

August 11, 2008

ABC Of Weddings: T Is For Tables



jessica clare

Filed under: ABC Of Weddings, Reception · Posted by: Polkadot Bride at 3:22 pm



Toasts to the newlyweds are often given while guests are seated at **tables**. After **travel** and **transportation**, guests expect **thank** you notes!

Who would have thought there are so many options for how you seat your guests? Although you may be limited by your reception space, or if you're not, there are a myriad of ways of seating everyone at your wedding.

For the Bride & Groom

The Head Table

The most popular option in Australia is still the head table. A long rectangular table sits in the most prominent place of the reception room and the bride and groom are often flanked by their bridal party.

The table can be elevated, placed to the side of the room, the front of the room, or at one end of the dance floor.

The Sweetheart Table

A sweetheart table is a table just for the bride and groom. Often located near the dance floor and cake table, the sweetheart table allows the newlyweds a semi private dinner alone but is also beneficial for their bridal party who may want to sit with their partners.

Some couples love it as it eliminates bridal party seating issues and allows them to eat their first meal together quietly. Others don't enjoy it as it can be isolating and more 'on show' than a standard table.

Other Combinations

- You may choose to make your head table the same shape and size as your guests tables and sit the table in amongst your guests.
- You may choose to sit with your parents instead of your bridal party
- You may choose to seat your bridal party with their partners, or if at the same table sit the partners with you

- You may choose to have vacant places at a number of tables and sit at a different table of guests for every course.

For The Guests

Round

The most traditional option is to seat guests in numbers of 8-10 at large round tables. Most reception venues offer this option. Round Tables can typically seat between 8-12 guests

Square

Square tables are a modern take on the round and can create a better atmosphere for easy conversation between your guests. They can also look rather elegant and formal with an equal number of guests sitting on all sides. Decorations are made easier too- table runners fit better and centrepieces can take on a different feel, given that they have more space. Square tables typically seat between 2-3 guests on each side (8 or 12).

Rectangle

Long rectangular tables give a wedding an intimate, family like feel. Seating all guests at only two long tables will give a dramatic touch to your reception. Of course you could break them up, or set them up to line the end of the head table.

Rectangular tables- especially when there are only one or two for 100+ guests- do not promote mingling as well as round or square.

Alternate

Alternating the table top shape is a great way to provide a different feel to your reception. Mixing it up can give you a variety of options on how you want to seat guests.

Guests who know each other well might be comfortable at a square table, whereas a round table may help conversation for unfamiliar guests.

Cocktail/Bistro Tables

Perfect for those having a cocktail wedding, cocktail or bistro tables allow guests to rest their bags and drinks and provide spots to mingle. The ratio of these, is of course less than guests!

A low cocktail table may hold two guests and two chairs, while a tall (often called a highboy) is simply for standing.

Extra Tables

The Buffet Table

Nowadays, buffets are not limited to casual weddings. Formal weddings can provide delicious feasts, even breaking up buffets so there is a seafood buffet, salad buffet, cake buffet et. When done well it can be not only a feast for the mouth but also a feast for the eyes!

The Cake Table

Often displayed in front of the head table, the cake table holds the most delicious part of the wedding reception! The cake table can hold just the cake but is often decorated with rose petals and candles.

The Lolly Buffet

The lolly or candy buffet may be placed on the same table as the cake table. Ensure that this is placed in an area where there won't be a bottleneck if guests are gathered around it (which they surely will!)

The Guestbook Table

This table will hold the guest book or wishing tree. Situated near the door, or to the side of a reception room, the guest book table can hold your creative guest book or just a traditional version.

Other Tables May include

- Gift and card table
- Wishing well table
- Drinks table
- Photo/mementos table

The Guide

Although very popular in the USA, escort cards are not a familiar concept in Australia. Escort or seating cards are displayed during cocktail hour or just prior to the reception. Cards are placed alphabetically with guests names on them (a traditional choice is using small envelopes) Inside is a card stating the table where the guest is seated. Upon reaching the table, the guest will find their place card.

A more familiar option in Australia is the seating chart. Displayed by the door of the main dining room, guests can see their table quickly.

Working It Out

Working out where everybody is going to sit is every couple's headache. Relations may reach boiling point if seated nearby and when you have divorced parents well that's another problem! You may of course choose to let guests choose their own seats, but many couples find assigning seats an easier way of achieving a smooth reception.

Computer programs such as [Perfect Table Plan](#) and [Marziplanner](#) allow you to move guests 'virtually' to achieve the perfect mix. Then you can easily print out the final copy to give to your reception venue or wedding planner.

For the less technical, a hand drawn layout of your reception venue with your setup and a pad of sticky notes will allow you to move guests until you are happy with the final arrangement.

Extra Tips

- Consider a children's table manned by one or two qualified baby sitters. Serve kid friendly food, provide quiet toys, puzzles and colouring in books to keep children occupied.
- Don't sit couples too far from one another if you decide to split them up.
- Be conscious of sitting older guests too close to the speakers- they will be less tolerant of loud noise.
- If parents are divorced, depending on how amicable their relationship, consider having them 'host' their own tables.
- Ensure guests are not too squashed in their seats. Ensure everyone is able to feel comfortable without feeling like anyone is invading their personal space.
- Try to seat guests with others who have similar interests and are of similar ages.