

VOL. 09

How to Do Wedding Season Right

WHEN THE INVITES start rolling in, you have two options: Book a summer abroad (*très bien!*) or vow to celebrate in sickness and in health. As experts who have sipped the cava and caught the bouquet, we're here to bring you everything you need to know to be the best wedding guest ever.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SEBASTIAN WADE/STYLING: ANCHOR

Play by the rules

Scaachi Koul would like to let you in on a few etiquette secrets to save you from being, well, the worst guest ever.

CONGRATULATIONS! Your presence has been requested at yet another summer wedding that you're half-dreading and half-eager about because you're guaranteed at least one slice of cake. I got married last summer, and if it taught me anything, it's that there's a dizzying set of rules wedding guests seem blindly unaware of. (Here's a bonus one before we get into it: Do not tell the bride or groom you're "disappointed" you don't get *more* than a plus one, and especially don't tell them as much when they're holding a knife to cut the cake.) So, no more excuses! Here, for your educational pleasure, is the definitive rule book for being a good—or at least not wholly terrible—wedding guest.

1. KEEP YOUR AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY TO YOURSELF.

At my wedding, guests seemed intent on driving me insane by standing up to take photos as my partner and I exchanged vows and rings, as if we hadn't just asked them not to stick their phones out in front of the professional on whom we'd spent thousands of our hard-earned dollars to perform that very service. Worse, maybe, was when my mother demanded that I take selfies with a series of family members whose names I didn't know while our photographer continued to try to take photos of me and my new husband—photos that, again, we were paying piles of money for. So, please, avoid bringing your phone anywhere near the couple if they are agitated; they will gladly share professional shots of the festivities with you after the whole mess is over. Unless, of course, you are my mother, in which case your camera roll is the priority.

2. NO ONE WANTS THE THINGS YOU ALSO DIDN'T WANT.

I'm sure you, too, have some decorative cherry-pit bowls sitting in your linen closet that you want to regift, but cash is king.

3. MAKE YOUR PEACE WITH LYING.

Is the chicken kind of dry? Do you find the decor tacky? Does the bride look like she's being swallowed whole by her wedding lehenga, with yards of crinoline eating up her little chicken legs? Say as little as possible. I once went to a wedding during which the bride and groom did a choreographed dance to K-Ci & JoJo's "All My Life" that ended with her sitting on his lap. Both of them had glitter in their hair. When they came over to our table to ask us what we thought, do you know what my entire family did? We lied like the dignified trash we are. Even if the wedding is an affront to your tastes, learn how to mask your feelings so that

less discerning people can enjoy themselves. And, to be clear, I don't mean you have to lie the day of the wedding—I mean you have to lie for the rest of your life.

4. BE AS DRUNK AS YOU ARE CLOSE TO THE COUPLE.

A reception without a fun drunk lunatic is terrifically dull. Someone at the wedding has to be a disaster, and while I imagine you don't want it to be you, it might, in some cases, have to be you. If you're a casual acquaintance, it's best to keep your drunkenness inconspicuous while also luxuriating in a (hopefully) open bar. But if you are in the bridal party, a non-estranged family member or a best bud, it is practically your duty to drink seven shots and get very weird. A good wedding has a good story, and a good story includes a drunk person wearing a tie incorrectly. At my wedding, my brother gave a toast in which he somehow

managed to mention my vagina more than once, and then he and I got into a full-on shoving match on the dance floor. From anyone else, this would be unforgivable; from my brother, however, it's a delightful story that I can tell for generations to come, and it's also ammunition that I can store away to use the next time I need to get angry with him, which is probably—wait, let me check the date—quite overdue, actually. Thanks for reminding me. ▶

WEDDING CHALLENGE

PUT YOUR PHONE AWAY.

If you spend the whole night snapping selfies or avoiding your ex by scrolling through your feed, you are wasting more than just your battery life. See if you can commit to just three hours without using your screen as a crutch.

Your life-saving small-talk cheat sheet

These five simple sentences will fix all your wedding-chit-chat woes.

"TELL ME MORE": Small talk doesn't need to stick to the surface. Dive beyond the basics by asking a follow-up question—you might even get a stock tip or some under-the-radar celeb gossip.

"ME TOO!": Order the same drink? Roll your eyes at the same lame song the DJ just threw on? Don't shy away from chiming in. Having a shared interest is the easiest way to ignite a conversation.

"IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...": Thoughtful conversationalists pay attention in order to gracefully remove themselves from a chat before it becomes painful. If you notice shifty eye contact or someone glancing at their phone, best go freshen your drink.

"OH, HOW SO?": We often fall into lazy conversation patterns. You mindlessly trot out the same funny story time and time again to score an easy laugh, but when someone digs a little deeper and makes you stop to think for a moment, a trite chat suddenly gets exciting.

"SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS...": Gently recapping what your new pal just said serves a double purpose: It shows them that you're dialed into what they are saying and challenges you to truly listen.

BUT, ACTUALLY, WHAT SHOULD YOU BE SPENDING ON A GIFT?

✦ "Deciding how much to gift for a wedding might be the most stressful part of the event for a guest," says Toronto-based etiquette and protocol consultant Lisa Orr. The golden rule of gifting is to—bare minimum—cover the cost of your plate, but what does that mean in real terms? At least \$100 per person. And you may want to open your wallet a little bit wider if you are

celebrating a family member or your BFF since kindergarten. (You did help each other survive middle school, after all.) There are a few exceptions, though. If you're attending a destination wedding for your second-cousin-twice-removed, then a small token is enough. (Our wedding experts also note that newlyweds-to-be should really be writing "No gifts required" in a bold

font on invitations to destination weddings.) Planning on skipping the wedding altogether? Unfortunately, that doesn't wholly get you off the hook. It's still politely expected that you send a gift that rings in at about half of what you would have given if you'd shown up for the

open bar. But if you get clammy thinking about what making it rain on your pals will cost you, focus on the most fundamental rule of gifting: Only spend what you can afford. "The couple should be grateful for whatever they receive," says Orr. "A wedding is not about the presents."

"YOUR LIFE-SAVING SMALL-TALK CHEAT SHEET" BY KAT SOMERVILLE
 "TAKE A DEEP BREATH" BY CARL WHITTEL



THE JOY OF...

showing kindness

Heading into a wedding alone is about as daunting as that dream in which you show up to school late and naked, so try to save a solo guest some stress.

✦ You've seen her: the one who suddenly feels like her dress is too tight, squeezing the air from her lungs like a boa constrictor and preventing her from getting the breath needed to make small talk. I have walked through a cocktail reception with feigned purpose, pretending to be looking

for my treasured friend who, conveniently, must be just out of sight. I can recognize that girl anywhere now: She is leaning on a tippy cocktail table, furiously pretending to fire off emails that can't possibly wait until morning; she is stalling in the bathroom, brushing her glossy hair aimlessly before heading

back out into the fray; she is slyly eyeing everyone at the bar, wondering who will be the one to strike up a conversation and save her. She was me, and now I am her saviour. Will tonight be the night you become someone's hero? Will you go up to her and say hi and make her night? KAT SOMERVILLE

WEDDING CHALLENGE

TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

Did you just introduce yourself to someone you've already met three times? Trip over your chair leg again? Be gentle with yourself. Try to view your behaviour like you would your best friend's.

THE PLEASURE OF...

not hooking up at a wedding

All that talk of "forever" can be an aphrodisiac, but sometimes it's better to walk away than to run toward the easy option.

✦ When I was in my late 20s, I attended dozens of weddings. I was perennially single, and despite my optimism and a rainbow of BCBG cocktail dresses, there were never any potential partners among the guests. Except for once: At a beautiful ballroom wedding in Toronto, I was seated at a table beside a lone, tall, tanned bachelor. We got to know each other over a six-course meal and slow danced the night away while my girlfriends cheered me on. It felt like we had been together for years. But then things took a turn for the worse. When I asked Prince Charming where he was staying that night (he was from a nearby town), he looked down at me adoringly with his piercing blue eyes

and said, "Your place." He explained that he hadn't booked a hotel because he was banking on meeting someone to go home with. He wasn't kidding. I bristled, but he persisted. By then I was not just crushed; I was pissed. As I watched my friends enjoy one of the most magical nights of their lives, we stood on the balcony and yelled at each other. I stormed off; he sulked—our romance had begun and ended in less than six hours. I stumbled into a cab alone and exhausted, but I was comforted knowing that I had likely sidestepped a land mine of heartbreak. God knows where he ended up staying—but when I realized that I didn't care, I slept better that night than I had in ages. KATE DALEY ▶

Dress code

You're too busy to worry about what to wear to the seventh wedding of the season. Here are outfits for every venue—complete with shoes that will finish off your look, not your night.



COUNTRY BACKYARD

If the venue calls for a vibe that's casual and fun, pair an unexpected (and comfortable!) silky suit with block heels that will allow you to manoeuvre elegantly across a lawn or a cobblestoned path.



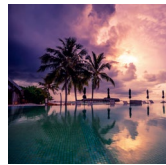
Lyocell suit, Tiger of Sweden (\$748, tigerofsweden.com)

Leather purse, Kate Spade (\$197, katespade.com)

Textured-weave mules, Antolina (\$661, atshopbop.com)

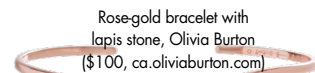


Beaded earrings, Emilio Pucci (\$165, atssense.com)



DESTINATION WEDDING

You likely had to pay a small fortune to attend this glamorous event, so reach for a flouncy jumpsuit that's as easy to wear as it is on your bruised budget.



Rose-gold bracelet with lapis stone, Olivia Burton (\$100, ca.oliviaburton.com)



Polyester jumpsuit, Ted Baker (\$419, tedbaker.com)

Leather clutch, Thacker (\$144, thackernyc.com)

Faux-suede and straw sandals, H&M (\$39.99, hm.com)



FINE-ARTS MUSEUM

When an invite demands black tie, lean in with subtle but standout looks. Contrasting clean lines with iridescent fabrics makes a dress feel instantly modern—and increases the likelihood you'll wear it again.



Cotton, polyamide, polyester and viscose dress, Jacquemus (\$1,455, at matchesfashion.com)

Alloy and glass-stone hairpins, Le Château (\$19.95 for two, lechateau.com)

Sterling-silver and 18-karat-yellow-gold ring, David Yurman (\$950, davidyurman.com)



Cotton canvas clutch, Mansur Gavriel (\$530, mansurgavriel.com)

DRESS CODE: KAT SOMERVILLE; STYLING: ELAINE JYLL REGIO



What's the most memorable thing a guest did at your wedding?



VANESSA CRAFT
@vanessacraft
editor-in-chief

"My niece did a backflip on the dance floor during a Bruno Mars song. It was everything."



JACQUELINE HOWE
publisher, TVA Group
"When we got married (in 1982, yikes!), we were paying for most of the wedding ourselves so the budget was a concern. My best friend's boyfriend purchased drinks for everyone that night, and we all had an amazing time."



CARLI WHITWELL
@carliwhitwell
managing editor
"Fell in love! My younger cousin Loren and my childhood neighbour Mark knew each other as kids but reconnected at my summer wedding in 2012. They were inseparable that night (tongues were wagging!), got married and recently had a baby. I hold myself solely responsible for their happiness."



ELAINE JYLL REGIO
@elainejyll
fashion & market editor
"We had our reception at a very intimate restaurant (hardly any room to dance), but the moment 'Follow Me' by Aly-Us came on, my aunt broke into a line dance (it's a Filipino thing) and everyone followed."

About face

Have you ever burst into the bathroom, still shimmying to the pulsing thrum of the bass, only to have your heart skip a beat when you catch your reflection in the mirror? A long day of pure-love-induced weeping and a longer night of dancing can be hard on your once-perfect makeup. Here's how to keep your look fresh.

By VICTORIA DIPLACIDO

PROBLEM: You sobbed through your maid-of-honour speech, and your mascara has trickled down to your chin.

SOLUTION: Don't beat yourself up for forgetting to use waterproof mascara. Instead, reach for an oil-free makeup remover to get rid of any smudged mascara. "Then gently blot your face with a tissue," says Toronto-based makeup artist Caroline Levin. "The heat from your fingertips will help blend your makeup back together." Next, refresh your skin with a setting spray while making a mental note to get eyelash extensions next time. "My ultimate tip is to 'cry pretty,'" says Levin. "Instead of sobbing, try your best to relax your face and let the tears go, catching them at the corner of your eyes with a tissue."

PROBLEM: You are suddenly very, very red.

SOLUTION: To avoid that dance-floor flush, use a green colour corrector as a primer before you start the rest of your makeup. And if you are very prone to redness, you might want to

consider chatting with your dermatologist about preventive options, like lasers. But if you are hit with a sudden case of hives (it happens more often than you think—Google "Solange gets hives at her wedding"), Toronto-based dermatologist Brittany Waller suggests taking an antihistamine and applying an over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream to quell inflammation quickly. (Note: Antihistamines can sometimes make you drowsy, so dial back on the vino.)

PROBLEM: Your designer dress is soaked with sweat.

SOLUTION: For those long nights when antiperspirant just isn't cutting it, Waller recommends Drysol, an over-the-counter topical product that helps tone down sweating. "Sweating can happen for a number of reasons, from nervousness to a thyroid problem," she says, adding that it's best to see your dermatologist to cross off any underlying medical conditions if you often perspire heavily. ♦