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Location, location, location!



Basic guidelines are critical when choosing a wedding site, says **Jolene Rae Harrington**, director of creative content at Berkeley-based **Here Comes The Guide**. “Don’t just dive in without preparation! Identify the geographic region, the guest list size, and look at the overall budget to see how much you can afford for location rental and catering. Think about what type of event matches your wedding style. For example, are you nature-lovers? On rare occasions, a bride and groom might approach a place that doesn’t traditionally do events—one of my colleagues got married at she and her husband’s favorite pizza parlor, for example.”

One popular trend is the destination weekend—an inn or resort—where guests can later enjoy several days of mini-events. Historic landmarks, yachts, museums and galleries are also “elegantly novel” locations for the special day. Vineyards are still popular, though wine regions beyond Napa and Sonoma—Lodi, Soledad and Temecula—are picking up steam. More unusual settings have been the slopes of Mammoth Mountain Resort; the redwood groves in Berkeley’s UC Botanical Gardens; even the San Francisco Zoo or Oakland’s Chabot Space and Science Center, which Harrington calls a pretty “out of this world” place to wed.

“The possibilities are only limited by your imagination and budget,” she says. “[But] unless you are working with an experienced wedding coordinator, you’ll need to do some research if you are choosing an unconventional location. Insurance, alcohol restrictions, décor policies and other considerations come into play. However, many non-hotel locations routinely rent out their locations [and] most have professional banquet staff who have covered many of these bases for you.”

For more tips and advice, visit [Here Comes the Guide](#).

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