

lifestyle

How Not to Be a Bratty Bride

COSMOPOLITAN

Mutating into a monster is natural when planning a wedding. But if you can restrain your inner bridezilla, you'll have a lot more fun — and so will everyone around you.

By Dina Roth Port

You've seen them in action: those obsessive women in white who get so wrapped up in planning their wedding, they boss around friends, insult family, and go psycho on the florist. After witnessing their wicked behavior, you probably vowed that when it came time for *you* to get hitched, you'd never morph into such a fire-breathing demon. But now that the ring is on your finger, you might be finding it a wee bit difficult not to turn into a beastly bride yourself. So for the sake of your loved ones and the catering staff, fight the urge to go bridezilla. These real women tell you how.

"I didn't demand that my bridesmaids spend a fortune on the usual blowout bachelorette party. Instead, I suggested they barbecue at my house and then sleep over, which saved money on hotel rooms, dinner, and booze. This gave us time to play girlie games and reminisce about our wild single days. It's all about being with your friends, not bankrupting them." —Diana

"I absolutely can't stand my mother-in-law, so I didn't want her involved in any of the wedding plans. But for my husband's sake, I decided to include her by putting her in charge of the guest-book table. All she had to do was arrange a candle, some flowers, and a book, but I kept hammering home how important it was to me. She bought it!" —Mary

"I let my bridesmaids wear any style dress they wanted as long as it was black. I also told them they could choose how they had their hair and nails done; the only thing that mattered was that they looked polished. I wanted them to be with me on my big day, and I was determined to make prepping for it as hassle-free as possible." —Caroline

"As my wedding day grew closer, I started going to the gym daily. Lifting weights and taking kickboxing classes allowed me to blow off steam whenever I felt like strangling guests who had yet to RSVP or cursing out the printer, who kept sending me the wrong seating cards. An added bonus: I looked buff and beautiful in my strapless gown." —Dana

"Honestly, I could have spent the entire wedding reception jabbering to guests about where I bought my dress and my exotic honeymoon plans. However, I made sure to first ask what was going on in their lives. So many friends and relatives came in from across the country, the least I could do was give them some attention." —Hilary

"My husband-to-be didn't stress out at all during our engagement. But the morning of the wedding, he woke up a nervous mess, anxious that the groomsmen would be late and that his parents would start bickering at the church. So I put off my hair appointment and took him on a half-hour hike through the woods. Our nature walk helped him chill out, and it gave me the chance to thank him for being so great in the previous months. Amid all the attention the bride gets, you have to give the groom some of the spotlight too." —Danielle

"My fiancé and I nixed the idea of a dragged-out engagement — it would only mean more time to obsess about petty details and micromanage our friends and families to death. Instead, we spent two weeks putting together a simple ceremony: I rented my dress, a friend made the cake, and my brother played the guitar. It was a magical affair, one I couldn't have topped even if I had had years to organize it." —Misti

"Every time I started to freak out during the planning and preparation, I repeated this little mantra: While the wedding is just one day, marrying the love of my life is forever. It helped me get through a yearlong engagement with no major meltdowns."

"Even though their invitations mentioned nothing about bringing a guest, a few of my single friends RSVP'd that they would be arriving with a date. I was so pissed off — didn't they realize how expensive each extra person was? But the more I thought about it, the more I realized I should encourage all of my unattached pals to bring someone. Before I met my fiancé, I was single for a long time and I always felt awkward having to attend weddings solo. I'd rather cut costs another way than know some friends felt lonely on one of the happiest days of my life." —Stephanie

"Early on, my guy and I divvied up the wedding-related tasks: He took care of the rehearsal dinner, while I covered the flowers and party favors. We also made a deal that we'd trust each other to get our jobs done. So although I desperately wanted to check up on him to make sure he wasn't slacking, I held back. In the end, everything came together beautifully." —Sommer

Reprinted with permission of Hearst Communications, Inc.