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Weddings 2006

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I Should Have Premarital What?!

Contributors



Michelle Johnson grew up in Greenville, Ala., and now lives in Birmingham so that she can pursue her dream of being a professional boxer. Michelle loves all things Southern, including impossibly large Southern weddings with impossibly large dresses, hair, cakes and buffet tables.



Award-winning freelance journalist and photographer Joshua Kinser specializes in outdoor adventure sports, travel, the environment, arts and entertainment, and book and product reviews. Joshua has explored wilderness and music from the coasts and freshwater springs of Florida to the mountains and rivers of Montana; the volcanoes and rain forests of Hawaii to the deserts of Egypt and the islands of Greece. Today, Joshua's travels as a professional musician with the progressive world-beat trio Luna Mantra and assignments as a professional freelance journalist give him the valuable opportunity to report and photograph from destinations around the globe to continue exploring its music and wilderness.



Kelly L. Adams Stone grew up in Gulf Breeze and graduated from Gulf Breeze High School in 1981. She earned a Master's degree in counseling psychology from Florida State University in 1988 and is now a licensed professional counselor in Atlanta. She has worked with families, couples, and children for 15 years. She served as director of children's mental health services for a tri-county area of metro Atlanta for 3 years, and she is currently employed as a high school guidance counselor in Georgia. She specializes in writing on topics of parenting, mental health and relationships. Visit her online at www.kellystone.com.



Originally from Minneapolis, Matt Bendell is easily adjusting to the climate and lifestyle here in Pensacola. He will be graduating in May from the University of West Florida with a major in communications/journalism emphasis. He also works part time at WEAR-TV and West Florida Hospital.



Renee Christie is a graphics freelancer for Ballinger Publishing. She obtained a Journalism degree from Middle Tennessee State University in 2005. She also studied French language in Caen, France, in 2004 and would love to go back. Renee grew up in Tennessee and credits her accomplishments to being brought up by a wonderful family. She is afraid of heights, large insects, and scary movies. Highlights of her day include laughing with others, her wonderful boyfriend, Woody, and phone calls from home.



Lindsay McMullen was born in Arkansas, but because her dad is in the military, she grew up all over the place. Before Pensacola, the last place she called home was the continent of Europe, where she graduated from high school. Currently a student at the University of West Florida, she'll graduate in the spring with her identical twin sister. She's looking forward to beginning a new chapter in her life after graduating and is anxious to see where it is she'll go next.

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WEDDINGS 2006

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Planning a Pensacola Wedding

By Matt Bendell

With a near perfect climate, beautiful beaches and a number of historical districts, Pensacola is a great place to plan a wedding. No matter what time of year, there are countless options that can fit anyone's needs. With the busy wedding season already here, two local wedding planners gave *Pensacola Magazine* tips and advice to plan the perfect Pensacola wedding.

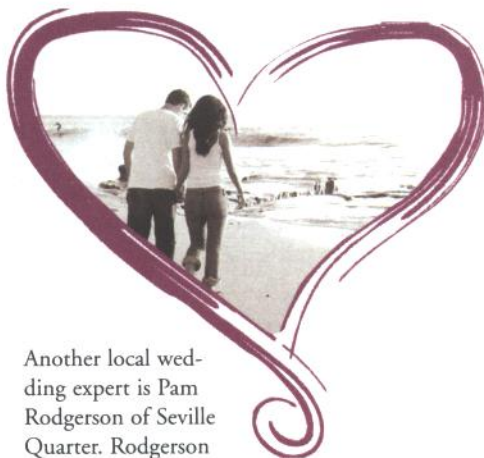
According to Sharon Boone, of Sharon Creations, "a perfect wedding is when no major problems occur on the wedding day."

To keep problems from occurring on your day, take care of things beforehand. "One thing you can do to help avoid a potential disaster is to follow up with all your vendors the week of the wedding to make sure everyone is still planning on doing their part and they are aware of when and where the ceremony and reception are located," Boone said "There is nothing worse than to have a no-show vendor or one that is unprepared or late because they have not been reminded of the schedule for that day."

Whether an outdoor beach wedding is your forte, or a more traditional church ceremony is in order, Pensacola offers a wide array of choices to choose from. Downtown Pensacola and the bay area are popular choices for many. "The Old Christ Church is a great ceremony location," Boone said "It is one of the oldest surviving church buildings in Florida. Couples tend to love the architecture and the feel that the church building adds to their ceremony. It is beautiful on the inside and outside and is the perfect place for gorgeous wedding pictures. The floors are the original pecan floors and the pews are made of sycamore," Boone added. "The ceiling of the church is called the naïve, which is a shipbuilding term. When you look at the ceiling, it looks like the hull of a ship." This church has a rich history that dates back over 150 years. Boone said it has been a church, a hospital, abandoned, a library and then finally a church again.

Boone said that the beach is also a great choice for both weddings and receptions. "The beautiful white sand beaches are a big plus for this area. Our beaches make a popular location for ceremonies and receptions," Boone said. "If you hold your wedding in the spring or fall when the weather isn't too hot, it can make for a gorgeous setting for a wedding."

For receptions, Boone said the Pensacola Yacht Club is a common choice among brides and grooms. "It has lots of room inside and a deck on the outside where more tables can be set up depending on the size of the reception. It is close to the water. The event planner will help you determine exactly what you need. Their food is very good, and the staff is friendly."



Another local wedding expert is Pam Rodgerson of Seville Quarter. Rodgerson has been planning weddings for over 18 years and has experience in various settings. Many girls have been planning their wedding since they were very young. "They have this idea in their head of the way it's supposed to be. It's supposed to be perfect," Rodgerson said. "When they say perfect, they mean they wouldn't change a thing, it went smoothly, without any complaints."

Rodgerson said that one thing to keep in mind when planning a local wedding is the weather. With hurricane season beginning June 1, it is always a good idea to have alternate plans in case a tropical system heads this way. Both Rodgerson and Boone have dealt with impending storms and have overcome the difficulties that were presented by them. Boone coordinated a wedding last summer which is a good example of why you should be prepared. Tropical storm Arlene hit during the wedding ceremony.

"A couple days prior to the wedding, the forecast stated that a strong tropical storm, or possibly a category 1 hurricane was headed this way," Boone said "We began making alternate plans just in case." Boone said she contacted all of the vendors and coordinated back up vendors as well. She made plans to have the wedding reception at the church if the weather was too bad to travel to the reception site. She also made sure that there was a sufficient amount of candles at the ceremony in case there was no power.

Even though some couples have locations booked up to a year in advance, the weather in Northwest Florida could still put a kink in the plans. Rodgerson said that she has had clients that had plans for a wedding and reception at the beach, and all of that changed after hurricane Ivan.

"We had a beach front hotel booked before hurricane Ivan hit," Rodgerson said. "The wedding was not scheduled for almost a year after that, but lo and behold, a few months before the wedding, the hotel coordinator notified me that the facilities were still not going to be ready by the wedding date."

With an organized, detailed agenda, it is a pleasure to plan and have a local wedding. "The busiest times of the year for weddings are the spring and summer months," Rodgerson said "The best scenario is to book your location early so you are less likely to be disappointed." 