

FALL/WINTER 2008

# the knot

NEW YORK METRO  
NYC | HUDSON VALLEY | CONNECTICUT

[theknot.com/newyorkmetro](http://theknot.com/newyorkmetro)

the most  
glamorous  
cakes ever

stylish  
reception  
ideas

new  
bridal  
beauty tips

# 14 metro new york weddings

the ultimate wedding guide for:  
New York City | Long Island | Westchester  
Rockland | The Hudson Valley | Connecticut

\$4.99 Display Until November 3, 2008



0 71486 01890 2



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Kimberly and Edward invited rehearsal dinner guests to an elegant barbecue; simple white escort cards printed in a fun black font leaned against martini glasses filled with fresh salad; tables draped with black-and-white-checked linens and topped with sunflowers enhanced the event's rustic setting.



## Q+A rehearsal dinners

Learn the ins and outs of pulling off a stylish prewedding event. BY CHARLI PENN

With your focus on the ceremony and reception, don't let the rehearsal dinner details slip through the cracks. A well-planned rehearsal will work out any last-minute snafus and can be a great chance for friends and family to mingle before the wedding. We have answers to common questions about day-before festivities and advice for sticky situations. >>



## toasting 101

A quick guide to saying "cheers"

### WHEN TO TOAST

Traditionally, the father of the groom will be responsible for kicking things off at the beginning of the meal.

### WHO TOASTS

The parents of the bride and groom, the best man and maid of honor, and any other friend or family member is welcome to say a few words.

### Toasting Dos and Don'ts

**DO** keep it short.  
**DON'T** bring up a sad or awkward memory.  
**DO** keep it clean.  
**DON'T** interrupt someone else's toast.

**DO** honor your bride or groom.

**DON'T** have too much to drink before it's your turn at the mic.

**DO** thank your parents and anyone else who has played an important role in your life.

**DON'T** reveal personal information about someone else without checking with the person first.

**DO** give others an opportunity to speak when you're done.

**DON'T** use an ex's name in any sentence.

**DO** make a point of watching your mouth around the kids.

### Q I don't want to put all of the financial responsibility on the groom's parents. Can we split costs?

Of course you can. This is one of those planning areas where breaking tradition often makes sense. No one should be financially burdened when planning the rehearsal dinner. If you're worried that the expense is too much for one family, splitting the costs will make things easier. In some cases, families create a wedding fund and let members from both sides contribute what they can toward wedding-related activities. The best friends of the bride and/or groom have also been known to foot the bill every now and then. The night's events should be fun, not a burden—remember this if the planning ideas begin to outgrow your budget.

### Q I am a single mom who is totally taking care of the rehearsal dinner. Can I make the initial toast and act as hostess? I have two brothers-in-law who could help, although choosing one over the other would create another problem. Will today's etiquette permit me to be in charge?

Of course it will! If you are hosting this party, it's only right that you should play hostess and start off the toasts. There's no reason to have your brothers-in-law do it just because they are men! Remember, you should use etiquette only in ways that work for you or make your life easier. It sounds like you've already thought of the best and most logical solution in this case, so you should feel free to go for it!

### Q Are there any special things the groom's parents should make sure happen at the rehearsal dinner?

The purpose of the rehearsal dinner is to provide an intimate setting for the two families to mingle before the big event. There's nothing in particular that must happen, although the groom's parents might want to give a toast just before or just after the meal. You can simply welcome the family and wedding party, express your eager anticipation of the wedding, and declare the festivities officially begun!

### Q Who should speak at the rehearsal dinner?

Any guest who feels comfortable can make a speech. It's a great time for college friends and out-of-towners to share stories and memories with you, your families, and friends. Your parents should also be given time to speak and salute your union. Speeches can slow the pace of a reception, so it's nice to have a venue for additional reminiscing.

### Q How long should the rehearsal dinner last?

Plan it so there's enough time after work for your bridal party to make it to the venue but not so late that guests will be starving. It's best to allot about an hour for the rehearsal. That factors in roughly 20 minutes to wait for everyone to arrive and then another 40 to run >>

## 5 rehearsal dinner themes

### Fun-filled ideas for a memorable dinner

**1 LATIN LUNCH** Kick off festivities with a twist—think mojitos, cigar rollers, and spicy tapas. To commit to the theme, splurge on flamenco dancers. You can even send guests invitations written in English and Spanish.

**2 POOLSIDE PARTY** Summer wedding? Beat the heat after the rehearsal by having guests join you poolside for some blue cocktails, water games, and burgers on the grill. For a special touch, pass out monogrammed beach balls or towels as the perfect party

**3 OLD WESTERN** Cowboy hats for all, with a smorgasbord of barbecue meats and spicy sides. Watching your friends as they attempt to square dance after a few cocktails will provide a moment to remember (as well as an utterly hilarious photo op).

**4 CARNIVAL CELEBRATION** Have a Sunday afternoon rehearsal and be (very) young again: Hire a caricature artist, set up a pie-eating contest, and let the guests spin their own cotton candy. Add on free pony rides for the kids, and everyone wins.

**5 LITTLE ITALY** Pick a venue with patio-style dining and decorate with your favorite tablecloths and candlesticks. While guests enjoy family-style dining beneath the stars, have an accordion player serenade them. They'll never want to say "ciao."

through the ceremony a time or two. The length of the dinner is flexible, but it's nice to pick a place that won't be rushing you out the door.

### Q Is it a requirement that I hold my rehearsal on the evening before the wedding?

The best time to hold a wedding rehearsal is on an afternoon or evening close to the event that accommodates the schedules of those in your wedding party. (After all, they need to be there.) What works for you may not work for them, so you'll need to agree on a date as far in advance as possible. The day before a wedding can be very hectic, so it may not always be an ideal time for relaxation and reflection (both of which are essential elements of the dinner). Try a weekday, like a Thursday night. You may actually find you get better rates at restaurants since Thursdays are typically a slower night. However, there is one decided benefit to throwing the dinner the night before: It will provide all of your out-of-town wedding party members the chance to arrive and get themselves settled in without having to take any additional time off from work.

**Q I have a very close family -- in fact, five of my cousins are in my wedding. Because we are so close, I will have more than 45 people at the dinner. Would it be all right to have the dinner at a casual Italian restaurant? My in-laws are concerned that they will look cheap, but I think it would be fun for everyone to get to know each other. What do you think?**

The rehearsal dinner is the perfect opportunity to let your families get to know each other in a more casual atmosphere. Your idea is not tacky at all – and guests will probably really enjoy it! The formal wedding

will be that much nicer and more fun because all the key players are already comfortable with each other. And a "casual" rehearsal dinner doesn't mean it's unstylish.

### Q How far in advance is it necessary for us to begin planning our rehearsal dinner?

If it's a relaxed affair, there's a bigger window, but you should still begin thinking about where you'll hold your rehearsal dinner between three and six months before the wedding. As with the ceremony, if you have your mind set on a particular venue that's extremely popular, the sooner you reserve it, the better your chances of getting what you want.

### Q Should guests pay for anything at the rehearsal dinner?

Traditionally, they don't pay for a thing. (Think of them as VIPs, and you're inviting them to join you for a celebration.) Indeed, some guests may even find it to be rude or tacky if you ask them to chip in. If you want to have a rehearsal dinner but suspect that your budget simply can't handle the cost of a per-plate meal, consider having a potluck or picnic and ask some family members to help with the preparation of your favorite dishes. There is one possible exception to the payment rule: if you casually asked a group of people to meet up at a local bar or nightclub after the rehearsal dinner, your guests most likely wouldn't expect you to pay for everyone's admission and/or drinks.

*Special thanks to Annie Lee of Daughter of Design.*



Plan your postwedding brunch at [theknot.com/brunch](http://theknot.com/brunch)