



# Second that!

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN  
EXPECT WHEN FACED  
WITH 'I DO' TAKE TWO

Not everybody's first marriage is a fairytale affair destined to last ever after, but many people find true love again. While the thought of taking another plunge into the throws of 'I do' may seem frightening, for most couples the experience is usually very different and just as joyful as when they first walked down the aisle. And it's certainly encouraging to know that when it comes to wedding planning, 'having been there, done that' helps to simplify the process.

## WHAT'S EXPECTED

Event planner Emma Newman ([enweddings.co.nz](http://enweddings.co.nz)) says second weddings are usually much more laid-back and personal than the first. 'People have a better idea of what they want for themselves rather than creating the 'perfect' event based on others' expectations. To them, celebrating their special day with people who really matter is paramount.' Second-timer Chris Browne agrees: 'You're older and more self-confident, so you speak up and make the day about the two of you.'

Linda Darnill certainly felt the pressure of everyone's expectations when planning her first wedding. 'With more than 200 guests, it was a staunch large-scale event,' she remembers. 'Most of them were our parents' friends, as well as relations from both sides of our families who we didn't even know.' Dressed in what she describes as a 'white lace meringue', Linda's ceremony took place in a church, complete with hymns and a 90-year-old playing the organ.

'I do' number two couldn't have been more different. Linda's husband's Invercargill roots influenced the couple's Speights-themed wedding, which was held in a function centre decked out in old ploughs, hay bales and beer signs. The venue also featured a path for two quad bikes to travel down – the groom drove one, his best man the other. Church hymns? No Ma'am. The groom and his second in charge cruised down the aisle to the Speights Southern Man song, and the couple wed in front of an old pub facade.

With 80 guests, it was still a sizeable event, but Linda says this time the guest list was made up entirely of the couple's closest friends and family – people they chose to invite, not those they

## REMARRIAGE



felt pressured to include in their special day.

About 20 per cent of the weddings celebrant Pauline Grogan ([paulinegrogan.co.nz](http://paulinegrogan.co.nz)) has presided over are remarriages and in her experience, the majority of couples only invite 'true and trusted' friends. As second-time groom Ian Ramsey puts it, 'There's no obligation to invite Great Aunt Joy who you haven't seen in 15 years.'

As for the delicate issue of whether or not you should invite your respective ex-spouses, that depends on your relationship with the ex and whether your new partner is comfortable about inviting them. Emma cautions: 'If either one of you is concerned about the other's ex attending, they shouldn't be there. After all, your current relationship is your number one priority.'

Exes aside, when it comes to children from a previous marriage, usually couples want them to be involved in such an important occasion. Emma suggests involving them in roles such as ring bearer, usher or flower girl. 'And, if they're older, they could do a reading, make a speech or sing a song.'

If you're experiencing difficulties with a child over the second marriage, Emma strongly advises that you tread carefully as children are sensitive and can be under pressure from the other parent to not attend. 'Be aware of where the child is at emotionally and what the situation is like at the other parent's home,' she says. 'Don't force them into anything they're not comfortable with.'

When compiling the guest list, Emma also recommends thinking carefully about whether or not to invite people who don't approve of your second marriage, even if they are family. 'If you do invite someone you suspect might play up, have an upfront discussion with them ahead of time,' Emma says. 'Be really clear about why you're involving them in the wedding and that they'll be asked to leave if they disrupt the proceedings.'

### HONOURING TRADITION

Whether you incorporate traditional details such as a bouquet or bridal party in wedding number two or three depends on your individual circumstances, especially if it's the first wedding for one partner.

Generally, remarriages feature some traditions, but not the full gambit. For her upcoming Fiji wedding, Rebecca Wernham will incorporate classic elements, including a bouquet and a small wedding party. But rather than abstaining from seeing her partner before their afternoon ceremony, the couple plan to have lunch together and go for a swim on the morning of their big day.

Seeing that it was her partner's first wedding, Karen Morrissey was adamant to carry a traditional bouquet and have bridesmaids. And while she skipped the bridal shower, she wouldn't miss the hen party for anything. 'It's a brilliant excuse to get out and have fun,' Karen laughs.

Second-time bride Sharon Elliot didn't plan a hen party – after giving guests one month's notice for their Vanuatu nuptials, there just wasn't time to organise one. But back home, Sharon walked into a surprise hen party her friends had organised for her.

### SETTING THE DRESS CODE

If it's not your first wedding, chances are you won't want a repeat of the extravagant, 'virginal' white gown you may have worn the first time. Often, brides will go for their favourite colour and a style that suits their personality, body shape and complexion rather than a gown purely based on tradition.

According to designer Kate Dowman, gold, silver and champagne tones, as well as textured fabrics and lace are timeless, flattering choices for those getting ready to say 'I do' again. However, she also notes that if it's the first time for the groom, brides will often choose to wear a white or off-white gown.

When it comes to the style of the dress, Kate says the cut is everything. 'Women who remarry are usually older and dressing like a teenager won't do them any favours. A cut that exudes confidence, class and glamour is what will make her look sophisticated and sexy.'

Combining a white palette with a contemporary, relaxed style is also popular with brides who remarry. Rebecca is due to exchange vows in the tropics in a simple, white dress, 'minus the veil and long trail' that embellished her first gown. Or you could defy tradition altogether and dare to be bold like Sharon, who wore a bright, summery hot pink and orange silk dress to her island wedding. **W**

BY DEIRDRE ROBERT

### WISDOM IN EXPERIENCE

'At my first wedding I got carried away with the extravagance and fairytale of it all. The second time round it was more about family, friends and simply enjoying the day.' *Karen Morrissey*

'While it's not my first marriage, it's my husband's. I am determined to make everything leading up to the wedding as special as it can be for both of us. In a way my attitude towards it is as though I am tying the knot for the first time.' *Jamie Field*

'My groom presented my young daughters from a previous marriage with a necklace during the ceremony – it was a special way to involve them.' *Therese Lacombe*

'Do exactly what you want and don't let other people influence you. Just because it might not be as big as the first one doesn't mean it's not as special. I enjoyed my second wedding much more than my first.' *Sharon Elliot*

'Since we both had been married before, we tied the knot on a beach in Fiji. When we got home we had a casual party without the formality and it was plenty of fun.' *Marc Shafer*

'Instead of opting for a bridal party we gave each of our kids a role to play – from signing the register to reading a poem at the ceremony.' *Sharon Elliot*