

BEHIND THE VEIL:

8 Truths About Being an Arizona Bride

WRITTEN BY Marlene Montanez

AS A BRIDAL WRITER, YOU'D THINK I'D BE BEYOND PREPARED to plan the perfect wedding the minute I got engaged. Candy stations? Hot. Matching bridesmaids dresses? Not so much. But like most anything in life the truth is, it's a whole different ballgame when it involves yourself. And nothing is quite as personal as planning your dream wedding.

continued



RESOURCES

Ceremony & Reception Site: **Montelucia Resort & Spa**

Photography: **Jane Z Photography**

Officiant: **Bride's uncle, Rev. Raul Torres**

Bride's Gown: **Priscilla of Boston**

Menu & Catering: **Montelucia Resort & Spa**

Music & Entertainment: **Impact DJs**

Wedding Cake: **Classic Cakes and Confections**

Bracelet: **Schaffer's Bridal**

Earrings: **Destiny's Bride**

Hair & Makeup: **Rolfs Salon & Spa**

Bridesmaid Dresses: **Demetrios**

Invitations: **The Event Essentials**

Shoes: **Nordstrom**

Wedding Planner: **Jo Ann Grant, Apropos Creations**

Men's Attire: **Tux-Xpress**

Flowers: **Community Florist**

Favors: **Bride**

Menus: **Bride**

Honeymoon: **Saint Lucia**

Forget what you think you know about wedding planning and realize this: there will be stress. There will be fights. Maybe even a bridezilla moment (or two). But there will also be some memories made you'll treasure for the rest of your life. So from one real bride to another, here is what you really need to know and a little about what I learned while planning my Arizona Wedding.

YOU'LL BE REALLY EMOTIONAL

One of my bridesmaids gave me the best piece of advice when it came to planning my wedding, saying, "It will feel like a year-long moment of PMS." I laughed at first but in hindsight, that's the best way to sum things up. Extreme highs and lows can come at any moment and something as small as the wrong shade sample can send a bride into a full-blown panic. Try to reign in those emotions and enjoy

your engagement time – it will fly by!

YOU'LL GO OVER BUDGET

I used every single wedding budget app there was out there – from Wedding Wire to The Knot and even purchased a planner. But although these were handy for tallying up big costs, it was the little ones that really racked up. Did you budget for padding under your wedding linens so that you won't be able to see the table underneath? Or how about any late-night pickup fees should your venue require you to leave an empty room after your reception ends at 2 a.m.? Uplighting, linen overlays and other unplanned upgrades can add up – fast! A word to the wise: be sure to include a "miscellaneous" tab in your budget to help you stick to it.

YOU'LL GET SICK OF PLANNING

Like most brides, the first thing I did after getting engaged was stock up on bridal magazines galore and spend countless hours pursuing Pinterest. But at some point, you will get tired of planning. This is where a wedding planner is a real treat. You see, while flower and dress shopping is loads of fun, you'll eventually need to make choices on every single finite detail, some of which will end up feeling like work at some point. By the time I was asked about napkin preference for our rehearsal dinner, I just said, "surprise me!" Don't overdose on the little things in the beginning and be sure to save some energy for the less-than-fun things later on.

YOU'LL FIND UNEXPECTED JOY

Whether it's finalizing decisions, getting that "Yes" RSVP or finding the perfect china set, there are so many unexpected places you'll find joy when planning your wedding. It's a journey filled with so many little moments of happiness, be sure to embrace it to the fullest.

SOMETHING WILL GO WRONG

My wedding day was absolutely perfect, but that is because it was My Wedding Day. With so many little things needing to come together, something will go wrong. And yes, something

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did go wrong on my wedding day, something quite big, I might add.

Whatever it is that happens, don't let it overshadow the fact that the day is yours to marry the love of your life and whatever else that may go wrong really does not matter in the big picture.

YOUR HARD WORK WILL PAY OFF

I'll be honest: there were definitely moments

where I felt overwhelmed, wanting to throw my hands up in the air and give up planning entirely! Again, this is where a wedding planner can really help, even if it's just to vent to or to provide some guidance. But when I walked into my reception space the night of the wedding, I was completely overwhelmed by how gorgeous everything was. It was exactly how I had imagined and all of the little details fit together perfectly. All those hours obsessing

over every tiny detail made our wedding come to life and it was like magic.

YOU'LL MISS YOUR WEDDING

The morning after my wedding I woke up and told my husband, "I want to do it again!" This may sound crazy, but I actually miss my wedding; friends and family came together to celebrate this really beautiful thing, and I would love to relive the moment over and over again. There is nothing I would change about my wedding day, flaws and all. So in the meantime, I'll have to count the years down until a vow renewal can be planned! Be sure to relish every single moment; it will go by incredibly fast and you'll wish for it over and over again.

LIFE AS A NEWLYWED...

May feel strikingly similar to life as an engaged couple! And that's not a bad thing. Don't be surprised if you feel just as comfortable in your relationship both pre- and post-wedding. Some brides say they feel a huge "shift" in their relationship but a lot of us feel just as happy before as we do after saying our "I Dos."

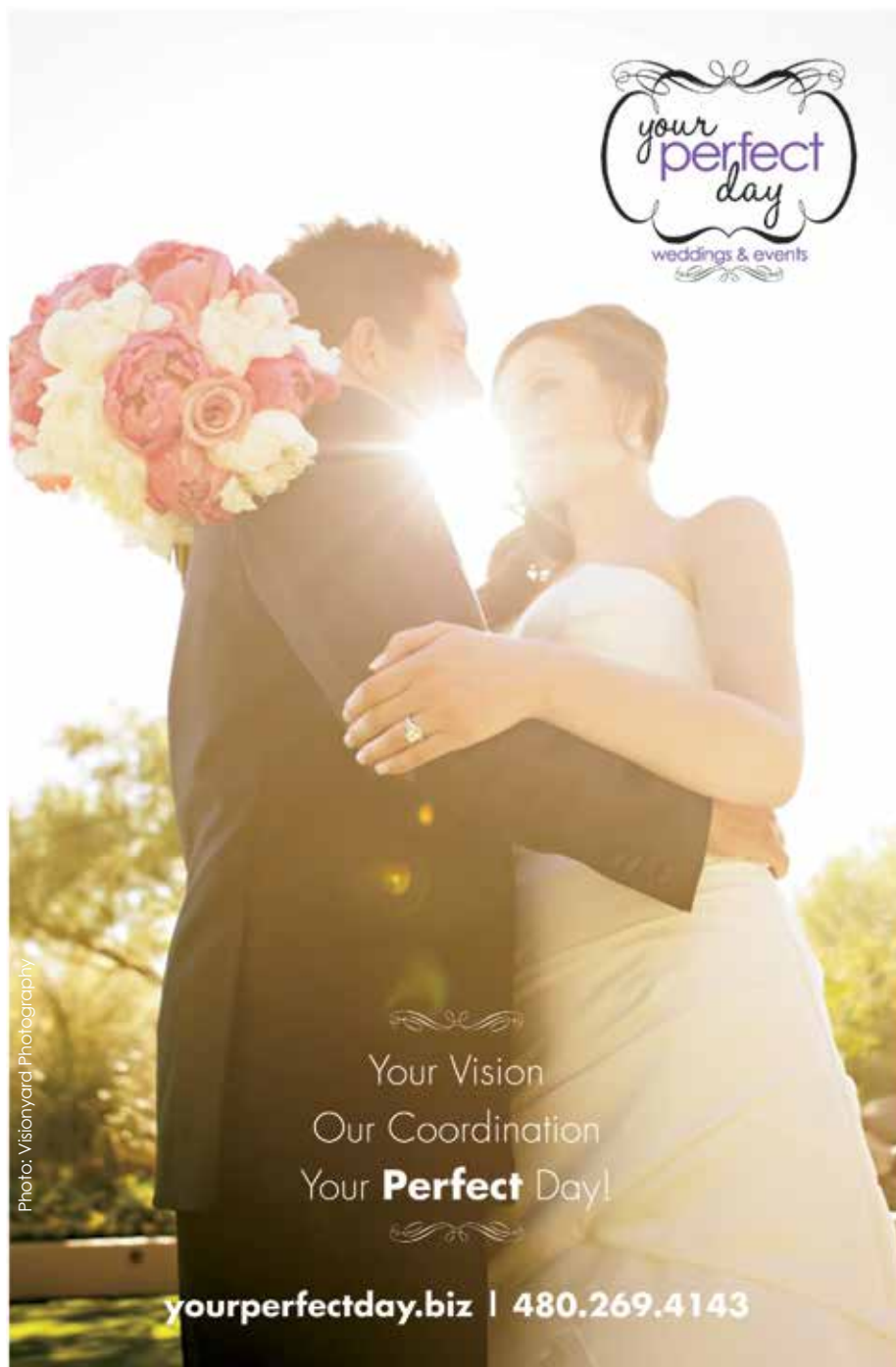
ADVICE FROM MARLENE

4 Things Every Arizona Bride Should Do

Hey, not every bride gets married in the desert! Here are my top recommendations for something every Arizona bride should do.

1. Host an Outdoor Shindig

Whether it's your bridal shower, bachelorette or your engagement party, take advantage of our glorious weather and host a beautiful, outdoor celebration at some point during your engagement. It's a great way to showcase the beautiful





backyard we live in to out-of-town guests.

2. Have a Weekend Staycation

Wedding planning can get stressful at times but luckily, we live in a great place to get away! Book a weekend staycation either solo or with girlfriends and enjoy some quality R&R when you need to take a break from wedding planning mayhem.

3. Meet Other Arizona Brides

Occasionally, you'll run into those only-another-bride-would-understand moments. That's why it's great to meet other local brides! Check out ArizonaWeddings.com for events where you can meet some new gal pals that are on the same track.

4. Dial Down the DIYs

Yes, Pinterest is inspiring, but there's no need to overwhelm yourself with projects galore. Instead, pick one or two you'd like to DIY and leave the rest to the Pros.

Are you the next Real Arizona WEDDING?

One lucky couple will be selected to appear in Arizona Weddings Magazine.

Simply register on: arizonaweddings.com



For more bridal inspiration and the glamorous side of desert living, follow me at StyleSizzle.com.



More Planning Advice online at

arizonaweddings.com

