

Things are Different...

the Second (or Third) Time Around

ENCORE WEDDINGS HOLD THEIR OWN SPECIAL CHARMS.

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Photos by Crissy Everhart Photography

ACE IT—WE THINK OF SECOND MARRIAGES differently. They're not laden with the same kind of starry-eyed hopes a first marriage can evoke, and they follow a marriage that didn't exactly have a fairytale ending. But if we think about it a little more, that seems not only unfair but not quite accurate.

It's like Paul McCartney sang long ago—love seems like a pretty big deal when you're in it. And if you're in love enough to get married, what came before never seems to matter quite so much. If it led you to the happy place you're now, it was all for the good. And what's wrong with that?









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And some couples opt to do the whole thing themselves. One West Chester repeat bride says her second marriage was very much in that pattern—the event was held in the front yard and decorated with flowers from a local supermarket. A friend took over the bartending chores, her brother-in-law did a video, and everyone took photos.

"It's just as meaningful, in a different way," says Peggy Kilkenny Hecksher, who runs the Chester County-based wedding planner service Love on a Shoe String. Like other wedding planners, she says some people opt for a very low-key approach, just a small gathering of friends and family. Or they may choose an exotic destination.

Many couples will take care to put their own stamp on the event. After all, they're fully adult now and, frankly, parents aren't paying for it or likely involved in the process. If they want to pick an unusual location or theme, they can do that. "It's their day," Hecksher says.

KIDS

Second marriages often include children, and when they're young enough the kids become part of the planning. Chimento says they're often part of the bridal party, walking down the aisle with the other participants, or they'll play music or take part in some other way.

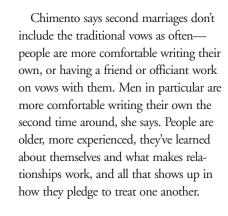
And of course, they're a part of the families being blended and many couples will acknowledge that. Presumably there's already a reasonable degree of acceptance all around, but Hecksher says the wedding can be an occasion to validate and formalize that.

In the vows portion of the ceremony, the partners can make a point of welcoming the kids into their lives and showing they're important members of the new family. "It makes it real," Hecksher says. Some couples want to have the kids do vows as well as the partners, but officiants often discourage that, says Smith-Hoban, reasoning that vow-making is really not a kid thing.

But there are other ways, including the "sand ceremony" in which family members pour sand of different colors into a glass vessel to symbolize both their individuality and their membership in a new family unit. (A more whimsical approach, Smith-Hoban says, is to use colored M&Ms.)







Some people even make the casualness of it the whole point, says Smith-Hoban, like the couple that opted to get married at home, on Christmas Day, in pajamas, with the family all around. "The marriage is more important than the wedding," Smith-Hoban says.

And no matter how informal an approach people might take, if the feelings are there, as Paul McCartney pointed out, it isn't silly at all.



No matter what number the wedding is, there's always cake!















