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2018 WEDDING GUIDE

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF ROBSON'S FARM



Welcome to edible Weddings

When you're ready to say "I do" to the one you love, you want everything to be just as you've dreamed. The Garden State offers unlimited options for picture-perfect wedding destinations, whether your vision for your Big Day includes mountain, shore or lake views, chic urban architecture or quaint rural settings. These venues all offer romantic styles and beautiful surroundings, with varying choices designed to suit every couple's whim.

In these pages, you'll find a wealth of distinctive caterers, floral resources, food artisans, and helpful professionals in our area who are sure to make planning easy and fun. From rehearsal dinner, decadent desserts, seasonal floral arrangements, wedding favors and even that emotional walk down the aisle, every detail can be addressed by these experts, whose goal is to help you create the wedding of your dreams.

Your wedding day should be one you cherish forever. In this guide, we'll help you along your path to the perfect day. We'll reveal tips from industry insiders about the latest trends in décor and floral arrangements, share innovative ideas for catering and cocktails, and much more.

Whether you plan to tie the knot on a mountaintop, at the beach, or in someone's backyard, we hope our 2018 Wedding Guide helps you in planning your perfect day.

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Designing & Planning Your Special Day

BY NISHA HALLERT

Your wedding is more than an event: It's the most important story you will ever tell. The way in which you craft your nuptials reveals who you and your partner are as a couple. Thinking of matrimony as a personal narrative with a beginning, middle, and end helps you break your Big Day into manageable pieces. This strategy enables you to plan, design, and weave your tale more easily. How will you tell your wedding story?

THE BEGINNING

From the moment you get engaged, the research begins. You may find yourself flooded with excitement ... and an overwhelming feeling of anxiety.

Venue

A venue sets the visual tone for your event. Take note of how the venue makes you feel as soon as you walk through the doors. Do you want your wedding to evoke the comfort of Grandma's house? If so, a quaint bed and breakfast or cabin near your favorite lake might be the answer. A venue with a view can help ease the decoration budget—you're substituting décor with vista. Full-service venues that provide tables and chairs as well as setup and teardown will be less stressful and ultimately better for your budget. Destination weddings are still hot this year, as are creative ceremonies with a twist, such as spiral ceremony setups, in which the aisle and seats on either side are arranged in a spiral.

Color and design

Color plays a major role in any wedding, evoking emotion and painting a picture for you and your guests. The color story extends throughout the entire process, from the invitations to makeup, bridesmaids' dresses, flowers, lighting, décor, and even food and drink. You can transform your venue into your dream destination through the effective use of colors and design accents, for instance by using different shades of blue, such as turquoise and teal with cobalt, then adding in bright green with coral accents. This color combination transports your party to a tropical paradise while remaining stateside.

The design aesthetic you choose also helps tell your wedding story, and flowers are a big part of that

aesthetic. What is your style? Do you like romantic, abundant, textured blossoms that look as if you've stepped out of a fairytale? Peonies and garden roses are in vogue this year. Maybe you lean toward organic and natural. Using unusual greens for your centerpieces helps achieve this look. More greenery-heavy centerpieces, as opposed to flower-forward arrangements, are in this year. To read more of this year's floral trends, explore Flowertrendsforecast.com.

Have you ever wondered why sunset weddings are so popular? The answer is lighting. Lighting helps enrich an event and provides a way to change the mood and environment. A sunset, one of Mother Nature's most precious gifts, creates a priceless, everlasting feeling. You can create that same sunset ambience that will last your entire event by using uplights that wash an area of the room with light. Uplighting can evolve as your event does. The ceremony could start with a romantic lighting palette and change as the evening progresses to match the vibe, similar to a DJ creating moods with music. Image mapping also allows you to create any desired environment by projecting images onto surfaces or producing creative light shows. Do you want your guests to feel as if they're floating on clouds? Image mapping can do that.

THE MIDDLE

Food and beverages

We are lucky to live in a region where we have access to some of the freshest produce, meats and seafood along with wonderful wines, handcrafted beers, and spirits. It has become the norm to include locally or regionally sourced ingredients at catered events, so if your caterer is not promoting local options, look for another vendor. Go a step further and make a

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connection with the farmer, the chocolatier or the cheesemaker. Did you know it might be possible to raise a specific item just for your wedding? Weaving a favorite food into your menu is a way to help connect the dots between you, the farmer, and the story you are trying to tell. For example, if you and your partner are turophiles (cheese lovers) perhaps you'll want to curate a menu featuring cheese wheels comprised of regionally sourced cheeses or a wedding cake made of cheese wheels, which can be served as the small plate appetizers for the guests to enjoy tableside. If you're an oyster aficionado, consider an all-New Jersey oyster bar, along with tasting cards featuring the name and description of each bi-valve. It will be a good conversation starter for your guests as well as a taste of the Shore.

Entertainment

Adding an interactive element to your wedding helps make the event extra memorable. Hosting a scavenger hunt on a property while the wedding party takes photos or having an illustrator create guest portraits are popular ideas this year. Love lawn games? Create unique cornhole boards for all to enjoy. Custom Snapchat Geofilters provide an easy way to engage guests in an activity, using only their smartphones. Silent disco, in which guests dance to music that's heard via wireless headphones, is both trendy and ideal for locations that prohibit sound past a certain time. Traditional DJs and live musicians are timeless staples, but don't be afraid to ratchet up your entertainment.

—  —
THE END

Photographers and videographers commemorate your wedding. Pictures are forever, so your venue needs to be camera ready. Visualize the areas you want photographed and communicate this desire to your event-planning team. If you're going to Paris for your honeymoon, create a Parisian backdrop. If the venue will allow it, bring Fido along to pose with you for photos. Furry friends always are fashionable!

Many of your guests have likely travelled a distance to join you on your Big Day. Locally crafted jams, preserves and candies make ideal wedding favors—and allow guests to bring home a taste of the Garden State at the end of the celebration.



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Wedding Trends for 2018

Your wedding is not only one of the most important days of your life, but it likely is the most significant gathering you will ever plan. Of course, you want it to be perfect. That pressure for perfection can derail your Big Day if you let the stress overwhelm you. The best way to alleviate the anxiety and turn it into excitement is to limit your focus. Get clear about what you want. Read on to discover some of the hottest trends this year, which you can leverage to create the wedding of your dreams.



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Authenticity is the key to designing the perfect wedding—one that you will be happy to attend... Being true to yourself is the biggest trend of all.

Décor and event design

Not every bride or groom wants to go crazy with the décor. Not every venue demands that, either. Whether you are looking to create a lush fantasy garden or a simple, sleek space, suspended arrangements and ceiling treatments are all the rage. What once was rustic is now woody. Use lots of greenery to create this feeling. Mono-botanical floral arrangements make any venue look contemporary this season, while cascading bouquets elevate the elegance quotient.

Elegance is the perfect word to describe the 2018 trend direction—elegant without overdone formality. Clean floral arrangements complemented by classic attire create a romantic, whimsical mood that is anything but stuffy. This trend extends to jewelry as well: Flower necklaces, especially chokers, are hot this year.

To put the finishing touches on your décor, consider adding texture details to the menus, such as marble, copper, or wax stamps. Finally, eclectic seating arrangements will set your wedding apart. Think high-top tables mixed

with rounds, king tables, banquettes, and mix-and-match chairs at each table.

Choosing colors

Color is about more than a palette for your party to abide by. Color sets the mood for your Big Day. Always, the colors you pick should reflect your personalities. If you worry so much about staying fashionable that you end up with colors you barely tolerate, you will regret it. Being true to yourself is the biggest trend of all. Fortunately, this year's fairly subdued colors ensure elegance and serenity. Navy still is hot, especially when paired with a neutral. Try substituting navy for black at formal events. Think blue tie instead of black tie. Metallics still are popular in 2018, with a slight shift. Brass and rose gold have replaced last year's gold. Also, silver and chrome are making a comeback.

Food selections

Ahhhh, the good stuff. Gone are the banquettes of classic chicken and bland rice dishes. Everyone seems to be a foodie these days, so get creative with your menu. Unique appetiz-

ers and salads featuring seaweed and hemp have surfaced this season. If those suggestions make you squirm, have no fear.

Classic flavors also are in, with a contemporary twist. In place of spaghetti and meatballs, consider baked mini spaghetti bites topped with meat sauce. For bacon lovers (bacon always is trending!), imagine a chocolate-dipped bacon hanging from a cute, woody clothesline display.

Many of your guests, and much of the public, increasingly consider where their food comes from. If you serve seafood, ensure it's sustainable and think about putting up signage indicating such. Stem to stalk and nose to tail have surpassed farm to fork as the righteous food calling cards. For your non-meat-eating guests, try vegetarian variations on the classics.

Food must not only taste scrumptious, but it must look great, too. A plate of food should be designed just like a work of art. Small, composed plates comprised of bright colors and textures add pop to your party. Imagine, for instance, edible flowers on top of burrata. Interactive food stations add another festive element. Cap the soirée with creative desserts such as popsicles or ice cream sandwiches.

Approachable videography

Where once videography seemed a superfluous luxury, now the medium has become accessible and predominant. These are not the long, droll, straight videos of yesteryear. Today's wedding videos tell cinematic stories using multiple angles and quick edits. Drone video is especially popular. We can thank the Super Bowl for this trend! Drones, in particular, offer a different vantage point that traditional videography cannot achieve. A drone can take spectacular photos of the guests during the reception and ceremony. One tip: Make sure that your drone pilot carries the proper license and that your wedding venue is comfortable with the drone on site. Also, while videography is popular, I do not suggest that a video replace your still shots.

As you can see, 2018 trends exude eclectic elegance. Still, never sacrifice authenticity for fashion. To help tell your wedding story in the most authentic—and trendiest—way possible, consider partnering with a professional wedding service company. These companies have experts who can help make your Big Day perfect. —N.H.



SMITHVILLE MANSION, ROSE GARDEN
PHOTO: BEAU RIDGE PHOTOGRAPHY



AGRICULTURAL CENTER, FARMHOUSE
PHOTO: TWISTED OAKS STUDIO



AGRICULTURAL CENTER, BARN
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HOPEWELL VALLEY VINEYARDS

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The Neri family brings three generations of Tuscan winemaking and hospitality to the Valley. Set against the rolling Sourland Mountains and surrounded by vineyard views, their Hopewell Valley Vineyards offers a spectacular setting for your wedding or bridal shower. Working in partnership with local caterers, such as Emily's Café in nearby Pennington, they will craft a memorable day set within their beautiful villa and tasting room or outdoor spaces overlooking the vineyard.

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UNIONVILLE VINEYARDS
9 Rocktown Road, Ringoes
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Filled with warmth and tradition, Unionville's tasting room and award-winning winery building date back to 1858. The winery's event venues include the historic 1858 Tasting Room, the Winery Building, and the intimate stone-walled Cave Room. From May through October, celebrate your wedding on their brick patio replete with a 3,200 square foot, high-peaked tent where guests can dance away the night under twinkling lights amidst a preserved farmland setting.

For more information about New Jersey wineries and vineyard venues, visit the Garden State Wine Growers Association website at newjerseywines.com.

Don't be Late

Your Wedding Timeline & Checklist

12 – 10 months before

- Write up the guest list
- Have the money conversation and set a budget
- Book ceremony site and reception venue
- Hire a wedding planner
- Go dress shopping
- Shop for vendors

9 – 6 months before

- Book the caterer, band/DJ, florist, photographer, ceremony musicians, and rental clothing items
- Block hotel rooms for out-of-town guests
- Register for wedding gifts
- Order bridesmaids' dresses
- Book the honeymoon
- Order invitations
- Send save-the-dates
- Shop for wedding bands
- Choose the getaway car
- Secure wedding-day transportation for guests

5 – 2 months before

- Order the cake
- Plan the rehearsal dinner
- Choose the groom's and groomsmen's attire
- Hammer out details with vendors
- Set up your hair-and-make-up trial
- Write vows if you plan on personalizing
- Finalize the ceremony with the officiant
- Mail invitations
- Buy gifts for your bridal party, parents, and fiancé
- Confirm arrival of bridesmaids' dresses

1 – 0 months before

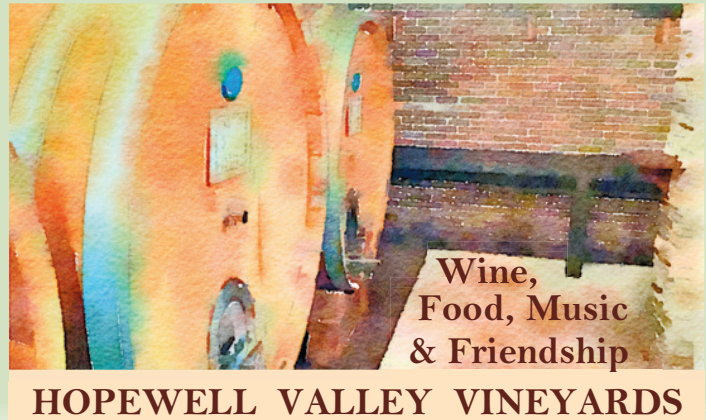
- Obtain a marriage license
- Partake in bachelor/bachelorette festivities
- Have your final dress fitting
- Submit a shot list to the photographer
- Send playlists to the DJ or band
- Provide a final head count to the site and caterer
- Finalize the seating chart
- Break in your shoes
- Write checks due day-of
- Rehearse and say "I Do"!

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF UNIONVILLE VINEYARDS



FLOWER POWER

Rose Robson runs Robson's Farm, a 4th generation farm in Wrightstown that now places a special emphasis on flowers, including offering a Flower CSA. She has noticed a shift in what couples want on the floral front for their big day: "Many couples are returning to a more formal feel. The cascading bouquet will have a presence. On the other side of that, I think greenery is big too, almost woody for both their bouquet and centerpieces. In some cases, people are forgoing large table centerpieces for other elements that multipurpose. For example, a floral wall that can be behind the couple at the ceremony and move into the reception for guests to use as a photo backdrop."



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