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# Two on the Aisle

by Barbara A. Edelman

Love is wonderful the second time around, according to Frank Sinatra and Ricki Lee Jones, but what about the wedding?

When I was about 12, my mother's widowed cousin remarried. My mother referred to the wedding in hushed tones as being "a very quiet affair." The poor woman wore a "traveling suit," was married in a rabbi's study, and after the ceremony, the couple was taken out to lunch at a rather dreary restaurant. All in all, it was a dismal afternoon, and the event hardly seemed worthy of the name "wedding". I also recall my friend's divorced mother's remarriage around the same time: The ceremony took place at White Plains City Hall on a weekday afternoon. My friend got excused from school that afternoon and was back the following day. Thinking honeymoon, I asked where her mom and new stepdad were. "At work," she replied.

The second wedding has come a long way since then. For one thing, it has spawned its very own magazine: *Bride Again*. No longer is the fat, ad-packed, shrinkwrapped-against-supermarket-readers, six-dollar magazine for first-time brides only. While *Modern Bride* and that ilk are heavy on such editorial content as birth control options and how to set up housekeeping (on the assumption that all first-time brides are virgins living at home with mom, dad, and the Beav), *Bride Again* editorial runs toward prenuptial agreements, asset protection, what everyone's last name will be, and who should finance the stepkids' college educations. (Don't poor people remarry, too? One also wonders where are all these wealthy divorced or widowed men and women with collegebound offspring? Are they kept on some sort of nature preserve? Can someone get me a map?)



Michael Weisbrot

After the assets have been protected and the prenuptial agreement signed, after last names have been decided (it's probably easiest for everyone to just choose an entirely new last name—how about Rothschild?) and junior's off at basic training (the army will educate him for free!), it's time for the wedding.

#### WHO PAYS?

While many first-time weddings are indeed financed, wholly or in part, by the bride

and groom, my research (research methodology includes chatting with girlfriends on phone, gossiping with mother and making things up) indicates that either or both sets of parents kick in all or some of the cost of the first wedding. The common perception is that the second wedding is financed by the couple alone; however, I did not find this necessarily to be the case. Rob and Ginger of Ulster County faced an interesting "who pays" dilemma. This was to be Ginger's second wedding and Rob's first.

Ginger's first wedding was an elaborate New York City affair orchestrated almost entirely by her mother, whose planning style was roughly comparable to that of General Eisenhower planning the D-Day invasion (although Eisenhower stayed within his budget). Ginger's gown was made by Priscilla of Boston in a style popularized by Marie Antoinette, but she put her ice blue, satin-clad slipped foot down at the elephants, swans and the entire cast of *La Boheme*.

Not surprisingly, Ginger's inclination was to have a small, simple, down to earth second wedding and a wedding-day outfit which did not involve specially constructed underwear, all paid for by her and Rob. Rob's inclination was culturally predetermined: he was born and raised on Long Island. The wedding, therefore, had to feature many guests, many attendants, large amounts of average food and specially constructed underwear for everyone. While Ginger loved Rob and was willing to compromise due to his cultural disadvantage, there was no way she was going to spring bucks for such a shindig. The solution was Rob's mother—also a native Long Islander with no daughters and a youngest son about to have a small, simple, down to earth wedding. She paid the difference between simple and down to earth and the Long Island ideal. While the food was above average and this attendant, at least, wore no unusual underwear, the wedding satisfied the Long Islanders' souls and did not break the bride's and groom's bank.

Terri and John from southern Maryland couldn't decide what kind of wedding to have. There was some urgency to make a decision in that they were living together, a situation which distressed Terri who felt they were living in sin. A quick trip to the town justice may have seemed the obvious choice, but that had been Terri's first wedding. She wanted something a bit more distinctive and romantic this time. The debate reached a fever pitch around Christmas several years ago. John's father came to the rescue by presenting them with a Christmas gift of tickets for a Caribbean cruise—





STYLING BY

presumably so that they could sail in sin, as there were no strings attached to the generous gift. Since a shipboard wedding is about as distinctive and romantic as you can get, the problem was solved to Terri's satisfaction. She stopped sinning, the wedding cost them nothing, and John—who tended to drink to excess on occasion—could claim he was not drunk, but seasick. Happily, John no longer gets seasick, and they both have very pleasant memories of their wedding.

### THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Personalizing one's wedding is hardly a new concept, nor is it exclusive to the second wedding. For example, couples have been writing their own vows for years. But the second-time bride and groom are often self-confident and poised enough to add truly personal or quirky elements to their wedding. Pam's second wedding was a memorable occasion for me for two reasons. Firstly, I found the world's greatest dress. It made me feel like a size-4 blonde and it was on sale. Also, Pam played a saxophone solo during the reception. She had been taking sax lessons for about a year before the ceremony and chose to play a love song to her new husband—probably a Kenny G number. There she stood in her wedding gown in front of a microphone, right next to the band, blowing away on that sax. How many first-time brides would have had the poise and confidence to do that? Pam then invited anyone who wished to speak, sing, or recite poetry to come up to the mike. Many guests did so, including this writer. I felt as confident as all size-4 blondes feel, and spoke a few words of tribute to the happy couple. Try though I might, I cannot picture any of the first-time brides of my acquaintance playing the saxophone, drums or kazoo, nor have I ever experienced requests for absolutely spontaneous participation by the guests.

### DON'T TRY TO REPLICATE THE FIRST WEDDING

A surprising number of women (well, two anyway) of my acquaintance have attempted to make the second wedding just like the first—perhaps in the hope that the failed first marriage was sort of a dress rehearsal, and this time they will get it right. Sharon's story is especially bizarre.

Both she and her fiancé had been married before, and both had been through acrimonious, expensive divorces and child custody tussles. While one would think these two would run like hell from anything resembling their first weddings, they both wanted a wedding just like their first ones! Having had two first weddings between them (his was a non-sectarian ceremony outdoors at a Northern California resort; hers was a North Jersey orthodox Jewish bash—close to but not exactly like the Long Island wedding discussed above), it would be a gargantuan feat for each of them to have their wish. While it would certainly have been fascinating to watch this wedding play out, it was not to be. It's almost like the wedding that realistically could not be was symbolic of a marriage that should not be and, in the end, wasn't.

In *Manhattan*, Woody Allen (relationship expert that he is) states to Mariel Hemingway that "People should mate for life, like pigeons. Or Catholics." But in many cases, they don't. Not even Catholics. Yet we all continue to look for love of the till-death-do-us-part variety, and as long as we continue to do so, the second wedding shall thrive. ■

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		WEDDING ELEMENT	
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	<b>THE BRIDAL BOUQUET</b>	When tossing time arrives, DJ instructs all "you single gals" to gather round and advises "no fighting, girls."	No tossing. Flautist instead of DJ. Bouquet of cascading greenery instead of flowers. Women (and a sprinkling of womyn) instead of gals and girls.
	<b>THE GARTER</b>	Humiliating. Ridiculous. But you do it. Everyone sees your fat thighs, but you do it.	Is it absolutely essential that your male guests check out your ass and try to catch a piece of what is practically underwear which your husband removes? You think not.
	<b>CHILDREN IN THE WEDDING PARTY</b>	Two or 3 nieces and nephews as ring bearers and flower girls. Tolerated because of family pressure, but those adorable brats had better not take the spotlight off beautiful, bridal you.	That maid of honor is your daughter, and those adorable brats are his grandchildren.
	<b>BRIDE'S FATHER</b>	Paid for the whole shebang and was damn proud of it. Yessiree. Of course, you had to go and embarrass him by getting divorced. Probably didn't pay enough attention to your husband. Not paying for another wedding. No ma'am!	Divorced your mother and married a 19-year old stripper named Tawny whom he met in Vegas. She disappeared after stealing his wallet and the plane tickets back East for your wedding. He sent his regrets and best wishes.
	<b>FIRST DANCE SONG</b>	A tune featured in a Disney movie. This choice, if nothing else, should have tipped you off that you're too young to get married!	A song which has some personal and/or cultural significance to the couple, and which prompts at least a few people to whisper, "What the heck are they playing? I've never heard it. Why not that nice song from <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> ?"
	<b>GIFTS</b>	You go to a department store where you register for Lenox china, Baccarat crystal and Reed & Barton flatware, just like the nice registry lady tells you to.	Do you really need more dishes? Of course not. You need and want cash. But if you're a person of any delicacy and breeding, you cannot ask. So don't register for gifts, and when people ask what to get you, reply, "Oh, use your imagination. Just no blenders. Ha ha ha." (The final chuckle is key.) About 10 percent of the guests will give you wonderful, individualized gifts which will sell well at your next garage sale; 10 to 15 percent of your guests are pikers who will neither bring nor send anything; the remaining majority will give you money. It's readily available at any ATM, easy to wrap and goes with all household color schemes.

Photos by Michael Polito