



## GIFTS

### *Who gives what to whom?*

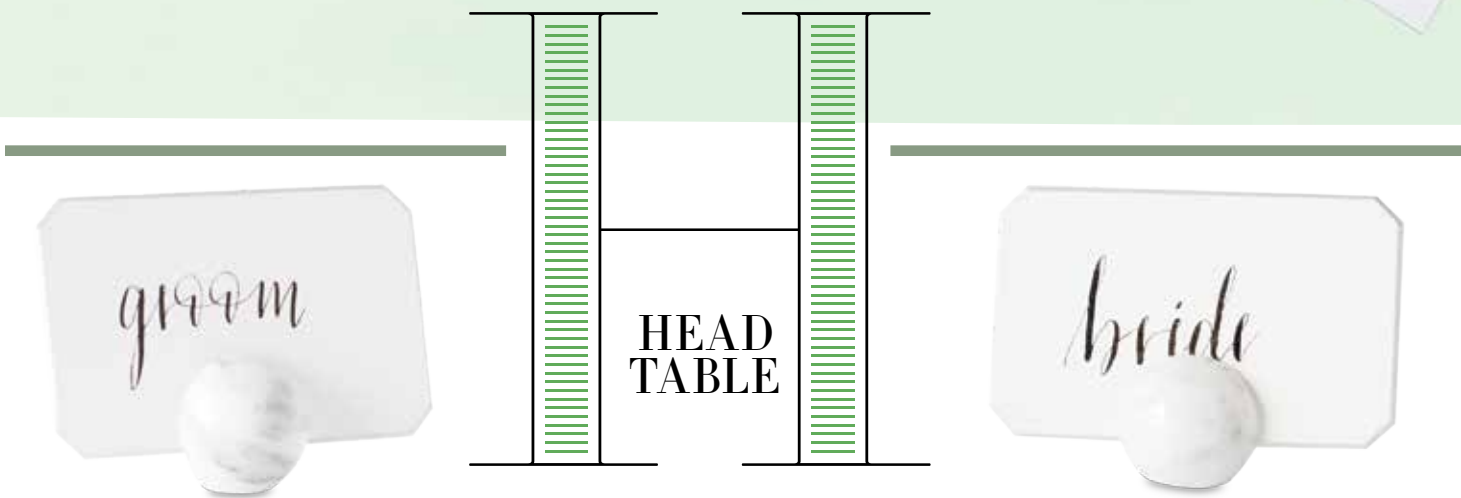
Sally Lutz of St. Michael's Woman's Exchange unwraps the expectations.

#### **BRIDE AND GROOM:**

You aren't required to exchange gifts with each other, but you are expected to give gifts to members of your wedding party. "Gifts for the attendants should reflect the bride and groom's personalities and fit with the budget that is comfortable for them," she says. Ideas include: picture frames, custom stationery, monogrammed totes, and makeup bags for girls; pocket squares, flasks, monogrammed dopp kits, or toiletry bags for guys.

#### **PARENTS OF THE**

**COUPLE:** Don't forget to thank any party hosts with a nice gesture, as well—even with just a handwritten thank-you note. The bride and her mother usually handle these, unless a host is closer to the groom's family. "In general, gifts are designed to be a token of thanks," Lutz says. "It's easy to get carried away with bigger and more elaborate gift giving, but it isn't necessary. Small, carefully chosen, beautifully wrapped gifts are lovely and fine."



**Silver tipped corner place cards** (\$36 for 15/ Bell'Invito); **marble place card holders** (\$165/Bell'Invito); **Calligraphy by Ladybird Paper Co.**

**You've said I do, and now it's time to celebrate.** But who do you picture sitting next to you and your groom? Space planning your reception doesn't have to result in pulling your hair out. "Some couples love the large head table with everyone included; others like an intimate sweetheart table with just the two of them," says Laura Hendricks of StarDust Celebrations. "Other couples opt for a family table and celebrate their first meal with their parents and siblings." If you do opt to have your bridal party with you, remember the plus ones—don't separate dates. Consider a sweetheart or family-only table if your bridal party is large. "I

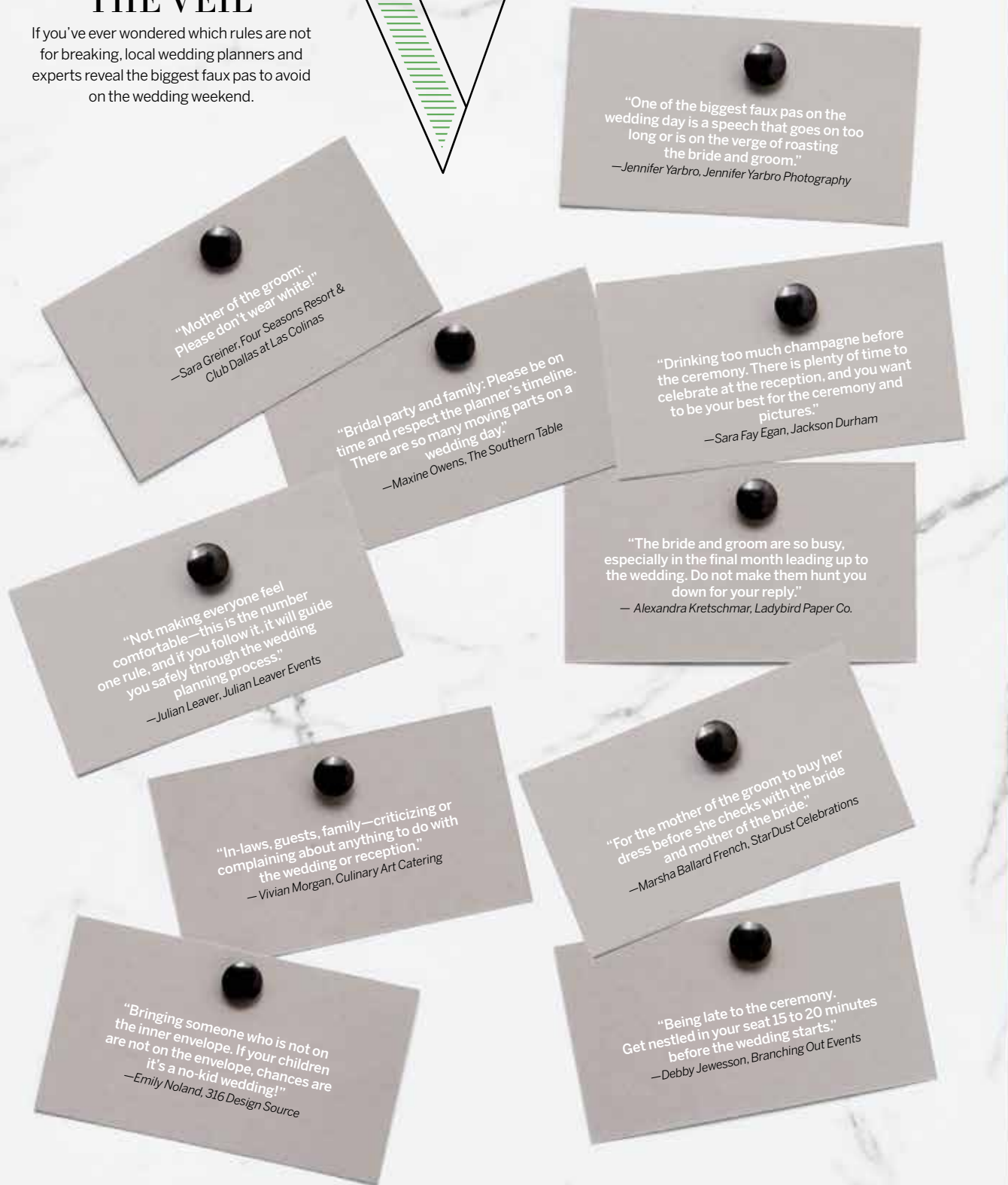
always recommend place cards for the head table; it makes for smooth seating with your VIPs," Hendricks adds. "A place card will ensure that your maid of honor gets a seat next to you and not at the far end of the table next to a groomsman's random date she's never met."

But what about your guests who aren't coupled up? Hendricks still recommends the singles' table, as people tend to be more social at weddings and mix with guests they may not already know—just remember to give a plus one to any guests who may not know anyone else at the wedding other than yourself.

DRESS CODE RINGS: COURTESY OF VENDORS; PLACE CARDS: ELIZABETH LAVIN

## BEHIND THE VEIL

If you've ever wondered which rules are not for breaking, local wedding planners and experts reveal the biggest faux pas to avoid on the wedding weekend.



"One of the biggest faux pas on the wedding day is a speech that goes on too long or is on the verge of roasting the bride and groom."  
—Jennifer Yarbro, Jennifer Yarbro Photography

"Mother of the groom: Please don't wear white!"  
—Sara Greiner, Four Seasons Resort & Club Dallas at Las Colinas

"Bridal party and family: Please be on time and respect the planner's timeline. There are so many moving parts on a wedding day."  
—Maxine Owens, The Southern Table

"Drinking too much champagne before the ceremony. There is plenty of time to celebrate at the reception, and you want to be your best for the ceremony and pictures."  
—Sara Fay Egan, Jackson Durham

"The bride and groom are so busy, especially in the final month leading up to the wedding. Do not make them hunt you down for your reply."  
—Alexandra Kretschmar, Ladybird Paper Co.

"Not making everyone feel comfortable—this is the number one rule, and if you follow it, it will guide you safely through the wedding planning process."  
—Julian Leaver, Julian Leaver Events

"In-laws, guests, family—criticizing or complaining about anything to do with the wedding or reception."  
—Vivian Morgan, Culinary Art Catering

"For the mother of the groom to buy her dress before she checks with the bride and mother of the bride."  
—Marsha Ballard French, StarDust Celebrations

"Bringing someone who is not on the inner envelope. If your children are not on the envelope, chances are it's a no-kid wedding!"  
—Emily Noland, 316 Design Source

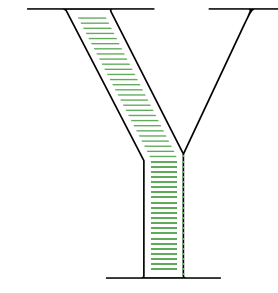
"Being late to the ceremony. Get nestled in your seat 15 to 20 minutes before the wedding starts."  
—Debby Jewesson, Branching Out Events

## WELCOME BAGS

Jordan Payne of The Welcome Bag Committee recommends filling these gestures of thanks with items that reflect the theme of the wedding or the couple's favorite edibles—cups, flip flops, napkins, and towels are all fair game. "We always recommend a salty, a sweet, a fun product like a candle or blanket, a bath and body product, and a beverage," she says. Deliver bags to the hotel a few days prior to arrival—you can have them handed out at check-in or delivered to rooms.



"Beach Please" insulated tote (\$34/The Welcome Bag Committee)

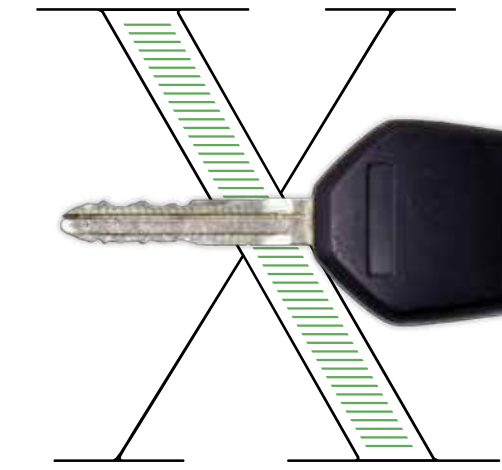


## YES OR NO

We polled 20 wedding vendors to tell us why—or why not—to include these traditions on your wedding day.

- NO: FREEZE THE TOP LAYER OF YOUR WEDDING CAKE**  
The group agrees that celebrating your first anniversary with wedding cake is a must—but freezing your cake is not. "Most bakers will bake you an anniversary cake so that you don't have to eat that stale thing," says Julian Leaver of Julian Leaver Events.
- YES: TOSS THE BOUQUET**  
It was a yes across the board, but just make sure there are enough single ladies to gather so it's not putting someone on the spot. "Let's face it, all your single friends are waiting for it," says Lacey Di Nardo of Marie Gabrielle Restaurants and Gardens.
- NO: GARTER TOSS**  
Awkward. Uncomfortable. Just a couple of words used to describe the garter toss. Most urged brides to pass on this one. "Save this for your bachelorette party, not your wedding dance floor," says Sara Fay Egan of Jackson Durham.
- TIE: NOT SEEING YOUR GROOM**  
It was a tie down the middle. On the one hand, it's an emotional memory to save this moment for the
- YES: SOMETHING BORROWED, NEW, OLD, AND BLUE**  
Everyone agrees that this is a great way to incorporate family heirlooms. "Weddings are made from family traditions and passing down memories," Jennifer Yarbro from Jen Yarbro Photography.
- YES: DECORATING A GETAWAY CAR**  
This has evolved from a *Steel Magnolias* moment to a classier version. "Opt for a cute sign and floral," says Molly Rasmussen of Pop Parties. "No more ribbon or bows."
- TIE: WEDDING FAVORS**  
The consensus was split. If you do decide on wedding favors, no tchotchkes. "It only makes sense if the favor is something that relates back to the couple personally," says Linda Lyons of Lyons Events.

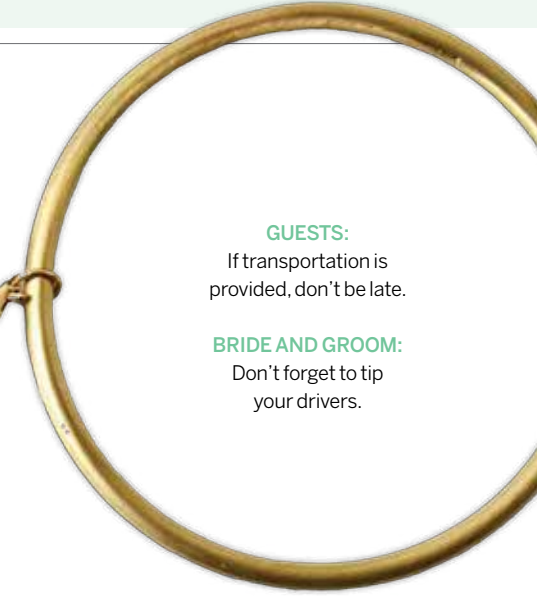
WELCOME BAG: COURTESY OF VENDOR



## X MARKS THE SPOT

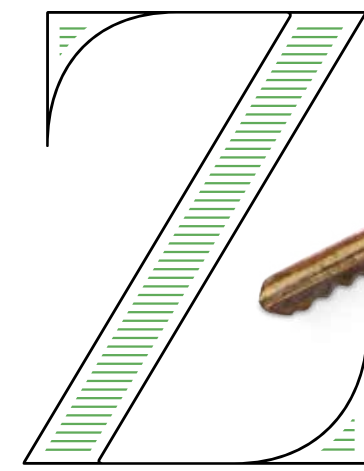
While transporting your guests—whether by bus, limo, taxi, or Uber—to your wedding is not expected, it is certainly appreciated. "If you can accommodate transportation in your budget, we recommend departing from the hotel room block, and be very specific about the departure time," says Brianna Noland of 316 Design Source. However, there's an exception: "When there is no Uber, parking is limited, you have a majority of out-of-town guests, or if your venue is way out of town, we would strongly suggest providing transportation," she says.

However, you are responsible for getting your bridal party to and from the party safe and sound. "The bride's family is responsible for providing transportation for the bridal party to and from the ceremony and reception while the groom's family is responsible for transportation of the groom and best man to the ceremony," Noland explains.



**GUESTS:**  
If transportation is provided, don't be late.

**BRIDE AND GROOM:**  
Don't forget to tip your drivers.



## ZZZZ'S

**Are you always responsible for where your guests sleep after the party's over?** "A block of hotel rooms is not always necessary; however, if you want your guests to all stay in one location to facilitate bus or shuttle transportation, a block is a good thing," says Marsha Ballard French of StarDust Celebrations. "Hotel blocks are communicated on the couple's website, by the save the date card, or by inserting a details/lodging card in the invitation packet."