



Best of Boston Weddings

Congratulations, you're engaged! Your mission, should you choose to accept it: planning the wedding of your dreams without losing sleep—or your sanity. Thankfully, you don't have to embark on this adventure alone. Organized by task, our annual guide to the region's finest venues and vendors is chock-full of wedding pros ready to help you nail every detail.

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**PLANNING
TIMELINE:
1 YEAR ▶**

Decide when—and where—you want to get married, then start touring. Popular venues book up fast, especially for peak summer and fall dates.

Vet Your Venue

BALLROOM

HARVARD CLUB OF BOSTON

Recent renovations to this Back Bay social club may have added a few modern-day creature comforts, but Harvard Hall remains, blessedly, unchanged: You'll still find the same English oak paneling, Spanish silver chandeliers, and roaring fireplace that have graced the dramatic space since 1913. The lofty coffered ceilings make it easy to go big on flowers and lighting, or you can just let the ballroom speak for itself. After hosting exclusive events for more than a century, it certainly has a lot to say. 374 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, 617-536-1260, harvardclub.com.

RUSTIC

FRUITLANDS MUSEUM

Who says "rustic wedding" has to mean campy barn party in some far-off locale? Perched above the Nashua River Valley, the grounds of the Fruitlands Museum, in easy-to-reach Harvard, are naturally pastoral, featuring views of rolling hills, forests, and mountains beyond the cliff where couples tie the knot. Exclusive vendor Fireside Catering continues the bucolic theme on the plate, with ingredients sourced from local purveyors. 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard, 978-944-9799, fruitlands.org.

COASTAL

CRANE ESTATE

Your very own castle overlooking the sea. It's a reality at Ipswich's Crane Estate, a 2,100-acre tribute to natural beauty and man-made opulence that showcases breathtaking water panoramas and one very regal Stuart-style manor. While several party spots

are available, the showstopper is the Great House's ceremony-perfect rolling lawn leading to the Atlantic. 290 Argilla Rd., Ipswich, 978-356-4351, thetrustees.org/crane-estate.

MUSEUM

JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

With dramatic city and harbor views and a healthy dose of presidential history, J.F.K.'s nine-story glass showpiece has welcomed visitors from around the world since opening in 1979—and now it can play host to your big day, too. You'll want to be among the first couples to experience this venue, which just this year announced it would begin booking weddings in its signature soaring pavilion and equally picturesque ballroom. *Columbia Point, Boston, 617-611-1600, jfklibrary.org.*

UNIQUE

FENWAY PARK

For baseball fans, it's the ultimate only-in-Boston venue. Get married behind third base in Section 32 before moving your celebration to one of 14 reception options: For Green Monster vistas, you can't beat the Dell EMC Club; for a skyline tableau, the State Street Pavilion or the right-field roof deck hit it out of the park. 4 Yawkey Way, Boston, 617-226-6791, redsox.mlb.com.

CAPE COD

WYCHMERE BEACH CLUB

As you watch the boats drift by the ballroom's floor-to-ceiling windows, you'll wonder if you somehow ended up in Venice. The fluffy blue hydrangeas dotting the property, however, will bring you right back to Cape Cod. The team behind Longwood Venues has transformed the event space at this private club along Nantucket Sound into a whitewashed coastal

dream complete with driftwood floors and sailcloth drapes. Want to really up the ante on your waterfront wedding? Host a clam bake on Wychmere's beach. 23 Snow Inn Rd., Harwich Port, 617-854-5000, longwoodvenues.com.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD

HARBOR VIEW HOTEL

Some prefer to dance the night away; others prefer to rock. At this historical hotel, a private door leads from the all-season Edgartown Room—with large windows overlooking the harbor—out to the peaceful wraparound porch, where rocking chairs and warm breezes await. The panoramas are just as prime from the waterfront gazebo, where you can exchange vows with Edgartown Lighthouse as your backdrop. 131 N. Water St., Edgartown, 508-627-7000, harbor-view.com.

NANTUCKET

THE WAUWINET

Is there anything more quintessentially Nantucket than a wedding at the Wauwinet? Originally built in the 1870s, the cozy hotel epitomizes island charm with its weathered cedar shingles and cozy, sun-drenched interiors. We doubt you'll want to spend much time inside, though: One look at the private beaches and waterfront lawn will have you picturing seaside "I do's. 120 Wauwinet Rd., Nantucket, 508-228-0145, wauwinet.com.

BERKSHIRES

THE MOUNT

A storybook romance deserves a storybook venue, and perhaps no place is quite as enchanting as Edith Wharton's 50-acre Lenox estate. The Versailles-inspired flower garden is a magical ceremony locale; the white-stucco manse and its dramatic terrace, meanwhile, are elegant settings for cocktails before a tented dinner on the emerald-green grounds. 2 Plumkett St., Lenox, 413-551-5111, edithwharton.org.

◀ CREDITS
Engagement Rings: Brilliant Earth
Stationery: Fête Collection
Photographer: Lisa Rigby Photography

Assemble Your A-Team

BAND

SEARCH PARTY

Sinatra, Motown, 1990s Top 40: you're embarrassed to love—this eight-piece band of Berklee-trained musicians often sounds better than the real thing. Over the years, they've performed everywhere from the Ocean Edge to the Fairmont Copley Plaza, and for everyone from Ethel Kennedy to Jim Koch, which means they're guaranteed to get all generations footrotting, boozing, and voguing in your honor. 781-367-6395, searchpartyboston.com.

DJ

BEAT TRAIN PRODUCTIONS

No cheesy ballads unless you want them, no used-car-salesman introductions—these song-spinners behave like people you'd actually want to hang out with *after* the party. Beat Train founder Ari Rosenfield acts as a musical matchmaker to pair you with the right DJ for your style, drawing from a team of industry vets based not only on spinning skills but on personality, too. beattrainproductions.com.

BAR SERVICE

HIVE

Consider this restored Airstream trailer your personal lounge on wheels. Proprietors Lance Davis and Graham McKissock ask which spirits you enjoy, then riff on them with house-made juices and herbs; recent hits include a gin-and-kumquat cocktail with lime-ade, and a Brown Derby mixed with sage. Not a cocktail aficionado? Four draft lines will hook you up with local brews from the likes of Trillium and Nightshift. hive-events.com.

▲ **PLANNING
TIMELINE:
10 MONTHS**
Interview bands
or D.J.s and
choose one that
feels right for
your party's vibe.

CREDITS ▶
Wedding Dresses:
Ceremony
Accessories:
Musette

CATERER

THE CATERED AFFAIR

Partnering with some of the area's most exclusive venues, this catering company turns out artfully plated fare that would be at home in the city's finest restaurants: chorizo beignets with romesco, espresso-roasted lamb sirloin. Maybe that's because executive chef Shane O'Neill, a L'Espalier alum, is the culinary genius behind the seasonally inspired menus. 70 Lodge-wood Place, Rockland, 781-982-9333, thecateredaffair.com.

CAKES

MAYFLOUR CAKE + CONFECTIONS

"Simple is beautiful and taste is everything." That's baker Jocelyn Pierce's mantra, and it shows in every ethereal, understated confection that comes out of her Rockport kitchen. Made with organic, local ingredients, her lemon-poppy seed and lavender-honey layers come adorned with silky buttercream, fresh flowers or fruit, and plenty of love. One Whistlestop Mall, Rockport, mayflourconfections.com.

FLORAL DESIGNER

FORÊT DESIGN STUDIO

As floral trends evolve, no one has answered the call for nature-inspired and greenery-infused arrangements like Rose Mattos and Erin Heath. From a windswept delphinium archway to a cascading bohemian-style bouquet, their organic pieces seem sculpted, not just assembled. In fact, you could say they take on a beautiful life of their own. foretdesignstudio.com.

PHOTOGRAPHER

LISA RIGBY PHOTOGRAPHY

Every wedding has its own unique

story. And Lisa Rigby, with backgrounds in professional writing and art history, knows just how to tell it. Her work has a cinematic quality that transcends traditional documentary-style photography, capturing expressions full of emotion and maximizing the scenery, whether it's your parents' lush backyard or the Museum of Fine Arts at 11:59 p.m. on New Year's Eve (see page 118). lsarigbyphotography.com.

VIDEOGRAPHER

READYSETFILM

Banish all thoughts of a gauzy, sappy drama: Husband-and-wife team Jeff Brouillet and Amanda Gosselin have a knack for capturing the little moments that mean a lot—a wink, a chortle, a happy puppy—in a way that's completely watchable, not belabored. Did you know your dad was checking his texts before you walked down the aisle? Or that your mom was tearing up as she zipped your dress? You will now. 800-806-9940, readysetfilm.com.

PLANNER

42 NORTH

A bagpiper who leads guests through a forest to the reception, a private fireworks display above a string-lit al fresco dinner party—with Britt Cole and Francie Dorman running the show, the sky is the limit. The luxury event planners work with only 10 couples a year, so you know you'll have their full attention—and all the unbridled creativity that comes with it—throughout the planning process. 978-233-8119, 42northweddings.com.

HAIRSTYLIST

DARREN LE

A master stylist at G2O Spa + Salon, Darren Le believes in celebrating the individuality of each bride who sits in his chair. That's why he's made it his business to master every coiffure his clients could possibly pin on their inspiration boards, from effortless



curls and waves to artistic updos with wisps and tendrils in just the right places. 857-205-4629, darronts.com.

MAKEUP ARTIST

DANI WAGENER, DW BEAUTY

Ever wonder how celebrities achieve that flawless red-carpet glow? It's all about the airbrush—makeup, that is. Boston beauty expert Dani Wagener, who's worked with the likes of Jenny McCarthy and Emily Deschanel, specializes in this technique. Armed with false eyelashes and the perfect lip color, she'll arrive at your prep site and promptly get about the business of making you look like a star. 326 A St., Boston, daniwagenerbeauty.com.

*Shop Till
You Drop*

WEDDING DRESSES, CLASSIC

L'ÉLITE BRIDAL BOUTIQUE

Some brides take longer than others to pinpoint their wedding-day style. If you already know that "timeless" and "sophisticated" top your list of gown criteria, skip the soul-searching and make an appointment at L'Élite. First opened in 1985, the elegant boutique impresses us time and again with an unrivaled selection of traditional yet fashion-forward gowns from top designers including Amsale, Reem Acra, and Jenny Packham. 14 Newbury St., Boston, 617-424-1010, lelite.com.

WEDDING DRESSES, INDIE

CEREMONY

In a town bursting with wedding talent, few pros come as highly recommended by their peers as bridal stylist Alix Childs. Bright and airy with lofted

ceilings, her studio is the perfect complement to an anything but ordinary selection of gowns, many sourced from talented fringe designers such as Sarah Seven and newcomer Alexandra Grecco. 53 River St., Boston, 857-277-1669, ceremony-boston.com.

LOCAL DRESS DESIGNER

LUKE AARON

Elegant and understated with classic silhouettes and minimal detailing, designer Luke Aaron's bridal gowns evoke the glamour of decades past—a fitting aesthetic for a self-professed history buff who once named Grace Kelly his dream client. Visit his atelier to customize one of his swoon-worthy dresses, each made to order in the fabric, color, neckline, and train length of your choosing. 20 Myrtle St., Boston, 857-263-7350, lukeararonboston.com.

BRIDESMAID DRESSES

BELLA BRIDESMAIDS

Tucked away on the fourth floor of an unmarked brick building, the Boston location of this national franchise can be easy to miss from the street. But passing it over would be a mistake: Not only does Bella carry gowns from top designers like Hayley Paige and Jenny Yoo, the shop's personable stylists make choosing one a breeze, offering helpful tips on everything from the most figure-flattering cuts to stress-free ordering. 715 Boylston St., Boston, 617-424-7231, bellabridesmaids.com.

MENSWEAR

HIVE & COLONY

Originally launched as a roving custom clothier in Manhattan (think: a food truck, but for made-to-measure menswear), Hive & Colony is now outfitting Boston's most fashionable grooms from its first brick-and-mortar, in Copley Place. The boutique, equipped with a measurement-capturing 3-D body scanner and a handsome bar, offers hundreds

of fabric options for customizable suits and tuxes: Choose a lapel, add sharp buttons, and stitch your wedding date into the lining for a truly memorable getup. Copley Place, Boston, 857-288-8515, hiveandcolony.com.

ACCESSORIES

MUSETTE

Past: We'll let you in on a little secret. The best accessories at this Back Bay gown showroom aren't actually in the showroom. Just a few minutes down the road, in the alteration shop, you'll find a treasure trove of bridal bling—Maria Elena baubles, Vera Wang belts, ornate Mac and Zoe filigree headpieces straight out of *The Great Gatsby*—presented as if you're shopping in a fine-jewelry store. A jewelry store where designers can craft a custom veil, or even turn your mom's into a fabulous something borrowed. 419 Boylston St., Boston, musettebridal.com.

BRIDAL LINGERIE

LULABELLE

Shapers for most sizes, strapless bras, lingerie tape to keep things in place: You'll find all the infrastructure necessary to help you slip seamlessly into your gown at this friendly South Shore shop. When the time comes to, ahem, slip out of it, the boutique also carries sexy European corsets from Simone Pérèle, not to mention Cosabella bralettes with plunging necklines and colorful Marie Jo demis. 222 Webster St., Hanover, 781-421-3754, mylulabelle.com.

ENGAGEMENT RINGS

BRILLIANT EARTH

Your relationship is conflict-free—shouldn't your ring be, too? The pros at Brilliant Earth go well beyond the industry standard, tracking diamonds from the time they're cut and polished. A selection of fresh settings made from recycled metals and one-

**4 WEDDING
TIMELINE:
6 MONTHS**
Take your 'maids dress shopping now to ensure plenty of time for delivery and alterations.

4 CREDITS
Cakes: Mayflower
Cake + Confections
Registry: Didriks
Engagement
Rings: Brilliant
Earth
Floral Designer:
Forêt Design
Studio

of-a-kind vintage looks, meanwhile, make it even easier to say yes. 38 Newbury St., Boston, 800-691-0952, brilliantearth.com.

WEDDING BANDS

ALCHEMY 925

This funky violet house in Belmont Center does a little matchmaking of its own, pairing couples with local jewelry designers to craft customized rings in just eight weeks' time. Need something even faster? Select from a deep inventory that ranges from traditional yellow-gold bands to standout pieces studded with pink sapphires and black diamonds. 48 Leonard St., Belmont, 617-484-9250, alchemy925.com.

REGISTRY

DIDRIKS

Building the perfect registry boils down to two things: variety and quality. With an array of treasures including luxe Alessi tableware, irresistibly soft Brahms Mount linens, and elegant Lippa glasses, this home-goods emporium—which shares space with kitchenware shop Local Root—checks both boxes. 2284 Washington St., Newton Lower Falls, 617-467-4847, didriks.com.

Sweat the Small Stuff

STATIONERY

FÊTE COLLECTION

Why spend nights clicking through hundreds of Etsy shops when you have Fête? Serving as your local connection to the most talented designers, printers, and calligraphers across the country, the team of paper and etiquette experts here will help you choose everything from custom invitations to menus. You'll get the gold

foil, embossing, and hand-lettering of your dreams coordinated through one friendly face, saving you the most precious resource of all during wedding planning: time. 345 D St., South Boston, 857-496-1350, shopfete.com.

CALLIGRAPHY

PAPERWEIGHT

In an increasingly digital world, there's still a place for superior penmanship—just ask Amberly Wallace. After learning the craft of calligraphy for her sister's wedding, the former account coordinator decided to turn her hobby into a business. So far, it's paid off: Marrying traditional calligraphy with modern fluidity, Wallace's lettering looks equally elegant on envelopes, terra cotta, shells, and any other surface you can dream up. paperweightink.com.

PARTY RENTALS

PEAK EVENT SERVICES

Party-rental juggernauts Peterson Party Center, Rentals Unlimited, Reserve, and Table Toppers of Newton have merged into a powerhouse brand that treats your wedding like the world's most important interior-design project. Want to convert your backyard into a mod lounge with specialty furniture? Need to transform a ballroom into a wood-paneled parlor lined with family photos? Whether your style is classic, edgy, or somewhere in between, you'll wish Peak could decorate your house, too. 36 Cabot Rd., Woburn, 781-729-4000, peakevents.com.

TRANSPORTATION

LE LIMO

Perhaps you've always dreamed of rolling up to the church in a vintage Rolls-Royce; maybe a stretch SUV outfitted with two bars is more your speed. Either way, you can trust Le Limo to get you down the aisle on time—and in style. The transportation pros even

offer a custom-made trolley car that'll fit 35 of your closest friends and family members. 224B Cherry St., Shrewsbury, 508-842-4790, letimo.com.

ALTERATIONS

ALL FIT TAILORING

Longing for an eight-point French bustle? Need a let-out that maintains the integrity of your gown's cut—but gives you some breathing room? This detail-oriented tailor will make sure your wedding-day attire works for you, with a menu of à la carte alterations and rush services for those who require last-minute fixes. 138 Newbury St., Boston, 617-901-0907, allfittailoring.com.

LIGHTING

SUZANNE B. LOWELL LIGHTING DESIGN

Choosing the right wedding venue is all about location, location, location. Transforming said space into an icy-blue winter wonderland or a romantic, red-hot dinner party is where Suzanne Lowell comes in. With a background in theater design, Lowell and her team can design and execute a custom lighting concept, drawing on dramatic chandeliers, pin spot lighting, laser-strewn dance floors, and everything in between. 781-899-5883, sblighting.com.

PHOTO BOOTH

THE DANGER BOOTH

Gone are the days of cramming into a claustrophobic black box; with this open-air photo-booth concept, you can fit as many as 14 pals into the frame. DIY your backdrop—a festive shower curtain should do the trick—or ask the Danger Booth's freelance designers to create something just for your special day. Either way, you'll get a digital gallery of images and high-res downloads (printouts are also available) to relive all of your wedding's silliest, funniest, and most outrageous moments. thedangerbooth.com.

PLANNING TIMELINE: 3 MONTHS

Attend your first gown fitting. Don't forget to bring the heels and undergarments you'll be wearing on the big day!

CREDITS >

Calligraphy: Paperweight
Floral Designer: Forêt Design Studio
Ballroom Venue: Harvard Club of Boston
Cape Cod Venue: Wychmere Beach Club
Berkshires Venue: The Mount

