

The day team



Charlotte Hewson, founder of stationery designers Chartula Studio (chartula.co.uk)



Kelly Chandler, director of The Bespoke Wedding Co (thebespokeweddingco.com)



Colette Harris, editor, You & Your Wedding (youandyourwedding.co.uk)

Stuck for ideas or don't know where to start? Our three wedding experts have the answers. We love it when a plan comes together...

Paper passions

Q I want lovely stationery but have a small budget. Can I cut corners? **Isla, Cardiff**

A "Yes! Consider items you need versus those you want. Use generic covers with different inserts for everything from menus to orders of service. And save money by printing all the inserts in one go – decide on your menu early and it can be printed with your invitations," says Charlotte.

Expert tip...

"Damask designs and intricate patterns are big trends for stationery in 2008. These can have a classic look using creams and silver or a contemporary twist with pistachio, purple and violet." Charlotte Hewson

worked really well are punting and rowing, circus skills workshops, city sightseeing and river cruises – depending on your venue and location."

Centre of attention

Q I'd love something unusual for my centrepieces that our guests will always remember. What are the most interesting/striking ideas you've seen recently? **Susan, London**

A "As a complete alternative to flowers, one idea is a bouquet of fruit prepared by companies such as Fruit Like Flowers (fruitlikeflowers.com) or Passionleaf (passionleaf.com)," says Kelly. "They look stunning and guests can eat straight from the basket! I also love the idea of having wishing trees like a miniature topiary tree as a centrepiece. Guests are given pretty tags and pencils and encouraged to write a good luck wish to the couple and attach it to the tree; it makes a lovely keepsake."



Designs on the day

Q I'm having trouble choosing a stationery design – there's so much choice! Where should I start? **Cassie, Cambridge**

A "The great thing about stationery is that it sets the tone and style for your day," says Charlotte. "The venue, colour scheme, time of year and anything that's personal to you are all great ways to find inspiration. For example, a floral design is lovely for a country wedding. Why not choose a design to match your flowers or bridesmaids' dresses? Bold and bright is a great start – turquoise or lavender with cream ink, or sorbet yellow with candy pink are all hot trends. If you can't find anything to reflect your day then a bespoke stationer will be able to create a design for you."

Expert tip...

"Think about your guests' experience as well as your own. Things like eating times and menus, travel and accommodation, dress code and other info on what to expect will go a long way." Kelly Chandler

Let me entertain you!

Q I'm getting married at 12 noon but wasn't planning to have the wedding breakfast until 5pm. How can I fill the time in-between? **Doona, York**

A "A 4-hour gap between the ceremony and eating is a long time and you'll need to think carefully about what guests will do in-between so it doesn't go too slowly," says Kelly. "Some great ideas that we've organised and have



Calling all eco warriors...

We have all the household basics so where can our guests buy eco-friendly and ethically-sourced gifts? **Cheryl, Sevenoaks**

"Brides are increasingly looking for stylish gifts with an ethical heritage, which is why online store Biome Lifestyle (biomelifestyle.com) recently launched its Eco Wedding List Service, complete with a wrapping service using recycled paper!" says Colette. "It doesn't stint on style, with funky vases, contemporary lighting, cushions, towels and linens. (Left: Organic Caister Cushion, £50, Recycled Glass Vase, £70)