The Planners

What started as a "wouldn't that be fun" idea turned into reality when 10 industry experts — from a makeup artist to a cake designer — gave up a free evening on short notice to play dress up — something they rarely get to do — and talk shop. The Fort Worth Club was filled with tulle and chatter of upcoming events as the women slipped into voluminous gowns and accessories provided by Bliss Bridal Salon. Hair was primped and lashes curled for this *Vanity Fair*-style production. It was definitely an "I feel pretty" moment for these hard-working pros, whose workdays often stretch into late nights, and a sartorial do-over for some, whose sense of style has changed since they said their vows. There's no doubt that all brides, even pretend ones, want to have fun. But we wanted to hear what advice they had for anyone who plans to say "I do." They suggest putting down your cellphone camera to be present in the moment and staying true to your personal vision, among other things. It's all sage advice from savvy professionals. Learn more about them on the next few pages.

Photo by Tracy Autem & Lightly Photography

Makeup by Jennifer Trotter, Lip Service Makeup

Hair by Erin Blair, Erin Blair Makeup and Hair Design



Wendy Holsomback
Bliss Bridal Salon
817-332-4696 or blissfw.com

Skills Create experiences and help brides find their wedding gown

Been there, done that Married for five years to J.T., who's also her business partner. "We had an outdoor ceremony and reception with close family and friends. I wore a silk summer gown from one of our London designers. I knew it was the one the moment I saw it."

The fantasy photo "I wanted to wear something unique that was also something unexpected for me. I love to throw curveballs when it comes to fashion."

Pro tips "Trust your vendors and their advice. If anyone knows this industry better, it's the ones that live and breathe it."

Tracy Autem
Tracy Autem Photography
& Lightly Photography
817-810-9282 or tracyautem.com

Skills Wedding and portrait photography

Been there, done that Tracy and J.W. have been married five years. "We had an intimate ceremony on St. John at the Annaberg sugar mill ruins. We were married at 10 a.m. and on the beach by noon; very simple yet beautiful. I wore a simple, sleek gown by Winnie Couture with a plunging back, very 1920s, purchased at Bliss Bridal, and my Nannie's brooch was part of my bouquet."



The fantasy photo "The gown is everything that my wedding dress wasn't: an unusual blush color, classic lines, jeweled waist and a voluminous skirt. I love the drama of a big ball gown, and that would have never felt right for my destination wedding. It makes me feel fashion forward and fun."

Pro tips "When starting to plan, decide what is important to you and deal with those parts first. This is where you will spend more money and, by planning early, you will be able to have the wedding professionals you truly want. And pick a photographer whose work you love, but make sure you like them, too. On your wedding day, you will spend more time with your photographer than almost anyone else."



Sarabeth Quattlebaum
Sarabeth Events
214-207-6081 or
sarabethevents.com

Skills Wedding planner and coordinator

Been there, done that "Married for eight years, I was a glove-wearing, very traditional bride and not so fun. I would do things very different today!"

The fantasy photo "What I'm wearing is very much the style of Sarabeth Events: a little nod to the glamour and traditional elements of the past but allowing the bride to put her own signature style on her wedding. I'm holding a vintage etiquette book, which I collect. They're hilarious reads about the strict traditions of the past."

Pro tips "Give your guests something to talk about. The fun and the experience is what they'll remember most. And trust the vendor team you've hired to achieve this."

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Meghan DeFreeuw
The Fort Worth Club
817-336-7211 or fortworthclub.com

Skills Director of catering and special events

The fantasy photo "I chose my gown because it is fun and frilly! I love the ruching and layering and all the movement of the fabric. It's both elegant and unique, and it blends modern with traditional. How much more can you ask for in one gown?"

Pro tips "Ask for help! Do not try to go through this process alone. There are so many experts in the industry that can offer advice, help and guidance. This may be your first wedding, but there are professionals out there who do this every day and can help make the entire process fun and stress-free."

Adrianne Porcelli
Turquoise Video Productions
817-235-9801 or tvideoproductions.com

Skills Wedding videography and films; she works with her husband, Aytek Kamacioglu.

Been there, done that Married seven years, the couple opted for a small December destination wedding in Antigua. "I had bright pink details on my hip-hugging dress, and we were all barefoot on the beach. Then, 20 days later, we had a fun reception at the Modern Art Museum in Fort Worth to celebrate with friends and family who could not attend the beach wedding."

The fantasy photo "This gown really highlights my assets and hides my flaws. I'm feminine and not too serious, so the lace and little flower details are fun and cute. I love the "belt" that was included on the dress; it accents my small waist!"

Pro tips "When shopping for a dress, bring an honest friend. They will tell you if it looks good on you or not. And feel comfortable; you'll be wearing this gown for at least six hours. And don't leave the video out of your budget. Remember it's not about just the wedding itself, it's about documenting a huge milestone in your life that your family and future family will cherish forever."





Jennifer Trotter
Lip Service Professional Makeup Artistry
972-345-0655 or lipservicemakeup.com

Skills Makeup artist specializing in weddings, lessons, headshots, boudoir, print, TV and film. "My signature is red lips. I wear them almost daily in real life."

Been there, done that "When I got married in Fort Worth 15 years ago, I chose a satin ball gown with long sleeves (it was December) that fit perfectly. It was gorgeous. I'm currently divorced but have a serious boyfriend and hope to walk down the aisle again someday!"

The fantasy photo "I didn't choose my dress; Wendy at Bliss chose it for me. She said it just looked like 'me.' As it turns out, she was right! My taste runs toward simple styles, and I typically wear very fitted clothing, since I'm a curvy hourglass. During the shoot, I gained a new nickname: Jessica Rabbit."

Pro tips "Don't save all the glamour, primping and lingerie for your wedding. There's no shame in sweatpants and ponytails on occasion, but getting glammed up on a Friday for no reason or a well-timed lingerie surprise for your hubby will make him feel like the luckiest guy around. When you look good, you feel good, and nothing is sexier than that."



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Tami Winn
Tami Winn Events
817-589-2393 or tamiwinn.com

Skills Event planner and floral designer

Been there, done that "I've been married for 14 years. We had a country-club wedding with about 150 guests. I used the same ceremony and reception venues as my sister, and we also had our bridal portraits done at the same location, even though we were married four years apart! I also did all of my own flowers with the help of one of my best friends, who I had met working my first job in a flower shop. Even though I was a floral designer, I would never do that again!"

The fantasy photo "This gown suits me inside and out: It has a traditional yet playful aspect. The bodice is fitted, with a beautiful sweetheart neckline, yet the full skirt fades to a soft blush pink, which just happens to be my fave color."

Pro tips "Make a list of your must-have wedding ideas/items so your vendors know what's most important. Having a great connection with them also ensures you will have an amazing day."

Sarah Rizy
Lightly Photography
817-810-9282 or lightlyphoto.com

Skills Lead associate photographer and studio manager

The fantasy photo "I'm single and chose the dress I wore because I have always envisioned wearing lace. I am fairly modest, so I wanted something with straps or covering the shoulders."

Pro tips "Have an unplugged wedding, and encourage the guests to put their cellphones and iPads away. I've tried to photograph a parent's reaction during their child's first dance or the father-daughter dance, and they have a phone in front of their face worried about getting a picture. Enjoy and live in the moment."



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Jamie Holder
Creme de la Creme Catering
817-492-8888 or cremedelacremecatering.com

Skills Cake chick extraordinaire

Been there, done that "Matt and I have been married for 12 years. We had a gorgeous wedding at The Fort Worth Club. It was a total blast."

The fantasy photo "My wedding dress was a simple A-line, off-the-shoulder design. For the photo, my gown is tulle heaven! I love all of the romantic fluff and the sparkle, plus the bodice flatters my waist and de-emphasizes my hips."

Pro tips "Have an overall vision for your wedding, but be willing to make changes and adjustments. Most of all, your wedding should reflect your own personal style and not anyone else's."



Lucia Bitnar
Foster Blue & Co.
214-793-2141 or fosterblue.com

Skills Wedding and event planner

Been there, done that "I've been married for 31 years to my love, my soul mate, the father of my children and my best friend. We got married at the courthouse on St. Patrick's Day with only a small gathering of loved ones. I wore a silk two-piece dress with a hat, and my grandmother brought me her hankie to have and carry."

The fantasy photo "This dress made me feel so glamorous. I felt like the very center of attention, and I am usually the one in the background. My prop is appropriate, as I am very blessed that I get to help spread love around the world."

Pro tips "Create a wedding that allows you and your guests to feel, taste, see and partake in the fellowship of your celebration. Show your family and guests who you are through the details of the day. Laugh together, pray together, cry together and continue to grow together."