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- ▶ consumer
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- ▶ donations
- ▶ family
- ▶ green living
- ▶ health
- ▶ Holiday ideas
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- ▶ personal finance
- ▶ pets
- ▶ shopping
- ▶ stains
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- ▶ work

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August 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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[Home](#) > [Life Guide](#) > [Archives](#) > [2007](#) > [December](#) > [13](#) > Entry

Wedding tips from the pros

By [Sarah Lindner](#) | Thursday, December 13, 2007, 10:55 AM

After she gave us tons of tips for our recent [column on holiday video](#), Ashley Chiles of [Ladyflash Productions](#) was nice enough to share even more great advice, this time on weddings. She's joined here by wedding photographer [Ashley Garmon](#). Together, these two pros have seen plenty of Austin weddings. They know what works and what doesn't. Here is their advice on making your ceremony and celebration memorable. Plus, you can enjoy their words, and their work, in this video.

— Start planning early, Chiles says. Six months to a year in advance is ideal. "Find your most stylish, savvy, resourceful friends who've been married and ask for all of their wedding tips," she says.

— Chiles recommends working with a wedding coordinator, ideally for more than just "day of" assistance. "They are one of the best investments you can make," she says. "I cannot tell you how many times I have seen things fall apart during clients' events because they simply could not anticipate unforeseen details nor be in charge of coordinating multiple people to be in multiple locations and all show up on time." Consultants can help with managing details, timelines and vendors, in addition to the design aspects of the wedding, she says.

— Be realistic about how much wedding you can afford with your budget, Chiles says. If a professional with whom you want to work is out of your budget, ask her to refer you to her assistants or to a less-expensive, up-and-coming vendor. As you'd expect, Chiles is passionate about making photography and video priorities in your budget. "It does not make sense to spend loads of time and money creating a beautiful and memorable wedding, only to have a less-than-fabulous record of it," she says.

—"Don't have an outdoor wedding basically between May 10 and October 10 in Texas," Chiles says. "It is just too hot! It absolutely kills your guests and vendors, and does not make for good photos and video, as you and your groom will be sweating, sticky, and miserable. If you want the outdoor option, choosing a location with both outdoor/indoor areas for your party is key." Garmon adds: "Always have a rain plan. Pay for the tent reservation. It is not an option to do otherwise!"

— In choosing vendors, look for people whose work you love and whose personalities mesh with yours, Chiles and Garmon recommend. Do you feel comfortable with them? Could you imagine spending several hours with them? "Ask your coordinator, your venue staff, your friends and other vendors for referrals and recommendations," Chiles says.

— Make sure you understand your contracts with the venue and vendors, Chiles says. "With photos and video, make sure you are clear on whether you will be purchasing the copyright to original photos on disc or unedited videotapes," she says.

—"Invest in lighting at your wedding," Garmon says. "You spend thousands of dollars on flowers and linens, not to mention all of the time that it takes making these decisions. It's a shame if they aren't showcased at the wedding. Or worse, if no one can see them." Get recommendations from your wedding coordinator and

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no one can see them. Get recommendations from your wedding coordinator and the pros handling your photo and video on lighting that will create the right ambiance at your wedding as well as look great on camera, Chiles says.

— “Limit the length of your ceremony and discuss the wording of your ceremony with your officiant,” Chile says. “I have seen some officiants ramble on endlessly and repetitively with guests literally falling asleep. I have also seen officiants make bizarre and very non-PC references.”

— Overbearing family member? Give her a task like putting together gift bags for out-of-town guests to make her feel useful, Garmon says. “Oh, and do not put yourself in charge of doing these things,” she adds. “You won’t have time and it will stress you out in the end.”

— “Do not get drunk at your rehearsal dinner and go to sleep early the night before the wedding,” Garmon says. “Being puffy and hungover is not the best way to start your wedding day. You’ll also probably be much more nervous and perhaps grumpy.”

— Don’t have your bridesmaid luncheon on the day of the wedding. “It’s just too much to try to pull off. This is a lovely tradition that is better held the day before the wedding,” Garmon says.

— “Don’t get a massage on your wedding day,” Garmon says. “This will dehydrate you and also might also make you a bit puffy.”

— Scenes of the bride getting ready are a staple of wedding photographs and videos. So, if possible, choose a pretty room for getting dressed, Garmon says. And pay attention to other details: Hang your dress on a wood or satin hanger, and have your bridesmaids dressed before you put on your dress. “Your photos and videos will look so much better!” Garmon says.

— “Don’t have your hair done in some crazy updo that doesn’t suit you,” Garmon says. “This just looks odd. You should look like yourself on your wedding day, just the prettiest, best version of you. That being said, if you are tragically having an outdoor wedding in the summertime, do not wear your hair down. You will look a mess by the end of the reception. It’s not pretty.”

— “If you can, try to convince your fiance to get a manicure,” Garmon says. “Gnarly fingernails are distracting in the photographs, particularly your ring shots.”

— “Bring a copy of the invitation to the wedding or mail it to your photographer ahead of time,” Garmon says. “It really adds to the story to have a photo of the invitation.”

— Finally, “Don’t sweat the small stuff,” Garmon says. “Take a deep breath and remember that this is supposed to be fun.”

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Practical advice and very fun to watch!