

**GROOMS-
MEN**
CAN get
creative
when dec-
orating
the new-
lyweds'
getaway
car.



Grooming yourself into a groomsman

Your friend comes over to tell you he finally proposed to his girlfriend. Then he plops the question to you, "I'd like you to be a groomsman." Refrain from wrinkling your face in disgust or confusion. Here's the low-down on how you'll help out your buddy:

Pre-wedding activities: You'll attend the engagement party and rehearsal dinner. You'll help plan the bachelor party and fend off the bride's interrogations about the festivities.

Attire: You'll pay for your own tux. You can rent one but be sure to get it fitted prior to the wedding.

Stress: You'll keep the groom cool with some pep talks and male outings. Help make his day memorable and stress-free by taking care of anything he needs you to do.

The ceremony: You'll usher guests to their

seats, perhaps. Guests will approach you with questions such as the restroom location. You may escort a bridesmaid down the aisle. And of course, you'll pose for photos.

The reception: You'll be introduced to all the guests, perhaps with the bridesmaid you escorted down the aisle. You'll dance with the bridesmaids or single female guests.

The getaway car: You'll decorate the honeymoon getaway car with streamers, soap, shaving cream or plastic soda bottles. Pop a romantic musical mix into the tape player for their enjoyment. And check to make sure the newlyweds' luggage is stashed in the truck.

TRENDS

Help for the Groom, Best Man and Groomsmen

TRENDS

(MS) — Traditionally, women have done all the wedding planning. Crusty adages like "the groom just shows up," have long been conventional wisdom. However, as more couples plan their weddings together, grooms are playing a more active role.

"Contrary to popular belief, planning a wedding is a difficult task for the groom," says Mark Walerstein, founder of GroomsOnline (www.grooms.com), an informational Web site offering tips, pointers and timesaving hints designed to make the planning process more fun, relaxing and rewarding for the man.

"The groom does have responsibilities, but we really are in the dark about what to do." Featuring wedding day checklists, attire pointers and more, the site sheds light on just about every aspect of the wedding, from buying a tuxedo to organizing a bachelor party.

There's even a full-service online gift shop for the gifts you need for the groomsman, best man, ring bearer and bridesmaids too. Got friends or family who are sports fans? Order a personalized Louisville Slugger or Rawlings bats. Or get creative with a framed photo flashing a name and message on a favorite team's electronic scoreboard. Visit www.grooms-online-gifts.com for more ideas.

As you plan your upcoming nuptials, here are a few tips to keep in mind, courtesy of GroomsOnline.

- Finding a disc jockey — Wedding magazines, the yellow pages and of course, word-of-mouth referrals from family or friends are all great ways to find a DJ for your wedding. Set up a meeting with him or

her before you make your decision to be sure that person is the best match for what you and your fiancée have in mind and there are no surprises. It's good to have an idea of what you're looking for when calling around. Don't forget to ask for references from previous clients.

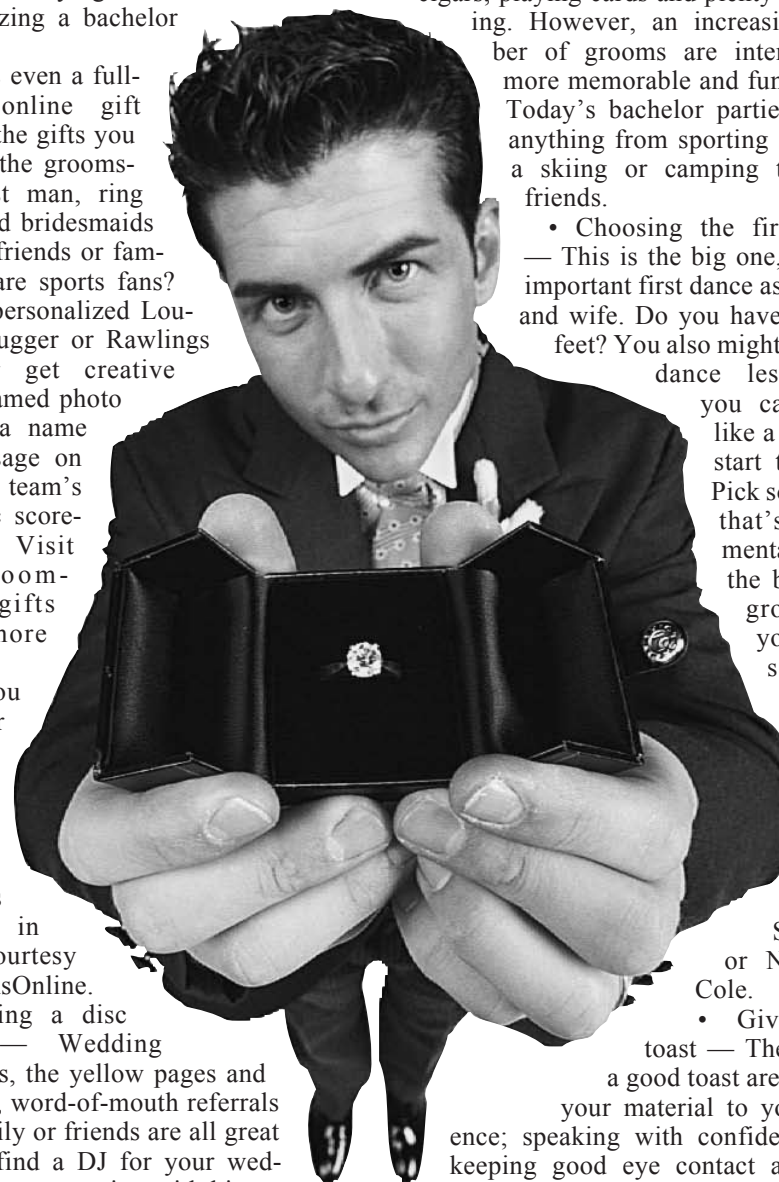
- Selecting a caterer — As you and your fiancée review halls for your reception, be sure to find out whether there is a caterer on-site or if you need to provide one, as this can have a major impact on your wedding budget. Also ask about alcohol pricing, menu planning and food service options.

- Throwing a bachelor party — Traditional bachelor parties have included cigars, playing cards and plenty of drinking. However, an increasing number of grooms are interested in more memorable and fun options. Today's bachelor parties can be anything from sporting events to a skiing or camping trip with friends.

- Choosing the first dance — This is the big one, that all-important first dance as husband and wife. Do you have two left feet? You also might consider dance lessons so

you can dance like a pro from start to finish. Pick something that's sentimental to both the bride and groom. If you're still stumped, choose a classic tune from artists like Frank Sinatra or Nat King Cole.

- Giving the toast — The keys to a good toast are tailoring your material to your audience; speaking with confidence; and keeping good eye contact and body language.



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