

The Daily
Herald

Wedding Special

May 29, 2024



The journey to 'I do'

There are so many moving parts to consider on the journey to "I do". Our annual Wedding Special, published in the run-up to wedding season, is all about showcasing the best in local offerings, as well as insight, inspiration, and a bit of fun along the way.

Enjoy the read!

Dar & Dan



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Unveiling this year's wedding trends

As we step into this year's exchanging-of-vows season, the world of weddings continues to evolve with innovative trends that prioritise personal connections, unique expressions of love, and memorable experiences. From intimate moments to stylish details, here are the top wedding trends experts expect to see more of this year.

Quality time before the wedding

Contrary to traditional beliefs, seeing your significant other before the ceremony is becoming increasingly popular. Couples are finding meaningful ways to spend quality time together on their wedding day. Some choose to meet for breakfast, sharing a quiet moment to set intentions and savour the calm before the festivities. Others opt for getting ready together, surprising their wedding party with a joint "first look".

The year of the mini

The year 2024 is all about embracing all things mini. From bouquets to cakes and after-party dresses, this trend is about embracing charm and simplicity. Mini dresses are making a bold statement for brides seeking a modern twist. For those not inclined towards a mini dress, consider having the wedding party carry petite bouquets or serving guests personalized mini pies instead of traditional cake slices.

Candid cameras

Wedding photography is shifting towards a more documentary style, capturing candid moments alongside traditional posed pictures. These authentic shots reflect the true energy and emotions of the day. Couples are also encouraging guests to participate in capturing these moments by providing disposable and/or Polaroid cameras. This approach results in a diverse collection of images, allowing the couple to relive their wedding through the eyes of their loved ones.

Digital guest books

The traditional guest book is evolving into a digital experience in 2024. Digital guest books offer an immersive way for couples to relive their special day. Guests can leave heartfelt photos, engaging videos, and touching audio messages, creating a rich tapestry of memories. This innovative approach also ensures these memories are preserved in a more dynamic and lasting format.

Restaurant receptions

Gone are the days when restaurants were only considered for rehearsal dinners. In 2024, hosting the main reception in your favourite restaurant is trending. This setting offers a cosy and intimate atmosphere, as a beloved restaurant can provide a familiar and beloved backdrop for celebrating love with family and friends.

Meaningful and non-formal menus

Wedding menus are becoming more personal and less formal. Instead of generic dishes, couples are incorporating family recipes, significant meals from notable dates, or dishes that celebrate their heritage.

Wedding crests

Branding is taking on a new, but old, form with custom wedding crests. Instead of the traditional monogram, couples are designing unique emblems or crests to represent their union. These signature logos are used throughout the event, adding a personalised and cohesive element to the wedding decor.

Champagne towers

What's old is once again new with the resurgence of Champagne towers. These elegant displays bring a touch of glamour and excitement to the reception – and add plenty of Bridgerton vibes!

More outfit changes

The trend of multiple outfit changes is gaining momentum. Brides are now opting for a second, and even a third outfit change during the wedding day. Transitioning from the ceremony to cocktail hour, and then to the after-party; these outfit changes allow brides to showcase different styles throughout their happy day.



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SAY 'I DO' TO INDULGENCE

Looking to celebrate love with indulgence and serenity? Look no further than Indulgence by the Sea, the #1 Spa in St. Maarten, where luxurious experiences are crafted just for you. Located within the breath-taking Divi Little Bay Resort – one of the island's premier wedding and honeymoon destinations – Indulgence offers a seamless experience. It's where celebration and rejuvenation meet, making your special day effortlessly perfect.

This wedding season, Indulgence is thrilled to reintroduce their popular local pricing special, offering nearly 50% off on select packages for local residents.



The following select wedding packages are designed to pamper you and your loved ones, ensuring your wedding experience is nothing short of magical.

Mind, Body & Soul Packages

Rejuvenate your entire being with the relaxing Mind, Body & Soul Packages: 50 minutes for \$100 / NAF. 100 80 minutes for \$145 / NAF. 145

These packages include a luxurious massage, a rejuvenating facial, or an invigorating body exfoliation and wrap, tailored to your preference – and leaving you feeling renewed and radiant.

Lover's Indulgence

Embrace pure romantic bliss with the Lover's Indulgence package: 3 hours for \$550 per couple / NAF. 550 per couple for locals

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cures. It's truly heaven on earth.

Honeymoon Indulgence

Extend the magic of your wedding with the Honeymoon Indulgence: 2 hours for \$295 per couple / NAF. 295 per couple for locals

This package begins with a luscious body polish to exfoliate and moisturize your skin. Follow up with Indulgence's most popular custom deluxe massage enhanced with hot stones, designed to melt away any remaining stress.

Secure these special promotions with the spa's gift cards, which expire within six months for your convenience.

Indulgence by the Sea is located on Little Bay Road at Divi Little Bay Beach Resort and is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00am till 6:00pm. Reservations are highly recommended to secure your spot. For reservations or more information, contact the spa by calling +1 (721) 542-9024, sending an email to info@spastmaarten.com, or a message on Facebook ([indulgencebythesea](https://www.facebook.com/indulgencebythesea)) or Instagram ([@Indulgence_spas](https://www.instagram.com/indulgence_spas)).

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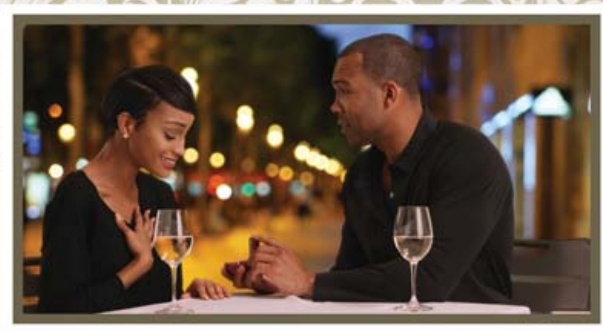


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Executing the perfect wedding day or weekend is all about organization, details, style, taste level, and logistics.

Let WIB Personal Loans help you successfully manage your expectations and budget, from the beginning to the end.

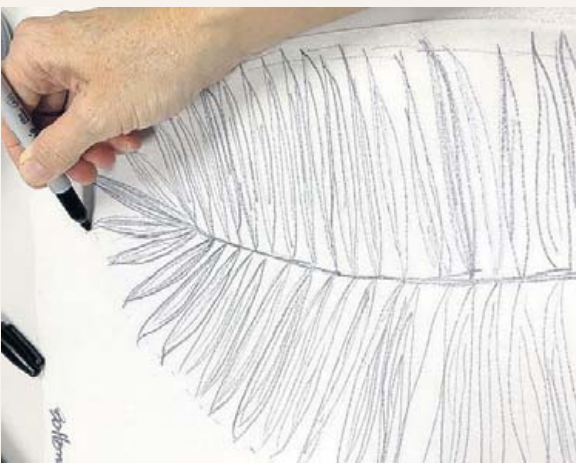


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Truly artistic centrepieces

Simply Zee Best!

Wedding cakes are truly artistic and customisable centrepieces. Along with her team at Zee Best, Chef Kara Sanchez Lapierre continues to offer a stunning variety of the latest trends and classic favourites with an inspiring combination of both passion and skill. Aim for nothing less when it comes to the Big Day!

While every wedding is truly different, painted and textured or embossed cakes are definitely gaining popularity, Kara shares. The cake itself is becoming the canvas. In general, there's a minimal use of flowers with these styles. On the other hand, some clients want an abundance of flowers. Some modern cakes are avant-garde, and very structural. Many are still white, but you also see lots of fun colours, such as fuchsia, pink, and orange. Even black cakes are becoming popular, with colour being another way to push boundaries.

Two more unique styles also come to mind: the use

of wafer-paper, and the Lambeth technique. With a soft-spot for making flowers, wafer-paper flowers are one of Kara's specialities. The intricate process of creating these flowers involves cutting and painting each individual petal out of delicately thin sheets, and attaching them to wire and buds. The same material can be used to make a variety of unique shapes, allowing for a distinct sculptural aspect.

The Lambeth technique, which Kara has down pat, is surging in popularity worldwide – leaning into old-world charm with multiple styles of Victorian piping, such as mini rosettes, pearls, different sized shells, and fleur de lis. The modern version of this vintage style sometimes incorporates different colours.

Two tips from Chef Kara for making the most of working with a professional baker and decorator: Timing is everything, reach out preferably when the venue has been organised. Three

months in advance is ideal, one month is the minimum.

Second, when it comes to serving most guests at large weddings, it's a good idea to have decorated sheet-cakes, which complement a smaller tiered cake – the one that the

couple cuts together and encompasses the “wow” factor. This option is better for serving, as well as timing and transport, and it also saves the wedded couple money – surely a welcome factor for the newly-weds.




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Bring romance and elegance to any wedding celebration, with Flowers R Us

Flowers R Us, the island's favourite flower shop, according to our latest Best Of survey, is not limited to intimate special occasions, but also offers a whole range of fresh-cut artistry, especially made for weddings – from the smallest details to grand displays. Flowers R Us offers everything from bouquets, to corsages, to bridal- and bridesmaids' bouquets, centrepieces, and stunning floral arches!

"As professionals for over 10 years, we have seen styles come and go. But what's one element that will never go out of fashion? Gorgeous floral arrangements!

Flowers have a timeless beauty that brings romance and elegance to any wedding celebration," says the Flowers R Us team. "The floral designers we work with are continuously experimenting with unique, creative designs."

We asked about any insights into trends, or recommendations that the team may have, to serve as inspiration for couples looking to tie the knot this wedding season. "Brides are asking for loose, wildflower-inspired arrangements in natural hues!" Sounds like a dream. Especially in line with the island serving as a wedding destination, as well as for local couples that simply want to

make the most of our surroundings, tropical flowers are always in demand, setting the scene of Caribbean paradise.

While two days in advance are technically a possibility for floral orders that are simple, and in traditional colours, weddings are grander affairs that call for personalisation and preparation. In order to have a proper consultation, personalise and plan so that every detail is exactly what you envision, it is advised to contact Flowers R Us at least a month ahead of the big day.

Open weekdays from 9:00am to 5:00pm and from 10:00am to 5:00pm on Saturdays, Flowers R Us offers a wide selection of flowers and custom floral arrangements to fit any occasion or mood. Ask about their floral or fruit basket, and make festive occasions extra special with teddy bears, chocolate and balloons. Flower lovers will also love their orchid plants, classic and long-lasting beauties. The boutique flower shop is now located within the business complex of Carrefour Bush Road, between Vision Center and Subway.



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Solidifying long Mr. & Mrs.



Julian Mendonca and Francis Pourier tied the knot this past November, officially sealing the deal on their longstanding, loving relationship. Friends and family flew in from Atlanta, New York, Guyana and Canada to join the pair in celebrating their nuptials, and share in their joyous occasion.

On our second date, I introduced him to fine dining at Le Moulin Fou, and made a point of paying for this date. He loved this dinner. I remember ordering a goat cheese salad, and while he said he didn't eat that, he tried it and has loved it since then. Soon after, I invited him to a Thanksgiving lunch at my home. He had also said that he didn't like turkey, but after tasting my baked turkey, he loved it.

In a few days, the happily married newly-weds will embark on the next phase of the celebration – doing what they love, which is travelling the world. The two will be honeymooning in Italy, savouring all there is to experience in the romantic destination, together as husband and wife.

We continued spending time together, going to the movies and to the beach. Eventually, we started travelling together.

Here in her own words, Francis Pourier retells the Mendonca Love Story, and the journey the two have had to becoming Mr. & Mrs. Mendonca.

We've had challenges over the years when it comes to differences in our views, but with communication and commitment, our love and bond has only strengthened over time.

How did you meet and how long have you been together?

Tell us about the proposal. Was it discussed, or a surprise?

He came to do a job at my work place. He does digital security. That day, he caught my attention, and we kept looking at each other. We talked and he kept me amazed, telling me all about his work. After that, we didn't see each other until about four years later when we met again on a Saturday afternoon. That day we exchanged numbers, and he took my phone and scheduled dates with him – recurring every Saturday – on my digital calendar.

The proposal wasn't discussed, but I knew it was coming. I remember making sure to keep my nails nice and neat for the occasion. On April 12, 2017, he proposed at Sale and Pepe. He asked me to be his wife, and I of course said yes!

How did your relationship progress, and when did you decide to get married?

We set a date, but Hurricane Irma struck that same year, and we had to put it off. Then Covid-19 hit, so we ended up sending out our "save the date" cards to family and friends five years after he popped the question, when things started getting back to normal.

We had our first date at Red Piano. Julian came to pick me up in his old jeep, without airco. That night was fun. We talked and shared our views, while having a pleasant time. We got to know more about each other, but it also turned into a short date because of bad weather.

How was the wedding experience?

We had the most beautiful wedding. The isle was elegantly lined with flowers on both sides, and we had a lovely flower arch, made by Flowers by Flores. The ceremony was held at Sonesta Ocean Point Resort, where we had a wonderful ocean view, with some planes landing in the backdrop. Memories were captured by photographer Anthony, from LNA Glamour Photo.

We had a beautiful Sweetheart Table, decorated with flowers, candles, and green and white drapes. My mother, the bridesmaids and my maid-of-honour all looked gorgeous – my mother in her sage green dress, the bridesmaids all in different style green dresses, and the maid of honour in a stand-out rose-gold dress.

As fun additions, we had small local-rum bottles donning the guests' names used for the seating chart, which also served as souvenirs. We also had 360° video booths, and the guests really had fun with that.

One person from each table

g-standing love: Mendonca

shared a small speech or word of encouragement, and they were all so sentimental and loving.

A highlight was the Hora Loca, where we all danced, and had the best time, with DJ Kembe. We also had entertainment from a French Side dance group, Anna Pasquier, and they performed with beautiful costumes. The waitresses shared out shots during the Hora Loca, with our personalised shot glasses. We also had LED bracelets, personalised glow sticks, and confetti poppers. We all really enjoyed it.

How did you pick the venue, the dress, the cake? Did you have a wedding planner?

I did have a wedding planner, Jelani from The Box. My maid-of-honour also helped me to plan the wedding, over the span of nine months, more or less. They did an amazing job organising the venue, décor, and all the small details. Sonesta Ocean Point Resort was the third venue we visited, and I loved it so much that I signed up right away.

The dress was bought in Miami. I was at a salon in Miracle Mile one day and saw a bridal store nearby. I went to check it out, and fell in love with one of the dresses instantly. Even my son saw how in love I was with the dress. I set a date to come back with my bridesmaids and when I did so months later, I tried on several dresses, but still chose the first one that I had fallen in love with.

We had a beautiful six-tier cake, intricately decorated by Sarah, with handmade flowers and petals. We have half a tier saved, for us to enjoy on our one-year anniversary. We had vanilla with guava filling, and guests were treated to tres leches and caramel coconut flan.

What was your most memorable moment of the Big Day?

The most memorable moment was definitely walking down the aisle with my mother and my son. I had a mix of emotions. That moment was filled with joy and love, my tears expressing overwhelming happiness and how proud I felt to finally marry the man I love and become Mrs. Mendonca.

Julian saw me cry, but then made me smile for the rest of the ceremony. I felt so much gratitude seeing all my family and friends sharing our special day with us.

How have you been enjoying married life? Has much changed?

Nothing has changed, we lived together for about 10 years, so this was about blessing and legalising our union. For me, it added to the feeling of security, stability and

pride, as well as the joy of building a life together with someone I love. The only thing that changed was being 50 thousand dollars poorer after our beautiful wedding. However, we enjoyed and loved every single moment.

We're continuing to work and grow together, and do things we both enjoy, such as travelling the world. In June, we'll be traveling to Italy where we'll visit Rome, Naples, Tuscany and Venice. We're looking forward to all there is to enjoy in Italy, including the art, wine and food.

Any advice for couples looking to get married soon?

Concerning the wedding; start planning as early as possible, I would recommend a year in advance. Find a wedding planner – they really help to get the vendors you need. Get at least three quotes from different vendors; and try sticking to your budget (I was off-budget). Another note is to take the family and bridesmaid pictures before the ceremony. I scheduled it for after the ceremony, but it had gotten dark, and we couldn't get the ocean in the background.

Concerning the relationship; communication is the most important thing of all. Make it a habit to discuss small issues immediately, don't save it for later. During an argument, never talk about divorce. Before you were married you would have never said that, so don't send such a message into the universe.

Keep the romance alive, always express love to each other, and continue to pamper each other and spend time together doing things you both enjoy. Be patient and flexible. Support each other during tough times and celebrate successes together.



Floral magic with Flowers by Flores



A beautiful wedding is more than just bridal bouquets – it's about creating an atmosphere of elegance and enchantment. At Flowers by Flores, owner Marisel Flores brings her extensive experience and passion for floral design to every event. From delicate corsages to stunning centrepieces, Marisel brings floral magic into every element of your wedding. Her specialities include bridal bouquets and impressive gazebos and arch arrangements, providing the perfect backdrop for unforgettable wedding photos.

Marisel collaborates closely with clients to ensure each wedding reflects their unique tastes and details of their special day. Customised arrangements are tailored to personal preferences, featuring a wide assortment of flower types and colours. Additionally, designs can be enhanced with special ribbons, faux gemstones, pearls and any other decorative accents that may suit your individual style.

For weddings, Flowers by Flores offers a variety of

products and services, such as arch rentals and round arches; tall vases and metal stands for indoor settings; and of course floral arrangements for the wedding party, ceremony, and celebration

While Marisel stays attuned to current trends, she emphasises the importance of helping couples realise their own visions rather than imposing her preferences. "Choices are never static, and depend heavily on personality and culture," she notes.

According to the expert, current trends include whimsical arrangements with light greenery and flowers, evoking a wild, natural look. Baby's breath and white blooms symbolise purity and add a fairy-tale charm. Light, elegant colours are also popular, maintaining a sophisticated aesthetic. Many brides seek unique, never-before-seen designs, and Marisel continually innovates to meet these high expectations, even when the requests are challenging at times.

To ensure your wedding flowers are perfect, Flowers by Flores recommends con-

tacting the boutique three to six months in advance. "We always want to give our customers the best, and not everything is found on the island," Marisel explains. While they can work with shorter timeframes, advanced planning is advisable for such an important occasion.

Discover the perfect combination of blooms to bring your wedding vision to life with Flowers by Flores. The company offers delivery services to yachts and hotels, and can ship to the neighbouring islands of St. Eustatius, Saba, and Anguilla.

Contact Flowers by Flores today to start planning the floral arrangements for your unforgettable wedding day.

Open weekdays from 9:00am to 5:00pm, and Saturdays from 9:00am to 4:00pm, Flowers by Flores is located at 129 C.A. Cannegieter Street in Philipsburg. For more information, call +1 (721) 524-8106 / 542-1935; email flowersbyflores@hotmail.com; find [FlowersByFlores](https://www.facebook.com/FlowersByFlores) on Facebook; or visit the website at www.flowersbyflores.sx.



Will you be my bridesmaid?

Three proposal ideas

Proposing to your bridesmaids is a special moment that adds an extra layer of excitement to your wedding planning. It's a chance to show your friends how much they mean to you and to set the tone for the celebrations to come. Here are three unique and heartwarming ideas to make your bridesmaids' proposals unforgettable.

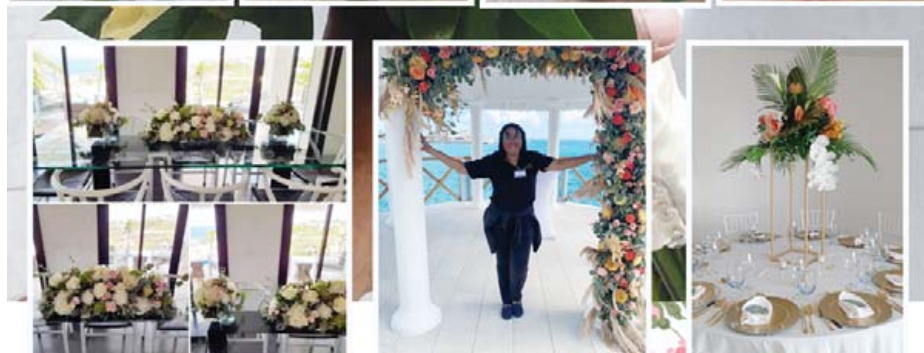
Personalised gift boxes
Create a moment with a beautifully curated gift box tailored to each bridesmaid's personality and interests. Start with a stylish box and fill it with thoughtful items such as jewellery, a mini bottle of champagne or wine, a scented candle, and a handwritten note ex-

pressing your gratitude and excitement for their involvement. You can also include a small keepsake, like a customised compact mirror or a piece of monogrammed stationery. This personalised touch will make your bridesmaids feel truly cherished.

Surprise brunch
Host an intimate surprise brunch for your potential bridesmaids. Invite them over for a casual get-together, but elevate the occasion with thoughtful details. Set a beautiful table with fresh flowers, pretty tableware, and a delicious spread of brunch favourites. During the meal, present each friend with a special "Will you be my bridesmaid?" card – perhaps placed at their seat or tucked into a small bouquet

of flowers. This relaxed yet elegant setting provides the perfect atmosphere for sharing your wedding plans and enjoying an unforgettable morning together.

Memory scrapbook
Compile a small scrapbook filled with cherished memories of your time together. Include photos, mementos, and little notes about your favourite moments and adventures. On the final page, write a heartfelt message asking them to be your bridesmaid. This idea is particularly touching because it highlights the journey of your friendship and emphasises the special role you want them to play in this new chapter of your life – plus, it's budget-friendly.



We also have Centerpieces, Canopies, Corsages, Boutonnieres and more.

Visit us at Cannegieter St. #129, Philipsburg or contact us at +1721 542 1935
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Website: www.flowersbyflores.sx



Although a ring is of course just a small token of your love, it is something that requires a lot of thought as you and your loved one will want to wear it for the rest of your lives. Whether you want to go the more traditional route, or opt for something more unique, Caribbean Gems can help you choose the perfect love tokens. Whoever you are and whoever you love, the wholesome family-run business has an option for you.

Throughout history, wedding rings have symbolised love, loyalty and faithfulness. This tradition springs from ancient times and is widely found in almost every culture. Wedding and engagement rings are consid-

ered sacred and highly valued pieces of jewellery.

The engagement ring often has the element of surprise and novelty. It is worn from the moment of proposal and is the herald of the coming nuptials. Engagement rings are generally very elaborate, sport a flashy gemstone (traditionally diamonds) and are typically relatively expensive.

The wedding ring, on the other hand, is generally seen as the confirmation of said nuptials. Of the two, the wedding ring is the most important metaphor of love and takes precedence over the engagement ring. Therefore, even though both are worn on the same finger, the wedding ring is worn below the

engagement ring, closer to the heart.

Luckily, Caribbean Gems has been providing the to-be-wedded with the perfect rings since the family business opened on Front Street in 1983. With two convenient locations, a wide selection of high-quality and unique jewellery pieces, an in-house workshop for customized designs, helpful staff and, most importantly – when it comes to wedding and engagement rings – lab-certified natural diamonds.

There are no rules when selecting the rings – what matters are the preferences of the couple. Fortunately, the expert staff at Caribbean Gems can help you find the per-

Love Tokens @ Caribbean Gems

fect token of your love when choosing your diamond (or other precious stone). It is all based on the four C's.

1. Colour = colourless or coloured diamonds.
2. Carat = the size of the gemstone.
3. Cut = the shape of the gemstone.
4. Clarity = how clear the gemstone is.

Most lovebirds opt for a classic bridal style when choosing their rings. For diamond engagement rings, this usually means a round brilliant cut, a cluster of diamonds, or a halo (diamond is surrounded by smaller diamonds). This ring is then combined with a plain or diamond wedding band after the "I do".

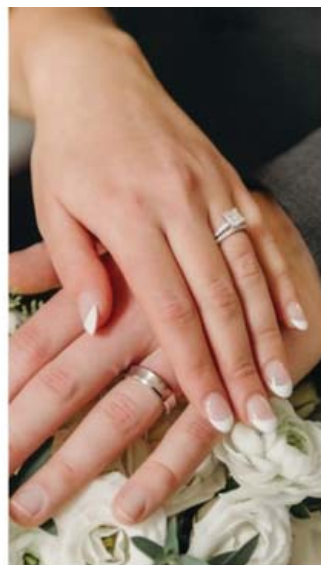
But if you are looking for something subtly different, an unusually cut diamond could be the one for you. Princess cuts (square), emerald cuts (rectangular), pear or teardrop cuts, marquise cut, oval cut and heart cuts are other great shapes to con-

sider for your perfect ring.

Of course, Caribbean Gems has additional wedding jewellery to make all your dreams come true. Think bracelets, necklaces, and earrings that perfectly match your rings and dress/suit.

Not ready to tie the knot? Or you may already be married? St. Maarten's #1 jewellery store has an extensive collection of fancy cocktail rings and other jewellery pieces. Just

come on down to Caribbean Gems on Front Street #22 and #40, or check out their collection online at www.caribbeangems.com



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Visit our website: www.sintmaartenpartyrentals.com
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So it's time to start planning the big day. SXM Party Rentals N.V. is at your service. The full-service party rental company caters to a wide variety of your needs for the perfect event – from essential event coordination services, tasteful décor and design, to entertainment and catering. From large tents and glassware, to lighting and furniture, the company has everything you need for an unforgettable experience.

The company has been professionally and creatively serving this community, as well as our neighbouring islands for over 40 years. As Creative Director, Gumbs listens carefully to clients, guiding them but encouraging and appreciating their own creativity and style. From romantic and intimate,

to large and lavish, the company brings their clients' visions to life.

This year, Gumbs is looking forward to turning more dreams into reality. "It is always awe inspiring to hear ideas from our clients and to strategically navigate through it all, in order to turn those ideas into a dynamic experience. Let's create more!"

Weddings are a specialty, but SXM Party Rentals also organises birthdays, vow renewals, family reunions, or any occasion needing coordination, entertainment, décor, catering, and of course that special touch that brings everything together.

As with any event company, prices vary, based on your wishes and a wide variety of details. Estimates are given

based on request, and you can always let the team know in advance what you're able to work with. Interested in an appointment? The team would love to hear from you. Contact SXM Party Rentals by calling +1 (721) 522-1972, emailing dlggumbs@gmail.com or visiting the website at www.sintmaartenpartyrentals.com



The civil wedding checklist

You've long imagined the cake, the dress and the venue. But dealing with the legal documentation is one of the first things you should do once you decide to get married to that special someone. This way, you can move forward confidently without risking the derailment of your wedding plans.

The process starts with filing the "intention to marry" with government's Civil Registry Department, which is done weeks before the civil ceremony takes place. When you file your intention to marry, all documents must be submitted, and all fees paid before the Departments starts to process your request. While technically this can be done a minimum of two weeks in advance of the wedding, it should be done as soon as possible, especially since it may take time to collect all the needed paperwork.

Requirements

- Passport copies of the bride, groom, and all witnesses.
- Birth certificates for bride and groom (if not registered on St. Maarten).
- Declaration of marital status (no older than three months).
- Four witnesses if getting married at the government Marriage Hall; six witnesses if getting married at another venue.
- For widow(er)s, a death certificate for the deceased spouse.
- For divorcees, a divorce certificate.
- For non-Dutch nationals: an interview at the Immigration Department.
- Cost is between US \$178 and \$409.58, depending on factors such as location and day (weekdays are less expensive than weekends).

Depending on your country of origin, the certificates/declaration must be authenticated – either through an Apostille stamp, which can be obtained from the Secretary of State, Civil registry, or High Court (this includes the United States), or by your country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then the Dutch Consulate.

On the other hand, St. Maarteners getting married abroad can obtain an Apostille stamp for their paperwork from the St. Maarten Civil Registry.

For the full list of requirements, visit www.sintmaartengov.org. Select "Government" from the top-left menu, then go to the top-left menu again and select "Ministry of General Affairs". Select "Civil Registry" and then "Back Of-

office Services" and last, select "Register a Marriage".

To make an appointment online for the various services, go to <http://appointments.sintmaartengov.org/services>. To contact the Civil Registry Department directly, call

+1 721 542-0652, email burgerzakensxm@sintmaartengov.org, or visit the Government Administration Building at Soualiga Road #1, Philipsburg.

Considerations

A wedding planner can help you get through this whole process, if you do not wish to deal with all the paperwork and contacting the Department on your own.

Either you or a wedding planner must handle all other arrangements such as décor or transportation. While guests may socialise for a short time, no food or drink is allowed in the Marriage Hall. Festivities take place elsewhere.

The civil wedding can be held in the government's designated Marriage Hall, or at another venue of your choosing, on the Dutch side of the island.

The ceremony can take place Monday through Sunday, 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Visitors having their destination wedding in St. Maarten should handle all paperwork and payment well in advance. Make contact by email for more information, and send original documentation via FedEx or DHL. This is especially important for those with a tight vacation schedule.

All required documents must be submitted in English or Dutch.

The marriage license is issued in Dutch. A certified translator can be hired on-island to translate it into English or another language.

In accordance with St. Maarten law, civil ceremonies are not held for same-sex marriages.

St. Maarteners getting married abroad should register their marriage at the Department, as soon as possible after returning.

Let Emilio's be part of your love story



Experience a wedding like no other at Emilio's, where timeless elegance meets culinary excellence. The historic venue, coupled with a nostalgic gourmet menu prepared by the talented chefs, promises a once-in-a-lifetime celebration.

Choose Emilio's for an exquisite blend of luxury, elegance, and unforgettable moments. Immerse yourself in the uniquely romantic ambiance, adorned with elegant decor and seasonal floral arrangements, ensur-

ing every moment is memorable.

Centrally located within a seventeenth century historic plantation sugarcane boiling house with stone walls, Emilio's is an ideal venue for a unique Caribbean wedding. It is one of the last preserved remnants of the island's rich history, transformed into a magical destination for your special day.

This highly rated and award-winning location boasts two beautiful ceremony locations on property that the couple

can choose from.

At the Grand Patio, guests are seated under the shade of the Sentry Hill, which stands as a majestic backdrop, while the bride and groom exchange their vows.

At the Wine Garden, guests can be seated under a sweeping Ficus tree adorned with twinkling lights, creating an enchanted forest atmosphere.

With capacity for up to 150 guests and specialized packages for more intimate gatherings of 20-50 guests, Emilio's is perfect for any size celebration. The venue features a spacious outdoor terrace surrounded by lush gardens, ideal for daytime events or magical evening receptions under the stars.

Renowned for the extensive wine list, premium bar, and impeccable service, Emilio's is dedicated to making your wedding seamless and spectacular. From the meticulous planning stages to the final toast, the experienced team will be by your side, ensuring every detail embodies perfection.

But it does not end there; Emilio's also offers a complimentary surprise for all its beautiful brides. They may use the air-conditioned Wine Cellar to do their makeup and finishing touches while enjoying a complimentary bottle of sparkling wine and a platter of cheese, fruit and crackers or crudités.

Clients are advised to book well in advance to secure this hot-spot location. A 50% deposit is required to secure this enchanting venue and the remaining balance due the day of the event or shortly thereafter.

Emilio's is located on LB Scott Road #59, under Rainforest Adventures. For more information, call +1 (721) 522 1848 or visit www.emilios-sxm.com.



Forever's gonna start tonight...



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Ushering in a lifetime of wedded bliss: Sint Maarten Marry Me / Artemia Event Planners



A wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime event, and Sint Maarten Marry Me is your full-service destination wedding planning company. We are dedicated to curating unforgettable weddings, turning dreams into reality, and ensuring that every couple's special day is nothing short of magical; imprinted on the memory forever! Sint Maarten Marry Me provides complete consulting services for civil weddings, holy matrimonies, symbolic unions, welcome dinners, and vow renewal ceremonies.

Two decades strong, the company has gained a stellar reputation for crafting and executing weddings that are stress-free and pure joy for the bride and groom. A vibrant destination that's connected to major airports across the Americas and Europe; St. Maarten is an excellent choice for destination weddings. Guests are sure to enjoy the culinary adventures, bustling nightlife, exciting excursions, and white sandy beaches.

With 18 years of experience, Maressia knows how to keep everything under control, working harmoniously, and making the right decisions at the right time. Wedding planners don't just coordinate all the intricate moving parts, they keep everything and everyone on time during the event, with every last detail in mind – from queuing the music, to ensuring the photographer can capture the perfect shots of your most significant day.

Whether you are from our island or coming from an international destination, the Sint Maarten Marry Me team coordinates the entire affair down to the last detail, ensuring top notch service and quality. This guarantees an unforgettable wedding which creates memories that last a lifetime. The company has the largest warehouse inventory on the island, and works with the best vendors available, from florists, to videographers, to entertainers. Wedding planning services are also offered in surrounding islands.

Maressia truly loves what she does; the wedding industry never has a dull moment. What she most enjoys is having endless new experiences, meeting new people – some of whom come to feel like family – and continuously learning.

A few tips offered for a great experience, with an eye on budget: communication and planning, both between the couple and with the wedding planner, are key. Start planning as early as possible, consider booking in low (tourism) season, limit the guest list, prioritize your must-haves, and select flowers that are available year-round.

Working with a dedicated wedding planner is a more-than-worthy investment, to ensure that every aspect is carefully orchestrated, for a seamless event. Trying to handle all the moving parts yourself can be utterly overwhelming. "Hiring a professional wedding planner cuts down on stress tremendously; we make sure the i's are dotted and the t's crossed," explains Wedding Manager/Head Planner Maressia Bailey-Mohamed.

Maressia and the team at Sint Maarten Marry Me look forward to welcoming couples and ushering in a lifetime of wedded bliss.

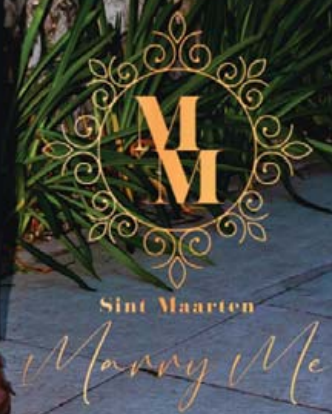


Creating memories that will last a lifetime...

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