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# Take cues from bride, local experts say

Jaelyn Youhana | The Journal Gazette

There was a time when a wedding invitation in the mail came with an obvious dress code. A church ceremony followed by a reception in the same locale was the norm that gave guests a clear idea of what to wear.

But today? There is no such thing as "typical." Brides and grooms declare their everlasting love on the beach. Couples say 'I do' in backyard ceremonies or express their commitment in local parks.

And wearing that to-the-floor evening dress bedazzled in rhinestones at Lakeside Park just isn't going to fly.

Michelle Kyrrou has been in the wedding planning business for more than 20 years. As the owner of Wonderful Weddings & Events by Kyrrou's Music in Fort Wayne, Kyrrou remembers a time when no guest would ever dare wear black to a wedding. Today, it's not only a popular color for the guests, but for the bridesmaids as well.

"I would say 20 years ago, it was more formalized," she says. "(Today) people follow the etiquette, but they have veered off from it to make the options that are (in line with their) preferences."

Kyrrou and One Fine Day bridal boutique owner Autumn Parton have shared some tips for guests who may find themselves dressing for an outdoor, summertime wedding.

## For men

It's rare these days for a man to wear a tuxedo as a guest to a wedding, Parton says, and while she doesn't suggest a man ditch a suit coat – even when his friends are getting married on a beach or in a park – there are other options that can be more summertime friendly, such as a linen suit jacket with a collared lightweight shirt and no tie.

She recently attended a California wedding with her husband and remembers a guest in a baby blue linen suit with a striped shirt.

"It looked fantastic," she says. "(It was) more of a laid back wedding, so it fit perfectly."



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Amanda Bok, sales consultant at One Fine Day, models a black lace Lazaro, perfect for a summer wedding.



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Amanda Bok models a silk charmeuse gown by Amsale, better for attending a more formal wedding.

Kyrou, meanwhile, says it's OK to pair dress pants with a lighter shirt, and she makes no mention of a sports coat or lightweight suit jacket. Instead, she focuses on color: stick with lighter hues to stay cooler in the summer heat.

## **For women**

The two best ways to dress for an outdoor wedding are to focus on a dress's cut and material, Parton says. For something outdoors, a guest would want to avoid a material like satin, which is heavy, and instead look for a chiffon or lace with organza. The lightweight materials will be more comfortable in the sun and blow beautifully in the wind, she says.

The cut of a dress is also important. Parton tells of a mother-of-the-bride who stopped in the store last week and purchased a knee-length dress with a high neck for her daughter's August wedding. The high neck worked, however, because the dress was a halter that left her shoulders bare.

"At the end of the day, you need to find what's going to be most flattering on your body.

Kyrou suggests that women wear sundresses for more informal, outdoor weddings, and adds that the style can be especially appropriate for a beach wedding.

## **In general**

The universal rule when figuring out what to wear to a wedding, be it for male or female guests, is to take their cues from the bride, Parton says.

"I think a lot of that is going to be dictated by the bride, regardless of the location," she says.

And pay attention to the colors the bridal party wears and avoid them.

"You don't want to look like you're one of the bridesmaids or trying to be one of the bridesmaids," she says. "The bride is going to want the colors that make the guests look their best."

And if that color happens to be dark, that's OK – dark colors can be appropriate for outdoor weddings, especially if they are formal affairs. Parton says to consider tones like charcoal gray, dark blue or chocolate brown for a different take on black. Though they are darker and will trap heat, choosing lighter weight materials help combat that.

Kyrou also says to pay attention to the time of day the couple is getting married.

"If you're going to have a wedding before 10 o'clock, it's usually very informal," she says. "(It's) semi formal after 12 o'clock. The formal weddings you'd have starting at the 6 o'clock time, it's more of a black-tie affair."

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