

The Royal Wedding and What it Might Mean for Your Wedding

By Alexandra McKay, Events Coordinator

I fully admit that I am not a morning person (nor a night person, come to think of it) and I slept through the Royal Wedding. But, thanks to the magic of YouTube, I caught up with my early-bird friends before the reception ended in England.

When the Duke (Prince William) and Duchess (Kate Middleton) of Cambridge got married, I very quickly saw changes in the wedding industry. With that in mind, below is a recap of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's Royal Wedding, and the ways their nuptials might impact ceremonies for years to come.

Afternoon Weddings

As Americans, we are used to evening weddings, so it was strange that the Duke and Duchess of Sussex got married at high noon. The idea of an evening wedding is less than a century old and was trending by the 1920s. Emily Post comments that the "fashionable wedding hour in New York is either noon, or else in the afternoon at three, three-thirty or four o'clock, with the reception always a half hour later."

Keep those times in mind because you are about to see them on more and more wedding invites.

Afternoon weddings are wonderful because you don't have to have a full dinner for your guests, no one has to find a tux or rent a ballgown, and you don't have to worry about lighting. For example, should you choose to host your afternoon wedding here at Morven Park, everything will be filled with the glorious natural light from the sun dabbling through the trees.

If you want to dance the night away, you can have an afterparty at your favorite local watering hole (with a second dress, just like Meghan).

The Dress and the Veil

Speaking of dresses, I guess I have to talk about the elephant in the room: Ms. Markle's dress. There has been much debate over the dress in the past two weeks and I won't go into the sordid details here, suffice it to say-- I loved it. She was not a young bride, nor was this her first wedding, and the dress seemed fitting for such a modern woman. It's unfair to compare her choice to Diana's, who was 20 on her wedding day and wore a dress that reflected the pomp and circumstance of the occasion and her age. Kate Middleton's dress was equally lovely and launched the (popular to this day) trend of ornately beaded, sequined and otherwise bedazzled bodices and sleeves. Ms. Markle's dress will surely have the same effect. You will see many boatneck, plain white, shift dress knock-offs at weddings this summer.

Now let's talk about something far more important (and fun!), the veil. That thing was gorgeous. In the last few years, I can count on my fingers the number of brides who wore a veil, and on one finger the number of brides who wore a cathedral length veil like the Duchess's. I happily await the rise in popularity for veils of all lengths in the coming years. A longer veil gives a bride the same level of formality as a train, but is far easier to remove after the ceremony for a completely different look without having to invest in a second dress or learn how to bustle (which no one has done properly since Reconstruction anyways).

The Flowers

If I had the talent, I would have become a florist, but since all flowers seem to die in my care and the simplest arrangements seem to fall out of their vases, I don't see that dream coming true.

However, thanks to my obsession, I do know quite a bit about flowers and the floral industry. Based on the Royal Wedding, I am going to recommend three floral-related trends that brides should be on the lookout for: local, in season, and sentimental.

While most of us don't have acres of gardens (or an in-house florist) to pick our flowers from, we can follow the Duchess's example. When you meet with your florist, start with the wedding date, not your Pinterest board. From there he or she will be able to tell you what is in season locally. This simple step will not only save you money, but keep your wedding's carbon footprint down as well (And how modern is that?). Here at Morven Park, you don't need to drape the archways of a chapel to get the same green and white look of the Royal Wedding. Our gardens are already filled with greenery and flowers.

The Duke supposedly picked his new bride's poesy himself, including the garden roses that were his mother's favorite. This is a simple way of honoring those who have passed. My personal favorite is a bride who placed one lily in her bouquet in remembrance of her grandmother, whose name was Lily. Not everyone will have a flower with the same name as a loved one, or a relative with a well-documented love for one rose over another, so simply choose a specific color or flower that you know they would have appreciated. You will remember the significance every time you see photos from your wedding.

Another interesting detail that was reported is that the flowers used in those amazing ceremony arches were taken down and made into bouquets for patients in hospice care. I made some phone calls, and several local nursing homes will gladly take your leftover flowers to decorate their common areas.

Page Boys and Flower Girls

I will start this section by saying that using young children during your wedding is not for the faint of heart or the perfectionist. My cousin Brian notoriously waned so much during my parents' wedding that the best man had to hold his hand.

For brides and grooms with a sense of humor, add a few flower girls and page boys for that Royal Wedding feel. Younger children work best if you want a flood of small children and the feeling of whimsy they evoke. But once they reach the altar, someone should take them off to the side. I recommend having something for them to play with during the service. Older children are best for holding your train (like the Duchess did for hers) or being ring bearers. Depending on their personality and the length of the service, they can usually continue to stand at the altar or sit quietly with their parents.

Etc.

Several other trends we are going to see in the coming seasons and at the trendiest of weddings: brides walking themselves down the aisle, more white and green weddings, choirs singing pop songs, natural or extremely sheer make-up, excerpts from Bishop Curry's sermon used for readings, and loose up-dos with wispy pieces of hair framing the bride's face.

My advice to future brides? Use the royal wedding as inspiration, not a template. You want your wedding to be yours, not Harry and Meghan's.