

# Gift Me My Wedding

## RESOURCES

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### **Venue Questions - Knowing What to Ask your Vendors:**

The Reception Venue and Ceremony location are usually the first vendors newly engaged couples meet with. Depending on each couples needs the ceremony and reception site might be at the same location, or they might be held in separate locations. Venues will rarely give you pricing on line because without actually meeting with the couple it is difficult to determine what their needs – and what their priorities are. Based on these answers – the price can have a staggering variance. Additionally, it always a good idea when possible to go to the venue and see it for yourself. Pictures can be deceiving and no one would put a picture in an ad or on a website that would reflect poorly on the property. Is the property clean and in good repair? Where the people that greeted you friendly and helpful? Was the person that you met with knowledgeable, friendly, assisting you with questions that you may not know to ask – they should be. It is really that simple. Venues are in the business of customer service. If they are not what you would have hoped for at the initial meeting – it is unlikely that it will get better from there.

For you to get an actual proposal from a venue, they will typically need to know some basic information.

- What Date and what time? Please be aware that the venue is usually looking at this as what time will guests arrive and what time will they be leaving. Set up time for your wedding would normally be about two hour in advance from guest arrival. This exact time will vary from venue to venue so this is definitely a question that you want to ask at the beginning stages.
- Is your date flexible at all? Some couples do not have the ability to look at other dates for a variety of reasons, other couples are able to. When your date is flexible it allows them to look at alternate dates for you. Based on where you live the popular months to get married in will vary. The number one day requested is always Saturdays. Wedding Vendors will offer discounts on off peak days and on off Months as well. Quite literally, you

can save as much as half of the cost by moving from a Saturday Night in a peak month to a weekday in an off month and this is a trend that is becoming far more popular in the last few years.

- How many people will be attending? Based on your answer – they may have stipulations. If your guest list is at the high end of what the venue is able to accommodate they may suggest doing a plated dinner to ensure that there is enough room for your guests, a dance floor, gift table, DJ, etc.
- What Menu ideas do you have? Plated, Buffet. Heavy Hors d'Oeuvres - and what are some basic ideas of things that you do like and were considering? There is a significant price difference between Roast Beef and Filet Mignon. Likewise, Shrimp Cocktail is more costly than chicken tenders. This simply will allow the venue and caterer to give you a proposal that is more realistic to your needs. Many couples do make the mistake of thinking that heavy hors d'Oeuvres is a less expensive option than dinner. This is rarely the case – many times it is actually more expensive. Also be sure to make sure that the venue or caterer clearly states on your contract that the food quote was for budgeting purposes only. The food (and the guest count) will normally change during the planning and RSVP process.
- The Venue MUST know if you are considering having a band at your reception. Bands take up more space than a DJ would. The venue may or may not be able to support the electrical requirements of a band as well. This obviously is something that you need to know prior to booking the venue or the band.
- You should always ask about the Venues policies. Music turned down or off by a certain time? Parking – is there enough? Do they offer valet if needed? What décor is and is not allowed? Many venues only allow LED dripless candles. When are additional payments due? What are the refund policies? Is there any sort of cleaning fee or overtime fee if you wish to extend the time?
- How early are you able to get there the day of your wedding to get ready? Is there an area for hair and makeup if needed? Is there an additional charge?

- When are you allowed to bring items to the venue that will need to be put out (favors, toasting glasses, cake topper, etc.)? Who are they anticipating will be putting those items out?
- Are they able to accommodate special meal requests for allergy or dietary needs?
- It is always a good idea to ask if the venue has a picture or sample lay out of the space with a similar number of guests in it. It will help you to visualize if the space is large enough or too large for your guest numbers.
- A major part of all receptions that is rarely thought of initially – guest seating. Are you doing open seating? If yes then you will need to provide more seating than guests attending. If the seating is not assigned – guest will not automatically work themselves into groups of 8-10 on their own. 15% seating overage is safe for open seating. You should be aware that more seats will eventually mean additional centerpieces, chargers, rented chairs, etc. so it something to take into consideration. Place cards and escort cards, as well as simple seating charts do work well. Should this be the route that you go, please organize the cards or list by the guests last name in alphabetical order. A common mistake is to do it by table they were put at and this will result in guests taking a long time to find their seats.
- The Venue will likely have policies in place on other wedding vendors coming in for set up. A standard time allotted is approximately two hours prior to guest arrival. Other wedding professionals are aware of this and are able to work within the time guidelines. If there are extensive set up requirements your wedding vendors would let you know in advance or simply make arrangements with the venue themselves. It is always good to be aware of this and double check that set up times have been worked out. This is even more important if you have a friend or family member as one of your vendors. Because they do not do weddings every day they may not be aware of the policy. They also will likely be guests at the wedding so this can present some unplanned challenges – this is most common when the family or friend is being the florist. Please check with the Venue in advance on set up times and make sure that your friend or family member is able to set up in the amount of time allotted.