

ideas for heirlooms

Wedding planners offer unique ways to incorporate something old into your big day.

INCORPORATING SOMETHING NEW, OLD, BORROWED and blue into a wedding is an ancient superstition that is said to bring good luck to newlywed couples. Whether you're a believer in it or not, family heirlooms—or that something old—continue to be a big part of weddings.

Ashley Stork from I Do, I Do! Wedding Planning says when a couple incorporates a family piece or tradition into the wedding, it makes their big day more intimate and unique.

"This is the day where two families come together and another is created," she says. "History and traditions tend to make us who we are."

Typically, this is important to brides when planning their wedding, she says. It's an outlet for brides to reflect themselves and their families in a very specific and personal way. It's also one of the easiest parts of the wedding planning for brides, Stork adds.

Bride Hayden Sentenn found this to be true when she was planning her wedding. She wanted to honor both her family, and her new family that she and her husband were creating. To do this, she incorporated not just one but several family heirlooms.

Sentenn carried her great grandmother's handkerchief around her bouquet, a common and also a traditional way to integrate a family treasure. Stork says brides often include family pieces such as their sister's veil or their mother's jewelry in their wedding ensemble. A groom might choose to wear a wedding band, a pocket watch or cufflinks that have been passed down to him.

Heirlooms don't have to stop at the wedding attire either, Stork says. She has a bride who is going to carry a family Bible with her as she walks down the aisle. Twenty other women in her family have done the same.

Rachael Grammer of Two Hearts Wedding and Events says she sees family brooches adorning a belt on the wedding gown. One of her brides wore vintage Mary Jane heels that her grandmother wore on her wedding day more than 60 years ago.

"If that person is no longer living, it can also give the bride a sense that that special person is there with her," Stork says.



Murray Gervais' great grandmother bought a veil each time she went to Europe. Now, anyone in the family or marrying into the family can choose from the antique lace veils.

A unique spin on incorporating your family into your wedding celebration is food. Instead of using a catering company, Sentenn filled her guests' bellies with dishes exclusively from old family recipes.

For those wanting to give just a taste of their family recipes, Stork suggests a special jam, sauce or anything that can be put in a jar as a party favor. You can put your monogram or wedding logo on it for even more personalization.

Stork also recommends recreating moments from past family weddings as a way of incorporating traditions. For example, assuming the same pose your parents took years ago while cutting their cake can create special photo. Using your parent's song for the first dance is a also meaningful "something borrowed" Grammer says.

Stork and Grammer also have a few tips for brides who feel pressured to include a family piece that might not fit their style.

"This can be tricky for the bride," Stork says. "First remember that this person loves you and wants to see you carry on a tradition despite if it is your taste and style."

If the item is small, like a brooch, Stork suggests pinning it on the inside of the dress. Or if it's a handkerchief, sew it in the shape of a heart, on the inside of your dress. If this offends family member, explain that this way the item is close to your heart, Stork says. She adds that this is also something that could be done

with a piece of a wedding dress that has been passed down.

If a family member isn't on board with the idea of cutting up their wedding dress (and most aren't), Grammer suggests putting the gown on display at the reception or a shower. This can also spur many conversations, she says.

However you decide to incorporate family pieces and traditions, both Grammer and Stork agree that these special touches make for a truly meaningful and memorable day. ■

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