The earliest record of public education for area African American students dates from 1882 when Mrs. Aleck McGee was hired "to teach the colored school." Professor Thomas Breckenridge Harris (1862-1907), a graduate of Fisk University, became the first instructor of the African American High School in 1890.

The name "West Belton School" was chosen in 1900. In 1936, a new building was erected at the site to house students of all grade levels. By petition, the school was named "T.B. Harris" for its revered former principal. The last class graduated in 1966, and Belton Schools were integrated the following year.

## The benefits to hosting a wedding ceremony and reception at the same venue



Streamlining the wedding planning process can help couples feel relaxed and enable them to more fully enjoy their big day. Hosting a wedding ceremony and reception at the same location is one way to streamline and simplify the planning process.

According to the wedding resource *Here Comes the Guide*, all-in-one venues are preferred by the majority of modern engaged couples. Couples contemplating such an approach can consider the following benefits to tying the knot and hosting the reception at the same venue.

- Streamlined planning: Rather than having to coordinate with two places, all of couples' attention can be directed to one location and working with one party coordinator. This can reduce the propensity for mix-ups.

- Ease of transport: Figuring out how to move between multiple locations and schedule hired vehicles and the like can be a chore. With one venue, guests simply arrive and are done with travel until the festivities end.

- Seamless transition: Sometimes there can be an awkward period between the ceremony and the reception. In such situations, a ceremony may end but the cocktail hour is still an hour or two away. A ceremony and reception in one locale can eliminate the gap, as such venues typically begin the cocktail hour a short time after the ceremony has ended.

- Better guest attendance: Guests who may

find it challenging to get to two different locations, particularly those who don't drive or must rely on public transportation or a taxi, may find a single-location wedding more convenient.

- Outdoor ceremony: Couples who want to exchange vows outdoors often can do so when they have one wedding location because the nuptials are taking place outside of a house of worship, which may not allow for an outdoor wedding due to the sanctity of the location.

- Fewer travel worries: With a single location, it makes it much easier if inclement weather dampens the occasion because there is far less traveling involved.

Couples can keep in mind that a single-location wedding may come with some challenges. Unless the location is on the grounds of a house of worship, the wedding may lack the religious or spiritual component that some couples aspire to. Also, weather can cause issues if couples had hoped to have the ceremony outdoors and must move it into the same space as the reception as a plan B, necessitating a turnover of the room. Couples also may be limited in their photo backdrops, as there will not be two separate places where photos are taken, particularly if the wedding space is limited.

Hosting a ceremony and reception at a single location can benefit couples who want to simplify and streamline their wedding planning.





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