

Talking point

THE HOT TOPIC THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION:
THIS ISSUE, WE ASK: ARE YOU FEELING PRESSURED TO DIY?

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If a scroll through #weddinggoals has left you feeling your plans are inadequate, you're not alone. But a crafty, Pinterest-perfect day is not the key to wedded bliss, insists *Rosie Patrick*



Photo: shutterstock.com

Down to YOU?

I'm fascinated with **5-Minute Crafts**. The videos pop up on Facebook and YouTube every now and then when I'm idly browsing in the evening and I. Just. Can't. Deal. The so-called 'life hacks' are downright bizarre. For instance, a quick check right this second reveals a feature on all the strange and useless things you can make in the comfort of your own home from concrete (oh, hold on, let me get my vat churning outside). I'm watching aghast as the person demonstrating pours the gloopy mess over a cluster of oranges to create an obscene fruit bowl. Other memorable moments include: the woman who whipped up a lip stain out of ink from a magazine and some balm; unbearably creepy hangers fashioned from Barbie legs; and the bed sheet that became a dress.

It's a similar horror show in the wedding world. Why is it that the minute people get engaged they think they're Neil Buchanan? Fair enough if you have an actual talent - I

have a bunch of artistic pals whose skills have definitely come in handy on w-day - but if you never even took Higher Art & Design, why are you now attempting to transform a wooden crate into a table plan?

And it's not just the havoc that can be wreaked with a paintbrush. Brides and grooms are desperate to put their stamp on their day and make it one of a kind, no matter how. We'd normally applaud such a mission, but how can we if it results in you weeping over a concave cake at 3am on the day you're due to walk down the aisle?

"I think couples often have the misconception that the most cost-effective way to plan a wedding is to go it alone," says planner Alison O'Neill of Pebblefish. "But in order to save money, you have to pay very close attention to your preparation. Ask yourself: what is your budget and what are your priorities - and how are you going to make both of these work together within your timeframe?"

The other culprit seems innocent

enough but ultimately breeds insecurity and unhealthy competition: yes, we're talking about social media.

"Social media very rarely shows you the time and effort that goes on behind the scenes at a DIY wedding," stresses Frill Factory's Alison Bell. "To anyone who feels pressurised, I would say pick just one aspect you feel comfortable with, that's within your skillset, and inject your own individuality into it. Even if it isn't Pinterest-worthy, it will still hold sentimental value. In the long run, that's worth more."

"Everyone wants to be first to have the newest craze," agrees makeup artist Leigh Blaney, "but I try to remind my brides that as long as you feel good and you're both there, that's all that counts. It's about you and your love - all the rest is extra."

WHAT NOT TO DO

Let's get real for a minute. Say you're determined to DIY: are there any areas you should avoid altogether? "Makeup!" laughs

Leigh. "Why would you? I mean, it's lovely when aunts produce their famous bakes and mums make personalised presents, but I hate to see people stressed and rushing about on the wedding day – the morning should be relaxed and fun, not filled with chores."

"Makeup is so important to many brides nowadays and it has changed so much in the last few years – I am often booked as soon as the venue is in the bag. It's about how it makes you feel. I'm speaking for myself, but most artists don't just do the makeup. We're also here to listen, calm nerves and set the mood."

Sandra Cunningham of the Lodge on Loch Lomond. That's because, she adds, there's a risk that without the benefit of the professionals' tried-and-tested methods, whatever it is that you've made with your own fair hands will be *Nailed It!* levels of disastrous. "A couple once provided rustic centrepieces that consisted of log slices and moss," remembers Sandra. "However, as these came fresh from a forest, the wood was full of creepy-crawlies and pretty muddy! We tried arranging the log slices on their tables, but they just didn't look right, and I was constantly Hoovering up dirt from all around them. I know for sure they



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As a general rule, steer clear of anything that will require your attention on the big day itself – this means food, flowers and venue styling. "You can't savour the time getting ready if you're back and forth to the venue, overseeing a set-up," Alison O'Neill agrees. "The experience of getting married doesn't just begin with the ceremony. So step back and allow your nearest and dearest to spoil you."

"I would only recommend doing it if it's something that's really meaningful to you," adds

weren't what the bride had pictured!"

HELP! I NEED SOMEBODY

What if you've come to terms with the fact that you do need a supplier brigade? Does that mean you'll have to over-stretch your budget or sacrifice creative control? "We have a range of styling services that are determined by the couple and how much involvement they want us to have," says Alison Bell. "You may believe you can't afford it, but you could end up spending the same amount of money as you would putting the day together yourself. There are more options out there than you might think."

And you may not even have to part with a single penny to get crucial expert guidance. "If you're offered a free consultation from a professional, take it," urges Alison O'Neill. "What is there to lose? Not only will you learn a lot by asking questions, but you and your partner will have the chance to discuss your vision, priorities and budget in a neutral environment. You may be surprised by how helpful this is."

PEOPLE POWER?

Of course, it might not be you who's wielding the glue gun. Can you trust crafty loved ones to come up with the DIY goods?

"Friends and family can be a fantastic

resource," Alison Bell states. "A wedding is a reasonable time to call in favours, and it can cut costs without compromising on quality. Just communicate clearly." Case in point: I'm currently customising a leather jacket for a pal's nuptials – it utilises my love of painting, gives me a role in the day and saves my friend some dosh. Win win!

But Sandra's not convinced: "People are always quick to volunteer when you first get engaged, but it takes more time than they think." Can they commit?

Alison O'Neill seconds this: "Before relying on relatives, consider how busy their lives are. Do they have children, or high-pressure jobs? Realistically, will they be available? Allocate simple, achievable tasks that won't result in fall-outs. Family politics shouldn't get in the way of a happy wedding day." ♥

