

an Honest Bride

Julia Smith gives us an open, honest & humorous account of planning her big day!

As a bride-to-be who's been covertly planning her wedding for years – and openly for the last 14 months – I'll tell you a secret: proposals (especially those made in Paris) are very romantic. Planning an all-singing, all-dancing real-life wedding ceremony – with all the trimmings from canapés and a string quartet through to a four-tier cake and favours (etc!) – is not.

It's the happiest time of your life, but it's also actually a sort of nightmare (albeit a lovely one!).

I now know why the groom fights back the tears as his betrothed advances down the aisle. It's not, as I previously imagined, emotion at the radiant beauty of his bride. It's actually relief that he has survived the planning process, from cars (a vintage Rolls or a white Austin "Princess"?), to flowers (only the palest antique rose will do!), to the bride herself (stressed and on a diet!). I don't like the term "Bridezilla" and I didn't want the terrified groom scenario to be the reality on my wedding day. Accordingly, I have approached wedding planning with a mixture of enthusiasm and humility. The path to marital bliss can still be weird and wonderful, though!

Choosing my wedding dress was easy (blush satin couture by Alan Hannah!). Reigning in my fabulous mother – now that was harder. When compiling the "official wedding budget", my mum's outfit allowance was double mine. This I can cope with, but suggesting she wears a long ivory gown on the big day is taking it too far!

Dad is less enthusiastic. I'm a daddy's girl and only child and, although my fiancé Alan is well-liked, dad initially pretended not to hear him ask for permission to propose!

After he realised he was gaining a son rather than losing a daughter, he gave in and found himself a project (as Dads do). We now have a collection of 13 different top hats lovingly purchased from eBay – and only four ushers to wear them.

I was concerned that the lesser-spotted "Bridesmaidzilla", may also rear her tiara-clad head. However, I was kind to my bridesmaids (who have all been perfect!) in my choice of dresses for fear of finding myself in my own little-Bo-peep outfit in the near future. The Bo-peep scenario is likely, since 2009 was a popular year for proposals so 2010 is a wedding-a-weekend sort of a year. While my fellow brides have been an invaluable source of support, there has also been a healthy level of competitiveness. Who would bag the August bank holiday weekend? Who would be at the top of the waiting list for the new lace Jimmy Choos?

My tipping point came when my best friend asked if I minded if she scheduled her destination wedding the week before mine. Um, just a little.

Thankfully, after realising she would miss my wedding due to her honeymoon, I won't be forced to knock some sense into her with a rude giant inflatable (although she may still want me bring it along to the hen do!). The cast of thousands is hard to please but on the day and until death do us part, only two people really matter, and that's my groom and I. Our guests will be having too much fun at our venue, to notice any minor glitches and after the wedding we'll be too busy honeymooning at the other side of the world to care!

I plan to enjoy the rest of the planning process with my loved ones. The only tears that I want to see from my husband-to-be on our big day are tears of joy!

ABOUT THE WRITER

Julia writes a daily blog at www.britbride.com

follow her progress as she fine-tunes the details of her big day and shapes up in time for her wedding this October.

Remember to check next issue for an update!

