

Your Last-Minute Countdown

Although these details may be at the end of your list, you won't want to forget them.

by Jennifer Lazarus

It's crunch time, and you're pretty sure you've got everything in order. But "pretty sure" isn't good enough. So take a look at these to-dos—and be certain you're one hundred percent on top of everything.

Check in with your vendors. "Confirm arrangements with your pros and make sure they all have exact directions and a contact person's cell phone number," advises Julie Pryor of Pryor Events in Los Angeles. **Prepare final payments.** "Pay your vendors ahead of time," says Emille Duncan of Emille Duncan Event Planning in Columbus, Ohio. "Then you don't have to try to remember what is owed to whom on your wedding day."

Have an "insurance policy." "When your vendors collect your final payments, have each of them sign a note indicating he's received it," advises Samantha Goldberg of Gold Events Planning in New Jersey. "Then if anyone claims he wasn't paid, you will have proof that he was."

Create tip envelopes. "If you plan on tipping anyone, such as the banquet captain, wait staff or DJ, prepare envelopes with their names and insert the correct amounts," says Duncan. "Sealed envelopes are a whole lot safer than a big stack of bills in someone's pocket!"

Bring extra cash just in case. "You might want to give a gratuity to someone who you feel has gone above and beyond the call of duty," says Kathi R. Evans, event coordinator for All the Best Weddings and Celebrations, based in New Jersey.

Drop your luggage off early. "If you'll be staying overnight at a hotel after the reception, bring your bags the night before or have a friend or family member drop them off the morning of the wedding," suggests Sarah Lasardi, wedding planner for NY Engagements, LLC, in New York.

Pack for your honeymoon early. Doing it sooner rather than later is the way to guarantee one less worry," says Pryor. "Also, make sure your passports and travel documents are in order."

Pack properly for your destination wedding. "Make a list of all the important things you need to bring and, if possible, pack them as carry-on," says Cindy Clearwater of SunCelebrations in the Virgin Islands. "You may be able to pick up such necessities as drugstore items at your wedding destination, but don't assume so."

Have wedding items in place before the big day. Lasardi suggests having your wedding favors, toasting glasses, cake knife and server delivered to your reception site a few days beforehand. For anything going to the ceremony site, designate a trusted friend or family member to get everything there before the guests arrive.

Put your signature-drink recipes in writing. "Give a list to your bartender the day before, so he doesn't forget exactly what you want," says Sasha Souza of Sasha Souza Events in California.

Name those tunes. Songs are often

covered or remade by different bands, so double-check with your DJ or band leader that they have the versions you want.

Have a discussion with your photographer. "Leave nothing to chance. Give him or her a list of people you'd like to have photographed together," advises Pryor. "He'll probably get the obvious ones, but if you want a picture of your security sisters or everyone who flew in for your wedding or your new husband's coworkers, let your photographer know in advance."

Create a wedding-day photography schedule. Jean Picard, state coordinator for the Association of Bridal Consultants in California, says this is the best way to keep things moving smoothly. "For example," she says, "if the bride, the bridesmaids and the bride's family are being photographed at 3:15 p.m., this means they need to be at the location at 3:00 p.m., fully dressed, coiffed and made up. You don't want a bridesmaid thinking she can pull into the parking lot at 3:15 p.m. with rollers in her hair and her dress in a garment bag!"

Create a day-of itinerary. "Write a detailed schedule for the bridal party and family to be distributed after the rehearsal," suggests Jo Ann S. Woodward, wedding coordinator in Texas. "This lets people know where and when to arrive for photographs and so on."

Continued on page 228

