



Capture the GLOW

Candlelight can imbue any wedding venue with romance and beauty. Use these tips and ideas to illuminate your event.

by Brenna McLoughlin

Everyone and everything looks more beautiful and radiant in the soft light of burning candles. At weddings, they can be accent or principal decor elements. A few simple votives scattered around a centerpiece can make a table look magical, and a cluster of candles can create a stunning arrangement on its own. Read on to find out how to incorporate candles into your event.

KNOW WHAT THEY'RE MADE OF

Most candles are made from paraffin, beeswax or soy. Paraffin candles, created with petroleum, are very common but can emit soot and toxins when burned. Beeswax and soy candles are made from natural ingredients. Beeswax candles emit a subtle honey scent and are long-burning, dripless and smokeless. Soy candles are also long-lasting and clean-burning, and are often less expensive than beeswax.

RESEARCH RULES AND REGULATIONS

"It's essential to check your venue's restrictions regarding open flames," says New York City-based planner Louie Walker. All sites have some limitations to the use of candles. These may be general ("No precarious placement of candles") or specific



A LUMINOUS LOOK

Give any space a feeling of grandeur with white and ivory candles in lustrous metallic holders. From left: "Romance" candle, \$20; base, \$12, both from Illuminations. "Antique Silver" votive holders, \$22 for set of six; candlesticks (seen throughout), \$6.50-\$10 each, all from Jamali Garden. Pewter tray, \$112, from Match. Wire votive holder, \$4, from Jamali Garden. Large pillar candles, part of the "Grand Candle Collection," \$199 for set of five sizes, from Pottery Barn. Snuffer, \$48, from Match. "Flame" pewter candleabra, \$265, from Match. Taper candles (seen throughout), \$13 for 12, from PartyLite. Flatware, \$200 for five-piece setting, from Match. "Vintage Platinum" place setting, \$195, from Bernardaud. Glass votive holder, \$26, from Ambria. Glasses, \$10 and \$12, both from Crate & Barrel.





("Only two-inch votives allowed"). Some sites may not allow open flames at all, in which case, battery-powered alternatives are commonly used.

CONSIDER THE CEREMONY

In ceremony decor, candles are often placed on stands at the end of the pews, to line the aisle, and on the altar, with or in place of flowers, or used symbolically as unity and remembrance candles. For a unique way to incorporate them into an evening ceremony, Walker suggests giving each of your bridesmaids a single candle to carry down the aisle, instead of a bouquet, or hiring a children's choir to sing while holding candles.

LIGHT YOUR RECEPTION

If you're planning to have floral arrangements and candles on your tables, Walker recommends coordinating their heights. For high centerpieces, use taper candles or taller pillars; choose tea lights, votives or short pillars for lower arrangements. To decorate a round table of 10 guests, Walker suggests using three groupings of three votives around the centerpiece, and two or three pillars or tapers, if desired.

For candle-based centerpieces, use a variety of shapes and sizes for a dynamic look. "I especially love candle centerpieces with banquet tables," Walker says. "You can just have pillar candles of different heights running the length of the table." White and ivory are very

The 5 Hottest Candles

Before creating your wedding decor, consider the details of these popular choices (left):

1 TEA LIGHT These small candles measure only about an inch and a half in height, and often come in metal molds. Despite their size, they burn for four or five hours. "Clarity" tea-light holder, \$15, from PartyLite.

2 VOTIVE Round or square, votives are about two to two and a half inches tall, and have a burn time of at least eight hours. Because they burn off completely, they must be placed in a holder. Hand-blown glass "Stratton" hurricane, \$130, from Simon Pearce.

3 TAPER These thin candles are six to 18 inches long and burn for four to 10 hours, depending on size. Because of their narrow base, they must be supported by candlesticks. "Eve" glass taper holder, \$125, from Juliska.

4 PILLAR Available in many shapes and sizes, these broad candles are typically at least three inches in diameter and may have more than one wick. They can stand on their own, but it's best to set them on a heat-resistant holder or in a larger vessel. They can burn for 50 to more than 100 hours. Pillar candle, \$12, from PartyLite.

5 NOVELTY This term applies to any uniquely designed candle. They're ideal as accent pieces. Burn time varies with size. Ball candle, \$2.50, from Jamali Garden. Pewter tray, \$365; snuffer, \$37, both from Match.

elegant, but colored candles can be lovely at events with more casual decor. Walker touts the broad array of vessels available today—in innumerable colors, sizes and designs—as another way to personalize and enhance the look of your reception.

You can use candles as accents in other areas in free-standing candelabras, or set on any surface. Walker offers this caveat: "You have to be careful when placing candles in any area where guests will be reaching, like the escort-card table or guest-book table," she says. "And I don't advise putting them on the bar, where guests and waitstaff will be going back and forth." She also warns against using scented candles in close proximity to food, adding that beautifully packaged scented candles are a perfect touch in restrooms.

KEEP YOUR CANDLES BURNING

"I like to light the candles 45 minutes before guests arrive to the reception so the photographer can get those beautiful room shots," Walker says. Most candles have burn times that allow them to more than outlast a four-hour reception (see "The 5 Hottest Candles," above). That's another wonderful thing about candles: "Your wedding ends, and your flowers wilt," Walker says. "But bring home your candles, and you may still be using them on your first anniversary, or after."

reception

How can we have a wedding motif that's consistent, but doesn't look overdone?

Introduce your logo on save-the-dates and invitations, says NYC-based event planner Louie Walker. At the wedding, use it in a few carefully chosen places, like on your aisle runner or on the ribbon around your bouquet. Walker says, then consider adding it to unique elements likeiced sugar cookies or wishing cards (in lieu of a guest book).

I am keeping my last name. How should my husband and I be introduced at the reception?

Your emcee may announce you using your first names only, saying something like, "And now, for the bride and groom, Jane and John," or "And now, for the first time as husband and wife, John and Jane." The most important thing is to alert the emcee or your planner to the fact that you have decided to not change your name so they will not assume you should be introduced as Mr. and Mrs. John Smith.

Who should we seat at the head table with us?

Most often, the bride and groom are joined by either their attendants with their dates, or by immediate family members. The head table may accommodate as few as eight or as many as 24 people, so it can be as intimate or as lively as you like.

Do groomsmen typically serve as ushers at the ceremony?

The groomsmen often do act as ushers, escorting guests to their seats before the ceremony. But you may have ushers in addition to groomsmen if you would like to give additional friends or family members roles in the wedding. If you elect to have both ushers and groomsmen, the ushers may wear a less formal variation of the groomsmen's attire.

Can you suggest elegant, non-floral centerpieces for our reception?

Debi Lilly of Chicago-based A Perfect Event suggests vintage glass bowls filled with fruit, or long wooden trays scattered with seashells and candles. Potted herbs offer the natural look of flowers and are incredibly fragrant. Achieve a very simple yet sophisticated style with clustered candles on silver trays; each arrangement will look beautiful on its own, and the tray will magnify the glow of the candlelight.

—Brenna McLoughlin

