

How to Have A Great Maui Wedding GUARANTEED



The Secrets You Absolutely
Must Know to Insure You Have
An Awesome Destination Wedding

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Congratulations! You're getting married! And you're also thinking about coming to Maui to tie the knot, so you have already made two important decisions that thousands upon thousands of wise couples have also done. If you'll follow our suggestions, this e-book is designed to show you how to have a Great Maui wedding—guaranteed!

This e-book is based upon our 15 years of experience as a Maui wedding company to share with you some ideas on how you can have an absolutely awesome wedding. We'll also share with you a few things that you want to avoid doing in order to keep from having problems with your wedding here in Hawaii.

This e-book is designed primarily for couples having smaller weddings of just a few people. If you plan to have a larger wedding be sure and contact me as I will be more than happy to give you a lot of great ideas for larger wedding parties.

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Chapter 1

Important First Decisions You Must Make

Why Do You Want a Destination Wedding?

Having a destination wedding is actually a very good idea. If you stay home, the average wedding will cost you about \$24,000. But if you live in a larger city, that cost will probably be much higher. So going to a more exotic locale can be both less expensive and also much more fun!

But you obviously need to know why you want to have a destination wedding so that you don't have second thoughts later after you've invested a lot of time and money in planning your wedding. Destination weddings are really not all that hard to plan (especially if they are smaller) if you have a plan and follow that plan. And that's the reason you're reading this book.

Many couples want to run off to have a simple wedding in a locale like Hawaii because they want to escape the family and friends. Eloping is really not that bad of an idea for many couples. At least if its just the two of you, most of your decisions will be a lot simpler. You'll also be able to save money, and you're likely to have a much better time. (That's just my opinion from all of the weddings I seen over the years where just the couple comes by themselves).

Why Should You Come to Hawaii?

Hawaii is probably one of the best places you can go

on earth to have a romantic wedding. There is something exciting about being here that you'll just love. Now of course there are many exotic locales where you can go to get married, but none matches what Hawaii has to offer. Beautiful year-round weather. Great oceans and beaches. Fine dining. AND, you are still in the United States.

Why Should You Choose Maui?

Of all the major islands in the Hawaiian chain, I think you'll find that Maui has the best reputation for being the best possible location for a beautiful destination wedding. Oahu, where Honolulu is found, is crowded. There are a lot of people on that little island (well over a million) and it is hard to find any really private beaches.

The Big Island (also known as Hawaii) has bad air (we call it "vog" because it comes from the volcano) and there are not nearly as many nice beaches where you can get married.

Kauai is a smaller island but it gets a lot of rain and most of the best beaches are on the east side of the island where its difficult to get a decent sunset.

Even the local Hawaiians have a saying, "Maui no ko oi." Which means: "Maui is the best." The island is not too small, but not too big either. It's not crowded, but there is a lot to see. And most important, Maui has some great quiet beaches facing into the western horizon which make for the perfect setting for sunset weddings.

You really will likely be happiest getting married on Maui.

Where to Stay on Maui

There are several major areas on Maui where people work and live. The north shore not far from the airport is more of a local area. There aren't many hotels in Wailuku or Kahalui and trust me when I say that you don't want to spend your time in those areas. There are a few condos and B & B's more towards Paia and Haiku but the area is more rainy and there aren't a lot of activities and things to do in that area.

West Maui is very popular with tourists. Lots of new hotels have been built in the last ten years and because of all the crowding that has come from those hotels, the state has restricted the number of beaches that are available for weddings on the west side. We estimated at one point that a third of our weddings on the west side were rained upon, so that's another reason not to schedule a wedding up there.

When they added all of those new hotels, they did not widen the two lane road that connects west Maui with the rest of the island. So if you are staying up on that side of the island and your wedding is on a beach on the south side, it could be that rush hour traffic or an accident could cause you to be late to your wedding. If an accident happens on that road coming around the pali that includes a fatality, they will just close the road altogether keeping everyone from going or coming from the west side to the rest of Maui, which would not be a good situation for your wedding.

The south side of Maui is where the best beaches are located. These beaches are less likely to have wind or rain because it is much drier than the other areas of the island.

These beaches are much less crowded so you are much more likely to have a more secluded wedding.

If you are going to have your wedding on the south side, we recommend that you also stay on the south side of the island. You'll have less driving to get to your wedding and you'll likely experience much better weather during your stay on Maui.

How Much Will You Budget For Your Wedding?

Of course, you should try to get an idea how much you can spend on your wedding so that you can get a better idea how big your wedding will be and what types of services you want to include. If you are planning to go on a nice honeymoon anyway, one of the great things about being married in Maui is that when the wedding is over, you'll already be in paradise!

Once you establish your budget you can then begin to do some price comparisons for your wedding, your airfare and your accommodations. A good Maui wedding coordinator can often give you some great suggestions about where to stay and what are some good travel packages to get (I know that I can do that for you).

How Many People Will You Be Bringing?

The number of people you bring to your wedding is probably one of the biggest considerations in your costs (especially if you are paying for any of them). We have found that larger weddings just take more time from us as a

wedding coordinating company, so we inevitably have to charge more for a greater number of people.

For the sake of your coordinator, be certain that you give her an accurate count of how many people will be coming to your wedding. If you are having a beach wedding, the State asks us to inform them of the exact number of people for the beach access permit that we'll pull for your wedding. And there is now a limit to the size of groups on the beach.

The more formal your wedding will be, the more of this information you need to share with your coordinator. She is the one who will help make sure that everything goes according to your wishes, and if she doesn't know what you have in mind, you might end up being disappointed.

Choose Your Approximate Date

It is important to have a target date in mind for your wedding. At this stage your date should probably only be approximate as you will have many different things to coordinate together, like: your work schedules and getting off; your family and friends available for your date; the wedding company's availability; being able to get travel and accommodations. If you're planning to come to Maui in December or early January (which is peak season here), and the time is short, you may find that it is impossible to get accommodations because all of the available rooms are taken. I've had couples in that situation.

So keep your date approximate at this stage if you can.

Chapter 2

Choosing Your Maui Wedding Company

Choosing a Maui wedding company can be difficult simply because there are a lot of companies who do weddings here, and when you're just looking at a web pages from the mainland, they might all seem to be a little like one another. So here are some suggestions about what to look for.

What Should You Look For?

First, I would suggest you choose a company that has a decent website. Companies that haven't put much time or effort into their web presence may not be very detail oriented. And for your wedding, you want a company and a coordinator that will definitely take care of all the details so that you don't have to stress out.

You also want a company that either answers their phone, or who gets back to your right away if you miss them. Nothing is more frustrating (to me) than to call someone who takes days before you hear from them. That's one of the things that I always work at doing: being responsive to my brides that call. I love to catch them when they call, but if I miss them, I try to get back to them right away.

Don't let a cheap price be your only objective. There have been a lot of times when I have lost a wedding to another company simply because they offered their services for as little as \$20 cheaper. Sometimes I shudder for them because the company that they have chosen might have

cheap prices, but the value of their service isn't very high. So be careful not to let the price be your final factor in your decision making.

Does the company have much experience? You certainly want a company that has been around long enough to have done a few weddings. Experience doesn't guarantee that a company will do a good job for you, but it certainly helps. Because we've performed Maui weddings for over 15 years, it has definitely enabled us to avoid a lot of problems. And of course, you should be able to see that experience right here in this little e-book.

If your wedding is going to be on the larger side, make sure your coordinator has experience with larger custom weddings. Trust me, there is a big difference between small beach weddings and the larger groups that want to have a formal wedding, maybe a private location, a reception, and/or a catered dinner. And not every coordinator is equipped to handle a wedding like that, so be sure they have the right kind of expertise to coordinate your wedding.

Are they rated by BBB? I can tell you that there are a few wedding companies on Maui that have a horrible track record of unsatisfied couples. Everyone who is in the business knows them and almost all of us have had couples complain to us about them. Obviously, I don't want to name names, but if you're not careful you can end up being one of their unhappy couples. Probably the best suggestion I can make is to check them out with the Better Business Bureau. Companies that have a truly bad reputation are usually well known with the BBB. (Our rating is A+ I might add).

Give Some Companies A Call

You want a wedding company that treats you with the spirit of aloha. Is the person who talks to you on the phone warm and personal? If they aren't, it should make you wonder how you will be treated when you are there on the island. I've often thought that people like to do business with people who are nice, and if you are not nice to them, they'll go somewhere else. So to me this is a very important part of how you should judge a Maui wedding company.

I hope when you are searching for a Maui wedding company that you'll include me in your list of companies to call. I would love to add to the information in this short ebook to help fill in any missing pieces of information that will help you have your truly awesome wedding here on Maui. Also, if you call me, I'll be happy to give you all of the details about packages and services that you might want so that you can get a better idea what will fit your needs.

I'll even give you my toll free phone number: 1-800-856-3270. You can also email me if that is easier: susan@mauime.com.

Chapter 3

Setting Up All the Details Of Your Maui Wedding

This chapter is meant to help you get a little closer to nailing down some of your thinking which you began in Chapter 1. This information is very important to have clarified in your head before you talk to your coordinator (to be). Often when a bride calls me I will help her establish the important answers on these details, but if you end up going with another company, of course, I can't guarantee that the coordinator will ask you all of these questions.

What Kind of Wedding Do You Want?

By the "kind" I mean big or small, beach wedding or private affair? Most of our smaller weddings are usually just weddings on one of Maui exquisite beaches. Compared to the beaches almost anywhere else, you'll love the ones we use here on Maui.

A few of our couples want to hold their weddings at a water fall or a garden, at a resort, or at a condo where they're staying. Some are larger and they are looking for a private location. Whatever you think you want, you should definitely have your desires thought out before you contact your coordinator.

What Time of Day for Your Wedding?

This is a very important consideration. On popular

dates like Valentines, we'll often do up to five weddings throughout the day. But usually we only have one or two weddings at sunset. Because sunset weddings are our most popular ceremonies, you want to decide if that is important to you. Some couples prefer to go to a luau after their wedding. If you do that, you will not be able to get sunset photography. And your coordinator needs to know what's in your schedule so that the wedding is finished with enough time for you to be able to arrive on time for the luau.

Personally, I would recommend that you go to a luau the day after your wedding because nothing beats having sunset photography. But make absolutely certain that you communicate your full intentions with your coordinator what time of day you want. I have a sunset calendar so I can tell you with a certainty amount of security what time your wedding will be many months off (as the sunset times varies about one and a half hours from summer to winter).

When Do You Want to Get Married?

If you want to be married on Valentine's day, call early as most companies are usually pretty booked on that date. I've had many couples call me over a year in advance because they wanted a specific date that they knew would be popular. It was that way with 7-7-07 and 8-8-08, and 3-3-13, etc. If you have a memorable date in your relationship (like the anniversary of when you met or got engaged) again, call early because a lot of couples book in advance. As I mentioned earlier, if you are flexible, it will be much easier for you not to be disappointed.

You do have to think about some of the logistics issues, like can you both get off work? Can you afford the airplane fare? This is especially true if it is a short notice before your date so that ticket prices might be a bit higher than normal.

There is a fine line here as to what you do first. You need to know about your personal schedules, and the availability of your party, and you need to get a rough confirmation of your travel and accommodations so you know what you're up against, BEFORE you book anything. Then call your coordinator to make sure that she has your date (or something near it) available.

Book Your Wedding

Once everything seems to be in sync, it's probably time to book your wedding date and time of day with your coordinator. Now some coordinators won't allow you to change your date in the event that your plans change and you have to switch your date. For small weddings where we don't have a ton of services (like private locations, catering and a lot of vendors), I will often wave any charge to change your date. But you can't expect that from most coordinators if you have to change your wedding date.

When you call your coordinating company, if you haven't already figured this out based upon their website or previous conversations with her, you should now determine what package and services you want. I always recommend to my couples that they choose the smallest package where all of the services in it are something they want and will use. It is much easier to add what you want, so we prefer that you

take a smaller package and then add in any services that you want which aren't in it.

At this stage with your coordinator you want to go over your choice of packages and the extra services that you want to add. Be sure that you talk about every service so that you know that you are getting what you think you are receiving. You don't want to assume you're getting something and find out at your wedding it wasn't included.

Although I often talk to brides for several calls before they book, we never place their wedding on our schedule until we actually receive their deposit. Most companies have non refundable deposits, which is our way here in the industry of making certain that a couple is serious about their booking.

When you've booked your wedding the coordinator should send you some kind of email addressed right to you that details specifically everything you are receiving including all the optional items, the flower preferences, the ceremony, the date, the time and anything else you have agreed upon together. It's definitely nice to have it all in writing, clarifying specifically what you have ordered (not just some generic email) along with the total price so that you are not disappointed later.

Time to Book Your Travel and Accommodations

I would suggest that you talk to your coordinator about her suggestions when it comes to travel and accommodations. I've been doing this for years and I know some great condos and hotels that often offer great deals, which most travel agents just won't know about. I also know

where the beach is located and what side of the island I would recommend you stay on so that you'll be close to your wedding site.

Now if you already have your accommodations, your coordinator won't be able to make any suggestions, but be sure and let her know where you're staying early. Sometimes our couples will be staying up on the west side of Maui and want to get married on the south side. That's an hour's drive—if there are no traffic problems. But it just makes more sense to stay on the south side of the island if you're going to get married there (because there are more and better beaches on the south side than anywhere else).

Book Your Travel and Accommodations

Once you've tentatively booked your wedding you can formalize your travel. Some coordinators can actually help you book your travel and accommodations. There have been many times when I've booked travel and accommodations for a large number of people all coming to the same wedding. It's nice to have it all coordinated by one person. Whether she books it or you do, you'll want to make certain that everything you are doing syncs together.

Again, where you stay and your wedding site should be figured out in advance. Where you stay also effects limo rental times, hair and makeup girls that you'll be able to use, who your wedding license agent will be, how long it will take you to get to your wedding beach and more factors, so that's why I like my brides to coordinate all of this with me.

Paying Off Your Wedding

Once everything is booked and set up, you'll want to plan on paying off your wedding about 45 days before the actual wedding. Most companies have policies similar to ours. We won't perform weddings that have not been paid for in advance. Our prices (especially compared to mainland weddings) are really incredibly cost effective and we would never be able to stay in business by doing weddings on credit. We'll leave that to the credit card people.

So make certain that everything is correct on your final confirmation from your coordinator, which is when you definitely want to find any mistakes. All companies make mistakes, and this is the time to spot them. If you see that anything is missing or that you are being charged for a service that you have not ordered, by all means, make that plain so that you get the wedding that you are paying for—nothing more or less.

Chapter 4

What to Bring When Coming to Maui

Now we all have preferences on what we want to take with us on our vacations and I can't begin to make that list for you. But when it comes to a vacation/honeymoon in Hawaii where you will be getting married, it is important that you don't forget certain very important items.

What to Bring For Your Wedding

If you are going to be wearing a wedding dress, especially one that you will be bringing with you on the airplane, you won't want to forget it. Some brides like to have their wedding dress sent on ahead of their flight so they don't have to deal with it. Some coordinators have contacts with people in Maui who will store and press a wedding dress. Of course that service costs a little, but its more than worth it for most brides.

Now if there are other items that you will be wearing, like something old and something blue or whatever you have decided upon, or special jewelry, or hair pieces or a veil or anything else, make a list of those items so that your don't forget any of them.

What will the groom be wearing? If he will be wearing some special attire that you are bringing from home, it's a good idea to make certain that you plan on bringing everything that he'll be wearing. It's probably a good idea for

you to create a checklist so that you don't forget a single item.

Things You Want to Consider Bringing

Bring your cell phones. I have been amazed by couples who either accidentally or even on purpose leave their cell phones home so that they "won't be bothered" by family and friends. Whatever cell phone numbers my brides and grooms give to me will be in our records and these are what we'll use to call you.

You can certainly purchase swimwear on Maui but it is nice to have at least one set of bathing suits and/or bikinis ready for your first dip in the ocean or the hotel pool. And a bottle of good sunscreen is essential because you do not want to burn yourself before your wedding. With that in mind, you might also want to bring some sun hats to keep the direct Maui sun off of your face before your wedding.

Important Things You MUST Bring

You would think that no one would forget their **wedding rings**. But I've had it happen. I've also had couples order special rings that didn't get finished in time before they left (which is why you want to start early so that they are done on time before you have to hop on a jet). Nothing is more awkward than to have to use "make do rings" at your wedding. When brides are in this situation, they often don't want the photographer to make any close-up photos of their hands and their rings and so that issue will end up making the photography less enjoyable for you both.

Your **wedding license information**. I have the website for the State where you can fill out your wedding license in advance. This is so nice because when you come to your wedding license appointment, you won't have to fiddle around with all of the details (because you will already have done it).

With this in mind, you will want to have **the date, time and place of your wedding license appointment** set up for you by your coordinator ahead of time. I like to send that information in a specific email so that you can print that email and BRING it with you. This is important. You don't want to show up on Maui knowing you have an appointment but not knowing who that appointment is with or when it is or where you are supposed to go. I can't tell you how many times I have had couples call in a panic because they did not print that email out or they failed to bring and left it at home. Then they end up having to track me down at the last minute to find that information and have to take the information on the phone. If you have a laptop or a phone that has the information in it that's also a way to keep from having to deal with last second wedding license panic.

Make sure that you have all of the **proper identification** with you for your wedding license appointment. If either of you has been divorced within the last six months, you should bring your **divorce decree** for the agent to view. Again, these are pieces of paperwork that you cannot easily duplicate here on Maui if you forgot them and left them home. Also, make certain that you have the details of your **wedding license appointment**, including the agent's name, address and phone number.

Don't forget your **flight details**. Whenever you fly there is inevitably the need to confirm your flight ahead of time and have your flight record locator especially if you are traveling ticketless. It's no fun to be in line at the airport and frantically searching for the correct info, worried that they won't be able to find you in the computer and that they will have canceled your seats because you didn't confirm. So have that paperwork handy.

Also, you'll want to have your **rental car information** handy for when you get to the Maui terminal. Maui is a small airport and you'll have to hop on a bus to take you to the rental car office, so its essential that you know which rental car company you have been booked with. Again, nice to have that information at your fingertips.

On the airplane many carriers will offer you a **map of Maui**. Be sure and take it. Maui is a larger island and you can't see very much of it without a rental car, so you'll likely want a good map while you're here.

Where will you be staying? You will want to have **the exact address and the directions to your accommodations**. Nothing is worse than trying to find your hotel or condo when you don't have a clue where it is. You don't want to be in the situation of having to pull over and ask for directions (if you can avoid it). That's a great recipe for an argument because most grooms don't want to pull over and most brides will be frustrated by that!

If you are at a smaller condo and you will be arriving after normal check in times, you need to make certain that you have all of the information for **how to get your key** after hours when no one is at the front desk.

You will need your coordinator's **direction to your wedding site**. We try to give explicit instructions to our couples because there is nothing we like less than having our couples get lost on the way to their wedding. With those directions you should also have the phone number of your wedding contact who can guide you in to the site in the event you are having difficulty.

You will want to bring all of the **details about your Maui wedding**: date, place, time. The time of any appointments like hair appointments, and limo pickup times. And you'll need your on Maui contact phone number. If you're having problems, you definitely won't want to go looking for this number.

Let me suggest that you **create a folder** that has all of your pertinent Maui wedding details in it. You could even punch three ring binder holes in all of your paperwork so that you can easily turn to the section you need next.

And whatever you do, make absolutely certain that you do not leave this folder at home when you run off to the airport!

Chapter 5

What to Do When You Arrive on Maui

Ah, you've finally arrived in Maui! As your airplane lands I'm sure you'll have a sense of anticipation for what's about to come. What do you do first?

What to Do First

You can turn on your **cell phone** as you land and then check for messages. This is important if your wedding coordinator or some member of your family has been trying to reach you. If you are eloping and don't want any phone calls, be sure NOT to turn off your phone as your coordinator will need to be able to reach you. Just monitor your calls and pass on all those calls you don't want to take. I've actually had to call the hair dresser and the limo driver for some couples just in order to reach some of my brides who had turned off their phones! For smaller weddings there is no one to call but you, so please don't turn off your phone.

Get **your luggage** and **your car**. It's probably easiest for one of you to wait for the luggage while the other takes the shuttle bus to the car rental office to pick up your car. Maui is currently a very small airport and it generally doesn't take too long to get your luggage or to book your rental vehicle.

If you don't have a **rental car** you can catch a **taxi** or a limo from the airport to take you to your hotel. You'll have a lot of places to go and taking a taxi will be very inconvenient

(like: your hotel, your license appointment, picking up your dress and/or buying clothes, eating, getting to your wedding site, getting to your reception dinner, going to activities, etc.). While there are some inexpensive public buses on Maui they are very slow, run only on the hour, and you'll waste lots of your precious time on the island by trying to use them. And they certainly won't take you to all of the places you want to go. Lots of couples who have decided not to rent a car often change their mind when they find out how big the island is and how easy it is to drive here.

Some couples will try, while they are on their way to their hotel or condo, to also have an early **appointment with their wedding license agent**. Doing that first thing after you arrive may be a little stressful (depending on how late you get in). It is a good idea to get this out of the way as quickly as possible so that you are sure that you can get married. Let's face it. No wedding license, no wedding! So when I set up license agent appointments for my couples I try to make sure that the timing is right for them based upon when their flight will come in.

Couples who are on a tight schedule or who are coming in on a weekend often have to wait a day or two before their wedding for their appointment because most agents don't work on weekends. So that's something you will definitely want to talk out with your coordinator.

Call Your Wedding Coordinator When You Arrive

A good wedding coordinator should give you the phone number to call when you arrive so that you can make contact with those who will actually be doing your wedding.

This gives you the opportunity to go over any last second details or changes. You'll want to let her know that you have arrived safely on the island (i.e. that you didn't miss your flight). This is a good time to go over any questions that you might have, so be sure and have your wedding folder (or binder) with you so that you can ask intelligent questions.

Check in to your accommodations and get settled.

This is important so you can relax and take a moment to unwind before you start to think about your wedding. One of the reasons I suggest that couples get married as close to their arrival day as possible is that you don't want to be stressing about it all week, especially while you are trying to enjoy yourself. Get your wedding over first and then you can relax and enjoy your honeymoon.

Drop off **your dress** to be pressed if you brought it with you. If you are going to be picking it up later, you might want to contact the person who is pressing it. My gal often helps brides who come alone, to get into their dress on the day of their wedding.

DON'T get sunburned before your wedding. I can't stress this enough. If you have rented a convertible be aware that you can easily get burned just driving around Maui with the top down. The sky might be gray, but don't let that fool you. Keep yourself either covered up or with a generous supply of sunblock on to protect your skin from the Maui sun (which will probably be much more powerful than the sun is wherever you are from).

Pick up your **wedding dress** if you have sent it on ahead.

Go to the beach wedding site or wedding location ahead of time to check it out so that you won't get lost. Many

rental cars have GPS, so its nice if your coordinator gives you an address near where your wedding will be located so that you can let the GPS do some of the work for you.

If you decide on any **last second changes**, like adding a limo or beautician to your wedding, call your coordinator. This is very important. For some reason couples often set up their own limo without consulting me. This creates a problem (especially if they use a company that is not one of my regular vendors). I need to be able to reach the limo driver in the event that something changes and we need to change the wedding beach location. With the limo drivers that I normally work with, I'm in contact with them so that I know when the couple will be arriving and I can alert the wedding team to coordinate and make certain that everyone is all ready to go when the couple arrives. Whenever a couple has a limo we use that as a photo or video opportunities and so it is nice if we all know what to expect.

The same holds true for having a hairdresser. If you want to book one of my hair and makeup professionals, and have her added into the mix, it may involve changing your pickup times for your limo and alerting other professionals who are doing your wedding. So it is always important to run everything through your wedding coordinator. After all, she is your "coordinator" and how can she effectively coordinate if you don't tell her everything you are doing. So that's why it is so important that you work with your wedding planner directly about any additions that you want to make to your wedding.

Chapter 6

How to Handle The Day of Your Wedding

One of the first things you will want to do is **write down your schedule** so you don't miss any appointments. The bigger and more complicated your wedding the more this will be necessary so that everything gets done. When we deal with larger weddings of 35 to 50 people we often have a separate coordinator who will go over all of the details that need to happen and she can make sure the everything progresses properly.

On the Day of Your Wedding

Wake up hopefully feeling **refreshed and ready** to get married. I would pamper yourself so that you are in a relaxed mood for your wedding.

Again, let me highly recommend that you **don't go to the beach** on the morning before your wedding. The beach will tend to fry you and the sun can easily take away your energy as well as give you an unwanted orange color to your skin. I would also recommend that the groom doesn't go off **golfing in the morning** as he is likely to show up looking like a lobster for the wedding which will dramatically impact the look of your photography.

Also, if one or both of you **end up in the bar** before you get married, you may end up "happy" but for the sake of your wedding professionals you should know that it is always

difficult for us to offer our best services when one or both of the couple is half drunk.

Get your **hair and makeup done** early enough so that you'll have extra time to reach your wedding site (in the event there is traffic or you get lost). When we schedule the hair and makeup professional, who will be coming right to your room to beautify you, we like to leave enough time for unforeseen circumstances, because you never know when something is going to take extra time.

Keep That Sunset in Your Mind

For sunset beach weddings there is one major thing you simply must be aware of. The sun will set on time whether you are on time or not. If you are late to your wedding, you will likely have less time to get the kind of photography and videography done that you crave. So don't short-change yourself by being late.

We've had brides who had the attitude—this is my wedding and I don't want to be stressed—so I'm going to take my time and allow myself to be late. While it is good to be relaxed, if you arrive late, you need to realize that you will likely be stressing everyone who is there to give you an awesome wedding. The wedding professionals know that they are on a tight schedule with the setting sun, and they only have so much time to get all of their shots, so the photographer and the videographer will have to cut back on the normal shots they would prefer to do, if they have less time than has been allowed.

Also, if you have chosen to use a Hawaiian minister, you need to know that many of them are in demand so they

will be performing two or three weddings each evening. We have had ministers who simply have another wedding after ours, and if the couple is late, they will be in a difficult situation with their next wedding. So it could impact more than just your ceremony. We've had the same situation with musicians who have had to leave at a certain point because they have another gig at another wedding or at a restaurant. So it is vital that we all stay on the schedule.

So, be relaxed and mellow, but start EARLY so that you can enjoy the day by being either on time or early for your wedding. That way you'll receive the best possible service from the wedding professionals that you are paying to give you an awesome wedding.

Sunset beach weddings are incredible, but we do also have other logistics issues to deal with. The beach we have chosen may end up being too crowded (so that we have to move to another beach). Because beaches are public access, we cannot ask someone to move (or we'll get in trouble with the state—which will impact our industry and future weddings of other brides). It may also rain, so we will sometimes need to move from one beach to another in the event the weather is better up or down the beach. Yes, there are many different unforeseen events that can affect an outdoor beach wedding, so your coordinator just might have to move it to a different location, which will take more time. That's another great reason for being early or on time, so you'll have more time available for such issues.

If you have lots of guests, make absolutely certain that everyone knows how to get to the wedding site. Sometimes it is a wise idea to have everyone meet with you and follow along together so that no one gets lost. I think it is

a wise idea to tell all of your guests that the wedding will start on time, whether or not everyone is there or not. I've seen weddings where one of the guests just took their time and the couple refused to have their ceremony until those guests showed up 45 minutes late. If you warn people that, "because we are timing everything with our wedding on the sunset, we would really appreciate it if you will please be on time to our wedding. We must start on time no matter who is missing."

Before You Step Into Your Limo or Rental Car

You will want to double check that you have everything. This is why **a check list** is so important and it's wise to check it twice to make certain that you get everything into the rental car or limo. I can't tell you how many times couples have discovered halfway to the wedding that they forgot the rings or the wedding license or any number of things that they just HAD to have. Better to have everything carefully planned and packed ahead of time so that you do not have to go back to get something.

Make sure you have your wedding license with you. If you show up without it, the minister cannot perform the ceremony. So it is essential that you make certain that you have it before you jump into your rental car to go to the wedding site.

If you have a limo picking you up, you will want to be ready to hop into it when it arrives. Remember, you are paying for all of the time in that limo, so it is foolish to make the limo wait on you why you finish getting ready. So be early, not late for your driver.

During Your Wedding

Of course you'll want to work on being in a good mood on the day of your wedding as your photos and video will definitely reflect your state of mind. So the two of you will want to work extra hard to avoid any issues arising during the day leading up to your wedding.

When you get to your wedding site and the photographer and videographer start to click and roll their cameras, you will want to smile, smile, smile. Even if you don't like your smile that much you'll probably find that you'll like your pictures and video much better if you are smiling most of the time. You'll want to look at each other and also directly at the camera. Try not to let anyone else distract you from the cameras and your new spouse.

When the ceremony begins just concentrate on each other. Remember why you're here and it's not about all of the trappings of your wedding. It's about your love for each other. So let that be the focus of your ceremony as you hold hands, look into each other's eyes and make commitments designed to last a lifetime. Also, try to anticipate that magic moment when your minister says, "I now pronounce you to be 'Husband and Wife.'" That's what it's all about so anticipate and focus on that moment so that when it arrives you'll remember it for a lifetime.

After the ceremony your minister will focus on giving you a souvenir certificate and making certain he has all the details correct on your wedding license. Some agents will ask you what your names will be after marriage and type it onto the license. Some won't. Your minister must know what

your names will be after marriage so be sure to tell him this at this time.

After Your Wedding

Now it's time to concentrate on each other and enjoying your moments of celebration after your wedding. Smile for your photography and drink your sparkling apple cider. Cut your cake and feed it to each other. Pose before the sunset and with your family and friends. Create for yourself a lifetime of memories that you will always cherish.

Once the sun sets and it is time to go, make sure you give your photographer and your videographer your contact information. In many cases we like to have your photographs ready for you BEFORE you leave the island, so he will need your cell numbers to confirm when they are ready. The same is true with your videographer who will often have it ready (depending upon who he is and how busy he's been) before you leave the island.

If you go out to dinner, be sure that you can drive yourself safely back to your hotel. If you are enjoying your dinner reception and drink, please make sure that you have someone to drive you safely to your hotel. You can always call for a limo or a taxi to pick you up. Better safe than very sorry as you can always come back the next day to pick up your rental car.

Chapter 7 What to Do After Your Wedding

Immediately After Your Wedding

Immediately after your wedding takes place, you are now no longer just on vacation. You are now on your honeymoon, so you really want to enjoy it! Hopefully you'll have a few activities planned ahead of time so you can have a lot of fun things to do while you're on Maui.

I actually help many of my clients set up their activities in advance so that they don't have to think about what they're going to do next after the wedding is over. You can book your activities in advance.

I know that you'll be busy having fun after your wedding, but you do want to make sure that you give your photographer a call (if he doesn't call you) to see what the status of your photography is. If at all possible, we like to have our couples able to pick up their photography before they leave the island. This keeps us from having to ship it and our couples also love it too. The same is true for your videographer. Try to contact him (if he doesn't call you) before you leave to see if he has anything for you. Other companies may not be so efficient, but that's what we try to do.

Enjoy Maui. You might want to see if you can find a t-shirt or a hat that says "Just Maui'd!"

After You Get Home

Your wedding license should be processed in about 30 days. Currently they seem to be getting the hard copy to our couples in about 45 days.

When you have your photos and video you will want to share them with your family and friends. Some couples who have a wedding with just the two of them will have a reception back at home where they will invite a lot of family and friends and show their photos in an album as well as their video on a larger screen. This can be a lot of fun for you all to relive the romantic experience of your Maui wedding.

Enjoy your new life as husband and wife and have lots of kids!

Chapter 8

Secret Tips to Make Your Maui Wedding A Success

I'm going to share some of my secrets with you for having an awesome Maui wedding. Some of these secrets have found themselves earlier in this e-book, but because of their importance, they bear repeating.

Get Married Early in Your Stay

We've found that it works best both for the couple and for our Maui wedding company if you choose to have your wedding at the beginning of your stay. This way you won't end up spending your entire time thinking about your wedding and can concentrate of your honeymoon and each other once the wedding is over. This also allows us an opportunity to finish your photography and videography which we could never do if you leave right after your wedding.

Besides, you will want to celebrate your new status together while you enjoy all of the things there are to do on Maui. And that's best done after your wedding, not before.

Plan your Activities In Advance

There are street kiosks at many of the small malls and shops everywhere on Maui. Their goal is to sell different fun activities to tourists. You can certainly plan your activities that way, but I don't think you really want to waste your

precious hours in Maui talking to a salesman and attending a timeshare presentation (which many of them push) when you would actually rather be out doing something fun.

Once again, if your wedding coordinator doesn't know how to do this, be sure and call me and I can help you get set up for the kind of activities that will give you the experiences you want.

To Save Money Stay in a Condo

Many couples just naturally expect to book their time on Maui in one of the big resorts. While most of those resorts are right on the beach, you'll find that resort rooms are often very pricey and unless you spend a bundle you won't have an ocean front room. There are many excellent condos available, many of which are located right on the beach overlooking the ocean. And you are much more likely to get a reasonably priced room that doesn't overlook a garden.

With a hotel you will likely get just a single room with a bathroom. But with a condo you will more likely receive the equivalent of a one or two-bedroom apartment. A bedroom, a living room, a bath and a kitchen. Now you certainly don't want to cook, but having a refrigerator and a stove and a microwave and a coffee maker can make your stay much more pleasant and a lot less expensive. Sitting on your lanai drinking coffee in the morning while you look at your ocean view is worth considering a condo, let alone all of the other amenities you receive at maybe half the price you will pay for a hotel room.

Don't Get Sunburned Before Your Wedding

Can I repeat this too much?! Just keep it in mind that red sunburn looks really bad in your wedding photos and there is nothing short of expensive photo retouching that will get rid of it. So try to save your suntanning for after your wedding.

Decide if You Really Want to Be A Secluded Bride

Many brides like the idea of being secluded from their grooms. They just want to see his face when they show up all made up gorgeous in their exquisite wedding dress. But keep in mind that this will take some pre-planning on your part.

In a church wedding it is very easy to keep the bride secluded from the groom. But on the beach where there is no place to hide, we usually have to have the groom face off towards the ocean so that he won't see the bride until it is time for her to be revealed. You will definitely want to tell your wedding coordinator that you are planning to do this as it involves some logistics issues for everyone involved in your wedding. Don't just show up secluded and spring it on your coordinator.

The two of you will have to arrive in separate vehicles. If you are coming to Maui alone, probably the bride will have to take a taxi to the beach so that the groom can drive the rental car. If you have a limo, the bride's arrival will be easy, but then you have to figure out how you two can pick up your rental car later (which will probably be left at the beach when you both return in the limo). If you have more in

your party this becomes easier, but it still needs to be decided who is going to arrive in what vehicle.

Being a secluded bride also impacts your photographer and videographer who should know when you are going to arrive and at what moment you are going to be revealed. Inevitably we find that we have to go back and forth between the bride and groom to establish all of the details so that we can film it all properly. This takes more time away from other photography and videography which we would normally do when the bride is not secluded.

So ask yourself if all the extra work is necessary for having that big reveal with your man. If it is, let everyone know how you think it will work best and then make it happen.

Don't Do Too Much on Your Wedding Day

Again, I've said this before but it is an important thing to consider. The more you try to stuff into your wedding day the more hectic it might become for you. Going fishing or golfing (as some of our grooms have done) can make them quite sunburned and a little sleepy at the wedding. Even if the two of you sit by yourself at the pool or on the beach, you want to be very careful not to over do it.

Make Sure Your Friends Know the Wedding Will Start On Time

Let me repeat this because it is so important. Make sure that your family and friends know what time you expect them to arrive at your wedding, what you expect them to do

(or not do), and that they know how to get to the wedding. I would also emphasize to them that “because this is a sunset wedding we have to start on time whether or not everyone is present. So please be early.”

Have a Professional Maui Photographer

Having a professional Maui photographer is a must. We’ve coordinated many weddings where the couple announced that they didn’t need a photographer because they have a “professional photographer” in the family. I always groan when I hear that because the results you’ll receive, even from a professional wedding photographer from the states will not be anything like what a Maui photographer will achieve. I’ve seen these photographers show up with only the flash that pops up on their camera! You simply can’t shoot the sunset with one of those popup flash units. There isn’t enough flash power to overcome the bright sun. So they will miss all of the really good sunset shots like what you’ll see on our website. Just don’t count on your photography looking like ours if you bring your own photographer.

Most mainland photographers are not used to shooting at sunset and while they have experience, it won’t be the right kind of experience to do a good job for you. Now I would caution you to make certain that your Maui photographer has the right kind of experience shooting the sunset as well. Many Maui photographers also don’t know how to shoot the sunset effectively. So be sure that your coordinator gets you one of the better photographers.

The most important thing not to do with your photography is to have one of your family or friends use their camera to shoot you pictures. I can't tell you how many times I've seen family members show up with full memory cards and/or battery power that fails. And the couple end up with few even halfway acceptable photos of their most memorable day. Spend the extra money and get a real Maui wedding photographer who knows how to shoot the sunset. You'll be very glad you did.

At Your Wedding, Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

There are a lot of things at a typical wedding that can go wrong or not be perfect. Even in Maui where weddings are so much more fun than on the mainland, things can and do go wrong. This is why you want to have an attitude: I won't sweat the small stuff. Focus on each other and why you are here and even if your coordinator or your company does things that you do not like or did not expect, don't let it ruin your night. That's a very important rule to make with yourself. No one owns your mood but you, so determine in your heart that you'll enjoy your wedding to the max.

We were once doing a wedding on a grassy overlook of the beach, when suddenly the sprinklers came on! Wow. What to do. I ended up putting a large ice chest that we had with us on the main sprinkler culprit and sat on it to keep the water from spraying forth. Afterwards, the couple had a great laugh over how that sprinkler didn't ruin their otherwise awesome wedding.

On another occasion we were doing a wedding on the beach and a suddenly big wave washed in and made

everyone run. Except the groom. He picked up his bride and held her while the water swept in and out and then we continued the wedding. It was such a beautiful act of romantic protection on his part and it is probably actually one of the fun things that I'm sure they remember most about their wedding on the beach.

So remember why you're in Maui. Sometimes it is easy to get focused on things that are not that important and miss the really important reason you're here: each other. As long as you focus on each other, and don't sweat the small stuff, you are likely to have a great wedding.

Enjoy Your New Spouse

Let your wedding day be the first day of your new life together. It really doesn't matter how long you've been together. Focus on the fact that you are making that extra special commitment to one another and so you want to really give your relationship that extra special love that it deserves. So enjoy your new spouse!