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# Wedding GUIDE



The Clinton Chronicle  
March 25, 2009



# Clinton House moves from hunting to hosting weddings

By **Bristow Marchant**

Staff Writer

Weddings are performed all year round, but springtime is the most popular season to get married because the blooming of nature makes the perfect backdrop for the newly blossoming phase of life for the young married couple.

That's why many wedding parties migrate outside the church and into the open air. And in Laurens County, the Clinton House Plantation hopes to provide the perfect natural backdrop.

Originally conceived as a hunting preserve, the Clinton House is trying to expand its services to hosting a wider variety of events, and this spring the 2,000-acre property plans to host its first wedding service.

"We can do full-blown weddings, receptions and rehearsal dinners," said General Manager Mike Johnson. "We've got two gazeboes and an amphitheatre overlooking two lakes."

Just four months ago, Clinton House

completed its new dining hall with space to double as a chapel if the couple prefers an indoor ceremony. Johnson estimates the building can hold up to 300 people, but says he expects most of their customers will rather go outdoors down the hilly path to the lakeside.

"Just look at the place," Johnson said when asked what the Clinton House has to offer. "They'll want to do it outdoors with those two ponds down there. There's nothing else like this in Laurens County."

When it opened a decade ago, Clinton House was a 200 to 300-acre property open for "corporate hunting" events, and the only available lodging was a single two-story brick house on a hill overlooking Highway 56 north of Clinton.

Since then, the plantation has expanded to host several non-hunting related happenings.

"We've done corporate events, sales meetings, charity events, police seminars and legislative meetings," Johnson said.

**Clinton House, Page 11**



Interior view of the Clinton House Plantation's facility that is available for weddings, corporate events, sales meetings, etc.



Clinton House Plantation's new dining hall with space that doubles as a chapel for indoor weddings. The facility can hold up to 300 people.

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# Clinton House

## From Page 2

The same hall that could hold reception dinners also recently hosted the fifth annual meeting of the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), a national association of state legislators active in outdoor sporting, wildlife and conservation issues.

"There were about 130-140 people on hand for that," Johnson said, "and about 36 state representatives all the way from Alaska, Texas and Arizona."

The Clinton House is staffed by two full-time employees (not including Pete, Johnson's canine "office manager," always available to greet guests at the office door), and some part-time employees, like hunting guides, available on an as-needed basis.

Johnson has been overseeing the property for three years. Growing up nearby in the Fairview Baptist community south of Joanna, he graduated from Clemson University with a degree in veterinary science and went into the restaurant business before he decided it wasn't for him.

"I like being outdoors," he says when de-

scribing his current job. "Anything's better than being inside."

Besides the hilltop house with space for eight overnight guests, the Clinton House is in the process of constructing four cabins with four beds and two bathrooms, one of which has been completed on the side of the lake opposite from the wedding chapel, complete with a whirlpool tub. Johnson also plans to install some duplex housing on the property as well.

For weddings, the Clinton House leaves event planning up to the individual customers, but is prepared to help where needed.

"We mainly just over the venue," Johnson said. "We can recommend caterers, recommend photographers who work with us. There's a handful of people we use on these occasions."

A reception at the plantation can cost \$1,800, while a two-day package including reception, rehearsals and wedding costs \$3,500. For guests who want to stay overnight at the Clinton House, the hilltop brick house costs \$250 a night, and the cabins \$125.

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# A simple green wedding

A wedding is one of life's major rites of passage. It is certainly something to celebrate!

Here are some tips on planning another sort of wedding that can be beautiful and meaningful in its own way.

\* Make it your day. Each wedding can and should be a unique expression of the couple getting married. So create the day just the way you want it, to please the two of you.

\* Choose the wedding traditions that are important to you. When it comes right down to it, the essentials of a wedding are the two people to be married, the minister or justice of the peace who performs the ceremony, the ceremony itself, and the guests who witness it. Everything else is decoration and tradition. Learn about wedding traditions and choose to do those that will make your day special.

\* Write your own ceremony. The entire reason for having a wedding, really, is the ceremony. The most important aspect of a wedding is not the decorations, but the vows and intentions that are stated in the

ceremony and that you give to each other. Research the time-honored patterns to wedding ceremonies and follow this pattern in your own personal way.

\* Invite meaningful guests. When you have a small number of guests, you can spend more time with them and really experience their presence. Minimum is just the two of you, the minister, and a witness. Invite family and friends with whom you have real relationships. Eliminate those that might be invited out of social obligation.

\* Have your wedding at home, either indoors or in your garden, or in a park. Rather than spending a lot of money on floral arrangements, we put that money into tidying up our back yard and planting perennial flowers that we are still enjoying today.

For many more details on planning your simple, small, green wedding visit <http://www.debraslist.com/wedding> and click on "You are invited to... My Simple, Small, Green Wedding".

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# Create your own unique wedding story

By Tracy Hargraves  
For The Chronoicle

Customize your own wedding to your own liking. Everyone wants to have the nicest wedding so why let others choose your wedding details for you when you can do it yourself?

Now that you are ready to settle down you are also ready to start making your own decisions for your wedding without the help of a wedding planner.

The retaining of planners actually took root initially in the business world where the owners of different enterprises took it upon themselves to hire so-called professionals to help plan different aspects of the business's operations.

Eventually, this started to seep over into the personal lives of many people. Following the business model, people began hiring personal financial planners.

Of course, in due course, the planner started invading the province of personal

life: financial planners, party or meal planners, most importantly wedding planners. By leaps and bounds, there has been a marked increase in the number of couples who are headed to the altar who end up hiring wedding planners to aid and assist them in their preparation for that big, momentous day.

Maybe you are already thinking about hiring a wedding planner for your wedding. You may think this is the best course for you.

The Process is Important: In many countries around the world when people take to traveling, the destination is all that matters. The actually journey from Point A to Point B is irrelevant and something to be endured at best.

This is definitely not the usual practice seen all over the world. In other countries, the actually traveling and journey itself is an integral part of any trip. The impatience that can be found in some sectors in regard

to traveling to a vacation destination can also be felt in the planning for a wedding. There are people who simply have concluded that while the wedding itself is magic, the planning for the wedding is not something to be savored.

With that mind set, these people readily (and with seeming pleasure) pass off the responsibilities of planning for their wedding to a professional wedding planner.

What you will want to do is give recognition to the fact that the process of preparing for and planning a wedding is important. Memories will certainly be made on that big day — your wedding day.

You need to keep in mind that the process of planning you wedding, the process of having a direct and hands on role in planning your wedding, is important.

Making Your Imprint - Directly: It goes without saying that if you are like most people you want to

ensure that your wedding bears your own distinctive and unique imprint. The fact is that when you use a wedding planner you do have influence on the decisions that are made, your desires and ideas end up being filtered and adjusted by someone else's vision.

The best and surest way to ensure that your nuptials and everything associated with your wedding day really does bear your imprint is to plan the affair and the occasion yourself.

Conclusion: While there are some practical benefits to hiring a wedding planner, there are some transcendent benefits that attach and adhere to planning your special day on your own. Therefore, before you do consider hiring a wedding planner, consider the pros and cons of undertaking the planning tasks on your own.

Article Source: <http://www.Ap-provedArticles.com>



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# Single parents should consider family-oriented wedding

(ARA) - When Tabitha Irwin began dating Michael Leach, she would never have predicted that this casual friend would turn out to be the man of her dreams. But once she realized that the 30-year-old radio producer had a heart big enough to embrace her and her four-year-old son Calym, she was smitten. By the following year, the couple announced their engagement.

One thing muted the joy of her pending nuptials — the memory of her own mother's remarriage when Tabitha was a typical, insecure adolescent. "I wasn't included in the wedding and, from then on, I never really felt like part of the family," she recalls. "That's why Michael and I wanted to do something special during the wedding to communicate to my son that he was going to be an integral part of our lives."

The marketing manager was grappling with a problem experienced by most of the tens of thousands of single parents who walk down the aisle each year: What can be done to ease the concerns of young children who feel, on a conscious or unconscious level, that their secure place in the family is threatened by the marriage/remarriage of a parent?

After much research, Tabitha found a

simple and emotionally satisfying answer to her dilemma in the form of a family-oriented wedding service that gives children a meaningful role in the wedding celebration. This five-minute ceremony — known as the Family Medallion service — can easily be integrated into any religious or civil wedding ceremony. It differs from the traditional wedding in only one respect: After the newlyweds exchange rings, their children join them for a special service focusing on the family nature of a marriage. Each child is given a gold or silver medallion with three interlocking circles, a symbol that represents family love in much the same way the wedding ring signifies conjugal love.

Although the family service seemed to be an ideal way to recognize Calym during the wedding, Tabitha and Michael let the kindergartener cast the deciding vote. First, they explained the meaning of the family ceremony in a way that a young child could understand. Then they allowed Calym to select the specific Family Medallion from [www.FamilyMedallion.com](http://www.FamilyMedallion.com) that he wanted to receive. "It made him feel important to be involved in the decision-making process," Tabitha adds. "He became more

excited about the wedding with each passing day."

The Leaches say they will never forget the moment during their wedding at a local park when Michel presented the Family Medallion to Calym. While the minister led Michael in a recitation of the words of the ceremony — a promise to love and care for the youngster and help him grow into a responsible adult — he placed the family symbol around his stepson's neck. Calym responded with a giant hug.

"It was an incredible bonding experience," Michael recalls. "In that instant, Tabitha, Calym and I came together as a family." Tabitha was moved to tears watching her new husband make a formal commitment to her son.

As for young Calym, he was just plain thrilled. "I really liked having a ceremony just for me," he explains. "It meant that Mike loved me and was going to be my dad."

For the wedding guests, this unique family service was the pinnacle of the marriage celebration. "Many later told me how moving it was to see us assure Calym, in such a loving and public way, that he would always be part of our family," says Tabitha.

The family wedding concept is an idea whose time has come. With a high divorce rate — nearly two in five marriages fail, according to the Heritage Foundation — more and more single parents with young children are remarrying. Additionally, the U.S. is experiencing a wave of first-time marriages among young single parents who had a child during the course of a common-



law union or other relationship outside of marriage.

Yet, despite the fact that a growing legion of single parents are bringing one or more children into their marriages, virtually no religious or civil wedding ceremony acknowledges the existence of these youngsters. This void frustrated Dr. Roger Coleman, ministers and president of Clergy Services, Inc., an organization in Kansas City, Missouri, devoted to developing family-oriented services for weddings and other important life events.

"The so-called traditional wedding ceremony does not serve the needs of couples with children, whether their own or children from previous relationships," Coleman explains. "That's because traditional weddings focus exclusively on the union of a man and a woman. The important role of existing children and the family nature of marriage are simply ignored."

Today, more than 25,000 couples annually use the Family Medallion ceremony to help strengthen the bond between parents, stepparents and children.

Tabitha, Michael and Calym are among its biggest fans. Today, more than a year after their family wedding, the Irwin-Leach blended family is thriving. Young Calym is ecstatic to have a baby brother, who was born this summer. "He doesn't feel rejected like I did when my mother and stepdad had a baby," Tabitha says. "That's because from the moment Michael and I decided to marry, we included Calym every step of the way."

For more information about family weddings, visit [www.familymedallion.com](http://www.familymedallion.com). Courtesy of ARAcontent

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# Don't let guests get lost on your big day

(ARA) - Planning to get married any time soon? It's true what they say — your wedding day is one of the most important and defining moments in your life. How do you envision yours?

In a perfect world, everything will go like clockwork. At exactly 1 o'clock, the music will start to play, all the guests will arrive on-time and anxiously wait for the bride to appear. Then they'll hold back tears as she marches down the aisle on her father's arm.

In reality, however, it's more likely that there will be some snags. The person delivering the flowers and decorations could be late, pushing the ceremony back an hour. The hired photographer could have written down the wrong date and not show up at all. Or even worse, your out-of-town guests won't show up on time either because they got stuck in traffic or were unable to find the ceremony.

Because for most weddings, a good portion of the guest list includes people from out-of-town, it is critical to be as detail oriented as possible when helping them get from destination to destination.

Along with the invitation, include multi-



view maps that will show guests where all the wedding-related events are taking place. You'll need one showing directions to the

wedding venue from the hotel, the bride's parents' home and the airport. Another showing directions from the ceremony loca-

tion to the reception hall.

Be sure to include a link to a traffic Web site, such as Traffic.com, at the bottom of any map you provide, as well as your wedding Web site. The site will be a great resource for your guests as it shows the most direct route from place to place, and also provides real-time information on delays, traffic jams and detours.

Guests can pre-plan their route by accessing the site from the hotel computer or their Internet-enabled cell phone. All they have to do is enter the address where they're staying, and of the place they're going to, and the information they need will come back instantly. Guests can also get the information they need through the (866) MY-TRAFIC (866-698-7232) traffic hotline.

After the wedding is over, Traffic.com can serve as a resource your out-of-town guests can use to find their way to local attractions, restaurants and long-lost friends' houses. The possibilities are endless. And who knows, maybe when all is said and done, you'll be the one getting the "Thank You" note.

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# Choosing a date for your wedding

**By Gina Brown**  
For The Chronicle

The most commonly asked question you will hear when your friends and family are informed of your engagement is "When is the wedding?"

Choosing a wedding date is very important because almost all of your wedding planning details will revolve around the date that you choose.

Here are some things to take into consideration to help you pick a perfect date for your wedding.

If you already know where you would like to have the ceremony and reception, you should call them and confirm what dates they have available. If you are set on a specific location, your wedding date will have to coincide with the availability of the location, especially if you have chosen a very popular location because these places tend to get booked very quickly.

Take into consideration what type of wedding you have in mind. For example, have you always dreamed of a beach wedding surrounded by the calming sounds of the ocean or a fall wedding with beautiful red and orange leaves in the background?

You will have to choose a date that is appropriate in terms of temperature and seasons. In addition, if there is a particular style of dress that you have in mind, the time of year will influence your bridal attire choices.

Have you always wanted a wedding during a specific holiday such as Christmas?

Christmas is a popular time because many wedding locations are already beautifully decorated at this time of year. However, getting ready for a wedding in addition to all the activities that occur during the Christmas holidays such as shopping, parties, wrapping gifts can be too much for some people.

Maybe you thought having a wedding during a holiday would be easier for your guests due to the three day weekend. Some people may appreciate that your wedding is during a long holiday weekend while it might be difficult for others because many people plan their own vacations during these times of the year.

Are there important people in your life that you feel must attend the wedding? While there will always be people who will not be able to make it, some people may be higher on your priority list than others. For example, if


your maid of honor is giving birth the same month you choose to have your wedding, you may want to give her a little time after the birth to feel more comfortable in her bridesmaid dress.

Or maybe your parents have a vacation already planned for the same time. Prevent scheduling conflicts as much as possible by discussing your wedding date with these important people to avoid any problems.


Author Bio\_Gina Brown writes articles on a variety of wedding topics. To learn more about wedding planning, Gina recommends you visit: <http://www.AWeddingToPlan.com>




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# Rent it: the perfect personalized wedding

(ARA) - When it comes to planning a wedding, most couples don't want to settle for cookie-cutter solutions that will make their wedding appear impersonal or even unremarkable. Instead, they want the biggest day of their lives to represent the two of them and no one else.

This yearning for personalization doesn't have to translate into more money. On the contrary — whether you're planning a formal wedding or a more casual event, you can incorporate personalized touches without breaking the bank by renting the materials you will need.

From 250 identical vases, to chandeliers,

to helium balloons or faux floral centerpieces, rental businesses provide endless amounts of materials that can make the difference between a run-of-the-mill event and your dream wedding.

"You can rent just about anything to make your wedding perfect," said Christine Wehrman, CEO of the American Rental Association (ARA), the global trade association for the rental industry. "By renting products for your wedding, you don't have to settle for items that don't fit your personalized vision. You'll get exactly what you're looking for and you'll have access to products that may have otherwise been too ex-

pensive in large quantities."

Make an impression by choosing table linens in your wedding colors, or go with all-white, then add chair covers with a bow-tie sash and matching napkins in accent colors. Rental businesses will have hundreds of colors to pick from. Be sure to ask for sample swatches of the linens so you can coordinate colors with your bridesmaid dresses and flowers. Add your choice of china and glassware to the arrangement for each table and get a rich and sophisticated setting.

If you're looking for the beauty of an outdoor location without the worry about the weather, tents are a great way to create the wedding of your dreams. ARA member rental businesses have beautiful tents to create the venue, as well as everything you need to make it beautiful and comfortable.

Huge tents and elegant canopies come in wedding white and many also come with clear tops — thus allowing guests access to the drama of a sunset or a sparkling night sky. However, if you plan on incorporating a tent into your wedding, make sure you give the rental business — and yourself — enough advanced notice. Depending on the

time of year, the rental business will need plenty of notice to reserve all the equipment you will need.

Also, many ARA member rental businesses offer personalized service through their Certified Event Rental Professionals who are trained to help you choose the right rentals to make your dream wedding come to realization.

They can help ease the tension of pre-wedding set up with their knowledge and experience. Many businesses even help you throughout the event as well, keeping it on track and flowing smoothly.

You can also rely on rental service experts to help before you book your venue. They can help you assess the site for things like power accessibility, ground water issues, or overhead power lines that may interfere with your vision of a tall tent, among other situations.

All events, no matter how big or small — even for the Oprahs or Trumps of the world — include rented materials. Visit [www.rentalhq.com](http://www.rentalhq.com) to find your local ARA member rental business.

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# Planning her own wedding begins career

By Trevor Baratko

Staff Writer

Wedding planning seems a desirable profession for many young women these days, but with Nita Hozey in Abbeville, she fell into the role by default.

"It all started with me doing my own wedding 38 years ago," said Hozey. "My parents were divorced and they couldn't really help out with much, so it was up to me."

Learning as she went is a sufficient way to summarize Hozey's development as a wedding planner and director.

"After my wedding, I had other members in my family ask me to help with their wedding," she said. "I just naturally picked up some of the skills. Back then, there wasn't really formal training on how to be a wedding planner like there is now."

Hozey helped with a number of weddings over the years, but it wasn't until seven years ago, after her husband retired, that she started Praise Unlimited Weddings, a professional wedding planning and directing service in Abbeville.

"We had always taken in foster children

and had a busy household," Hozey said. "But after he retired and we had more time, I said, 'I want to go to work.'"

"I deal mostly with weddings all over the upstate," Hozey said. "We also do a lot of traveling weddings down in Charleston. I've developed relationships with all the businesses that deal with weddings — caterers, photographers, decorators — in this area, so whenever someone says they want to do it in Greenville or Laurens County, I know who to contact."

Hozey will teach a wedding planning course at Piedmont Technical College next fall to share what she has learned in her three decades in the wedding business.

"There are a lot of girls that are interested in this as a career," Hozey said. "I want to be able to pass on what I know so it continues when I'm done."

One of the most important aspects of a wedding, Hozey said, is staying within budget.

"That's something I take a lot of pride in," she said. "I know what is essential for a wedding and what can be done without. So sometimes when couples want something they can't afford, I ask them, 'Do you really



Nita Hozey's career as a wedding planner began almost 40 years ago when she planned her own wedding.

want to take these payments into your marriage?"

Hozey said she charges from \$300 to \$600 for planning and \$600 to \$1,000 for directing.

"I'm the cheapest that I know of," she said. "I've never heard of people doing planning for less than \$1,500. The cost depends on how involved I am and how much the couple wants me to be involved."

Initial consultations are free, Hozey said.

"If couples meet with me and decide I'm not for them, we go our separate ways and it's not a problem," she said. "There have been times when I could tell things just weren't going to work out, and I ended up giving the money back."

With certain clients, Hozey will be with the bride and groom to be every step of the way, from the initial planning to the wedding. In other cases, she may just help the couple make contacts with the right people and guide them along.

Hozey said she's had as many as eight weddings to deal with in one week.

"From April through October, there are multiple weddings going on every week," she said. "But that's when it's fun — that's why I do what I do."

She relies primarily on word of mouth to acquire customers, but said she has done some advertising through newspapers.

Hozey puts on two bridal expos a year, one in the fall and one around February. She said she features invitations, napkins, favors, garters, ring pillows, toast glasses, halos, tiaras, veils, locations, caterers, cakes and photographers.

With such a hectic schedule, what is it that Hozey enjoys about her mid-life profession?

"I enjoy making their dreams come true," she said. "It's one of the most important events of their lives, and I want to help them make it as special as possible."

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# The best wedding day gift for your guy is you

(ARA) - With your wedding day just around the corner, many times it is difficult to find the most meaningful and personal gift for your significant other. Flowers, candy and stuffed animals are stereotypical and other gifts can be costly, so why not give the one thing that brought you together in the first place: You!

Weddings are a great reason to get a makeover and unveil the new you. Not only will you feel great, your new husband will adore the dreamy new look of the woman he fell in love with. A hot new you doesn't need to come from expensive doctors or spa treatments. Try these ideas for a ravishing appearance that is bound to surprise and delight him:

#### Hair

So many of us fall into hair ruts each day as our mornings are short and styling time is sacrificed. For your special day, do something out of the ordinary. If you wear your hair down, try an updo; if you often wear a ponytail, leave locks to flow down your back. Wispy curls can add romance to any hairdo. If you are really ambitious, try a new shade or add some highlights.

#### Smile

A study of 600 men conducted by Kelton Research determined the high importance of a kiss-worthy mouth. A beautiful, white smile is one of the first things partners find attractive in one another and nearly half of the men surveyed stressed that white teeth are a deciding factor for a second date. Try brightening your smile with a product like the number one dentist recommended Crest Whitestrips Premium that is only a seven day commitment. Recent clinical studies show it has two times more whitening per strip versus the leading dissolving strips. They're perfect for men and women alike who don't want to spend a lot of money on whitening. So pucker-up and give your sweetie a whiter, more kissable smile on your big day.

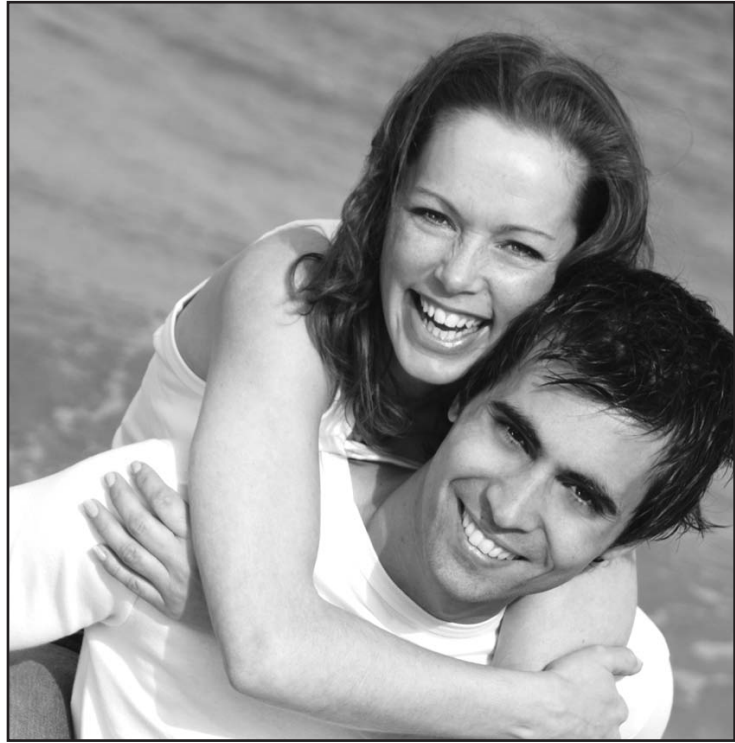
#### Accessories

The finishing touches to your bridal look are in the details. For example, jewelry with a little sparkle can add glamour to your look and dangle earrings draw more attention to your face. Maybe there's something special he's given you that you can wear. Make sure you smell delicious by lightly spraying on his favorite perfume. Polish with a bit of makeup. Try dark smoky eyes for an exotic,

mysterious look. A glossy lipstick will add to your already beautiful smile.

On your wedding day, don't fret over what gift to give your special guy. Give him what he loves above anything else ... you! He will be surprised at your new romantic look and impressed that you went through all the effort just for him (we won't tell him that you didn't mind all the work). For more information on getting a gorgeous white smile, visit [www.whitestrips.com](http://www.whitestrips.com).

Courtesy of ARAcontent



# Spotlight brides: look red-carpet worthy while walking down the aisle

(ARA) - This spring, it will be difficult to tell if a bride is walking down the aisle or making her way down the red carpet. After a year-long love affair with the boxy trapeze dress, designers are emphasizing the waist and adding elegant details.

"This focus on the feminine calls for glamorous bridal jewelry fit for a queen," says Shawn Diddy, Jewelry Television's trend tracker.

Here are some of the looks she's expecting to be hot in 2009:

•Brides will make a "ready for your close-up" impact in an off-the-shoulder dress. The look from the runways calls for minimal accents — a single, "statement" piece of jewelry such as a pair of dangle earrings that sparkle or a thick, signature bracelet. Wear hair up to really show off your shoulders in that gorgeous dress.

•Pleats, ruffles and tulip tiers abound in light and frothy fabrics. Because of the un-

usual silhouettes of these trendy dresses, keep hair and jewelry simple. A loose chignon softens your face while a classic pair of diamond stud earrings adds elegance and light to the ensemble.

•A white dress and grandma's pearls is what everyone else is wearing, so why not go with this season's hot pastels? Diaphanous dresses in shades of peach, blush and baby blue are fresh and stylish. Pull your hair back into a soft ponytail to show off sparkling crystal earrings or a necklace in a complementary color.

•Lace is always in, but this season's unique lace details work especially well with long, flowing hair. Rich, jewel-toned, vintage-look jewelry adds texture to the ensemble.

•Whether the dress is short or long, designers have put the emphasis back on the waist. Nipped-in lines and wide belts or sashes showed all over New York's runways. Because of the symmetry of the dress, wear your hair parted to the side and add drama with strong platinum jewelry pieces.

"Few brides can spend a fortune on a couture gown and estate diamonds so we recommend Jewelry Television's Bella Luce Collection," says Diddy. "Most pieces are platinum plated sterling silver for elegant, affordable, designer-inspired wearability."

For more information on the latest trends in bridal jewelry, visit [www.jtv.com](http://www.jtv.com) or check your local listings for Jewelry Television.

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