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AOL Keyword: Wedding & Home

PLUS! IDEAS FOR INVITES, CAKES, FLOWERS AND GIFTS

Ola

WE TROUBLE-SHOOT YOUR WEDDING DAY QUERIES

I would really love to wear a pair of strappy, high-heeled sandals at my summer wedding, but ever since a skiing accident earlier this year the toenails on my left foot have been heavily ridged and discoloured – not even regular pedicures have improved them.

Do I have any other options apart from wearing closed-toe shoes?

Not every apparently immaculately nail-polished foot is the real deal: our spies tell us that certain regulars in the celeb pages of *Now* are taking a crafty short-cut to salon-perfect toes with stick-on French pedicure nails. Kiss Fashion Toenail Accents kit (£8.99; available from Boots nationwide) contains all you need to transform the look of your toenails, including false nails for each toe, plus adhesive. Just push down your toenail cuticles with the orange stick provided (this helps the false nail grip the surface of the real nail more easily), glue them on, wait for them to set, then trim and file into shape and you're ready to glide down the aisle in those killer sandals.

My fiancé and I would like to design our own wedding rings, but aren't the most creative people in the world. Do you know of any companies that can help us devise a beautiful design and have it made up.

The Wedding Ring Workshop have come up with the solution for every individualistic but inspiration-poor couple looking for unique wedding rings. Their Wedding Ring Workshop allows you to visit them in their Hatton Garden

store for the day, during which you will spend time working on a one-off design with

experienced jewellers, get your hands dirty smelting the metal and milling and shaping your rings before filing, buffing and polishing the finished article.

As you congratulate yourselves on your work with a glass of Champagne over lunch, the rings will be sent to the London Assay Office for hall marking and engraving, ready for collection at a later date. Two rings in 18ct gold cost £600; two platinum rings cost £1,150; diamonds and precious stones are available at extra cost. Call 020 7831 2909/ www.weddingringworkshop.co.uk. Fashionable London jewellers Wint & Kidd (020 7908 9990) also offer a bespoke ring design service that allows you to choose your stone and collaborate with their in-house design team in creating a beautiful setting for it. They specialise solely in diamonds, and have a huge range in every cut and colour imaginable (their work is shown below left), so this is the place to head for if you'd like a gob-stopper of a pink diamond on your finger, à la Jennifer Lopez. For designs with an Art Deco feel, try Brighton jeweller G&G's bespoke service (01273 732492/ www.ggjewellery.co.uk). Edinburgh's Hamilton & Inches (0131 225 4898) and Herefordshire's Harriet Kelsall (01462 790 565/www.hkjewellery.co.uk) will also design to a specific brief.

My fiancé and I both come from Newcastle but are holding our wedding in London, where we now live and work. Although we're pretty organised, we're finding it hard to stay on top of all the wedding organisation as we work long hours and, as our families are back up north, there aren't many people we can delegate tasks to. We don't have the budget to hire a wedding organiser to oversee everything but would love to be able to offload specific tasks as and when we need to. Are there any companies out there who offer this kind of service?

As much as most women enjoy planning their wedding, plenty would agree that it also brings with it a fair amount of stress. London-based company Buy Time aims to provide just the kind of service you're looking for. Rather than being run on a membership or subscription

basis, it allows you to tell them exactly what level of help you need, with whatever task, and pay for that help alone. They charge by the hour (£35 per hour) rather than by the job; if you buy blocks of time you'll benefit from a discount (£290 for 10 hours; £500 for 20 hours). Their service is aimed at anyone who is short of time and they've had loads of experience in assisting couples organise their wedding; in the past they've helped out with everything from sourcing and purchasing specific wedding services or supplies, organising and co-ordinating various elements of the day, through to attending on the big day itself to make sure everything runs smoothly. You pay for as little or as much support as you need, whether you're looking for someone to project-manage the whole wedding or just someone to source a suitable caterer. For more details, visit their website www.buy-time.co.uk or call 020 7498 7934.

I met my fiancé 18 months ago and after a whirlwind romance we're planning our big day. Shortly before we met he ended a three-year relationship with a girl he met at university. They've stayed friendly – which is fine with me – but now he'd like to invite her to our wedding. As much as I'm happy for them to have a friendship, I feel uncomfortable about her being there on my big day as I suspect she's still carrying a torch for him. But my fiancé says it will be awkward not to invite her as they have friends in common who will be there on the day and he doesn't want to snub her. Tricky! Your fiancé's wish not to humiliate his ex-girlfriend by excluding her from an event that many of her friends will be attending is understandable, but he must also respect the fact that her presence at your big day won't exactly put you at your ease. He should also realise that his parents might not feel comfortable with the prospect of bumping into his ex on the receiving line. This is the





Q I'm going for a 1950s Audrey Hepburn look on my wedding day, from my dress right down to my make-up. The thing is, I've got less than Bambi-ish eyelashes and am really struggling to achieve that long-lashed look, whatever lengthening mascara I try. Please don't tell me to use false eyelashes as I find them really difficult to put on properly!

Lengthening mascaras or false eye-lashes aren't the only way to achieve the illusion of lashes worthy of Holly Golightly. Eyelash curlers are also a really effective way of making your lashes appear longer and curvier – and they have the added bonus of making your eyes look larger, too.

Make-up artists are now replacing the old-fashioned manual curlers that looked like instruments of medieval torture with heated, battery-operated versions. They're far more effective, as the heat sets the lash in place as it's curled. One of the sleekest versions on the market is the new Lashwand. A staple in the make-up bags of Kate Moss and Kylie, it will maximise the length and curl of your lashes in just 10 seconds, is guaranteed not to burn or pinch and, as it's no bigger than a mascara, it's slim enough to slip into your wedding bag so you can pep up your lashes throughout your day. Priced £25, Lashwand is available exclusively from www.miskis.co.uk – a mascara designed to be used in conjunction with Lashwand is also available.

same dilemma that Brad Pitt faced when planning his nuptials with Jennifer Aniston: should ex-fiancé Gwyneth Paltrow, with whom he was still on friendly terms, make it onto the guest list or not? It's alleged that Gwyneth was sent an invitation, but responded as etiquette dictated and politely declined to attend. So, you've got two options: take a risk and agree that she can be invited, and hope that the prospect of seeing the man she's may still have a thing for getting hitched to another woman will be enough to make her do a Gwynie and decide to stay away; or explain to your fiancé just how strongly you feel about this whole situation and gently assert the bride's right to ban former girlfriends from the big day. If you decide to go for the latter option, be prepared to keep things equal, and let your husband get his own way on another element of your wedding day.

I have arranged for my hairdresser and make-up artist to visit me at home on the morning of my wedding, but I'd also like some extra treatments to help me chill out completely before I leave for the ceremony. How can I source someone to come to me? I'm based in London.

Operating in the central London area, Perfectly At Home has beauty specialists on stand-by, ready to visit you at home to deliver whatever kind of treatment you need, from massages and facials through to lash-tinting and manicures. If you're getting ready with your bridesmaids or mum and think they might want some attention, too, the company will send round a troop of therapists to take care of all their beauty needs. A bridal hair and make-up package is also available. Call 020 7610 8000 for details or visit their website, www.perfectlyathome.com. South London-based The Pamper People,

run by Martine Burke, also specialise in giving treatments at clients' homes. Choose from ultra-relaxing options such as Eastern head massage, reflexology or Shiatsu, or go for grooming treatments such as a manicure, pedicure or professional blow-dry. As well as visiting your home to treat you and your bridesmaids on the morning of your wedding, they can also put together pamper parties that are perfect for an indulgent hen night (minimum group size: 5; maximum: 12). Call Martine on 07930 867 610 for more details. If you're interested purely in a de-stressing massage to help you get a hold on your pre-ceremony nerves, The London College of Massage can put you in touch with practitioners in your area who can visit you at home. For more information, check out their website at www.massagelondon.com or contact them direct on 020 7637 7125.