BRIDAL GUIDE

Headache-free seating arrangements

(WMS) -What is the most difficult aspect of planning a wedding aside from conflicts of interest with your future mother-in-law? You guessed it - the seating arrangements. Brides-to-be can spend hours with their fiancé pouring over scribbled charts, colored construction paper cutouts and guest lists all in an attempt to make guests comfortable. Yet, this part of planning often ends up being the most stressful and could lead to a heated argument a few weeks before your wedding day. Is there an easier solution?

There are a few steps in developing your seating chart that can make the process less of a headache:

❑ Devote your attention to the task at hand. Choose a time to sit down with your fiancé that is free of other distractions. When the big game is on, a few hours before bedtime or when you've got something cooking on the stove are not practical times to concentrate. Decide on a time that is conducive to both of you, maybe at noon on Saturday when you're both rested and alert.

❑ Gather your tools. If you have all your elements in one place, you'll be less likely to get frazzled nerves searching your home for guest lists, RSVP cards and dinner selections.

It also might be helpful to have a room layout provided by your catering hall manager so that you'll know exactly where bathrooms, bars, kitchen doors and the stage are located.

❑ Accept that you can't please everyone. Part of the problem of seating arrangements is that the prospective couple tries to cater to all of the guests' needs.

Invariably there will be someone who won't get exactly what they want. But after all, the evening only lasts a few hours, and you're hoping guests won't be glued to their seats, therefore a short time of minor inconvenience shouldn't offend too many people. But just in case, save the awkward seating arrangements for the most easy-going guests.

❑ Rely on technology for assistance. There are several programs available that will take some of the work out of seating arrangements. According to www.seatingarrangement.com, their software allows you to set up and place all tables, enter a room layout, keep tallies of menu selections, print RSVP reports, design place cards and more.

❑ Make the party memorable. If your wedding is one to remember your guests will probably forget about where they sat anyway. So don't worry too much about it!

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