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THE 75 GREATEST WEDDING WEB SITES

Brides.com rules, but it's just the start. We visited the good, the bad, and the utterly ridiculous, and found these truly helpful dot coms. *By Kim Schworm Acosta*

LOCATIONS

weekendwinery.com Coastal vineyards may be the latest in destination weddings, but before you pack up the dress and head to Napa, check out this state-by-state winery guide.

towd.com Whether you're planning to marry in your hometown or exchange vows abroad, this worldwide directory of tourism offices points you to the best resources.

nps.gov If the great outdoors is your idea of the perfect wedding backdrop, make this national parks site your first virtual stop.

thebarnjournal.org You'll find finished barns for rent here (click on Resources). None listed in your

state? Post your plea on the Barn Board—site regulars will offer some suggestions. **museumlink.com/states.htm** Museums lend a cultured air and built-in decor to your reception. This guide links to museum Web sites nationwide, many of which list facility rental specifics and rates.

CAKES

wilton.com Get the lowdown on how to choose, transport, cut, and freeze your cake. Making it yourself?



Cake, Laurie Lucov; laurie lucovweddingcakes.com

You'll also find recipes here, plus helpful advice from pastry masters. **elegantcheesecakes.com** The tiered creations here are as gorgeous as traditional wedding cakes, and can be shipped almost anywhere. **thechocolateguy.com** What could be more perfect on your dream day than never-ending chocolate? You can make dessert a fun, hands-on adventure for your guests by renting a fondue fountain from this site.

CEREMONY

www.poets.org What better place than your wedding to bring poetry to the masses? Search for more than 1,200 poems by key word or poet to hit on the perfect verse. **weddingministers.com** This directory includes more than 3,000 ministers, priests, rabbis, and justices of the peace in the U.S. Select vows and readings, and learn how to choose the best officiant for your ceremony. *(Continued on page 356)*

Site, Wölffer Estate Vineyard and Stables, Sagaponack, New York; wolffer.com.





Bouquet, Magnolia; magnolia-nyc.com

BEAUTY AND ACCESSORIES

bluefly.com Purchase trendy accessories—from shoes to earrings—for up to 75 percent off retail at this discount designer site.

veilshop.com See up close how different veil lengths and styles look from the front, back, and side with this site's Veil Tutorial. A handy chart reveals how to avoid wrinkles.

myglassslipper.com No need to sift through fuchsia stilettos or striped Skechers here—this shoe site is all about the bride, so white and ivory rule. Search by designer in the couture section, or by heel-height in the Under \$100 area for pumps, sandals, and slingbacks.

makeup411.com Recreate Kate Hudson's dreamy look in *Almost Famous* (Lancôme Silk Finish pow-

usmarriagelaws.com Time for the license? Find out your state's rules and requirements, and the address of the closest clerk's office.

documentsanddesigns.com Looking for the right prose for your nuptials? Go to Vows and Poetry for a vast selection of readings, from top 10 wedding verses to a whopping 71 contemporary vow choices.

ulc.org Want to really personalize the vows? A friend or relative can become legally ordained for free at this site run by the Universal Life Church, which promotes freedom of religion.

rcrconline.org For a small fee, the Rabbinic Center for Research and Counseling will provide a list of over 330 rabbis nationwide who will officiate at interfaith weddings.

FLOWERS

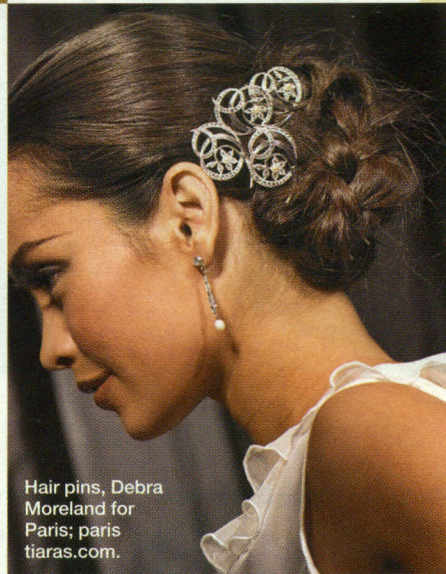
freshroses.com Have a nothing-but-roses affair with fresh blooms shipped to you straight from the

grower. (The minimum order is \$390.) This site also offers advice on arranging flowers, and in a non-rose moment, gives the best seasonal blooms for your wedding month.

wiggyflowers.com This San Francisco florist's sleek site groups bouquet, centerpiece, and decorating ideas by theme, from ballroom fantasy to silver palette. Not marrying in the Bay Area? No problem. The site will refer you to like-minded florists in other parts of the country.

aboutflowers.com Take a quiz to determine your flower personality, learn what to look for when choosing a florist, and study a glossary of common flowers, all at this site run by the Society of American Florists.

sunshineflowers.com You may know a yellow rose signifies friendship, but are you aware that the red tulip means undying love? Or that yellow lilies mean flirtation, while white ones mean innocence? Bone up on the language of flowers here.



Hair pins, Debra Moreland for Paris; paris.tiaras.com.

der) or Brittany Murphy's spoiled-girl pout in *Uptown Girls* (Delux lip gloss in Asher and Jasper) with this site's inside tips on Hollywood makeup.

ebay.com/wedding Rather go naked than pay retail? Don't overlook this popular auction site for wedding-day stash, (Continued on page 360)

from designer shoes to sparkling tiaras. Have enough "something borrowed"? Bid for new items, too.

GIRL PARTIES

vegas.com Saying "so long" to your single self in Sin City with your best pals? Here, you can book a limo and buy tickets to a show, and find detailed descriptions of nightclubs, bars, and, yes, strip clubs.

citysearch.com Home in on ideal rehearsal dinner or bachelorette party locales in dozens of major cities. The guide's Best Of section has reviews of popular restaurants, bars, entertainment venues, and hot spots.

party411.com You'll find a primer on showers and bachelorette parties, and ideas for themes, invitations, games, and party favors.

spafinder.com Whether you want a nearby day spa or a luxe resort facility, this is the site to lead you and your pals to all things seaweed.

FOOD AND DRINK

icacater.org This caterer search engine connects you with members of the esteemed International Caterers Association, a trade group that attracts top-notch, inventive chefs.

rentalhq.com Find local party-rental stores, plus lots of tips from the



Glasses, Crate & Barrel; crateandbarrel.com. Compote, Ercole; ercolehome.com.

pros, such as how much space to allow between tables.

wineanswers.com With info on the number of bottles to buy and correct serving temperatures, plus insider tips (how to chill a Chardonnay in 30 minutes), this site will quickly turn wine neophytes into sommeliers.

cocktail.com Your quest for a signature sip just got a lot easier, thanks to this site's endless assortment of mixed-drink recipes categorized by season and spirits.

chefmike.com Wondering how much ice to buy, or whether to include children in your head count? Chef Michael Flowers, author of "Cater Your Own Wedding," offers answers to common party queries.

STATIONERY

rexcraft.com This mail-order invitation site has the routine down. Categories

like Color, Picture Perfect, and Layers and Ribbons help you navigate the wide selection you'll find here. The prices and shipping time (two to three days) are hard to beat.

crane.com Leading invitation-engraver Crane's offers its entire 159-page "Wedding Etiquette Blue Book" online for free (click on Social Stationery at the bottom of the home page). It covers all your addressing, assembling, and wording questions.

paper-source.com Create original wedding stationery using this site's luxe paper and cards of every imaginable size and color. Kits and online step-by-step instructions guide you in making contemporary invitations and program booklets.

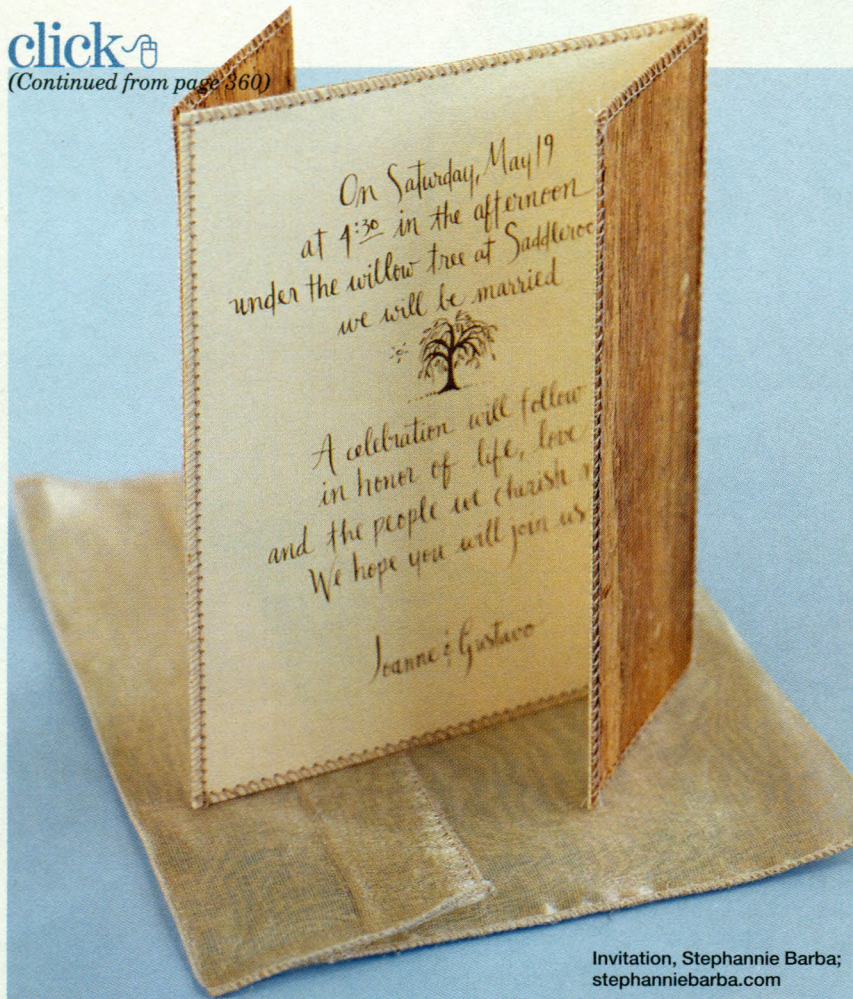
invitesite.com Achieve designer-style stationery with this site's kits featuring creations with pressed flowers and handmade paper. Save by printing them yourself at home.

weddingmaps.com Yes, even directions can get a creative flair on your big *(Continued on page 364)*



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Invitation, Stephanie Barba; stephaniebarba.com

day. This design team creates stylish, easy-to-read maps highlighting landmarks, wedding locations, hotels—even your future home.

verseit.com Got writer's block? Find hundreds of creative wording suggestions for invitations, rehearsal dinners, informal weddings—you name it. Verses are grouped in categories such as Casual, Fairytale, Nature, Shakespeare, and Western. **kinohidesigns.com** Tying the knot seaside? You'll love the modern stationery sets at this Hawaii-based dot-com. Designs include floating palm trees, shells, and pineapples.

GIFTS

thebigday.com Ensure that honeymoon fun won't be hampered by your (or your husband's) inner cheapskate. Here, guests can give money for essentials like airfare and

hotel as well as for romantic perks such as a couples massage.

felicite.com Love the beaded lamp at Pier 1, the birch nightstand from Ikea, and the yoga mat from Gaiam? Register for all three at this site, where you can sign up for any item from just about any store.

givefun.com The honeymoon will keep going on and on with this personal piggy bank for fun. At this site, guests donate funds you can use toward movies, restaurants—even an anniversary weekend at a cozy inn.

justgive.org If you'd like a different kind of wedding gift, this national nonprofit organization offers it. Guests can donate money either by buying Just Give gift certificates (you later decide which charities will receive the funds) or by making a donation in your name to a group on your "registry." (You'll receive an e-card about the donation.)

MUSIC

soi.org This Symphony Orchestra Institute site links to more than 140 symphonic groups in the country—excellent sources for professional musicians who moonlight at weddings. **wedalert.com/songs** Looking for an alternative to Pachelbel's *Canon*? Listen to snippets of 1,200 "wedding songs," divided into categories (ceremony, first dance, ethnic). **bustamove.com** Via easy-to-follow instructions and pictures, you and your man can learn to dance for much less than one-on-one lessons. **adja.org** Find a qualified dj in your area at this site run by the American Disc Jockey Association. The Hiring Tips section lists must-ask questions (about equipment, insurance, contracts) and average rates. **booklivemusic.com** Hear music samples, and view prices and playlists of hundreds of bands and classical musicians nationwide.

FAVORS

beau-coup.com This dot-com sticks to one irresistible specialty: favors. Feeling overwhelmed by all the elegant options? Click on New Products and Bestsellers for some of our top choices, (Continued on page 366)



Glasses, Steuben; steuben.com. Tray, Pottery Barn; potterybarn.com.

including a personalized miniature book of love quotes, "A Perfect Blend" coffee packaged with a heart-shaped scoop, and golf ball keepsake boxes.

orientaltrading.com This party-supply site sells decorations and trinkets for welcome baskets or rehearsal dinner favors at low prices. Having a wedding hoedown, luau, or retro/'60s bash? Fun, themed accessories are their specialty.

islandweddingshop.com

Surprise your guests with unusual seaside favors, like miniature beach chairs, glass votive holders with sandcastle accents, or personalized sunset candy-bar wrappers. Silly for seashells? Yep, they've got those, too, and they're filled with birdseed.

myownlabels.com From Grandma's oatmeal cookies to a CD of your favorite tunes, homemade favors acquire a professional touch with customized labels from this site—with 24 styles, 15 shapes, and 12 colors to choose from.

customhearts.com These personalized conversation candy hearts, in tangy or traditional flavors, are just like the originals—minus the chalky aftertaste. Customize with up to five (short) phrases. Luv Rules!

idofoundation.org This site's Favors for Charity program lets you make a donation to your favorite



Favors, 2 Pyromaineiacs; 2pyromaineiacs.com.

nonprofit organization in honor of your guests. A personalized card at each place setting tells loved ones about your contribution.

weddingfavorites.com This site offers a new, exclusive collection of miniature envelopes, takeout containers, and box totes for packaging favors, plus unusual baubles like chair place-card holders/favors and scented floral magnets.

HONEYMOON

honeymoonlocation.com Click on Honeymoon Packing Tips for a comprehensive guide to what to stash in your luggage, from camera batteries to sarongs. Remember to pack a surprise for your new hubby!

visitmexico.com Local experts highlight the best sights, hotels, and restaurants, from Cancún to La Paz.

gocaribbean.com This site details the unique characteristics of 36 Caribbean destinations, such as Aruba's 42 major dive sites and Martinique's Parisian-chic feel.

cruise.com If you've got fond memories of *The Love Boat*, this site's for you. It has an exhaustive list of voyages from nearly 100 cruise lines to help you map out your ideal itinerary (destination, sailing date) at the right price.

gorp.com If sunning on the sand makes you yawn, check out this site for the best ideas in domestic adventure travel. Browse the many top-10 lists (Continued on page 371)



Caneel Bay resort, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands; caneelbay.com.

CLICK

(Continued from page 366)

for your ideal spot, from national forests to secluded campsites to parks with eye-popping views.

sexhealth.org For any bride who'd like to mix it up on the honeymoon, this site offers solid sex advice on popular positions and techniques, plus the silliest toys. Bonus: no embarrassing pop-ups!

yahoo.farechase.com Be certain you're getting the best travel deal with Yahoo's specialized search engine. It combs more than 50 Internet travel sites for the cheapest flights, hotels, and rental cars.

PHOTO/VIDEO

weva.com Click on Find a Videographer for professional referrals in your area. Check out the tips on how to get unobtrusive coverage, plus information on the latest trends in video styles.

ofoto.com Create a wedding album that friends and family can view for free at this site. Uploading, editing, and ordering prints of photos is a cinch even for technophobes.

ppa.com Make sure you're hiring a seasoned photographer to capture your wedding on film. This site allows you to search the Professional Photographers of America's member database by city or zip code. You'll also find tips on what to ask when interviewing prospective lensmen.

GROOM 101

www.gia.edu If he hasn't bought the ring yet, take the Gemological Institute of America's free tutorial—it's the best primer around on the four C's of diamond value. (Note: Reputable jewelers use this group's diamond grading system.)

tuxedos4u.com Preview the latest tuxedo fashions and colors by three top designers at this site.

Impressed? Buy one online or find a rental store near you.

gingiss.com This national formalwear chain's site explains appropriate tux style based on formality and the time of the wedding. It even offers advice on how to be the model groom (send flowers or a card to her house when she's getting ready).

formalwear.org Find a comprehensive chart that spells out exactly what to wear when (daytime vs. evening), plus a speedy search engine that guides you to a top-notch tux shop that's close to home.

tiffany.com With its easy-to-follow shopping site, this esteemed jeweler makes it simple for a groom to find the perfect wedding gift for his bride. Need direction? You can't go wrong with an engraved heart tag bracelet.

WEDDING PARTY

free-wedding-speeches.com

A proactive bride is a happy bride when she slips the best man and maid of honor a couple of useful tips on wedding speeches. The 10 Commandments of Toasting section offers practical pointers (stand when you're speaking; keep it short!).

redenvelope.com This purveyor of affordable fine gifts offers a wide selection of attendant presents, such as pink leather I.D. bracelets and canvas golfer's wallets.

wishingfish.com Forgo the standard earrings or grooming kit in favor of vintage fabric envelopes or electric juicers shaped like citrus fruit from this eclectic, fun boutique.

bridesmaidaid.com Two perpetual bridesmaids answer every question newbie attendants might have (e.g., the right underwear to wear when dress shopping).

thebestman.com If there's one person who knows less about weddings than the groom, it's the best man. This humorous but helpful site explains things like how to escort people down the aisle and what to do if the getaway car won't start. ♦

Over 300 stores across the country are members of Savvi Formalwear

for the location closest to you, visit www.savviformalwear.com or call 1.888.NiceTux.

Alabama - Mr. Burch Formalwear
California - Friar Tux Shop
Colorado - Mister Neat's Formalwear
Connecticut - Savvi Formalwear & Squire Tux
Florida - Michael's Formalwear
& Sacino's Formalwear
Georgia - Savvi Formalwear
Illinois - Savvi Formalwear
Indiana - Savvi Formalwear
Kansas - Savvi Formalwear
Kentucky - Savvi Formalwear
& Skeffington's Formalwear
Louisiana - Al's Formal Wear
Massachusetts - Mr. Tux
Maryland - Savvi Formalwear
Maine - Mr. Tux
Minnesota - Savvi Formalwear
Missouri - Savvi Formalwear
North Carolina - Savvi Formalwear
New Hampshire - Mr. Tux
New Jersey - Savvi Formalwear
& Dante Zeller Tuxedo
New Mexico - Al's Formal Wear
New York - Schapiro's Formal Shop
& Dante Zeller Tuxedo
Ohio - Skeffington's Formalwear
Oklahoma - Al's Formal Wear
Pennsylvania - Savvi Formalwear
Rhode Island - Mr. Tux
South Carolina - Savvi Formalwear
Tennessee - Savvi Formalwear
Texas - Al's Formal Wear & Ascot Tuxedos
Virginia - Savvi Formalwear
Wisconsin - Savvi Formalwear
Wyoming - Mister Neat's Formalwear

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