

Plan a Summer Wedding in Eight Weeks or Less



By Kelly Rouba for GalTime.com

If you recently got engaged and just can't wait to tie the knot, famed party planner Martie Duncan says it's not too late to plan a summer wedding.

A summer wedding can be put together in under two months, assures Duncan, who shares many of her expert tips on her website MartieKnowsParties. Duncan's experience in planning weddings on the fly began when a friend recruited her help not long ago.

"They got engaged on a Saturday and wanted to get married the next Saturday," she recalls. "It wasn't a joke, and we did it!"

(It turned out to be) a beautiful, simple but sweet and sentimental family wedding with a seated reception dinner for 30. We even ended with fireworks!”

Contrary to what one might expect, the planning process went rather smoothly. “The reason it was so easy is because the couple had seen my work and knew my style. They trusted me,” says Duncan, who gained popularity as the runner up on Season 8 of Food Network Star.

After the couple first approached Duncan for guidance, they agreed to meet to go over details. “We sat down for one planning meeting to discuss what they wanted and what it would cost. Within hours, I had most of it pulled together because I knew what was important to them,” she says.

It also helped that Duncan’s friend had already found a farm to serve as the venue for the ceremony and reception. “That made things easy,” Duncan says, adding that she made sure the wedding theme reflected the couple’s personalities. “The flowers, decor, food and drinks were all very rustic—a perfect fit for both the setting and their laid-back style.”

For all those other couples out there who are ready to march down that aisle, Duncan offers these simple tips for planning a summer wedding in eight weeks or less:

SET A BUDGET

“The first big step is to decide on the budget,” Duncan says. “Often, planning a wedding quickly means you may pay more for things because you do not have time to shop around or delay making purchases.”

Also, keep in mind that the vendors you have to select from at the last minute might be more expensive, and there could be added expenses you never anticipated. In fact, while helping her friend plan her wedding, they realized there wasn’t a kitchen at the farm. “We had to create everything,” Duncan

says, noting that it certainly made things more difficult, especially since they only had a modest budget.

In the end, it worked out because “we communicated openly about what was possible and what was not under the circumstances. Since we had to bring everything in, we kept it all very simple,” she said.

HIRE A WEDDING PLANNER

If the couple or their close friends have experience planning events, know vendors they can rely on, and have plenty of time on their hands, then a wedding planner might not be necessary, Duncan says. Otherwise, “I would always advise finding someone who knows the ropes to make the process easier. The biggest problem is finding trustworthy vendors who might still have the date open. A planner can certainly help, since they typically know all of the vendors in their area.”

Always make sure you have a contract in place with the vendors you select. “Don’t skip over these precautions just because you are trying to pull things together quickly,” Duncan warns.

STICK TO A SCHEDULE

“When planning a wedding in a short amount of time, you have to make decisions quickly and move on,” Duncan says. “There is no time to procrastinate or labor over the choices you have to make.”

BE FLEXIBLE

“Most importantly, the couple has to have some degree of flexibility when making decisions,” Duncan says. “For example, if the peonies you always dreamed of are not available, you might have to settle for something else. You just cannot be rigid when you only have days to plan. Decide on a few basics, like overall style and color. After that, you almost have to see what’s available and go from there.”