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W and H Exclusive

Howdy-Doooooooooooo

Greet your guests with a fabulous bash before the big day!

A welcome party is a fun pre-wedding event that can take many forms. It serves as the initial opportunity to greet and obviously “welcome” guests for the wedding celebration to follow. The event might be a chic, simple gathering with cocktails and/or dessert or a more spirited event at Blame Her Ranch in our Knotty Pine Barn! With so many options to mix and match, welcome parties have become a wedding itinerary mainstay!

Here, you will find some steps on how to plan your welcome party:

CREATE THE VISION: The first step in planning a welcome party is to find out what impression the couple wants to lead with for their guests. The direction may be dictated by cultural elements, what you love, hate, dream, etc. This is where you should start. Make sure the welcome party represents who you are as a couple. It is the first introduction to the weekend and sets the tone for the celebration! Finalise the date of the welcome party as soon as you set the wedding date. That will help put into motion other items needing to be planned, such as stationery, hotel room blocks, transportation, and budgeting for catering and decor.

PUT TOGETHER THE GUEST LIST: Welcome parties are a great way for guests to meet and make friends before the wedding. The welcome party serves the purpose of breaking the conversation ice so that the wedding day will feel more like a warm meeting of friends. Once you have a clear idea of how many people will be attending the welcome event, you can settle on a location that accommodates that occupancy!

MIND THE DETAILS: Make a list of all the nitty-gritty details to keep yourself on task and on budget. The most commonly overlooked items for a welcome party are the audio and visual elements, such as entertainment and/or microphones for toasts. If you are an intimate group of people, you likely do not need it. However, 50-plus people in a room make more noise than you think - plan for success, no one wants to miss the punchline!

DECIDE WHAT TO SERVE: The food you offer guests and how you choose to present it will help set the vibe for the event. If you are planning to invite all of the guests to the welcome party and make it a dinner, then do something different than the wedding. If the wedding is a formal plated dinner think about something different like food stations, Chuckwagon, BBQ or a buffet. While making menu picks, keep in mind that the goal is for guests to easily mix and mingle. This is a great opportunity to have some fun and feature local cuisine or favourite items that may have clashed with the wedding meal itself.

ADD ACTIVITIES: Sure, a cocktail party can certainly suffice as the welcome event, or you can kick things up a notch and incorporate fun activities to get friends and family interacting. Fireworks or cold sparklers are a hot new trend making waves these days in the wedding world. It is also trending to incorporate exciting entertainment, such as a small, retro

band playing covers of modern songs, or a food truck of your favourite desserts! For our daughter's wedding at the BHR barn, we had a roaming violinist playing all sorts of country classics.

FIND THE RIGHT WORDING FOR YOUR INVITES: Once you've planned the celebration, begin designing the invitations and inserts or finding the right wording for the wedding website. Use festive colours and creative verbiage to reflect any theme or activity. Also, make sure the invite conveys to guests all they'll need to know to prepare for the cool events you've planned. Be as descriptive as you can, including clothing and footwear suggestions, area maps, and any phone numbers or websites that might be useful to guests when planning their time.

HAVE AN EXIT STRATEGY: While the welcome party will undoubtedly be an exciting kickoff event for the wedding festivities, remember that it's only the beginning of a very eventful schedule. Always have an exit strategy so you can get a good night's sleep before the wedding. Hair and makeup will be knocking on your door bright and early, and we want you to look and feel your best.



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BLAME HER RANCH IS AN EXCLUSIVE WEDDING VENUE NEAR SANTE FE IN NEW MEXICO. FIND OUT MORE AT [BLAMEHERRANCH.COM](https://blameherranch.com) OR @BLAMEHERRANCHSANTAFE BY SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR LINDA

