

Q & A

Got a question? We've got the answers (and if you're still stuck, log on to www.bride24.co.za for more)

THE PANEL

To answer your questions, we enlisted the wedding experts:



* Aleit Swanepoel is the founder of Aleit Wedding Coordination, which is part of The Aleit Group. Based in Stellenbosch, there is also a European division in Munich. The group coordinates functions and events, boasts music and entertainment services, has a jewellery collection and an online wedding-gifts shop. Call ☎ 021 887 4448; info@aleit.co.za; www.aleit.co.za



* Pam Black is founder and owner of the unique exhibition centre Celebration House, which for more than a decade has been the savvy bride (and the bride's mother's) first stop. They don't arrange the weddings, but they do set up the introductions to some of the most established wedding service providers in the Western Cape, all of whom come with extensive personal references. Call ☎ 021 674 7350; info@celebrationhouse.co.za; www.celebrationhouse.co.za



* Enelra Booth is the founder and owner of Mela Events, a wedding consultancy based in Johannesburg which operates nationally. Mela Events also does corporate and special events and has a branch opening in Cape Town soon. Call ☎ 082 653 8411; enelra@mela.co.za; www.mela.co.za



* Fiona Hilton is founder of The Wedding Gift List, an innovative online South African gift registry. The service has over 1 000 gift ideas sourced from local and international brands, as well as alternatives for those couples who 'have it all', such as experiential gifts. It also has a honeymoon registry option. Call ☎ 021 851 1501; info@weddinggiftlist.co.za; www.weddinggiftlist.co.za



Q American weddings (on TV, at any rate) always seem to have rehearsal dinners. What are they rehearsing exactly? Is this something we should do before our wedding?

A Aleit responds: It is a very American institution, but it's a good one, and a great ice-breaker when families don't know one another very well. I advise couples to have a rehearsal 'party' two days before the wedding.

At the rehearsal, you run through the order of the ceremony. Though it's nice if he or she is there, the minister is not strictly necessary but all the other main

players involved in the union must be present.

The bridesmaids and best men will be informed and thus more comfortable on the day; your dad will be acquainted with the aisle down which he will be walking you, and so on.

It is important that the rehearsal takes place at the exact place and time of day as the wedding; you need to know what the sun will do.

After the actual rehearsal, you can go for drinks and a light dinner. A trend now, is to have a cocktail party, a low-key event that allows guests to catch up with one another, and long-lost friendships to be rekindled. This ensures an even greater party on the wedding day.