

## WEDDINGS

## Sealed with a kiss

**Preparation** is key to ensuring the big day goes well. Reports by Jade Lee-Duffy

Everybody dreams of the perfect wedding day. But with countless people involved in planning the big event, you can almost expect something to go wrong.

"Planning your wedding is a stressful time and an emotional experience, so you need to maintain a sense of humour. Sometimes people get too caught up in the details," says Sonya Yeung, founder and creative director at Bliss Creations. "Try to be lighthearted and keep calm. You don't want the events leading up to it to be a nightmare. Remember your wedding day is supposed to be fun."

As wine and liquor are usually one of the biggest expenses, Yeung recommends couples negotiate the corkage package.

"If you have particular tastes in wine, you probably don't want to pay for the cost of other brands," she says. "Bringing in your own wine is a lot cheaper."

Couples getting hitched abroad should check the best time of year



Bliss Creations can help make wedding days go without a hitch.

for weather and pick a date that borders on off-peak seasons.

"You also have to understand that planning a destination wedding requires a lot of patience," Yeung says. "You are going to experience cultural differences, different working styles and language barriers."

On the day, Yeung suggests couples keep their energy levels up by eating a big breakfast.

Her final piece of advice is to hire a wedding planner for the big day, if

not for the entire process. That can reduce any extra responsibility that would be otherwise placed on family and friends.

Anna Wong, director of catering at the Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong, recommends booking the date of a wedding banquet about 18 months in advance. "Most people in Hong Kong get married in a hotel on a Saturday or Sunday, so we always encourage people to book as soon as possible, or they won't have their preferred date," she says.

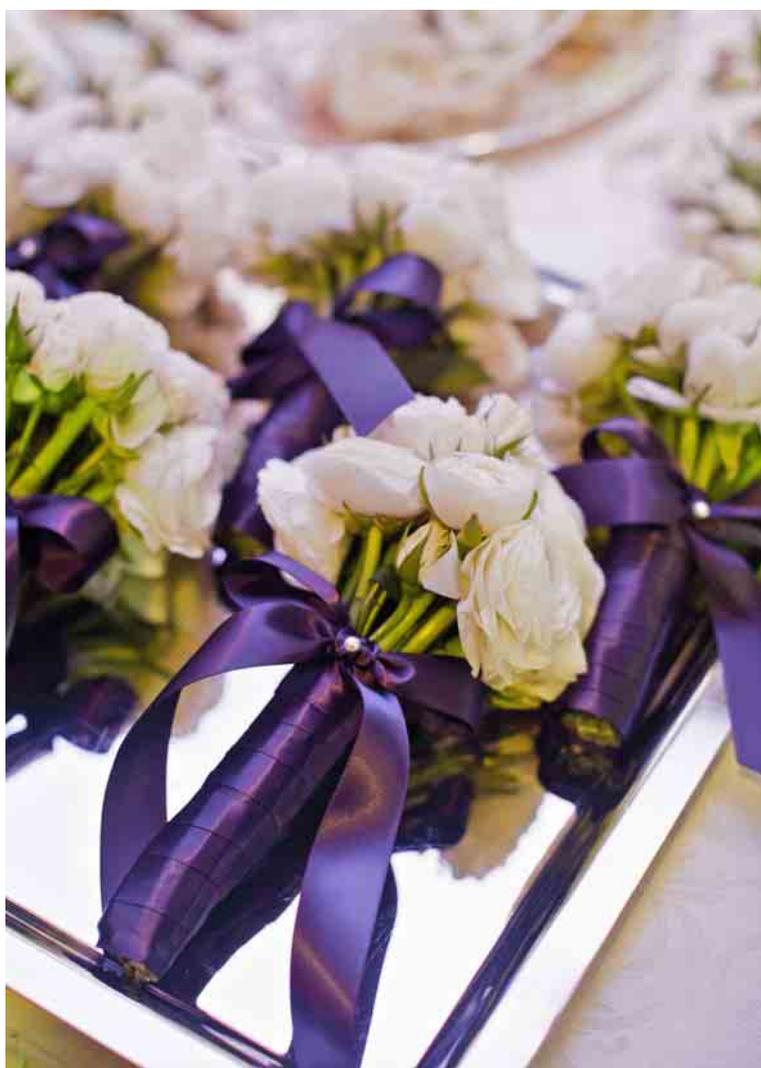


Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong can cater to casual as well as lavish tastes.

Before deciding on a venue, Wong suggests couples check the ambience. "Ballrooms can be very different from hotel to hotel," she says. "It's always best to check."

As the wedding banquet is usually the largest portion of the wedding budget, Wong suggests couples on a limited budget host a lunch or cocktail-style party instead. Once the dinner, lunch or canapés menu has been ordered, the couple should book the tasting menu two to three months in advance.

## PLANNING



Choosing flowers that are in season can save a lot of money. Photos: Gary K

## A blooming good time

No wedding is complete without flowers. Floral designer and founder of Gary K, Gary Kwok, says fresh blooms add colour, life and fragrance to the big day. "They can help make table settings more beautiful, and can transform a dull space into a gorgeous personality-filled one," says Kwok, who helped set up Armani Fiori in 2002.

Couples should first decide on their colour scheme and floral and style preferences. Kwok says: "By having a consistent theme match a venue that is well-planned, you will be giving your guests a chance to witness a gorgeous and memorable wedding."

"It is also a good way for [a couple] to reflect on [their] own personalities and taste."

Kwok says certain colour combinations, such as white and green, symbolise a relaxing natural theme, well-suited for outdoor venues. Alternatively, indoor venues may inspire more classical elements or evoke passion, which can be reflected in strong shades of purple, red and burgundy.

Colour, shape, style and size are factors to consider when choosing the bouquet, and the style of the wedding dress usually influences the outcome.

"It's very helpful if you have a colour in mind. Bring swatches,



## FLOWERS

photos of your wedding gown and discuss with your florist how to choose a colour to complement your dress," he says.

Bouquets can range from a just-picked-from-the-garden look to more stylised formal pieces, Kwok says.

"You should always get a sense of balance between the gown and the bouquet. Too large a bouquet would simply overpower the bride and clutter her elegant dress."

Couples should also consider the colours of the bridesmaids' dresses and groomsmen's attire when choosing bouquets and boutonnières.

And, while most blooms are now available year-round, Kwok adds that choosing flowers in season "can save a lot of money".



Purple can evoke passion.



A classical touch for indoors.