

■ SPECIAL REPORT ■

PLANNING



Flowers and candles by Pink Wedding. Pastels are making a comeback. Paler colours will also be popular in the coming months.



LED lighting shows and 3D mapping are a great suggestion for couples. Tech will be showing up strongly in weddings.



WEDDING WONDERLAND

Think smart when planning your big day - from the venue to the theme - to avoid last-minute chaos, writes **Liana Cafolla**

Organising your wedding banquet or venue can be an overwhelming task. If you're using the services of a planner, you will get a lot of advice and help, but you will still need to make some important initial decisions on the style of venue, the scope of your decoration plans and the colour palette.

Simplify the task of selecting the venue by picking a room that's already decorated in a style that suits your taste, suggests Conway Lau, chief consultant at Pink Wedding.

"That will save you a lot of money in decoration. For example, an empty hotel function room will need a lot of decorating, compared with a stylish restaurant."

Find out how much time you will have to decorate the venue. Many hotels in Hong Kong allow

only a short set-up time, says Elle Chui, co-founder of Only Mine. "If they have enough time, couples can consider the ceiling decoration or the technology-driven decoration, as they take longer to set up," she says.

Colour it right

Once the venue and style have been agreed, it's time to look at design features and colours.

"Sit down with your partner and talk about what you like and don't like, and start a small Pinterest board to help visualise what you want," says Michele Li of The Wedding Company. "Pick a theme - be it a few colours for a colour palette or a feeling or mood that you want to evoke - so that you can easily communicate your ideal 'look and feel' to your wedding vendors."

Colour is a key decision that

needs to be made early, as it is a unifying ingredient that will affect all your design decisions. Stronger colours are still the choice of some couples, but paler colours seem destined to make a comeback in 2019.

"Generally, traditional whites, ivory, champagne and pastel colours are always popular," says Marriage Maestros founder Evelyn Mills. "White is definitely making a comeback."

"Earth tones and pastel colours are in, replacing many contrasting and bright colours," agrees Lau.

Talk tech

Tech will be showing up strongly in 2019 weddings, Chui predicts. "3D mapping and lighting shows are great suggestions for couples," she says. Other than

that, hanging decorations will be one of the biggest requests in 2019, too. It [doesn't] take up much space but creates a wow effect."

A natural relaxed look will be popular next year, says The Wedding Company's Li. "Lots of greenery, different types of foliage, S-shaped ceremony aisles, lanterns, vintage glass jars, antique silver and more relaxed florals. And pretty natural arrangements that are loose, not tightly packed, with lots of foliage."

Mills says couples are focusing on creating an elegant and memorable guest experience. "They are putting more thought into the details of their menus and table settings, choosing elaborate show plates or providing personalised napkins embroidered with



guests' names that double as takeaways," she says.

Let there be light

Light shows are a new trend made possible by technology. For a more traditional look, fairy lights are an easy way to create a soft, evocative atmosphere in larger areas. For a flattering, romantic light, candles are the top choice.

"Nothing beats candlelight for its glow," says Li. "We are seeing more candlesticks in varying heights and candles in pale shades of pastel."

(Clockwise, from above) The Wedding Company's dining table arrangement; a wedding at Kerry Hotel designed by Only Mine; and a wedding venue created by Pink Wedding.



"I personally love as many candles as possible," says Mills. "The light from real candles - organic beeswax ones are becoming a trend - as compared to LED ones; it comes out warm and natural in photographs."

Sustainable soirées

Couples are starting to make more eco-friendly choices overall, particular with flowers.

"Clients are becoming more eco-conscious," says Chui, pointing out that more clients are choosing e-invitations instead of paper and smaller

flower arrangements. At a recent wedding, the couple gave potted herbs to their guests, says Li, who encourages bride and groom to hand out their flowers arrangements to guests.

Marriage Maestros encourages clients to choose less packaging, incorporate locally grown flowers, and to choose wedding favours that contain edible items instead of plastic.

In addition, "encourage clients to donate flowers to local elderly homes or children's hospitals after their event", says Mills.