



a complimentary guide



EXPLORING YOUR
WEDDING DESIGN:
*DISCOVER WHAT
INSPIRES YOU*

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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS GUIDE.

Maybe you're excited to dive into design. Maybe it overwhelms you to think about. You might be someone who knows exactly what they want, or perhaps you're someone who likes too many contrasting styles, and you need help refining your vision to just one. Or, you could be starting from the drawing board and have no idea what you even like. No matter the type of persona you fit, this guide is designed to help you!

While we could probably write an entire novel on wedding day design and the intricacies that go into it all, our goal was to create a digestible and easy-to-follow guide with our top tips for the couples who are wondering where to begin.

And if that's you, we hope you're ready to create!

With love,

Kylen & Cynthia

FINDING INSPIRATION



Part One

WHEN SHOULD YOU BEGIN THINKING ABOUT YOUR DESIGN?

Before you've officially kicked off your planning and especially before you've booked your venue, it's helpful to begin thinking generally about your wedding day aesthetic and here's why. Once you've locked in your venue, it will become the number one influence in forming your design around its atmosphere and architecture, versus having the freedom to select a venue based on your desired aesthetic.

For instance, if you envision a contemporary, minimalistic wedding design with cocktail-attire, you might narrow your venue search to only those properly suited, such as a rooftop in the city, or a modern art gallery. If you were to book a French Chateau or a setting in the countryside before realizing the design you were ultimately drawn to, you may find yourself needing to alter your vision to appropriately match.

Another reason that thinking generally about your design prior in the early stages, is to identify your design priorities. We'll talk more about this more in the next sections.



Here's where your planner fits in.

Knowing the elements you place a higher value on will allow your planner to help set your expectations when it comes to accurately building your budget, and keep your expenses in line throughout the planning journey.

There is no worse feeling as a planner than knowing your couple is disappointed and ultimately couldn't afford what they were led to think they could. Or worse yet, they felt forced to increase their budget by thousands of dollars to pull it off.

Our advice? More is more when it comes to communicating effectively between you and your planner from the very beginning of working together.

Later in the guide, we'll elaborate on how to clearly convey your wedding design to your planner, and in turn, their responsibility in conveying it to your creative vendor partners.





STEP ONE: BECOME INSPIRED.

The first step in piecing together your wedding's design is finding inspiration. To put it concisely, inspiration can be found everywhere - architecture, interior design, restaurants, art, travel, movies, or the nature around you. Everywhere, and in unexpected places. Now, that might sound overwhelming, but it's actually a good thing because it means you'll have no shortage of ideas as long as you remain open. But before you draw inspiration from the world around you, you'll want to first look to draw inspiration from yourself. This is the type of inspiration that means the most to you. The more significance it holds, the more authentic it will come across when implemented into your wedding day design.

To be clear, we're not saying you have to keep yourself from pulling images off of Pinterest or other social media platforms either. Rather, don't look to these as your sole source of inspiration. Build your design foundation by identifying the inspiration that resonates with you first, and then supplement it with the visuals you find online.



Drawing inspiration from your own life

Your wedding should be a genuine reflection of you and your partner. When you look to yourselves for inspiration, there are three things to consider: your life as individuals, your love story together, and your personal styles. Do this together as something fun by taking a walk down memory lane. Talk about your favorite memories growing up, your family's heritage, and the favorite aspects of your relationship. Take turns discussing your styles, including the types of design you're instinctively drawn to, the colors you love, and the colors you don't.

Through these conversations, we highly recommend you keep track of any notable motifs. A motif is anything that holds significance to your life that you could in turn use as a design element, such as a pattern, symbol, or color in your wedding. Don't confuse this with a theme, which is the overall aesthetic of your wedding. Let's look at some motif examples below and how they could translate into your day-of design.

EXAMPLE 01.

Background: Your family hails from a culturally rich town in Mexico, and you want to incorporate nods to your heritage throughout your wedding.

The Motif: Mexican heritage

How to use it: Cuisine, event branding, favors, entertainment, color palette

EXAMPLE 02.

Background: Growing up, you and your mother spent weekends bonding in the garden, and you grew up with an affinity for flora.

The Motif: Trees, foliage, seeds, botanicas

How to use it: Floral design, favors, tableware and linen patterns, escort card display

Keeping your budget in mind

Let's assume you've already spoken with each other and the family members who want to contribute regarding how much you're willing to invest in your wedding. Numbers aside, know that certain design directions are going to cost more than others. If design is an aspect of your wedding you're not willing to compromise on, it is also likely something you'll need to prepare to spend a higher % of your budget allocation towards.

This is why we mentioned the importance of knowing your wedding day priorities. For example, fresh floral is a design element where many couples underestimate cost. Therefore, if your vision is centered around standout floral design, you can plan on requiring more of your budget. Another consideration is your paper goods, such as your save-the-dates, invitation suite, and day-of signage. Consider going a semi-custom route instead of full custom pieces if these are not as high of a priority, allowing you to free up more budget towards other areas.

Design Tip 01: We often hear brides compare their wedding to that of their friends' or relatives'. But doing so is comparing apples to oranges because each wedding is a reflection of that particular couple's needs, budget, design direction, and personality. All the factors that went into their day will be entirely different when it comes to your own!



Planning around seasonality

We encourage our couples to forget seasonality exists when dreaming up their wedding day design. Just because your wedding date is in the Fall, it doesn't mean you have to include oranges and browns in your color palette.

Where seasonality does come into play is when designing your guest experience and ensuring they are comfortable in both the indoor and outdoor elements, no matter the season you choose.

Here are some questions to think about regarding your date's seasonality:



- Is your date in the middle of busy season? | Your venue pricing may fluctuate up or down based on the time of year. Pricing is typically less expensive during the summer and winter months.
- When will the sun rise and set? | Remember that in the winter, the sun sets earlier in the day.
- What is the average temperature during the time of year you're considering?
- Does your wedding date fall within a monsoon season in the area? | If so, consider working with your planner to create a detailed backup plan should you need to use it!



Consider the day's formality

The formality of your wedding day does make a difference when it comes to the design. Do you want your guests to arrive in floor length gowns and black tie suits or in a more laid-back cocktail attire? By defining the formality for your guests, it helps the design not look out of place, or vice versa, it helps your guests not feel out of place at your wedding. We encourage you to use your venue location, the time of day, day of the week, and your desired attire as a good foundation of selecting the formality for your day.

Selecting your color palette

To identify the colors you enjoy, it's sometimes faster to rule out the colors you don't. Think about the colors in your wardrobe, and notice the colors you wear often versus the colors you have little to none of. Think about how you pair colors with other hues, and how they make you feel. Do neutrals make you feel cozy? Do bright colors lift your mood?

Many people often think that when they select a shade of color for their palette that they are limited to that exact hue as well, which is *not* necessary! Lastly, don't limit yourself only to traditional choices. Consider incorporating unique shades that you wouldn't typically think of for a wedding.



Part Two



GATHERING VISUALS

YOU'RE INSPIRED. WHAT'S NEXT?

Organizing your ideas visually can help you see patterns and identify the direction you want to take. Compile images, color swatches, and fabric samples that resonate with you, and arrange them in a way that captures your desired wedding design, and how it makes you *feel*.

Once completed, you'll have a full collection of boards or photos ready to share with your planner, who will then refine and translate them into a detail-oriented design collection consistent with your conveyed goals and vision. This design collection is essential for your creative vendor partners to understand and visualize your event's design where words may otherwise fall flat.

Tools you will need

Canva

Great for creating collages and digital mood boards.

Pinterest

Great for finding content from other events.

Magazines

Create physical mood boards from cut out photos.

Swatch Books

Save textures and patterns to add dimension to your design.

Design Tip 02: We always say that no idea gets knocked during a brainstorm. If you like an image, save it! But be sure to organize it into a relevant folder that you can later refer back to and refine.



Design Tip 03: If you're searching for a specific picture on social media or in a magazine and can't seem to pull it up no matter how you type it in search, guess what? That means it's an original idea!

STEP TWO: DTD. DEFINE THE DESIGN.

Know that no planner you work with will expect you to know everything. That's our job! This includes expecting you to know how to seamlessly convey your vision. Rather, it's our role to ask the right questions, spur the right conversations to inspire thought, tell your story, and ultimately discover your priorities. *You* are the root of your design.

Using a combination of these conversations and the visuals you've gathered, your planner should be able to curate, transform, and articulate all the information you've shared into a clearly defined design direction. The next page provides some helpful tips for communicating your design to your planner.



- **Think about the why** | If you resonate with a photo, be sure to tell your planner *why*, and the positive feelings you're experiencing when you look at the photo.
- **Be specific** | A photo is worth a thousand words, so be sure to specify what specific elements within the entirety of the photo you admire.
- **Be transparent about your budget** | Without sharing your true spending limits with your planner, they may present ideas or vendors that are outside of your reach. When that happens, valuable time is spent considering things that aren't actually possibilities for your day!
- **If you don't like something, make it known** | Wedding professionals understand that while they could express multiple ideas to you, ultimately, you may not go with any of them! And that's okay. This is your day, so don't be afraid that you will hurt anyone's feelings.
- **Share your priorities** | We can't stress this enough! Given your budget, your planner will understand what areas you should splurge and what areas you can cut back to make you the happiest with the end result.



WORKING WITH CREATIVE PARTNERS



Part Three

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF VENDOR CONSULTS. *HERE'S HOW.*

- Search for vendors that have a portfolio proven to achieve the look you're going for.
- Once you book the consult, take note of the vendor's creativity, and their willingness to explain *how* they plan to implement the look you're going for.
- As you explain your vision to the vendor, are they saying yes to everything you say? Or, are they advising you based on what is in your best interest?
- Are they willing to find and send inspiration images to show you what they are envisioning either during your conversation or following it?
- Notice how the vendor made you feel during the conversation. Their customer service during consults is indicative of their service throughout your planning!
- If you prefer to meet with multiple vendors before making a final decision, we recommend meeting with no more than three that would be excellent matches for what you're looking for. Any more than three begins to feel like tedious management following each consult.

Design Tip 04: Pull images of texture, different hues of colors, patterns, and floorplans you feel speak to your desired look. These details help articulate the tone of your aesthetic.



Trust your vendors

Good news. You, and even your planner don't have to do *all* the creating on your own! Even as planners, we don't claim to be professional florists, production experts, or photographers for good reason. Your vendor partners *are*. Don't be afraid to ask vendors you're considering working with for their advice: what have they seen that works and what doesn't? Invite them to get creative within the realms of your budget. If your design is a concept they can get excited about knowing they're safely able to take creative initiative, they will likely provide top notch service and a seamless process!



Go in-person

If you're provided with the option to visit with a vendor in person, either at a studio, office, or showroom, go! And ask your planner to attend with you. Not only does it help when forming a connection, but oftentimes, products appear drastically different online than they do sitting in front of you. Additionally, you'll be able to touch fabrics, see the dimension of textures, and take as many photos as you want. If you visit a floral design studio, the florist may also be able to show you their inventory and recent work for upcoming weddings.

Part Four



THE GUEST
EXPERIENCE

Design is about an experience

In the traditional sense, many people think design is about a space, whereas in reality, it's about an entire experience. A thoughtful experience helps create a deeper connection between your guests and your day. Work with your planner to put yourselves in your guests shoes, and think through how they would experience your day from beginning to end. Where are the times of day that you can extend extra hospitality, ease of access, and intentional ties to your love story?

5. easy ways to personalize your guests' experience:

- **Cuisine** | Though accommodating for every guest's dietary needs is a difficult feat, providing a variety of hors d'oeuvres, dinner selections, and even dessert ensures everyone has a chance to eat. Try to build a menu that accounts for at least one meat, vegetarian, seafood, and gluten free option. Make it fun and engaging by offering food stations that encourage guests to engage with others and move around the space.
- **Transportation** | If you plan to offer a hotel block for your guests, or your ceremony and reception are taking place at different venues, consider offering a shuttle or private bus to pick-up and drop-off at both the beginning of the ceremony and at the end of your reception. This way, guests can order drinks throughout the night and know they'll be getting back safely. Take it a step further by offering guests rideshare vouchers that cover a ride.
- **Temperature Control** | If your event takes place outdoors at any point, have an adequate plan for keeping guests comfortable. Work with your planner to create a contingency plan in the event of inclement weather. Offer guests blankets or shawls in cooler months, and fans or parasols in warmer seasons.
- **Entertainment** | Entertainment is anything that keeps your guests engaged outside of your ceremony, dinner, and drinks. Nothing gets guests up and moving quite like a live band, musicians, or the right DJ! You can also get creative with a cigar roller, live painter or sketch artist, dancers, photobooth, late night food trucks, fireworks, props for dancing - the list goes on!

Your floorplan is equally as important

One of the most cost-efficient ways to create an impactful wedding design is by strategically arranging your floorplan to be both functional and beautiful! A well-designed floorplan can both focus your guests' attention where you want it, but also increase engagement.

If your floorplan creates a chance for misdirection, makes it hard to access the bar, is confusing for guests to enter or exit, or feels cramped, this will no doubt reflect in your guests' overall experience! Your planner will invest the time into creating a custom floorplan for your needs, but just as with your design direction, you'll want to convey those needs clearly.

3 key suggestions for discussing the floorplan with your planner:

- How do you want your guests to feel when they enter the space? | To experience is to feel, and you'll want your floorplan to help create that sense of feeling for your guests. Whether it's intimate, familial, lively, or nostalgic, your floorplan can help set the tone.
- Do you want to encourage guests to move around and mingle, or stay seated until the dance floor opens up? | If your hope is that your guests engage with others throughout the night, ask your planner to create a floorplan that has a lounge atmosphere, with varying table heights and smaller amounts of people sat at each. Another way to encourage movement is to consider assigned tables, but refraining from assigning people to a specific seat.
- What areas within the space would you like to highlight? | Does the venue have a stunning view, or a courtyard you'd love guests to freely roam to and from throughout the night? Maybe there are floor to ceiling windows, or dramatic arched doorways. Ask your planner how to draw attention to these high impact opportunities!

DESIGN RESOURCES



Part Five

QUESTIONS TO INSPIRE

Q. *Where are you when you feel most inspired?*

Q. *What are your favorite hobbies to do together?*

Q. *What are your favorite restaurants to visit together?*

Q. *What colors do you see most in your closet?*

QUESTIONS TO INSPIRE

Q. What colors do you not see at all in your closet?

Q. What is your favorite room in the house and why?

Q. What are you favorite memories growing up? Why?

Q. What are your favorite memories together? Why?

DESIGN CHECKLIST

As you begin to brainstorm, below are key pieces from your creative vendor partners that help create cohesion in your design!

Floral Design

Ceremony florals

☐

Reception florals

☐

Personal florals

☐

Stationery & Event Branding

Save the date / Invitation suite

☐

Day-of signage & paper goods

☐

Escort card display

☐

Rentals & Tableware

Plateware / Flatware

☐

Linens

☐

Furniture Rentals

☐

Venue

Floorplan

☐

Rental inventory

☐

Key focal points

☐



CONGRATULATIONS,

By applying this knowledge, you're ready to dream up all the elements to a beautiful wedding design, and confidently convey your thoughts & ideas with your planner and vendor partners.

Have additional questions? We'd love to help!

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