

SGM EVENTS WEDDING GUIDE

HOW SUCCESSFUL COUPLES BOOK A DJ

Tips, definitions, and the pro
advice we have collected over
years of weddings.





HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

EVERY MOMENT, IN ORDER

The guide walks your wedding day from the seating of guests to the last song, explaining what happens at each point and what your DJ needs to make it work.

Read it start to finish, or skip to the parts you are deciding on now. Pro tips throughout are the things we would tell you in a consultation.

FROM THE READING

"Wedding vows are not a declaration of present love but a mutually binding promise of future love." Tim and Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*

THE CEREMONY

FOUR PARTS

Seating of the guests, the procession, the ceremony, and the recession.

SEATING OF GUESTS

Starts about thirty minutes before the ceremony. Light background music, from the DJ or live musicians, sets the tone.

THE PROCESSION

The wedding party walks the aisle. Larger parties may use several songs: one for parents and grandparents, one for the party, one for the couple.

THE CEREMONY

Traditions vary widely. Your DJ and officiant should both know the specifics so everyone works from the same plan.

THE RECESSION

Upbeat music leads you away from the altar and into the celebration.

PRO TIP

Confirm exact titles and versions with your DJ, since most popular songs have several. Ask for songs to be extended or shortened to fit the moment.





THE CEREMONY

SOUND AND MICROPHONES

Some venues provide a ceremony setup and many do not. Your DJ can. Either way, coordinate it in one place so nothing is assumed. Two speakers, one on each side of the altar, so every guest can hear. A site without power needs a generator, or battery-powered speakers and microphones.

Officiants prefer a hands-free lavalier clip-on microphone, leaving both hands for notes. A handheld suits detailed vows, or guests taking part. High-end digital microphones prevent signal loss: Shure, Sennheiser, Audio Technica, and Line 6 are reputable, and a wired microphone is the safe backup.

PRO TIP

If a musician needs amplification and your DJ already covers ceremony sound, they can often share one system, which lowers the overall cost.

PRO TIP

DJs need a table and linens at every setup. Ordering through your rental company or caterer keeps the decor matching. Near water, wireless receivers can pick up interference from boats.

THE RECEPTION

COCKTAIL HOUR INTO DINNER

The cocktail reception begins right after the ceremony, while you, your wedding party, and immediate family are taking photos. Upbeat music that invites celebration and conversation.

As guests move to dinner, music drops to a conversational volume so people can mingle.

PRO TIP

Close the bar during the transition, so guests are seated when the grand entrance begins.





THE RECEPTION

GRAND ENTRANCE AND FIRST DANCE

Your DJ announces the wedding party in a set order over high-energy music. Two songs usually work best, one for parents and the party, another for the two of you. The order runs: flower girls, junior bridesmaids and ring bearers, then the wedding party, then the couple.

The first dance usually follows the entrance. If the dance floor sits in another room, it moves to after dinner and becomes the transition into open dancing.

PRO TIP

Line up in the same order as the ceremony entrance, with the maid or matron of honor and best man entering just before you.

PRO TIP

Give your DJ the running order and the correct pronunciation of every name being announced.

THE RECEPTION

WELCOME, BLESSING, DINNER

WELCOME SPEECH

A chance to thank your guests for spending the day with you.

PRAYER OR BLESSING

The officiant, a family member, or a friend can bless the meal where religion is part of the day.

DINNER

Music at a conversational level, so nobody raises their voice to talk at the table. Something light suits most rooms.

PRO TIP

Guests and vendors should give you time to eat. The start of dinner may be your only chance, and finishing early frees you to go table to table.





THE RECEPTION

TOASTS

A few kind words, and maybe a funny story, about the couple everyone came to celebrate.

Keep the whole set under fifteen minutes, with a few from each side. Excessive toasting loses the room.

PRO TIP

No music during toasts, other than quietly between them.

PRO TIP

For a champagne toast, your DJ works with the planner or venue coordinator so glasses are poured first. For an in-hand toast, the DJ reminds guests to visit the bar.

THE RECEPTION

ORGANIZED DANCES

After dinner and toasts, these are a reliable way to activate the dance floor.

PARENT DANCES

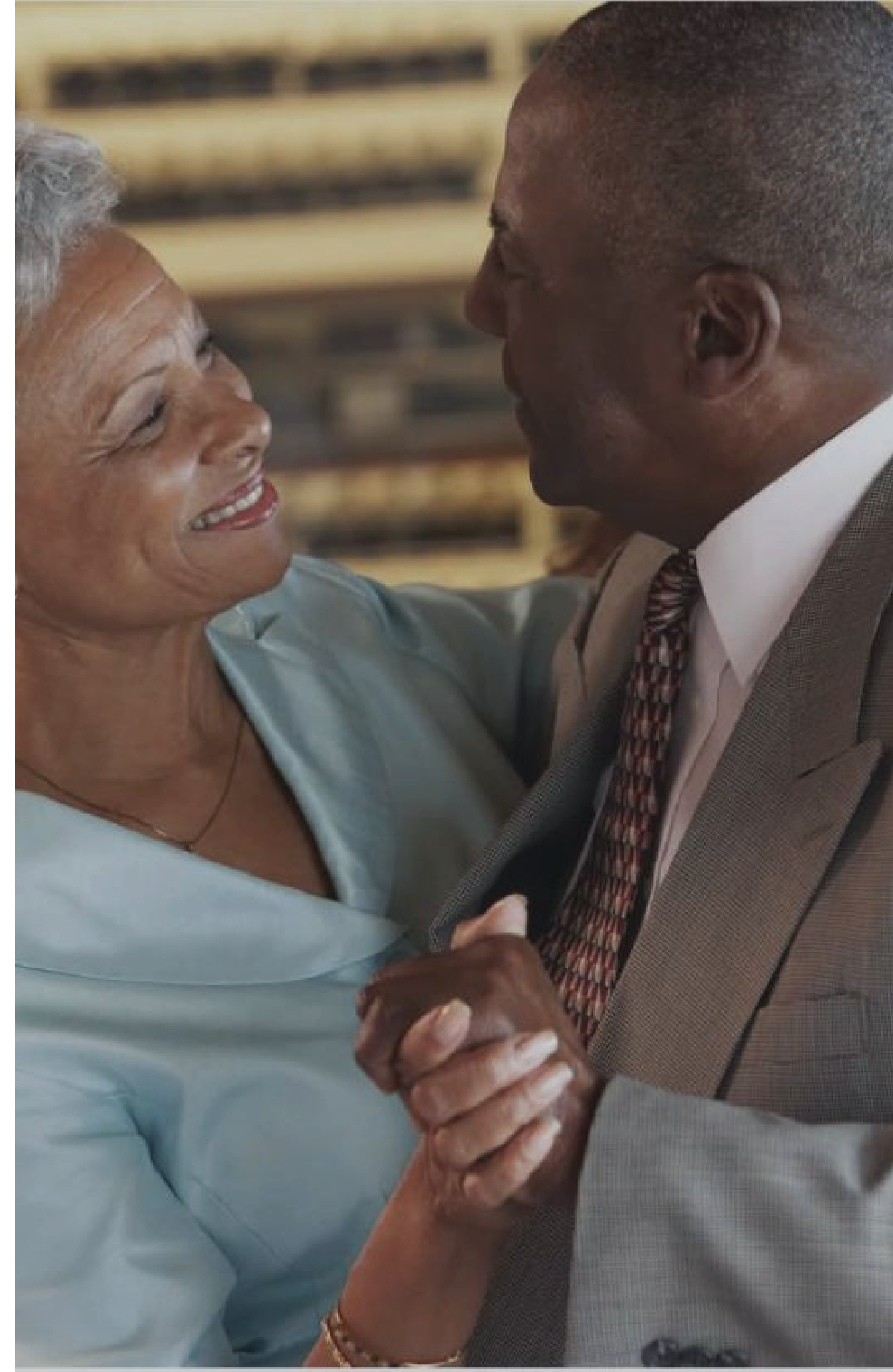
Individual dances between you and your parents. Father-daughter and mother-son are most common, but dancing with any beloved family member is a nice touch.

MONEY DANCE

Guests form two lines and pay for a dance with one of the newlyweds. Most couples include it where it is a family tradition. Choose at least three songs.

ANNIVERSARY DANCE

With several long-married couples present, your DJ calls couples off the floor by years married, beginning at less than twenty-four hours, until the longest marriage is left dancing alone.





THE RECEPTION

OPEN DANCING AND TRADITIONS

Once the formalities end, the floor opens. A good DJ takes a generational approach, starting with older music and moving contemporary as the night goes on.

BOUQUET TOSS

Thrown to the single guests. Tradition says whoever catches it marries next.

GARTER TOSS

Two parts, the retrieval and the toss. The same tradition, with the garter.

CAKE CUTTING

The cake symbolizes good fortune, and is said to bring luck to anyone who eats it.

THE LAST SONG

Draws everyone back to the floor. Ideally guests surround you and sing along.

PRO TIP

A group photo just before open dancing does double duty: everyone in one frame, and everyone already standing on the floor. Right after, drop the lights, turn on the dance floor lighting, and play something well known.

CHOOSING YOUR DJ

EXPERIENCE IS THE WHOLE THING

There are three kinds of DJ. Radio DJs play to listeners over the air. Club DJs run dance floors in bars and nightclubs. Mobile DJs play private events and bring their own sound. A wedding DJ is a mobile DJ.

Each background leaves a gap. Private-event DJs may not blend genres seamlessly. Traditional wedding DJs may not hold a floor for hours or know current music. Club DJs may be uncomfortable on a microphone or following a timeline.

Our DJs work both club rooms and weddings. Reading the crowd is the hardest skill in the job and takes years to master.

HOW TO JUDGE ONE

The best DJs come from solid reviews, word of mouth, and referrals. Meet a few, and see one work if you can.

A SHORT HISTORY

1943, records played in public for the first time. 1947, twin turntables. 1969, the first DJ mixer and the first beat match. 1973, hip-hop pairs the DJ and the MC. 1979, the Technics SL-1200 MK2 becomes the standard. 2004, Serato moves DJing to software.



A close-up photograph of a brown, woven fabric with a diamond-shaped pattern. In the lower right corner, a portion of a metallic, dome-shaped object, possibly a speaker or a piece of jewelry, is visible. The background is a solid dark blue-grey color.

BEHIND THE BOOTH

SOUND AND GEAR

SPEAKERS

Speaker tops carry the midrange and highs, and some bass. Above a certain guest count you want tops and a bass bin together.

MIXING THE MUSIC

A DJ works from a mixer and a source controller, often two turntables. The mixer takes several sources at once so music blends seamlessly, and holds inputs for microphones used for announcements and toasts.

HEADPHONES

Used to cue the next song and mix it accurately into the one playing.

ENHANCEMENTS

LIGHTING AND EXTRAS

UPLIGHTING

Accents walls in your colors. Wireless and battery powered, placed anywhere, color changed from a phone.

PIN SPOTS

Focused beams that pick out the sweetheart table, the cake, or a candy table.

PHOTO BOOTH

Above 200 guests, an open-air booth fits more people per photo and keeps the line short.

DANCE FLOOR LIGHTING

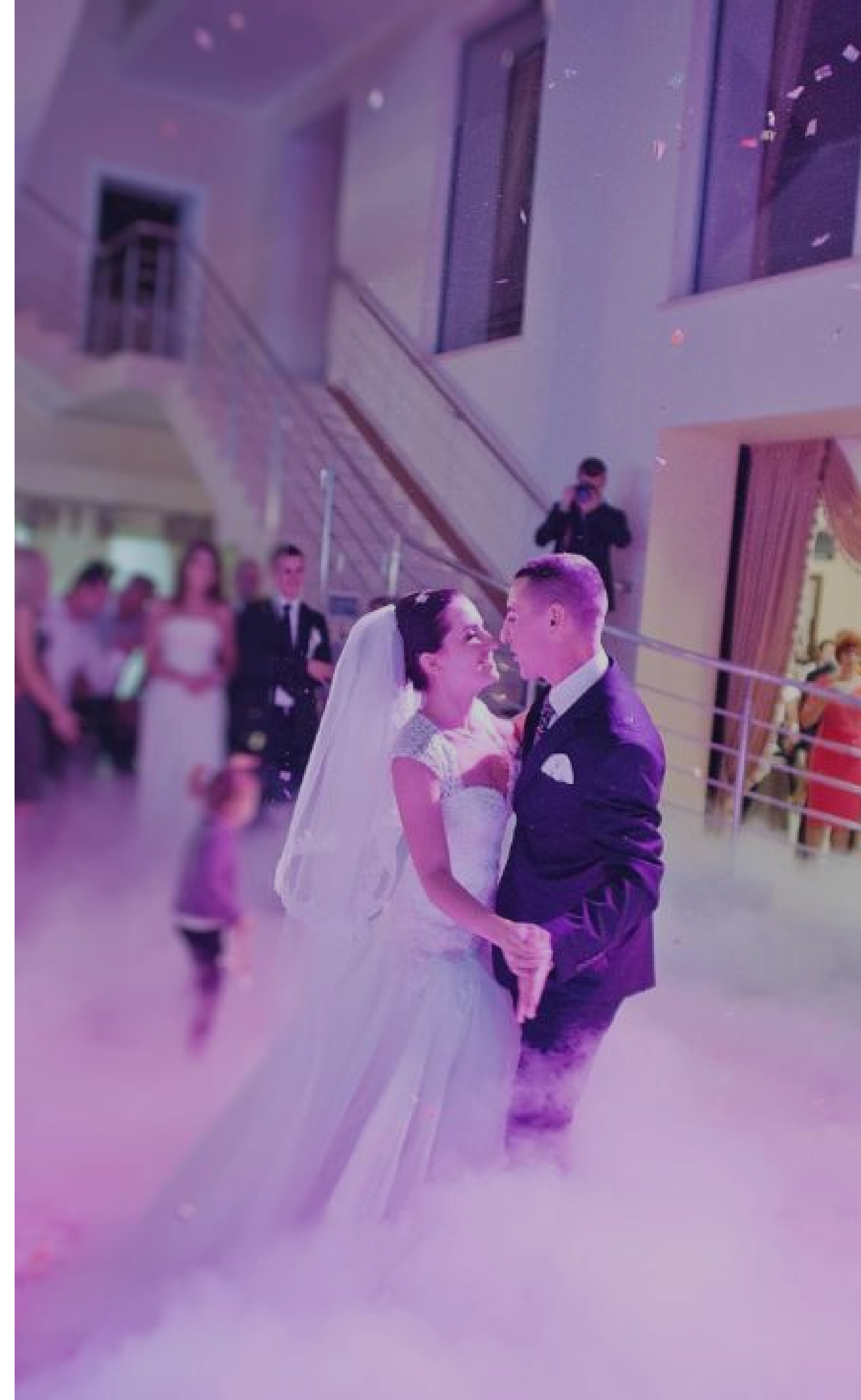
Multi-colored lights, manual or sound activated, that build a club atmosphere.

MONOGRAMS

Initials projected on a wall or floor, via a metal gobo and gobo light, or an LED projector that can also run a dinner slideshow.

PRO TIPS

Send uplight colors before the day. An uplight under a linen-draped table makes it glow. Gobo monograms need lead time to manufacture. Ambient light ruins projection, so ask for high lumen output. No strobe lighting, ever.





THE VENUE

WHERE YOU HOLD IT MATTERS

CHURCHES

Often provide speakers and microphones, or music comes from the choir or organ. Usually the ceremony only.

BEACHES AND PARKS

Permitted through the city and often affordable. Rarely any power, and some restrict generators.

UNIQUE SPACES

Four walls and power outlets. An empty canvas for a custom wedding.

HOTELS

Can host everything in one place. Sound is more often the DJ's responsibility than the hotel's.

WINERIES

Host both, often using the vineyard and storage rooms.

ASK EVERY VENUE

Decibel restrictions. Available power. Whether a separate setup is possible per location. Insurance requirements, usually one million in liability. Access at least two hours before the ceremony.

LOGISTICS

PLANNERS, VENUES, AND DISTANCE

WITH A PLANNER

They work with vendors and your DJ for months beforehand. The two should speak before the day.

WITHOUT ONE

Workable if you are organized and can delegate. On-site coordinators prioritize the venue, banquet captains the food. A planner prioritizes you. What you need is a detailed timeline, and we recommend a three-day itinerary.

TWO LOCATIONS

Your DJ sets up the reception first, returns to the ceremony, runs it, then breaks it down. An assistant may be needed so music is playing when guests reach cocktail hour.

DESTINATION WEDDINGS

Your DJ travels with what they can and sources the rest locally, arriving a day or more early. Mileage, flights, hotel, and meals can be extra.



STARTER PLAYLIST

SOMEWHERE TO START

MOMENT	CLASSIC / CURRENT
Seating	Clarke, Trumpet Voluntary Jack Johnson, Better Together
Procession	Pachelbel, Canon in D Ben E. King, Stand by Me
Recession	Mendelssohn, Wedding March Stevie Wonder, Signed Sealed Delivered
Cocktail hour	Vitamin String Quartet, Home Michael Buble, Crazy Little Thing Called Love
Into dinner	Frank Sinatra, The Way You Look Tonight Jason Mraz and Colbie Caillat, Lucky
Grand entrance	Kool & the Gang, Celebration Bruno Mars, Uptown Funk
First dance	Etta James, At Last Ed Sheeran, Thinking Out Loud
Dinner	The Piano Guys, The Cello Song Christina Perri, A Thousand Years
Father-daughter	The Temptations, My Girl John Mayer, Daughters

MOMENT	CLASSIC / CURRENT
Mother-son	Ben E. King, Stand By Me T. Carter Music, A Mother’s Song
Money dance	Louis Armstrong, What a Wonderful World Hidden Beach Recordings, Get Money
Anniversary	Nat King Cole, Unforgettable Israel Kamakawiwo’ole, Somewhere Over the Rainbow
Bouquet toss	Aretha Franklin, Respect Beyonce, Single Ladies
Garter retrieval	Marvin Gaye, Let’s Get It On Ginuwine, Pony
Garter toss	Queen, Another One Bites the Dust Robin Thicke, Blurred Lines
Cake cutting	The Archies, Sugar Sugar DNCE, Cake by the Ocean
The last song	Bill Medley, (I’ve Had) The Time of My Life Justin Timberlake, Can’t Stop the Feeling

NEXT STEP

LET'S SET UP YOUR CONSULTATION

Consultations are complimentary, and you meet the DJ before anything is signed. Email us with your date and venue and we will take it from there.

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