



NEWPORT NUPTIALS:

An Iconic Spot to Tie the Knot

BY STACEY MARCUS FOR CITY/STUDIO

PHOTO CREDIT: KAT HANAFIN

SOCIALITE JACQUELINE BOUVIER

married Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy, the future President of the United States, in Newport, Rhode Island on September 12, 1953. Over six decades ago, Newport was the destination of the social event of the year. Today, the oceanfront stylish city still remains the quintessential spot to tie the knot.

Andrea McHugh, Marketing & Communications Manager at Discover Newport, shared that there were 1,335 weddings in Newport county in 2015. If you divide this number by 52 to represent 52 weekends in a year, that is an average of about 25 weddings per weekend. What is it about Newport that makes it an iconic place to get married? "There are weddings, and there are Newport weddings," says McHugh. "Newport weddings are, simply put, extraordinary, and that's because Newport is an extraordinary destination. Considered the shining gem in the coastal crown of New England, Newport offers couples who marry here a diverse array of options custom crafted to suit everything from an intimate, informal affair where "I do's" are exchanged

with the sand between their toes to elaborate nuptial celebrations in opulent oceanfront mansions and unique venues."

For many couples, a Newport wedding means a destination weekend complete with rehearsal dinner, activities including mansion-hopping and sailing, the main event, an after party, and an après affair brunch—or any combination of these options.

McHugh offers a couple of reasons why Newport is a great place to get married. For one, Newport boasts more than 40 miles of coastline, charming cobblestone streets peppered with mom-and-pop shops, critically acclaimed restaurants, tours on land and sea, miles of trails, windswept beaches, cozy inns, grand hotels, and a robust events calendar. Newport is also ideally situated to host weddings any time of year. While many know the "City by the Sea" as the summertime playground of the country's elite, the most popular nuptial season may just be the fall, when the crisp salt water breezes keep the temperature cool, the treetops start to turn magnificent hues, and the city adopts a more leisurely pace.

Come winter, Newport exudes all of the charm of a Norman Rockwell painting with white lights illuminating homes, shops, restaurants, and the bustling wharves in a ritual meant to represent candlelight from days gone by. By spring, more than half a million daffodils bloom throughout the city, trumpeting the arrival of the season of new beginnings—an apropos symbol for couples starting their new lives together.

We asked area experts to share their insight on Newport's alluring appeal as well as provide helpful tips on getting hitched in Newport. Here is what they had to say.

Planning Tips

"Newport has something for everyone and your guests will embrace all that Newport has to offer! Newport offers many stunning venues and top professionals essential in planning a wedding,"

says Stasia Anthony, Events Coordinator & Owner of Exquisite Events. When planning a wedding in Newport, Anthony gives six tips to couples to create a bespoke and beautiful celebration.



+ BE CERTAIN TO ENGAGE AN EXCELLENT LOCAL WEDDING PLANNER

Every couple needs a professional planner who has all the vendor connections and can streamline your choices that best suit your needs and budget parameters. It is extremely beneficial leading up to your wedding weekend and crucial for the perfect execution of each and every moment of your weekend celebrations. Weddings are an investment, and it truly should be the best celebration of your lifetime. The right wedding planner has all the right contacts and is working on your behalf to make certain that all details are met to perfection.

+ BE SENSITIVE TO YOUR GUESTS

When selecting a destination location like Newport, it is always best to think of your wedding weekend from your guests' perspective. Block out rooms early and give your guests a variety of options in varying price ranges and encourage them to book early! When your budget allows, provide transportation to and from your venue from local hotels. Welcome your guests with a personal note including the weekend agenda, transportation schedule, suggested attractions and activities (all of this can also be included on your wedding website), and possibly a welcome bag with creative local treats to emulate Newport's infamous hospitality.

+ CREATE A TIMELINE

Creating a timeline is crucial to making sure your wedding flows perfectly. It is essential to orchestrate the arrival and set up of your vendors; preparations for you, your bridal party, and families preparations; and all the details and design of the ceremony and reception. Be sure to include plenty of time for transportation (Newport is known for summer traffic) and time for you to enjoy moments with friends, family, and your new spouse!

+ PLAN DETAILS THAT HIGHLIGHT WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT THIS AMAZING CITY

If you've come to Newport for its stunning water views, find a venue that looks out on the ocean. If you're here for the delicious seafood, cultivate a menu that makes that the centerpiece. If you want to share the city's rich history, pick activities throughout the weekend that allows guests to explore Newport.

+ CHERRY PICK YOUR VENDORS

Select vendors that can professionally and graciously execute all details to exceptional standards.

+ GET PERSONAL

Add personal touches that reflect your style and story. Guests do notice and appreciate all the personal touches. The overall design and ambiance of the celebration should reflect your unique love story.

Think Outside the Box
"Brides and grooms imagine the perfect day in a fairy-tale setting that captures exquisite photos while family and friends enjoy the time of

their lives. This dream comes alive in Newport which is why so many couples choose it as their wedding destination," notes Keith Chouinard, Director of Sales & Marketing at The Hotel Viking. "Newport offers the most unique collection of wedding venues in the country that are complemented by our history, picturesque landscapes, and an abundance of attractions, activities, restaurants, and amenities."

CHOUINARD OFFERS THESE INSIDER TIPS ON HOSTING YOUR WEDDING IN NEWPORT:

- + Consider off-season (December-March) or Thursday, Friday, and Sunday dates, which offer greater savings and more availability.
- + If your dates are flexible, research special event and festival schedules to avoid.
- + Consider venues which offer both ceremony and reception options at the venue for stress-free planning and a seamless flow of wedding day events.
- + Book early!



PHOTO CREDIT: KAT HANAFIN

Newport residents Lisa Robinson Heino and John Andrew Heino, Jr. knew they wanted to get married in Newport. "We got engaged on Christmas and wanted to get married in the summer so we knew we had to be flexible," says Robinson Heino.

The couple opted to get married on a Monday at OceanCliff. "You can get married three times on a Monday for [the price of] one Saturday," she notes. Along with cost savings for the venue, the Heinos found that vendors had more availability on Mondays and they could get more competitive pricing.

"Everyone loved having a long weekend," says Robinson Heino, who noted that many people stayed until Tuesday. She was thrilled that their family and friends got to experience Newport, beginning with a sunset sailboat cruise

aboard the Aurora and a rehearsal dinner at The Landing Restaurant on the waterfront. "I loved that our guests got to drive along the water and see the mansions," she says.

McHugh notes that there is also a financial advantage to marrying in Newport during the "shoulder season." "Lodging rates are significantly less—you'll have more dates to choose from at your venue, and you're likely to see a lot more bang for your buck," she says. She also says that another hot trend in Newport is mid-week weddings. "Fridays and Sundays have long been popular in addition to sold-out Saturday dates, but Newport is seeing more weddings outside of those weekend days," says McHugh.

Things to Do

The event team at Castle Hill Inn notes that

"Newport is a destination location that offers not only a scenic and professional wedding experience, but a weekend full of countless activities! From historic mansion tours to sailing excursions into breathtaking sunsets, Newport is bound to please any newcomer—It is perfectly timeless. You don't have to be a history buff to enjoy the beautiful architecture and cobblestone streets as a backdrop to your wedding photos!"

The team adds that guests can enjoy a plethora of activities in Newport including sailing tours, polo matches, historic mansion tours, rooftop dining/cocktails (try out The Hotel Viking and Vanderbilt Grace), seaside yoga, winery tastings and brewery tours, parasailing, and skydiving.

Whether you plan on a short wedding day or



a long weekend, it's always great if you can help guide your guests with a few things to do while they're in town!

Blooming Ideas

One of the key factors that makes weddings in Newport spectacular are the area experts

that specialize in floral design. Sayles Livingston is an expert on floral décor in Newport itself, while her team at Sayles Livingston Design works all over New England, New York, and even outside of the country. Due to their close proximity to Newport, and the fact that Newport is an

increasingly popular destination wedding location, (about 70% of their weddings take place in the Newport area), Sayles Livingston knows a thing or two about wedding design.

“I started designing with flowers and gardens when I was in college at Brown University and then I got a Masters Degree in Plant Sciences. That was 25 years ago and within that time the wedding industry has grown tremendously in Rhode Island, especially in Newport,” Livingston says.

“Newport is a very special location for weddings because there are so many great venues, most with spectacular water views. The infrastructure in Newport, from accommodations to shopping to events has really developed with the exploding wedding industry. A couple's guests can find many different kinds of accommodations and great restaurants,

SAYLES LIVINGSTON GIVES THESE TIPS FOR COUPLES TRYING TO CHOOSE DÉCOR AND FLOWERS:

- + Decide on a color palette.
- + Decide on a design style. Spend time looking through magazines, wedding web sites, Pinterest, and save the images you are drawn to.
- + Set a rough budget for your décor. How much do you want to spend on flowers, linens, lighting, and props?
- + Choose your three favorite flowers (and three varieties you would be upset to see at your wedding).
- + Always invest in one show-stopping element like the escort card table décor, head table, or the ceremony arbor.
- + Let the professionals do what they do best! Within the parameters of color, design/style, budget, and favorite flowers, or other specifics you may want to mention, the more freedom and flexibility that you give a designer to be creative, the better result you will get!

as well as endless activities from visiting museums, historic mansions and vineyards, to enjoying water sports and great shopping. The weather is often perfect and the city has anything you could possibly need for a perfect destination wedding.”

Newport is among the top wedding destinations in the country, and it's easy to see why. Between world class venues and experts with years of experience, Newport is the perfect setting for a wedding you will never forget.

Check out these resources to discover how to create a bespoke celebration in this enchanting destination.

Castle Hill Inn

590 Ocean Drive, Newport
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Exquisite Events

221 Third Street, First Floor, Newport
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Sayles Livingston Design

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