

15 QUESTIONS:

Find the right site

THE SPACE LOOKS GREAT IN PICTURES, but is it really the perfect place for your wedding? Ask these simple questions to make sure you choose the right site.

1 IS THE SITE AVAILABLE ON OUR DESIRED DATE?

Unless you're absolutely set on a particular date, getting a "no" in response to your first- (or even second-) choice wedding date may not be the end of the world—just ask about the days surrounding it. Friday nights or Sundays are less likely to be booked—and the bonus is that these days often cost less.

2 HOW MANY GUESTS CAN FIT COMFORTABLY IN THIS SPACE?

By the time you're investigating sites, you should have a pretty good idea of the length of your guest list. The same space won't necessarily work for both an intimate 80-person affair and a 300-strong soiree, unless you're willing to be flexible about the type of reception you're having. (A room that holds no more than 90 for a sit-down dinner may fit a few hundred for cocktails, for example.)

Be sure to ask the site manager if a minimum number of guests is required. Even if a smaller group is allowed, you may find that the room feels empty if you don't reach the minimum capacity—and you may still be charged as if that number of guests had attended.

3 WHERE ARE THE BATHROOMS? HOW MANY PEOPLE DO THEY ACCOMMODATE?

If you want guests to remain happy during your party, you should make sure that the site's restrooms can handle the traffic. (No one wants to waste 20 precious minutes of the reception waiting in line.) Make sure the restrooms are conveniently located—particularly if you have many elderly guests who may have trouble climb-



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ing stairs or making their way through a long maze of hallways.

In the case of a farmhouse or other venue that's not a traditional event space, ask about renting mobile bathrooms—the Porta Potti's more chic, every-amenity cousins—which can be parked a short distance away from the reception site.

4 IS THERE AN IN-HOUSE CATERER? IF NOT, DO YOU WORK WITH ONE OUTSIDE CATERER EXCLUSIVELY?

When a site has its own in-house caterer, you essentially will be booking two vendors at once, so you should consider each one individually. Arrange a meeting with the caterer if he isn't present at your initial visit. After you discuss your menu options, schedule a tasting to make sure you like the food as much as the atmosphere.

If the site doesn't have a caterer attached to it, then the site »