**WEDDING PLANNING WORKSHEET**

You probably spent many of your childhood years dreaming of this one day…From the moment he slipped the ring on your finger, you finally could start planning your dream: your wedding day! Who will be in your wedding? Where will you be married and have your reception? What exotic location will you choose for your honeymoon? Once you have laid the foundation for your wedding, it is time to make the other important decisions. You must choose a photographer, DJ or band, invitations, a cake and a florist.

For most brides, choosing a florist and deciding what floral decorations you want can be a difficult and tedious process. How will you know what you want when you don’t even know the names or varieties of flowers? How will you know you’re getting a unique and beautiful floral expression without spending your entire budget? How will you choose the best florist for your particular needs?

Relax! Your professional florist can guide you through your entire wedding floral ordering process. A great florist will not only help you choose your floral decorations but will also educate you throughout the entire process, customizing your desires and tailoring them to your specifications. She or he will walk you through, step by step, the major decisions such as color scheme, floral selection, floral theme and budgetary concerns.

The intention of this guide is to prepare you for your first consultation with the florist of your choosing. It will help you make educated decisions and pose questions for you to ask your florist. Additionally, this guide is written from a florist’s perspective. The more you know about your purchase, the more satisfied you will be with the end result. **So, let’s begin! Enjoy!**

As a florist, the very first thing I recommend is to look through some bridal magazines and other bridal publications for initial ideas. Look through at least two or three magazines and pick out all the ideas and themes you like that pertain to what you may have already planned. Also, I encourage you to talk to your married friends and relatives and even attend some bridal shows and exhibitions to gain more ideas. You may even want to start a folder specifically for your floral decoration ideas. Bring this folder to your initial consultation. Further, have a clear and firm idea of what you absolutely DO NOT want. Additionally, have a general floral budget set. While you don’t have to know 100% what your budget is or what it will be, you should have a general idea. Setting initial parameters will give your florist a frame of reference to work with.

The following is a list of simple do’s and don’ts to consider before and during your floral consultation:

* Prior to meeting with your florist, DO get online and visit various floral websites to familiarize yourself with different floral and foliage varieties and bouquet ideas. (Recommended sites: [www.aboutflowers.com](http://www.aboutflowers.com), [www.theknot.com](http://www.theknot.com))
* DO call a florist to set an appointment time and date. (Many florists require an actual consultation time/appointment as opposed to a cold call or on-the-spot consultation.)
* DO be prompt to your consultation.
* DON’T bring more than one other person to your first consultation. Too many people can make your consultation hectic and can cloud your opinions.
* DO have a general floral decoration budget set. Typically, your floral decoration budget should be between 10-20% of your entire wedding budget.
* DO make your florist aware of any budget considerations at the time of your consultation.
* DO be honest with your florist. Be upfront with him or her if you are merely price shopping. If you are price shopping, most florists will not do an extensive wedding consultation or “on-the-spot” consultation.
* DO check with your venue before your floral consultation for all applicable specifications and restrictions. For instance:
  + In Catholic churches, flowers are generally not permitted on the main altar, but flowers are typically allowed on the back altar. Some may only permit fresh flowers in the sanctuary
  + Episcopal churches typically permit flowers, plants and candles, but the altar arrangements cannot be taller than the arms on the standing cross. Additionally, simplicity is encouraged as to not detract from the religiousness of the ceremony
  + Like Episcopal churches, Lutheran churches permit a wide array of decorations, but generally do not allow decorations on or around the pulpit area
  + Protestant churches are generally the most open and accommodating, but it is advisable to consult with your minister for his or her personal regulations
  + Synagogues may allow a variety of floral decorations and may permit you to decorate the chuppah or supply your own.
* DO incorporate your personal style into your ceremony and reception floral scheme.
* DO expect to pay a deposit to reserve your wedding date. Your deposit is often non-refundable, but will be applied to your wedding order. You may also be required to sign a contract to process and fill your wedding order. This contract will most likely be mailed to you following the receipt of your deposit.
* DO tell your florist if you or any member of your wedding party has any specific floral or foliage allergies
* DO be open to alternate suggestions from your floral professional. Sometimes, one look can be achieved in a multitude of ways.
* DON’T overdo a theme. The key is tasteful and understated.
* DO make sure your contract outlines all the duties and responsibilities you expect your florist to perform. Often, an additional fee may be incurred if you want your florist to service or deliver your wedding.
* DO keep in mind that you may pay a premium price for your wedding flowers if your wedding coincides with a holiday (i.e. Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day, Christmas, etc). Additionally, keep in mind that some churches will not perform wedding ceremonies during “holy” times of the year (i.e. The Lenten season).

Bouquet Styles and Descriptions

Nosegay (formal and free-form)

Small, hand-tied cluster of typically not more than seven stems of flowers looks best when using only one or two floral and foliage varieties such as roses or carnations (also known as a clutch style bouquet)

#### Hand-tied

Stems of flowers exposed, generally round in shape, best for garden style or non-traditional themes

#### Biedermeier

Hand-tied bouquet of typically three or four different flowers, where flowers are distinguished in concentric circles

Cascade (formal and free-form)

Long, flowing style bouquet, most traditional and formal, best for showcasing foliage and longer stemmed floral varieties, most manageable on a form

#### Composite

Consists of only one floral variety, and five or fewer stems, very simple and elegant, dramatic in photography

Arm Bouquets/Presentation Style Loose flowers tied with ribbon or tulle, cradles in the arm (think “Miss America”), works best with only one or two floral varieties together like roses and lilies

Bouquets on/in Props: Baskets, Purses, Muffs, Pomander Balls, Fans