

Getting hitched, Victorian Style

Wedding ceremonies are different depending on the preferences and fortunes of those involved. There are no specific directions to follow. However, those that will be married by ministers should first study the form of weddings their church follows.

The Episcopalians have their "Book of Common Prayer", the Methodists have their "Book of Discipline" and the Catholics have certain rituals. The wedding rehearsal is normally made in private but it is required if the couples will be wed by a magistrate. The most number of ceremonies occur in Catholic and Episcopal weddings but these are normally the most impressive.

The Victorian Wedding

ATTIRE: Victorian weddings are filled with ruffles, bows and lace. Guests should consider wearing an antique dress a lace cap or headpiece, which can be purchased from the ladies at Greystone Gardens. For a morning wedding, the men should wear a morning dress and a tailcoat for an evening wedding. A top hat is also a nice option.

MENU: A formal Victorian wedding should follow the guidelines for a traditional formal wedding. For an informal wedding, the ideal setting is the Sunday tea dance with scones, petit fours filled with fresh fruit. The movie The Age of Innocence should be watched for inspiration.

INVITATIONS: The invitation of a formal Victorian wedding should have an attractive embossed border on the edge. The text should be formal or if possible should be engraved. Invitations can also carry the couple's favorite Victorian love poem.

FAVORS: A cracker popular during holiday time is good option for a Victorian wedding. These things were invented during the Victorian era and snap when opened. These can be filled with a trinket based on personality and budget. A folding fan printed with a nice poem and wedding date can be used in a daytime wedding.

FLOWERS: The flowers play a very important role in a Victorian wedding. A tussy mussy is a good option. The flower girls can carry pomanders.

PROPER ETTIQUETTE IN A VICTORIAN WEDDING

Weddings regardless if its Victorian or not follow a certain etiquette in order to make the ceremony flow seamlessly.

- Bridesmaids and groomsmen should perform certain responsibilities in the ceremony if the wedding is not strictly private.

- The bride should be older than her bridesmaids and their outfits should match.

However, the wedding gown should obviously look more expensive but the dresses of the bridesmaids can have more ornaments. The dresses should be composed of graceful, light material. The flowers should serve as the principal decoration.

- The wedding gown should exude simplicity but can be worn with few ornaments or jewelry, which come from the parents or bridegroom. The garland and veil should be the most eye-catching in the dress.

- The bridesmaids should assist the bride in wearing her wedding gown and receiving guests. They should also stand at her left side during the ceremony. The bouquet and gloves should be held by the first bridesmaid.

- The placing of the bridesmaids should not be much of a concern but those conscious with symmetry should consider putting the tallest to the smallest from the couple. However, any order should suffice. A bridesmaid can be paired with a groomsman who has the same height.

- The groomsmen are primarily designated to receive the clergyman, lead him to the couple that will be married and stand in the right side of the bridegroom during the ceremony.

CEREMONY IN CHURCH

The etiquette in a Victorian church wedding sees the bride entering from the left side with her father followed by the bridesmaids or more common, as single bridesmaid. The groom enters from the right and is trailed by his attendants. Behind are the parents, while the attendants stand from either side.

The bride should make sure that her glove can be easily removed, while the groom should be certain that ring is placed where he can easily find it to avoid being embarrassed or delaying the ceremony.

ETTIQUETTE IN EXITING THE CHURCH

The newly-married couple holds each others arm when they depart from the church. A reception can be held at home for around two hours attended by intimate friends. A short breakfast can be held before the couple can embark on their bridal tour.