

# Bear Creek Golf Club Wedding Planner Guide



## You've got a dream in mind & Bear Creek Golf Club is where it can all come true...

Of all the events that happen in your lifetime, your wedding will be the most romantic. You've no doubt been dreaming about what your wedding should be like all of your life. Since the time you were a child, you've probably had fantasies about it – what you and the attendants will wear, the magic scenery of the spot where you'll say your vows, the delicious cuisine that your guests will eat, the flowers, the music.

We'd like to invite you to consider Bear Creek as the destination where all those fantasies can become reality. For starters, just consider our setting. The course is very scenic, with heath land features and panoramic views. With our location, we're close to all of the activities that people flock to Grande Prairie for.



Although the ceremony will last only an hour at most and the reception just a few hours, the planning may take much longer and can require more hard work than you could ever imagine. Working with the Bear Creek staff, you'll find that your big day will run smoothly and successfully. We can lighten your tasks and make your wedding a fabulous experience.

Let us help you accomplish your goal: To create the perfect wedding, a scene of whimsy, imagination and excitement. You'll fashion memories that you'll treasure for a lifetime. Be sure to call our event coordinator, soon to find out all the details about Bear Creek.

To get you started on your planning, this brief Guide to Weddings tells you how to go about this great romantic adventure and offers ideas for how to make the process go more smoothly.

**Through this planner, we hope to provide ideas that will make this day as special as you want it to be.**

## Wedding Timeline

### What happens when, in your planning schedule?

Now that you're engaged, you're probably already frazzled over what happens next and when. That's why we've provided the following timeline to help you in your preparations. The optimal amount of time for planning a wedding is at least a year, but if you hurry, you can handle a wedding in less time.

### Nine to 12 months before the wedding...

- ✓ Set a date and time for your wedding.
- ✓ Decide what the style will be for your ceremony and reception: Big or small, for example; formal or more relaxed; and indoors or outdoors. At Bear Creek we offer you all these possibilities.
- ✓ Set a budget for what you want to spend and decide who will pay for what.
- ✓ Begin tracking your expenses.
- ✓ The possible locations for ceremony and reception are endless and you'll want to start visiting them whether they are golf courses, like Bear Creek, resorts, churches, hotels, and restaurants. Find out what their calendars are like and book the date you want for your ceremony and reception sites. We believe at Bear Creek we offer you an incomparable choice that you won't find anywhere else.
- ✓ Once you've picked Bear Creek, you'll want to request menu packages and price lists from our culinary staff.
- ✓ Determine the number of guests you want to invite.
- ✓ Start writing your guest list with the help of your families; think about who must be invited vs. guests who would be nice to invite.
- ✓ Choose your wedding attendants.
- ✓ Select a color scheme for the wedding.
- ✓ Decide on the color and style of clothing for your attendants and find out their sizes.
- ✓ Begin thinking about a honeymoon location.
- ✓ Check on passports and birth certificates if needed for your honeymoon or to secure a marriage license.
- ✓ Consider working on a health and fitness plan.

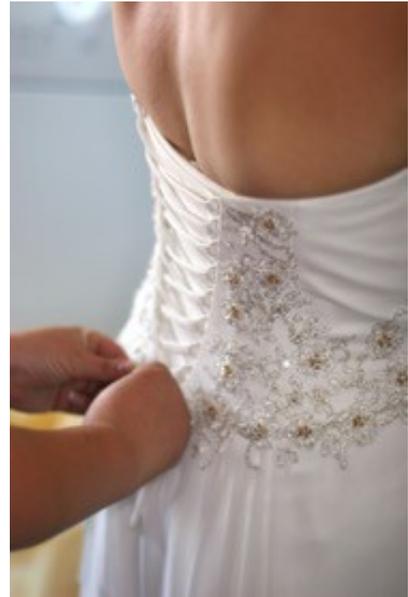
## Six to nine months before the wedding...

- ✓ At six to nine months in advance, it is time to finalize reception arrangements.
- ✓ At Bear Creek, we'll go over all the details of your contract with you, including any cancellation clauses before you commit to a contract.
- ✓ Check requirements for marriage licenses.
- ✓ Meet with minister, rabbi or other officiating authority to discuss the arrangements for the ceremony.
- ✓ Order dresses and shoes for bride's attendants: Set a date for fitting and delivery.
- ✓ Order your dress and headpiece: Set a date for fitting and delivery.
- ✓ Interview and book florist: Choose the color and style of bouquets and arrangements.
- ✓ Choose china, crystal, silver patterns and other household accessories and register for gifts at various stores.
- ✓ Reserve equipment needed for the wedding day: At Bear Creek, we can help you with these details.
- ✓ If showers are held for you in advance of the wedding, begin a record of gifts received and send out thank-yous.
- ✓ Plan your honeymoon.
- ✓ Make a reservation for the wedding night.
- ✓ Interview and choose a DJ or band for the reception.
- ✓ Interview and choose musicians for ceremony.
- ✓ Choose a photographer and videographer.



## Three to six months before the wedding...

- ✓ Order wedding rings.
- ✓ Finalize your guest list.
- ✓ Work on menus and food arrangements for reception.
- ✓ Order stationery, including invitations, announcements, thank you notes, wedding programs, seating cards and maps. You may wish to include food choices on your RSVP cards.
- ✓ Address your invitations.
- ✓ Decide on the wedding cake and groom's cake.
- ✓ Help mothers coordinate and find their wedding day clothing.
- ✓ Finalize ceremony arrangements.
- ✓ Book any other needed services.



## Two to three months before the wedding...

- ✓ Mail out invitations to guests.
- ✓ Begin making accommodations for out-of-town guests.
- ✓ Have portraits taken and place engagement announcement in newspaper.
- ✓ Choose a rental shop for clothing for the groom and his attendants.
- ✓ Choose favors for guests and decide on room decorations.
- ✓ Arrange and plan your rehearsal dinner. If you're having your wedding at Bear Creek, we can arrange a rehearsal dinner for your wedding party and relatives as well.
- ✓ Arrange bachelor and bachelorette parties. At Bear Creek, you can combine those parties with a round of golf in summer.
- ✓ Hire limousine service or arrange for transportation for wedding party and family members.
- ✓ Choose music for reception.
- ✓ Finalize selections for beverages for the reception and finalize menu choices.
- ✓ Finalize all plans for the honeymoon.
- ✓ Decide on a hairdresser and/or makeup artist and book appointments.

**One to two months before the wedding...**

- ✓ Keep a list of all guests who RSVP and record any gifts as they arrive.
- ✓ Send out thank-you notes.
- ✓ Have final fitting for wedding dress.
- ✓ Have final fittings for all apparel for wedding attendants.
- ✓ Order your wedding cake.
- ✓ Choose gifts for the bridal party

**Two to four weeks before the wedding...**

- ✓ Obtain your wedding license.
- ✓ Select a guest book attendant.
- ✓ Choose where and when guests will sign in.
- ✓ Mail rehearsal dinner invitations.
- ✓ Plan a bridesmaid lunch or dinner.
- ✓ Create a calendar of events for the wedding day.
- ✓ Confirm honeymoon arrangements.
- ✓ Shop for clothing or luggage for honeymoon, if needed.
- ✓ Write out a schedule of wedding day events for your wedding party and service providers.
- ✓ Decide where the reception line will be.
- ✓ Follow up with guests who have not replied to invitations.
- ✓ Pick up rings.
- ✓ Determine seating for ceremony and discuss it with ushers.

**One to two weeks before the wedding...**

- ✓ Send out announcements to those not invited to the wedding.
- ✓ Arrange seating for bridal and parents' table. Make place cards for guests.
- ✓ Buy any special decorative items needed, such as candles and table decorations.

- ✓ Confirm lodging arrangements.
- ✓ Confirm flower order with florist.
- ✓ Confirm with BearCreek and other vendors the final number of guests that will be coming.
- ✓ Pick up all wedding apparel and be sure that it fits.
- ✓ Finalize arrangements with all service providers: photographer, videographer, musicians and others.
- ✓ Hold bachelor and bachelorette parties.

**One to seven days before the wedding...**

- ✓ Make sure your marriage license is in order.
- ✓ Buy travelers checks.
- ✓ Pack for your honeymoon. If you're bringing your flowers to the Club, we will refrigerate them for you. You can also leave decorations and props with us.
- ✓ This is a good time to confirm final details with your caterer and our wedding coordinator about menu, cake, beverages and tables and seating arrangements.



- ✓ Have your wedding ceremony rehearsal, followed by your rehearsal dinner.
- ✓ Instruct your wedding party on what you would like them to do on the big day.
- ✓ Choose someone to bring accessories to ceremony and reception, including ring pillow, flowers, guest book and pen, toasting glasses, cake cutting knife.
- ✓ Arrange for someone to give the checks to the professionals and service providers who are to be paid the day of the wedding.
- ✓ Arrange for someone to return all rental items.
- ✓ Pack any necessary items in your car.

## The Big Day Arrives

### **A timeline for your wedding day**

#### **Three to four hours before the event (possibly the day before)...**

- ✓ Bride's family should visit ceremony and/or reception sites at Bear Creek to decorate.
- ✓ Set up flowers and candles.

#### **Two to three hours before the event...**

- ✓ Bride and bridesmaids have hair and makeup done, either professionally or by each other.
- ✓ Bride and her attendants begin dressing.
- ✓ Groom and groomsmen meet and begin dressing. Best man and groom should remember to bring rings and marriage license.
- ✓ If photos will be taken before the ceremony, allow at least 90 minutes.
- ✓ Last hour before the event...
- ✓ Clergy person and/or officiating person for ceremony should arrive.
- ✓ Ushers should arrive 45 minutes before ceremony.
- ✓ Guests should be seated as they arrive.
- ✓ Music is played.



#### **Fifteen minutes before...**

- ✓ Family members and special guests are escorted to marked seating locations.

#### **Five minutes before...**

- ✓ Depending on the religious ceremony that is used, this order may vary.
- ✓ Groom's mother and father are escorted to seats.
- ✓ Bride's mother is last person to be escorted to seat.
- ✓ Carpet runner is rolled down aisle.

- ✓ Bride's father takes his place with the bride.
- ✓ Officiating minister or authority takes his place at front.
- ✓ Groom enters accompanied by best man and groomsmen.
- ✓ Processional music begins.
- ✓ Bridesmaids enter in order.
- ✓ Bride and her father enter

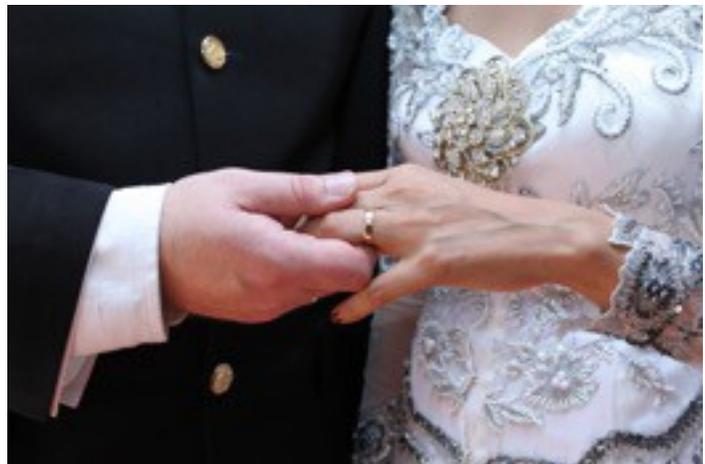


## Wedding Budget – Who pays for what?

Current estimates of what weddings cost run the financial gamut.

Much of it depends on where you live, how many people you invite and what frills you want to add or subtract. If you're worried about the costs, one thought to keep in mind is that you pay many of the expenses as you go along. You're not going to get a bill for \$20,000 on the day of the wedding, because you've been making deposits and/or full payments for several months.

Because of the costs, many couples often help their parents pay for today's weddings, particularly when the bride and groom are older and have been working for a number of years.



Traditionally, the etiquette books have lists of what each family and person should pay for. But remember as you look at our list that obligations and responsibilities can be revised and changed. The important thing is that you need to make it clear to all parties involved what everyone is going to pay.

**What the bride & her family traditionally pay for...**

- ✓ The groom's wedding ring.
- ✓ Pre-wedding parties, such as the first engagement party.
- ✓ Stationery, including invitations, announcements, personal stationery, wedding programs, thank-you notes and postage costs.
- ✓ The bride's wedding dress and in some cases, bridesmaids' dresses if the attendants cannot afford to pay for their own.
- ✓ Clothing for parents of the bride.
- ✓ Any engagement photos taken in advance and all photography and videography at the wedding. Some copies of the wedding photos may be given to the groom's family as a gift. But generally, family members and guests pay for their own copies.
- ✓ Gifts for bridesmaids.
- ✓ Luncheon for bridesmaids.
- ✓ Fees for bridal consultants.
- ✓ Flowers and decorations for the ceremony and reception site.
- ✓ Bride's flowers and flowers for her attendants, although sometimes the groom pays for the bride's bouquet.
- ✓ Music for the ceremony and reception.
- ✓ Any fees for a church or ceremony site, except for the fee for the clergy person or person officiating at the ceremony which is paid by the groom.
- ✓ The wedding reception, including the rental of the site, the food, rental of equipment, such as tents, awnings, carpet runners, and any staff hired, such as parking attendants, caterer, bartender.
- ✓ Transportation for bridal party to and from ceremony and reception.
- ✓ Bride's wedding gift to groom.
- ✓ Wedding gift from bride's parents to couple.
- ✓ Possibly overnight accommodations for bridesmaids and, in some cases, for out-of-town relatives or guests of the bride.



## What the groom & his family traditionally pay for...

- ✓ Bride's engagement and wedding rings.
- ✓ Groom's formal wear, shoes and accessories and sometimes clothing for groomsmen and ushers.
- ✓ Pre-wedding parties as desired and the bachelor dinner or event.
- ✓ Rehearsal dinner.
- ✓ Groom's wedding present to bride.
- ✓ Groom's gifts to groomsmen and ushers.
- ✓ Marriage license.
- ✓ Clothing for parents of groom.
- ✓ Some flowers, including possibly the bride's bouquet, boutonnieres for groomsmen and ushers, and corsages for mothers and grandmothers.
- ✓ Fee for the clergy person or person officiating at the ceremony.
- ✓ Possibly transportation for groom and groomsmen to church.
- ✓ Transportation from the reception to honeymoon site for bride and groom.
- ✓ Honeymoon trip.



## What bridesmaids traditionally pay for...

- ✓ The maid or matron-of-honor usually hosts a bridal shower and/or bachelorette party. Friends may also host engagement party.
- ✓ Their attire, shoes and accessories, if the bride doesn't provide it.
- ✓ Their own transportation & accommodations if not paid for by bride.
- ✓ An individual wedding gift.

**What groomsmen & ushers traditionally pay for...**

- ✓ The best man usually hosts a bachelor party or dinner. Friends may host an engagement party.
- ✓ Their attire, shoes and accessories.
- ✓ Their transportation and accommodations, if not paid for by groom.
- ✓ An individual wedding gift.

**Expenses that could be shared...**

- ✓ Bride or groom's families may hand down heirloom rings.
- ✓ Bride's family may host the rehearsal dinner and/or dinners and meals for out-of-town relatives.
- ✓ Bride's family may buy bouquets and corsages.
- ✓ The wedding couple may cover all ceremony costs.
- ✓ The groom's family may share the cost of the reception by covering specific services.
- ✓ Either family may arrange transportation or lodging for out-of-town guests.
- ✓ The couple may buy thank-you gifts for parents, friends and relatives who helped with planning the wedding.

## Wedding Day Supply Checklist

### Don't forget the little extras & the essentials

The list of items that you may need for your wedding day is endless. Here are just some of the possibilities of items and props you may wish to bring or have at your ceremony or reception. If you are having your wedding at Bear Creek, we can help supply some of these necessities. Others you may wish to bring with you:

#### Wedding Essentials...

- ✓ Gifts for bridesmaids, groomsmen, parent and family, bride and groom.
- ✓ Tent to cover outdoor ceremony.
- ✓ Candles for ceremony.
- ✓ Flowers for ceremony.
- ✓ Arbor or altar or chuppah.



#### Reception Essentials...

- ✓ A guest book, pen and guest book table.
- ✓ A special cake table.
- ✓ Gift table and box for cards.
- ✓ Decorations for banquet room.
- ✓ Favors for guests.
- ✓ Place cards and place card holders for guests.
- ✓ One use cameras for candid wedding shots.
- ✓ Chairs and tables and linens and dishes, if not supplied by caterer.
- ✓ Toasting glasses.
- ✓ Special cake knife to cut the cake.
- ✓ Special cake topper.
- ✓ Tent for outdoor reception site.

## Wedding Invitations & Guest List

### Who will you invite & when?

Once you decide on a date, place (Bear Creek!) and size for your wedding, you can start on the guest list. Generally, the bride's family makes up the guest list and all guests are invited to both ceremony and reception.

When preparing the guest list, invitations are sent to the groom's parents as a memento of the wedding, to wedding attendants and spouses, the clergyman and his or her spouse and the attendants' parents.

Give special thought to your invitations both to the texture and weight of paper as well as the printing and design.



The proper wedding invitation wording is critical and should tell you everything there is to know. Whether it be a church wedding, home wedding, wedding at a venue like Bear Creek, a second marriage or whatever, the proper etiquette and wedding invitation wording are essential.

Generally, you must order your invitations at least two or three months before the wedding.

All wedding invitations should be sent from the home of the bride, even those going to the personal friends of the groom. They should be mailed about six to eight weeks before the day set for the wedding. Out-of-town guests should be sent a notice card, preferably with room and hotel suggestions, in time for them to make travel accommodations.

Be sure to include maps, RSVP cards and other necessary information in your invitations. When you order your stationery, you may wish to order thank-you notes to send out afterward as well.

## Picking a Location for Ceremony & Reception

### **The perfect day requires the perfect place...**

Is it your fantasy to be married in a grand cathedral, at a beautiful resort, on the fairway of your favorite golf course, or under an arbor in grandma's garden?

Every bride-to-be knows that the wedding of her dreams begins with a wonderful location, the perfect backdrop for a romantic story. To ensure that you can have the ceremony and reception that you have always dreamed of, you will want to plan carefully and well in advance. Begin your search for the perfect location as soon as you get engaged.

We believe at Bear Creek, you will find the kind of setting for your ceremony and reception that you have always yearned for, indoors or out.

Ours is a unique dream destination.

At Bear Creek, you have the option of holding both your ceremony and your reception with us. We can create intimate settings indoors or out. We have the capability to accommodate a reception of up to 250 guests. As you consider our Club, think about the following...

### **What will your ceremony be like?**

Start by deciding exactly what type of ceremony you want to have. Will your ceremony be a traditional and formal affair or something a bit more relaxed?

The style may dictate where you have your wedding. At any rate, you want to fill your special day with the personal touches that show just who you are.

The season of the year, the number of guests expected and your religious affiliation will play a role. The ceremony location is the place where you make those lifelong promises and commitments. So begin thinking about the ceremony site as soon as you have selected the date for your wedding.

As we mentioned, like many country clubs, golf clubs and hotels, Bear Creek can accommodate both your ceremony and your reception — which can significantly reduce the logistical issues involved with planning a wedding..

Most brides bring with them special items that they want for the ceremony, including arbors, kneeling cushions, aisle runners, unity candles, and candelabra.



We can provide you with names of musicians, DJs, photographers and other service providers in the area. Many wedding parties hire DJs. If you choose to bring your flowers with you, we can keep them fresh in a walk-in cooler.

Your contract with Bear Creek will specify all aspects of renting or using the location: Arrival times, departure times, equipment that can be used, clean-up responsibilities, parking facility use. Make sure that you understand all those guidelines, and feel free to ask any questions you wish.

Although it's hard to know exactly what the weather will be like when you hold your wedding, think about what your reception would be like regardless of whether it rains or shines or snows. If you have chosen an outdoor ceremony, we always have a contingency plan at Bear Creek for handling your wedding in case of bad weather.

While having a ceremony outdoors is an exciting concept for your wedding, make sure that the person officiating at the wedding is willing to perform the ceremony at your chosen location. Some clergy members will only perform ceremonies in a house of worship. Make sure that your guests understand what an outdoor ceremony might mean for them as well, in terms of dress and accommodations.

At Bear Creek and other fine locations, the calendar tends to book up rapidly, especially in the traditional wedding months of May, June, July and August. You'll want to inquire soon about any date you have in mind. We're open for weddings any day of the week throughout the year.

Our facility is popular for a reason: We do a lot of weddings and we have acquired excellent experience. We have set up for weddings hundreds of times, which can make your big day go very smoothly. We also have our own wedding coordinator on staff who will supervise our workers during your event.

### **What will your reception be like?**

All eyes will be on the bride at your wedding, of course, but scenery and comfortable surroundings like those that we provide at Bear Creek will help make your wedding reception a pleasure and an unforgettable experience for your guests. Our staff will also make the entire group feel right at home.

The size of the reception area is important. Guests at a smaller wedding may feel a bit lost and lonely in a large room. Too small a banquet space for a large group can make dining very uncomfortable.

You'll want to visit our reception site around the same time of day you are planning your ceremony or reception so that you can better envision the type of lighting and

decorations you want.

If you're holding both ceremony and reception with us, it will be easy to coordinate the timing of the two events so that guests travel smoothly from one site to the other.

### **What type of food will I serve?**

Another key part of the wedding event for your guests is the menu you plan to serve. The options for wedding receptions are endless: breakfast, brunch, lunch, hors d'oeuvres reception, buffet with a theme or buffet with carving stations.



You need to ask yourself some of these questions about the cuisine:

Is the setting beautiful, but the food only so-so? Can I sample some of the entrées in advance? Do I want to give my guests choices or will everyone be served the same food?

### **What will the beverage service be like?**

Beverage plans at many facilities can be very complicated. You'll want to ask: What is the charge per drink for an open bar? Do they charge extra to pour coffee with the cake?

At Bear Creek, we have assorted beverage plans to choose from that will provide you with exactly what you're looking for at your wedding.

Your beverage service should complement and enhance the food service of the reception. Does your elegant dinner require a special wine service?

Would you like a signature drink for the bar? Bear Creek staff can assist you in the pairings.



### **What will the service be like?**

You'll want to make sure that there will be adequate experienced serving people for large groups. At Bear Creek we have a devoted and gracious staff that will tend to all the needs of your guests with great skill. Don't hesitate to ask about any question you have in mind. We handle hundreds of small and large groups every year and we offer everyone the same warm and friendly welcome.

## Pre-wedding Activities

### **The work starts long before the wedding announcing your engagement...**

The days of sending out formal engagement announcements are probably gone forever. You will, however, want to e-mail all your closest friends and relatives with the big news and tell them tentatively when you plan to hold your wedding.

In suburban areas or small towns, it's still possible to place an announcement of your engagement in the local newspaper. Call the newspaper and ask them to send you an announcement form. Also ask what kind of photo they need. The best photo would be a sharply detailed black and white of the two of you.

### **Choosing wedding vendors...**

Here is a list of some of the important services you need to arrange for your wedding. You'll want to seek references from friends and relatives. These are also items that can drive up your expenses considerably. So be sure to ask lots of questions about the cost.

Many of our wedding couples come from other areas to hold their events at Bear Creek. We can provide you with the names of many local wedding vendors, including photographers, musicians and other service providers who live near our club. Sometimes this can make your wedding day go more smoothly. Some of our brides, however, wish to hire vendors who travel in for the wedding from the couple's home location. Whatever your situation, we can help you make it work.

**Photography** – Finding the right photographer takes time, but it's time well-spent. You can only take the pictures once, after all. You may need to book a photographer well in advance, so don't wait to the last minute. Ask to see samples of his or her work before you make a decision. Friends and relatives may offer to take photos. That's fine, but nothing compares with the work of a professional. Ask photographers about what moments of the wedding they will take pictures of. If they don't shoot digital, how many rolls of film will they shoot? It's possible that pictures cannot be taken inside a church or synagogue during your ceremony.

With our spectacular grounds and scenery, we offer numerous wonderful backdrops for your wedding photos. Hiring a photographer who has worked at Bear Creek before can ensure that you will have photos of all the best sites at our golf course.

**Videography** – Almost everyone does some videotaping of their wedding. Hiring a professional can make sense, but remember that they have to use very bright lights at time to do their job. Will this interfere with the quality of your wedding experience? At any rate, ask to see samples of his or her work before you make a decision. Some

videotaping by members of the family or friends might make a good option.

If you hire a professional, they often have several formats for taping. For example, a video can be shot with one camera that starts at the ceremony and runs through the end of the reception, with no editing. This option is the cheapest available. Others turn the video into a documentary that may include interviews with family and friends as well as the wedding party. This choice would require more editing and more expense.

**Flowers & Decorations** – The main focus is on the bouquets. Will there be nosegays or luxuriant and loose armfuls of blossoms or closelyknotted colonial style bouquets?

White has always been traditional for the bride and remains popular because of its pristine elegance. Think of the options: lilies, orchids, freesia, stephanotis, lilies of the valley, baby's breath and plumaria? How about combining paperwhites and calla lilies in the same bouquet? Or what about a feathery green bouquet of ferns combined with a few white blossoms?

Strong colors can be a dramatic possibility for the bride as well: Red roses or red tulips; burgundy and gold flowers in autumn that pick up the colors of the bridesmaids' dresses; or long-stemmed purple and yellow pansies tied up with lace.

Carnations are definitely out of style for the guys. Boutonnieres can now be as varied as a sprig of rosemary or a fir or pine twig combined with acorns or a tiny bit of eucalyptus combined with a rose. The groom's boutonniere is often a flower found in the bridal bouquet that he wears on the left lapel, right over his heart.

The mother of the bride and mother of the groom can carry nosegays instead of wearing corsages.

Be sure to give your florist a list of the wedding party and their corresponding flowers. That way, there will be less confusion about who gets what bouquet or corsage.

Don't forget the floral decorations for the ceremony site. And be sure to pin down the timing. Many brides bring their flowers with them from home when they come to Bear Creek. We can keep them cool and fresh for you after you arrive.

**Wedding Music** – Music is a major part of your wedding and reception, and should be chosen with care as it sets an important tone and atmosphere. Special songs and solos can also make the wedding uniquely your own.

Usually two different types of music are desired: Softer, more romantic music sung or played during the ceremony, and entertaining or dancing music played for the reception. In some cases the same musicians may play both types.



Before making any definite music arrangements or selections, you should check with your church or synagogue to see what restrictions it may have.

The traditional wedding processions and recessions are still used: Wagner's "Wedding March" from Lohengrin for the processional and Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" from A Midsummer Night's Dream for the recessional. But today's couples often choose from many other classical and religious options for their ceremony music.

Taped music can be used for smaller weddings, but live music is always more glamorous.

**Marriage License** – As soon as you pick a wedding location, you and the groom should probably call the county records office to find out what the regulations for a license are in that area. You'll want to know the hours they are open and what kind of payment you have to make. You may have to go to the license bureau in person to obtain a license and will need to bring identification with you – probably a birth certificate, passport or driver's license. Once you have the license, file it safely until your wedding day.

## Pre-wedding Excitement & Parties

### **The excitement goes on & on...**

The build-up to the big day of your wedding is going to be filled with excitement and parties. Here are some tips on what is customary and traditional and how you may wish to personalize these events to suit you and your lifestyle.

**Bridal Luncheon or Dinner** – Once upon a time, the maid or matron of honor and bridesmaids held a lunch for the bride a week or so before the wedding. At that time, the bride gave her attendants her presents and the bridesmaids in turn gave their wedding gifts to the bride.

With today's busy schedules, this doesn't happen as often, but it would make a wonderful idea, particularly if members of the wedding party don't know each other very well. The bridal luncheon could even take place the day that the bridal party picks up their dresses.

Rather than the bridesmaids giving the lunch, the bride may want to serve as hostess for this event. Or perhaps the bride would like to hold a dinner, the same night that the groom holds his bachelor party.

A great location might be a golf club — like Bear Creek — with a beautiful dining room where you can enjoy the scenery as well as a relaxing lunch. Breathtaking views and beautiful outdoor seating make Bear Creek the premier site for this event.

**Wedding Showers** – Are usually held at least two weeks before the wedding, but that rule is not firm. Generally they are held when they are convenient for everyone involved.

Who serves as hostess to the bridal shower is another role that has changed; Generally, it is the maid of honor with help from the bridesmaids. Nowadays, however, anyone who wants to host a shower can. Generally, members of the bride's immediate family do not give showers, but even that traditional rule is often broken.

Showers are often given in the home of the hostess. But restaurants, country clubs, golf clubs and outdoor locations such as a park or patio can add new excitement to your event. Holding a shower at a restaurant or club means less work and more fun for all involved.

Showers usually last about two hours, but time can vary depending on the type of shower you plan to hold. The time at the shower can be broken down any number of ways, but the basic format usually includes the following: Arrival of guests, bridal



shower games, lunch, tea or brunch, opening of gifts and cutting and serving of the cake. It's best to invite only those guests who are also invited to the wedding.

If the bride is having more than one shower, try to arrange it so that the guests are not invited to more than one of these parties, except for family or wedding party members.

Showcase the bride and groom with an enlarged photograph of the couple from their dating era. Mount it on poster board with a wide border. Set the board on an easel and attach a fine point permanent marker to the end of a strand of ribbon. Attach the pen to the board so guests can sign their name and a brief message for the couple on the poster board.

Games are a great way for guests to get to know each other. Don't wait for everyone to show up. Late arrivals can join in on the next game. Allow time for two games but have a third one ready to go just in case you breeze through the first two. Be prepared with supplies like pencils and paper before the party starts.

Shower gifts should be opened in front of guests. Have the bride sit where everyone can see her. A bridesmaid should keep track of what she receives and who it is from. That will make it easier for the bride to send out thank-you notes later.

Shower gifts can be more practical and less costly than wedding gifts. It's fun to hold a theme for your shower asking for gifts for the bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, closet or garden. Lingerie or pillow showers are also popular.

**Bachelor / Bachelorette Parties** – In the past, the reason for giving a bachelor dinner was quite different than it is today. The idea was to hold a final fling to “bolster” the groom's courage before the big day.

Today's bachelor parties, however, are more often outings several days or even a week or two before the wedding.

The event may be organized and paid for by the groom or his father or another family member or by members of the wedding party. Often the groom uses this occasion to give presents to the best man and his ushers. Unlike the custom of giving gifts which can be worn during the wedding, as in the case of the bride's attendants, the gifts for groom's attendants are more likely not to be worn or used in the wedding: Pocket knives, small traveling kits, wallets and other items.

Consider some fresh alternatives for guy fun. Today's bachelor parties are often times when good friends get together for a special event – a baseball or football game, camping trip, a day of fishing or frequently, a day of golf. If you're thinking of golfing for your wedding group, most clubs will be happy to treat you as an outing group and will set up tee times so that all foursomes can start back to back at the same time. Bear



Creek is willing to grant you a special outing rate and can also assist with scoring and prizes.

The groom might like to use golf as the theme for his gifts to ushers, including such items as golf balls, golf shirts with the club logo or golf visors. Of course, a day of spirited golf right here at Bear Creek would be perfect! We're home to 18 holes of championship golf and offer arguably the best golf anywhere in the area.

Bear Creek is the perfect location for holding a golfing event/bachelor party for your wedding group. Book an evening at our venue and combine it with a round of golf. This is also an excellent way to familiarize your wedding party with the facility.

You can also have your wedding party visit Bear Creek a day or two before the wedding to hold a mini-golfing tournament.

The Rehearsal – Holding a final rehearsal before the wedding is an excellent way to avoid slipups on the big day. At the rehearsal you'll be able to iron out all the final details with all the participants in your wedding.

By now, you should have met with the person performing the ceremony to discuss what will be said during the ceremony. Even the smallest detail – saying, "I do" or "I will" – may make a difference to you. It's important to finalize all this before the rehearsal so you can concentrate on rehearsing, rather than on making decisions. Be sure that you and your clergy person or officiant is on the same wavelength about how the ceremony will go. The rehearsal is also a good time for soloists and musicians to practice.

The best time for your rehearsal is late afternoon on the day before. It's good, but not necessary, to do the rehearsal at the wedding site. It may be more valuable to be at the real site when there are children in the wedding party in order to help them learn exactly where they need to walk and stand. But sometimes a rehearsal on site is not possible. If so, a rehearsal can be done in someone's family room or living room. At Bear Creek, we can cooperate with this arrangement. Please let us know what you have in mind and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Start your rehearsal by calling the entire wedding party together. Line them up in the order they will stand during the wedding ceremony. If you are missing one or several members of the wedding party at the rehearsal, don't worry too much. Be sure as you line people up that you leave a space for each missing attendant. Ask those who are on either side of the missing attendant to clue him or her in on the day of the wedding. Those present will pay extra attention, those missing will get the word and you won't have to worry about it.

Besides having the bride and groom and attendants at the rehearsal, the mother of the bride attends as well. The bride's father or whoever will escort her up the aisle must



be there, too, as well as the officiating person or clergy person, your wedding director and your organist or other musicians and singer. The groom's parents do not have to attend but often do so.

In general, the person officiating over the ceremony will give instructions to the wedding party about where to stand and when to walk in and out. The clergy person will explain the service and tell each member of the wedding party at what point to play his or her role. The processional is usually rehearsed first and is done in this order: ushers, junior ushers, bridesmaids, maid of honor, matron of honor, junior bridesmaids, ring bearer, flower girl, bride and father.

During the rehearsal ceremony the attendants generally will stand on either side of the clergy person or officiating authority, facing the bride and groom and looking out at the guests. The bride and groom stand in front of minister/clergy person/judge. Ringbearers and flower girls stand in front of the adult attendants.

There are options for the recessional. The bride and groom lead the recessional down the aisle, the bride taking the groom's right arm. Sometimes bridesmaids and ushers follow in the same order as in the processional, in other ceremonies, they pair up with the maid of honor escorted by the best man.

Be sure to introduce everyone to each other at the rehearsal and always remind all the attendants about timing for the next day. Give everyone a telephone number to call in case of problems.

Rehearsal Dinner – If you're holding your wedding at Bear Creek, and you're having the traditional dinner after your rehearsal, we can create the perfect festivities for your group.

It's customary for the groom's family to pay for the party, but it can be put on by another relative or by the bride's family.

To begin with plan to have a table of hors d'oeuvres and drinks available before the dinner so that members of the wedding can mingle and get to know each other.

Your rehearsal dinner should have a different style and menu than your wedding. For instance, if your wedding is a formal sit-down dinner, then plan a rehearsal dinner that is more casual, such as a buffet. Some wedding couples use a theme for their rehearsal dinner.

You don't have to send out invitations for your rehearsal dinner, but if you have time – it's a good idea. The invitation will tell people where and when the rehearsal will be held and where and when the dinner will take place. You can include directions and a map.



You should invite all those who will take part in the wedding ceremony to the rehearsal dinner. Spouses or dates of all adult attendants should be invited.

Parents and grandparents of the bride and groom should be invited. You can also invite other family members who are not part of the ceremony and out-of-town guests to join your rehearsal dinner.

## When the big day finally arrives

### **What your ceremony will be like...**

When it comes to planning ceremonies, today's wedding couples are determined to put their own special imprint on the vows, the music and every word spoken during the service.

### **Here are some of the main elements to decide:**

**A Special Person to Preside over the Ceremony** – You may wish to have a minister, rabbi or clergyperson from your faith preside at your wedding. Perhaps a friend of the family or a relative can do so as well. Be sure that the person you choose knows where the location will be for the wedding and that that person is willing to do the ceremony there. Be sure to include the presiding person in invitations to the rehearsal dinner and wedding itself. Some clergy people want the bride and groom to have counseling sessions with them before the wedding.

**Words to Say Your Vows By** – Writing your own vows and doing readings of poetry, prose or Scripture are among the ways of creating a special moment during your ceremony. Before you do all this, be sure to check out the many books or sites published on ceremonies for saying "I do." You may even wish to write your own romantic poetry to recite at the altar. Be sure to check out your choices with the person who will be performing your ceremony. And practice, practice, practice before you get to the big day.

**Theme Weddings** – The truth is that almost every wedding has a theme these days. Sometimes it's the simplest of ideas like decorating with cones, acorns and woody branches. Modern couples also borrow music and special clothing from their ethnic heritage for their ceremony: Scottish, Irish, Chinese or Hawaiian, for example. There are also Renaissance, seaside and Old West-style weddings. Flowers can be planned as well to fit these themes and so can your reception menu.

**The Unity Candle Ceremony** – This is a ceremony that has become common in many weddings. Couples use two lit taper candles to light one large pillar candle that can even be engraved with your names and the date. Your parents can be involved in lighting the two original candles. Children can also join in the ceremony.

**Flowers & Decorations** – If you choose a florist located in the area near your ceremony site, he or she can give you advice about what flowers and decorations are permitted there and ideas on creative ways to decorate. Remember, the bigger the site, the more flowers you will need.

**Grand Entrances for the Bride** – You'll want to have an aisle-runner for the bridesmaids and bride to walk on. Perhaps you'll want it sprinkled with rose petals by a flower girl.

**Music for the Ceremony** – The music should start about a half hour before the ceremony, usually instrumentals to set the mood, with a solo sung just after the mother of the bride is seated. This lets people know the processional is about to start. The processional will begin usually with an instrumental.

Once the attendants have reached the altar, music which announces the arrival of the bride is played, commanding everyone's attention as you walk down the aisle. The guests should stand as the bride enters with her father. This selection can be traditional or contemporary and either an instrumental or a solo. One or two songs may be played during the ceremony – any more would be too many. Finally there is the recessional, which should be more upbeat and a slightly quicker tempo.

#### **What your reception will be like...**

The ceremony is over and it was glorious. Now the celebrating and the feasting begins. From music to menu to toasts, you need to do some advance planning as well.

**Receiving Line** – Receiving lines are becoming less popular at today's less formal weddings. But having a receiving line guarantees that the bride and groom, their attendants and families can personally welcome the guests and thank them for coming. On the receiving line everyone gets a quick handshake or a kiss and a thank you.

Some couples choose to hold a receiving line right after the ceremony. Others wait until the start of the reception. The line can be positioned near the entrance of the banquet room. Either way, here's what you need to know if you're planning to have a receiving line.

A receiving line can be as big or as small as you like. Generally, the parents and the bride and groom should take part. The attendants may also participate.

But the larger the receiving line, the more difficult it becomes.

Traditionally, members of the receiving line stand in the following order: bride's mother, bride's father, groom's mother, groom's father, bride, groom, maid of honor and, finally, the bridesmaids. If either member of the happy couple has any children, they can stand wherever they feel most comfortable. If either of the couple's parents are remarried, it's up to the bride and groom to decide who stands in the receiving line.

**Party Favors** – Favors for your wedding guests are endless and far more imaginative than they were in the past. Here's just a sampling: Small boxes of chocolates; personalized mini-samples of tea bags or coffee; tiny candles shaped like wedding cakes; scented bath salts in heart-shaped bottles; packets of wildflower seeds; small woodcuts or watercolors of the church where the wedding took place; golf balls and/or golf tees imprinted with the names of the bride and groom (perfect for the couple getting married at a golf course). You can probably think of thousands of more ideas.

**The Wedding Menu** – Wedding feasts go back to the beginning of time. Spectacular food gives pleasure to the guests and the wedding party as well.

We have talked about menu planning before in this planner, but here is some more information.

Remember that it is the quality of the cuisine at your wedding that counts, not the number of different types of hors d'oeuvres or buffet dishes or courses. But of course, there should be enough for everyone to eat.

The main types of reception are the brunch, lunch, late afternoon reception and dinner. **Brunch** can begin with light hors d'oeuvres and champagne, followed by Eggs Benedict, perhaps. For **lunch**, you can have a buffet of salads and cold turkey and ham, depending on the weather, followed by the entrée and then perhaps fruit to go with the wedding cake. For a late **afternoon** event, start with hors d'oeuvres and then have buffet tables with salads and entrees. For a **dinner**, three courses are usual: Soup or salad, a second course entrée and then wedding cake with ice cream. Coffee and tea are served at the end of the meal.

**Decorations & Flowers** – Table decorations are a necessity and can include candles or unique containers, such as porcelain cachepots, colored glass bottles, unique pieces of pottery, all holding beautiful flowers.

Don't make your table too busy. Make the arrangements low or high enough that the guests can see you on the dance floor and still talk to one another.

For a simpler look, still life fruit bowls studded with stephanotis blooms make beautiful centerpieces. Try twining small pieces of fragrant flowering vine in and around each place setting for added texture and softness.

Colored linens that compliment the colors worn by the wedding party are a necessity. Many brides choose to cover the standard chairs in the dining room with drapes tied with magnificent ribbons.

**The Seating Arrangements** – If you have a buffet, you should at the least have a specific table assigned to each guest. People feel more comfortable when they know where they're sitting.

**Sometimes the wedding party is seated at a long head table** – bride and groom in the center, flanked by their attendants. But brides and grooms often feel uncomfortable putting themselves, and their wedding party, on display while they eat. So often the bridal party is seated at round reception tables, together with their dates – or even scattered throughout the room among the guests. In general, the bride and groom spend very little time eating anyway and lots of time visiting guests at their tables or dancing.

**Toasts** – At more formal weddings, the toasting begins after lunch or dinner is served. You may need to have a microphone for the toasting. The best man should be the toastmaster. Parents, grandparents and sisters and brothers can also make toasts. The best man starts, followed by the groom toasting the bride, the bride toasting the groom and the bride's father toasting the couple and so forth. When the bride is being toasted, she remains seated and the groom stands, when they are toasted as a couple, they both remain seated.

**The Wedding Cake** – Today's wedding cakes have gone way beyond white frosting and pink sugar roses. If you're interested in something distinctive for your cake, seek bakery referrals from family and friends. You might even wish to compile a cake photo file.

A myriad of flavors are available to you in between the standard vanilla and chocolate; carrot cake and mocha praline are popular, as are chocolate mousse and raspberry fillings. You can trim your cake with unusual frills – acorns, ribbons, lace, berries and ribbons. Be whimsical: Add your wedding colors to the cake or decorate it to look like the bride's dress.

A cake can have as many tiers as you wish, although three or four is about average. The top tier is often kept intact and frozen so the bride and groom can eat it on their first wedding anniversary.

Etiquette says that generally guests are expected to stay at the reception until the bride and groom cut the cake. So as a courtesy, try not to delay the cake-cutting for hours, or you might find your guests slipping away.

A silver, decorated cake knife is usually used to cut the cake. The bride, standing at the groom's left cuts the first piece with the groom helping her. They then feed each other a tiny piece of cake. After that the cake is cut for the guests.



**Music & Dancing** – Reception music can be any of a variety of types, depending on the mood you want set at a particular time. You may want something a little softer for the first hour during the receiving line or cocktails, and then have the sound pick up later on. Or maybe you prefer only violins, with no dancing. The musical presentation may range from an individual like a pianist, to a small combo of mixed instruments.

You may opt for a DJ and recorded music. Recorded music is becoming more popular today than ever before. The equipment and the people operating it have gotten much more professional. With the cost of live music so high, it's an economical alternative.

You may find musicians by asking friends or relatives, caterers, wedding consultants, your clergyman, or by checking the yellow pages or musicians' union in your area. We are happy to assist you with suggestions.

**We would love the opportunity to assist you in making your day the special day you've always dreamed of!**

Wedding Partners:

The Events Centre at Bear Creek has a complete list of contacts which will step you through the wedding planning process. Please contact us for this list which ranges from decorators to photographers and everything else you can imagine.

**Events Centre at Bear Creek Contact**

(780) 538-3393

events@bearcreekgolfclub.ca