

Wedding plan for a New Year's themed wedding in Porvoo, Finland

Johanna van Kalken



Author Johanna van Kalken	
Degree programme Degree programme in Tourism and Event management	
Thesis title Wedding plan for a New Year's themed wedding in Porvoo, Finland	Number of pages and appendix pages 60 + 12
<p>This is a product-based thesis that includes theory of wedding planning process, interviews of professional weddings planners, and a wedding plan as the final product. This thesis is commissioned by Mennään Naimisiin magazine, which is a wedding magazine that writes about wedding planning, wedding trends, beauty and wedding fashion.</p> <p>A wedding is a highlight of many people's lives and the use of a wedding planner can be a major help for a couple in the wedding planning process. Wedding planning is a big business especially internationally, but it is also meaningful for the couples in a personal level.</p> <p>The main objective for this thesis is to find out what wedding related matters are popular among couples, what are the current and future wedding trends and average wedding budget. Another goal is to create a New Year's wedding plan for a couple. In addition to this, the author's personal development as a future wedding planner is an important objective.</p> <p>The set goals were met, as the interviews of professional wedding planners and the couple gave insights on current wedding trends and what wedding related matters are popular among couples. Information on average wedding budgets was also gained. Additionally, the wedding plan as the end-product was usable for the couple and a concrete example of a wedding plan.</p> <p>The thesis starts with theoretical background of wedding planning process and interviews of professional wedding planners and the bride and groom. After that there is a description of the wedding planning process and lastly the wedding plan, that was made as the final product, is presented. In the assessment section, it is discussed how the wedding planning process went, how the final product turned out and how the objectives were met. In the appendices, the interview questions for professional wedding planners and the bride and groom can be seen as well as the wedding plan in a visual form.</p>	
Keywords Wedding planning, Wedding planner, Wedding trends, Wedding planning process, Budget	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the thesis	1
1.2	Objectives	2
1.3	Structure of the thesis	2
2	Wedding planning and management	3
2.1	Role of a wedding planner	3
2.2	Steps of wedding planning process	5
2.3	Wedding theme and wedding colours	8
2.4	Budget	9
2.5	Wedding venue	11
2.6	Wedding stationery	13
2.7	Decorations	14
2.8	Menu and drinks	16
2.9	Program and entertainment	18
2.10	Photography	19
2.11	Wedding day schedule	20
2.12	Transportation	21
2.13	Safety and legal aspects	22
3	Interviews as part of the product development	23
3.1	Interviews of professional wedding planners	23
3.2	Interview of the bride and groom	28
3.3	Results	31
4	Wedding planning process for a New Year's themed wedding	34
4.1	Looking for the right wedding venue	34
4.2	Creating the visual look and decorations	40
4.3	Researching for program options	44
4.4	Transportation and accommodation on the wedding day	44
4.5	Presenting the ideas to the couple	45
5	Wedding plan for a New Year's themed wedding	47
5.1	Wedding theme and wedding colours	47
5.2	Budget	47
5.3	Wedding venue	49
5.4	Wedding stationery	49
5.5	Decorations	51
5.6	Menu and drinks	51
5.7	Program and entertainment	51
5.8	Photography	52

5.9	Wedding day schedule	52
5.10	Transportation.....	53
5.11	Safety and legal aspects.....	54
6	Assessing the wedding planning process and the wedding plan.....	55
6.1	Assessment of the wedding planning process	56
6.2	Learning outcomes	58
7	Conclusion.....	60
	References	61
	Appendix 1. Interview questions for the bride and groom	68
	Appendix 2. Interview questions for the professional wedding planners	71
	Appendix 3. Wedding plan in a visual form.....	72

1 Introduction

Weddings are an important event in many people's lives and even though times have changed, many want to hold on to the tradition of having a wedding and celebrating commitment between two people. In the 18th century, marriage was a financial decision and families would look for the appropriate match for their daughter or son. (Moore 2009.) Today, at least in most modern societies, people can choose their own partner and to get married to form a union and acknowledge their commitment to each other before friends and family. (Lemon 2017.)

Wedding arrangements and wedding planning have also changed. According to a survey done by WeddingWire in 2017 the average wedding budget have grown by half of what they were ten years ago. Back then weddings were not planned around a certain theme that often, whereas according to the survey, 50 percent of the couples had a specific wedding theme in mind in 2017. In addition to this, couples use professional wedding planners a lot more than a decade ago. (Brides 2017.) Even earlier, before we had the world of internet and social media, brides and grooms used to look for inspiration from magazines. Now all the new wedding trends can be found online; in blogs, Pinterest, online wedding magazines and even wedding applications. (Douglas 2017.)

1.1 Background of the thesis

I have been interested in wedding planning at least for the past five years but became especially excited about the wedding planning industry after my own wedding in Portugal in 2016. I started event management studies for the same reason, as there is not a specific wedding planning education in Finland. On the first week of my studies I found the book, *Wedding planning & management* by Daniels and Loveless (2012) from the campus library as it was amongst books that the library was getting rid of. Already two years ago, I thought I might need the book later in my studies as I now did in my thesis. Furthermore, because of my interest in weddings, I applied to work at the royal wedding in Dubai in June 2019 where I got to experience three massive, luxurious weddings, where differences regarding culture and religion were highlighted. All of these experiences grew my interest in wedding planning and eventually led me to my thesis topic.

The idea for this product-based thesis came as I started to do research around interesting topics and was able to get the contact details of the editor-in-chief of Mennään Naimisiin Magazine. My interest was to write a thesis around the wedding topic, as I knew that it was a subject I was fascinated by and would benefit from in the future. Mennään Naimisiin magazine agreed to commission my thesis as they have expertise on the topic and are

interested in getting new perspectives on it. Mennään Naimisiin magazine is a wedding magazine that has information about organizing weddings and new wedding trends. They write about beauty, wedding program and decoration ideas as well. Additionally, there is a yearly wedding expo organized by them called Mennään Naimisiin wedding expo and the next expo is coming in January 2020. At the expo, couples can find ideas and examples for their wedding, including services and products. There are also several wedding blogs under the magazine, which can be found on their website. (Mennään Naimisiin 2019.) The other commissioner for my thesis is the couple I did a wedding plan for as the end - product of the thesis. As I considered my options regarding the topic, I was approached by the couple, who expressed their willingness to organize their wedding at the end of 2020 but did not have the resources and time to start the planning process. The couple wished to gain a realistic and usable wedding plan that they could use in their approaching wedding and I was interested in making the plan for them as part of this thesis.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective for this thesis is to find out what wedding related matters are popular among couples, what are the current and future wedding trends and average wedding budget. Another goal is to create a New Year's wedding plan for a couple. The knowledge that is gained from the theory of wedding planning and the interviews is used as a source when making the wedding plan in a concrete form. Additionally, a big significance for me is my own professional development as a future wedding planner, as I am planning to work as a wedding planner after finishing my studies.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The thesis starts with theoretical background that includes wedding planning theory and then continues to interviews of four professional wedding planners that give a solid background on what wishes couples have related to their wedding. Additionally, the planning process of the case wedding is gone through in detail and the decisions that led to the final wedding plan is explained. The assessment section goes through the evaluation of the wedding planning process, how the final product turned out and how the objectives were met. In the appendices the interview questions for the couple and the professional wedding planners can be seen, as well as the final wedding plan in a visual form.

2 Wedding planning and management

This chapter contains theory of wedding planning process that is used as a base for the wedding plan that I made for the couple. The chapter starts with introducing different roles of a wedding planner, steps of the wedding planning process and then goes through all the different matters that need to be looked into when planning a wedding.

2.1 Role of a wedding planner

There are several reasons to use the help of a wedding planner. One of them is that organizing a wedding includes usually a large financial effort from the couple organizing a wedding and a wedding planner with experience can guide them with the budgeting process. Another reason is that weddings involve many emotions for the couple, therefore decision making can be more logical with the help of a wedding planner whose emotions do not affect the decisions as much. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 4.). Additionally, a wedding planner can help with reducing stress from the couple whose big day is in question. (Malouf 2012, 194.) A couple may have many ideas, from magazines or Pinterest, but they might not be able put all the ideas together, as a wedding planner can make it easier to create a wedding that looks like the couple. Additionally, a couple can choose how much help they want from the wedding planner, as there are different kind of packages available. A wedding planner has many contacts that might not be available for the couple and can react quickly to any problems. (Mennään Naimisiin Magazine 1/2019, 123.)

Today many couples are getting married later in life, which means that they may not have as much time for the wedding preparations, for example because of their careers. Additionally, such couples can have more money to hire a wedding planner. Another reason is that second or even third marriages are quite common today and a wedding planner can make the process easier when there are different kinds of family units involved. Many marriages today are being tied between people from different cultures and wedding planner can also help to bring rituals and customs from both cultures into the wedding. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 4.)

A wedding planning business can offer several services that include different amount of assistance for the customer. A comprehensive package means a full package that include everything that the customer might need to plan the day. This package of course cost the most, because it includes all the required services. Elements that the package might include are budgeting, planning of the theme and visuals (for example invitations and menu cards) making the wedding day timeline and checklists as well as searching for and book-

ing the service providers. The package might also include putting together a guestlist with the customer and mailing the invites, helping with needed contracts and eventually the preparations for the ceremony and reception. Lastly, the package includes taking care of everything on the wedding day and the wrap up of the wedding. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 7-8.)

Partial wedding package consists of the wedding planner helping the customers to find the right vendors, that are suitable for the couple's budget and personal preferences. This service can be needed when the customers do not have time and resources to look for the different service providers themselves. With this package the wedding planner will be available on the wedding day to make sure everything goes as planned. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 7-8.)

Day-of package is for customers who have planned their wedding themselves but wants a professional to take care of the coordination of the wedding day. In this case, it is important for the wedding planner to have detailed information of all the vendors used at the wedding and it is necessary that the wedding planner contacts the vendors to make sure that everything is in order before the actual wedding day. On top of these wedding packages, wedding planners offer so called à la carte services with an extra charge, which can include organizing the honeymoon, engagement parties or events organized after the wedding such as a lunch for the wedding party. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 7-8.)

A wedding planner has different kinds of roles in the wedding planning process, depending which kind of package the customer has decided to purchase. If the customer has decided to choose the comprehensive package, the wedding planner of course has a bigger role in the lives of the customer. An important part to understand about the relationship between the wedding planner and the customer, is that it is most of all a business relationship and the wedding planner needs to provide professional service with high-standard. The wedding planner will oversee a lot of the decision making in the planning process, but it is important to remember to give the customer the final say and they must be involved in the decision making. Additionally, the wedding planner should never sign any contracts on behalf of the customer. A big role for the wedding planner is to be the organizer, and that any persons involved in the wedding can contact the planner for assistance. Time management is one of the most important qualities in a wedding planner as well as prioritizing skills. Checklists is a tool that will help a wedding planner to stay organized. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 10-11.)

Being an artistic designer is one of the roles for a wedding planner and making the ideas of the customer come alive without affecting their ideas excessively. Additionally, help with visual design can be needed, for example with flower decorations or wedding cake design. As the wedding day can be a very emotional day, especially for the bride, the wedding planner needs to possess qualities that are calming in stressful situations and the planner might need to take the role of a psychologist in some straining situations. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 10-11.) In addition to this a wedding planner needs to have knowledge in contract regulations and cultural and religious customs as well as trends happening in the wedding industry. A successful wedding planner also needs to have a business mind-set and have organizational and time-management skills. More soft skills that a wedding planner should have are good listening skills, communication skills and empathy towards other people. A very important feature is to be able to work well under pressure as events can be very stressful work environments. (Moran 2014, 9 - 13.)

A wedding planner might have to take the role of a mediator in conflict situations and help the people involved to come up with a solution by listening and negotiating. In some cases, the personal chemistries between the planner and the customer do not meet, but a professional wedding planner is still able to have a working relationship with a customer. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 10 - 11.) As wedding planning is part of the hospitality industry, the wedding planner needs to be able to work with not only a variety of different customers, but also the suppliers, staff members and all the guests attending the wedding. This requires very good people skills from anyone who wants to be a professional wedding planner. (Moran 2014, 9 - 13.)

2.2 Steps of wedding planning process

There are seven steps that should be done when planning a wedding. Some of the steps overlap with each other, as the planning proceeds in a form of a process. The first one is doing research. As one of the first matters a couple should think is how many guests they want to invite, because this will affect many other things in the planning process. For instance, the number of guests will affect which venues can be considered for the wedding size wise. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 104.) If the amount of the wedding guests grow in the middle of the planning process, it can mean that the chosen wedding venue will not be big enough for the wedding. In this case, the couple should consider carefully who they want to celebrate their wedding with (Ranta 2017, 43).

Considered venues will possibly affect the wedding date if all the venues are not available on wanted dates. The couple can decide that the desired venue is so important that they

are willing to change the date of the wedding to get the right venue. Choosing a different wedding day instead of the usual Saturday can also help to get a certain venue. At this point of the planning it is also important to make a list of vendors that are needed in the planning. Vendor as a term means any company or individual that offers services or products for the wedding and are getting a payment for the service. A budget should be decided at the research part. A way to make budgeting easier, is to make a feasibility analysis of things that are important for the couple to have at the wedding and things that can be left out if the budget doesn't allow to have both. For instance, if having a fancy wedding car is very important for the couple, this will be put in the "must have" category and something that is less important for the couple will be left out. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 104.)

The next step is to decide on the design of the wedding, some of these matters will also be thought of in the research phase. In this step the theme and visual look of the wedding is decided or at least planned. At this point the wedding date should be decided and the venue booked. The wedding planner should present their customer two to four different options for all service provider categories, possibly in different price points, which will also make it easier for the couple to determine their budget. In this stage the couple should determine the amount of wedding guests and wedding party and think of a look for the wedding party that will go well with their chosen wedding visuals. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 106.)

Coordination is the next step after the biggest part of the research is done, and the visual look of the wedding is determined. During this part, the wedding planner will make sure that the customer has made the final decision about vendors and help with the payment process. Also, outfits for the couple and the dress code for the guests will be decided. A couple should choose and book their honeymoon and save-the-date cards should be sent out, especially if the wedding is a destination wedding or the wedding date is during a public holiday. At this time the first version of the wedding day schedule should be done, this schedule should include everything that will happen on the wedding day. A layout of the wedding ceremony and reception venues should be done. At the end of this stage, the couple should make their wedding present registry and have their possible engagement photos taken. If there are many guests coming to the wedding from other cities or abroad, the couple should book some hotel rooms for the guests beforehand. Looking into legal issues related to a wedding is an important part of wedding planning process. The legal issues are even more relevant, if the wedding is held abroad. A wedding planner needs to inform the couple about matters related to marriage license and possible name changes. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 107-109)

The step after this is confirmation, when all small details are decided. The schedule of the wedding day and layout of the venue needs to be ready as well as the guest list. Some sort of security plan should be done, depending on the type of the wedding. For example, security staff may be needed if the wedding has extra security risk such as high-profile guests. All wedding vendors should be confirmed, and they should be provided with an individual schedule that involves their part at the wedding. At this point also the seat chart should be finalized and the possible reserved hotel rooms for the guests should be booked. If the couple has done a wedding present registry, they should make sure it is updated. All details of the wedding day should be planned and done at this point. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 110-121.)

After all parts of the wedding has been planned and booked, it is time for the actual wedding day. The wedding day will go as planned, if the wedding planner has a detailed schedule, also called the production schedule. The schedule includes all the detailed tasks that need to be done during the wedding day. The schedule usually includes the day before the wedding, the wedding day, as well as the tasks that needs to be done after the wedding. The schedule contains all tasks in detail, the starting time, the contact person for each task and notes for the task. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 110-121.)

The final step after the wedding has ended is that the wedding planner will stay in contact with the couple for feedback. The wedding planner should ask feedback from the couple as well as some suggestions from vendors of the wedding day. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 110-121.) A good indicator to check if the wedding was successful, is to see if the wedding matched the client's vision or even exceeded their expectations. A wedding planner should also evaluate how he or she was able to react to changing situations or spontaneous requests. A written feedback may also be a good idea for the wedding planner to request, to develop her or his work in the future. (Moran 2014, 155 – 156.) If the couple has decided to have lunch with the wedding guests the next day or some other program, the wedding planner might coordinate these events as well. In this case, preparations related to these extra events should be taken in consideration in the production schedule. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 110-121.) In image 1. below is a summary of the steps of a wedding planning process. It needs to be taken in consideration, that some of the steps are happening simultaneously in the planning process.

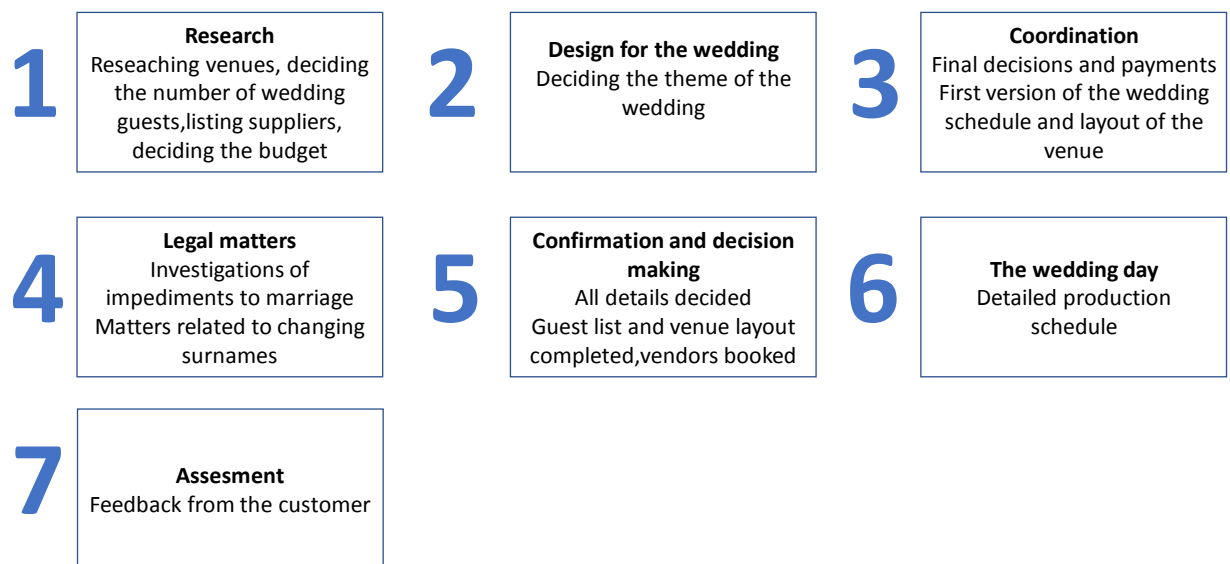


Image 1. Steps of the wedding planning process

2.3 Wedding theme and wedding colours

When starting the planning process with a new customer, it is important to meet up with them face-to face, interview them and ask open ended questions. A good idea is also if the customer can bring some photos or objects that describes their wedding vision, this can help the wedding planner to understand their vision better. Crucial is to remember that “you are not planning your own wedding”, which means that you must listen the customers vision whatever it is. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 140-142.) One of the purposes of having a wedding planner, is that even though it is important to listen to the client’s ideas and wishes, a wedding planner can take those wishes to another lever and suggest things that the couple has not even thought about. A wedding planner should not be afraid to suggest new ideas, even though the customer might not want to use all of them. (Moran 2014,152.)

A clear theme makes the wedding a well thought event. The theme can come from any interests of the bride and groom. A wedding planner Eija Holmberg-Lehto states that a popular theme in the metropolitan area in Finland is a sea theme. (Mennään Naimisiin magazine 1/2019, 105.) A theme for the wedding can be something dramatic or just inspired by the customers favorite color. Another matter that influence the theme is seasons, for example light, pastel colors are usually used in the summer and darker colors in

winter weddings. Some popular holiday seasons for weddings in addition to summertime are around Christmas, New Years and Valentine's day. Another idea for a wedding theme can come from historic period, if the customer has a time period in mind that they love or someone who loves outdoors might want to have the wedding outside in a beautiful environment. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 140-142.)

2.4 Budget

Average wedding budget varies between different countries and also between different areas inside a certain country. In USA the average wedding budget according to Daniels & Loveless in 2012 was 26 000 dollars (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 126.) In 2019 exchange rate this is about 23 500 euros. In a study made by WeddingWire website in 2019 states that the average wedding budget in USA in 2019 is already 38 700 dollars which is approximately 35 000 euros (Business insider 2019).

Estimating the budget well in advance and sticking to it is important part of any wedding plan. First step is to figure all the finances that are available to be used for the wedding and then leaving 10-15 percent of the budget outside for any unexpected changes or surprises (Ranta 2017, 17) It is quite common that a wedding either has less guests and higher quality food, drinks and decorations or more guests and a bit less quality in these parts of the wedding. An exception to this rule is of course if a budget is very large and allows everything that is wanted for a wedding. (Malouf 2012, 196.)

According to a research done by Lähi - Tapiola insurance company, 43 percent of couples pay for their wedding themselves, but also a one third of them said that they have received help from their parents on financing their wedding. The research got 1050 answers in May 2019. Especially younger people see that parents are an important help in covering the wedding costs. Women are more likely to ask help from their parents than men, according to the research. Most couples used their money they earned from work on the wedding, and a big amount of them used savings as well. Only 4 percent of the people answering the questionnaire had taken a loan to cover the wedding costs. Economist Hannu Nurmiäho from Lähi-Tapiola advised couples to start saving early for the wedding, but a year is a good enough time as well. (Talouselämä 2019.)

Wedding planner Jenni Hukkanen from Mevent says that the wedding budget for Finnish weddings right now are about 10 000-15 000 euros. Hukkanen also adds that social media allows wedding trends to come to Finland earlier than they used to before. In practice

the cost of the wedding will be defined by the number of guests, states Hukkanen. A usual amount for wedding guests in Finland is about 100 guests. Half of the budget will approximately go on the wedding food, so that is why the number of guests need to be thought carefully. Anu Beadle from Lily Dream wedding company states that using a wedding planner is a growing trend in Finland, additionally couples put effort on good food and drinks and real flowers as well as visuals and sense experiences. Beadle adds that it may come as a surprise for many how expensive alcohol is, so it is important to think if the wedding will have an open bar. (Op.media 2019.)

Making a proper budget for the wedding is crucial, and it helps the customer make better decisions if all parts of the budget are shown logically. When making a budget the following parts should be included in the spreadsheet: Category name, whether the certain product or service will be included, the estimated cost, the final cost, the amount for down payment and payment date. Finally, a column for extra notes is a good idea in the budget spreadsheet. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 126.) Today, when it is possible for brides and grooms to see amazing wedding related photos on the internet, for example on Pinterest, there can be false perceptions of what is possible on a certain wedding budget. A wedding planner should be able to present the client an alternative that is in low, middle and high-end category, so the couple can choose the option that fits their budget but still matches with their wishes for the wedding. (Moran 2014,154.)

There are several different categories that are usually handled in a wedding budget and all of them have many detailed sections under them. Below in table 1, there is a summary of a wedding budget and all the important categories from Wedding planning and management book by Daniels and Loveless (2012), This can be a good way to present the budget for the customer in the beginning of the process, without giving too much detailed information that might be confusing for them. A good example of the categories is that reception & rentals category include everything from food and beverages to tables, chairs and lighting of the event space. Wedding consultancy category include all the costs of using a professional planner and wedding attire category include the wedding dress, shoes, jewelry as well as the grooms wedding outfit. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 127-130.)

Flowers category include everything from the bridal bouquet to the flowers in the ceremony and reception. Preparations for wedding day category include for example the bride's hair and make-up costs. Other costs that should be taken in consideration in the budget are entertainment, photography and videography, wedding rings, stationery, transportation, presents, ceremony costs and legal matters. According to Daniels and Loveless (2012) the consultant fee is 10 percent of the wedding budget, but a professional can save

a lot of money for the customer by getting them good deals with vendors and as time is money these days, a wedding planner is saving the customers time as well as lower their stress levels. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 127-130.)

Table 1. A summary of an example wedding budget (Daniels & Loveless 2012, modified by van Kalken)

CATEGORY	BUDGET %	AMOUNT (\$) ALLOCATED
RECEPTION & RENTALS	40	10.400
PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY	10	2.600
WEDDING CONSULTANT	10	2.600
WEDDING ATTIRE	8	2080
FLORAL DÉCOR	7	1820
MUSIC & OTHER ENTERTAINMENT	7	1820
WEDDING RINGS (excluding engagement ring)	4	1040
STATIONERY ELEMENTS	3	780
GIFTS	3	780
TRANSPORTATION & LODGING	3	780
WEDDING CAKE & OTHER PASTRIES	2	520
CEREMONY & LEGAL ISSUES	2	520
WEDDING DAY PREPARATIONS	1	260
Total	100 %	\$26.000

2.5 Wedding venue

The location and venue for the wedding can be inspired by the theme, for example a country themed wedding is likely to be held at a farm rather than in the city. A wedding venue can also be changed to fit the theme with decorations and lighting if it is not possible to choose a venue that fits the theme. In many cases a couple might have their ceremony at a church and then have the reception at another venue, for example a hotel, event venue or garden. Another option is to have both the ceremony and reception at the same venue. A couple planning their wedding, might not have a proper idea what sort of theme they want for their wedding and need help from their wedding planner to create a theme and to find a suitable venue as well. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 143-149.) A couple may also choose to have a civil wedding ceremony and then to continue the celebrations in another venue (Ranta 2017,21).

When looking at wedding venue there are certain matters that should be taken in consideration. First matter is that how many people can fit in the venue, because this will deter-

mine if the venue can hold the planned number of guests. Another matter is the rental cost and other costs of the venue, because rental costs varies between different venues and this is an important matter to know when making the budget. When making a budget, it is also crucial to remember other costs that can come on top of the venue rental cost, for example taxes and extra fees. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 143-149.)

When comparing different venues, all the prices need to be comparable, for example all costs are shown with taxes. If there are any regulations in the venue that might affect the planning, that needs to be thought of in advance. This could be for example that a venue can only be booked by someone that has a membership to that place, for example a club. Other regulations can be for instance that food and beverages need to be ordered from the venue and using any outside vendors for that can be forbidden by the venue. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 143-149.) One thing that should also be checked is the outside area of each wedding venue, so they yard is accessible for a wheelchair and isn't hard to walk around with high heels either (Ranta 2017,20).

If a venue is historical or old, it can have regulations related to keeping the space un-harmed, for example that red wine cannot be served in certain spaces to prevent staining. Lastly one needs to consider how much setup time the venue allows before the wedding. Certain venues might have weddings close to each other, so it is not possible to go and set up the space well in advance. If the set-up time is very short, it can cause risks as there is not enough time to solve any problems that can come up. It is recommended to have at least four hours of time to set up the wedding, and If the set-up time is less than that, it is important to have many assistants at the venue. To find out which is the most appropriate venue for a certain wedding, it is a good idea to send a request for proposal to couple of venues to find out all details and costs related to the venue. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 143-149.) One matter that should also be thought of, is if some or all the guests will need accommodation after the wedding. The easiest option for the guests is, if the accommodation is in the wedding venue or at least nearby where the guests can get to in a relatively easy way. (Ranta 2017, 19.) Once the wedding venue is chosen, one of the next steps is to consider what kind of table layout options or what sort of table sizes there are available, this will help to plan the seating order as well (Malouf 2012,126).

If a wedding is held outside, for example in a tent, there are special matters that need to be considered. Firstly, a wedding planner needs to find out how the electricity will be arranged for the music and lights whereas in an inside venue all of this is already arranged. Another matter that needs to be thought of is how the waste is disposed in this case or how the food is cooked, and food and drinks are stored in a proper way. Also, bad weath-

er conditions should be considered and to find out that where is an inside space that the wedding can be transferred, if needed. (Moran 2014,154.)

Additionally, destination weddings are very popular these days. Many couples choose the destination first and then hire a wedding planner to help them plan their wedding in another country. Some venues have their own event planners as well, that help with the planning process. It is important for the wedding planner to do research about the wedding destination and its culture to be able to plan the wedding with the couple. Some couples might also need the wedding planners help to choose the best wedding destination that would match their wishes regarding the wedding. (Moran 2014, 174.)

2.6 Wedding stationery

Before wedding invitations are sent, usually the save-the-date cards are sent to the guests around six to eighteen months before the wedding day- Not all couples do this, but the trend has become more popular. The save-the-date cards are a good idea especially, if the wedding is being held far away or in a different country where the guests live, so the guests have enough time to prepare. The save-the date-cards include basic information about the wedding such as the wedding date and location, further information will be in the actual wedding information. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 322.) In Finland, using the save-the-date cards has not been such a used custom yet and couples have perhaps informed the guests about the wedding in another way in advance. Another option is simply sending the wedding invitations well in advance, but in this case all the needed information might not yet be available (Ranta 2017, 45).

Wedding invitations can be ordered, when the number of guests have been decided. The couple should check how many guests come as individuals and how many come as couples or families, so the correct number of invites will be ordered. The wedding invitations should be sent out about 6-10 weeks before the wedding. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 331-338.) An important part is to check that the date, times and guests' addresses are correct. Wedding invitations do not have to only be sent traditionally by mail, but another option is that they can be sent online by email. For RSVP's, a couple can add their emails or phone numbers and the date by which the RSVP's have to be given. (Ranta 2017, 74-76.) RSVP is French and comes from the words *répondez s'il vous plait*. This means that the date that RSVP's are requested, is the date when the guests should let the couple know, if they are attending the wedding. (Pilato 2019.) Other stationery that is usually done for a wedding is program cards, menu cards and seating charts. The purpose of the program card is to let the guests know what will happen next in the ceremony and if there are some specific element in the ceremony that the guest should know about. Menu cards will in-

form the guests about the food that is served during the dinner and will make the guests to anticipate the food that is about to be served. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 331-338.)

The seating chart will be used, if the couple wants to have set seats for the guests in the dinner tables. The seating chart also makes it easier for the guests to find their seats more quickly and will save time as the names will be in an alphabetical order with table numbers. On top of this, on the table there is usually table markers that show the number or name of each table plus a place card that indicates the exact seat where the guest has been seated. In some cases, guests can choose their own seat at a table or even the table they will sit at during the wedding. On top of the stationery mentioned earlier, a couple can decide to have other products personalized to their wedding, such as napkins or little gift boxes for the guests that contain a little favor or a treat. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 331-339) Additionally, signs directing guests to one place to another can be personalized according to the wedding theme (Moran 2014). After the wedding, couples generally send a thank you card for their guests. Thank you card usually has one or more wedding photos of the couple and some sort of thank you message to the guests (Ranta 2017, 122).

2.7 Decorations

The venue itself will determine a lot of how much decoration is needed. For instance, a beautifully decorated hotel venue might not need that many extra decorations whereas an empty warehouse space will need a lot of decoration to make the vision happen. Additionally, the budget will also limit how elaborate decorations can be done in each event. (Malouf 2012, 153.) Flowers are a big part of weddings usually and take quite a bit amount of the wedding budget. Of course, the bride generally wants to have her bridal bouquet, but flowers are used also at the ceremony and reception. Maid of honours usually have a bouquet or flower decoration on their dresses and flower petals are thrown after the ceremony. (Daniel & Loveless 2012, 239-240.)

One idea is that the entrance of the wedding venue can be made looking special with flowers, this will make a good impression on the guests as well. Another idea is to use plants to give some colour to the venue without having to only use traditional flowers or to use a flower arch that the couple gets married under. A good point to remember, that an outdoor wedding needs less flowers, if the surroundings themselves are colourful and visually pleasing. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 243.) Below in image 2, an example of a flower arch and floral decorations on the guest's seats is shown.



Image 2. A flower arch and other floral decorations in an outside wedding (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 246)

When choosing the wedding flowers, it is important to think if the flowers are available on the season that the wedding is organized in, for example all flowers are not available in the winter season. Other vital things to consider regarding the wedding flowers are the size and shape of the flowers as well as colour and scent. If the flowers have a very strong scent in them, it can be overwhelming for example during the wedding dinner. In many cases, the bride will choose the flowers that she wants in her bridal bouquet, and then the rest of the wedding flowers can be matched to the style of the bouquet. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 248-249.) It is quite usual that the bride wants to have a separate throw bouquet, that she will throw to the single ladies at one point of the reception without having to use her original bridal bouquet (Ranta 2017, 61). A new unique idea is to have an ecological flower bouquet or centerpieces that are even edible after the wedding (Mennään Naimisiin magazine 1/2019, 10),

Centerpieces and other flowers decorations can be done in many ways to make the wedding venue more appealing to the guests. A big trend has been to have the flowers on the dinner tables in big, high vases, and example of this can be seen in image 3. below. Other decorations can also be added to the flower arrangement depending on the theme, for

example berries, lights, leaves or anything the couple and their wedding planner can think of. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 251.)

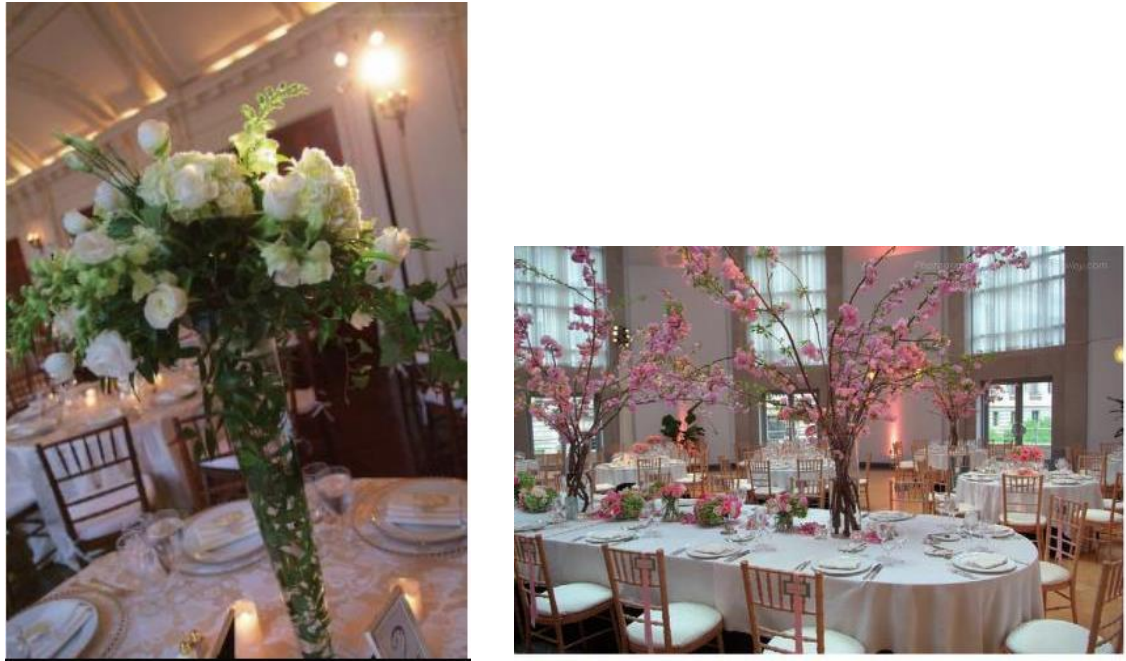


Image 3. Centerpiece in a large vase (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 252 - 253)

If the decorations and flowers are transported to the wedding venue, it is important to be aware all the extra costs that the transportation and installation of the decorations may cause and add them to the wedding budget. Some wedding venues are particularly strict, how some decorations are attached to the walls or ceilings, so this should be planned well in advance to prevent any problems on the day. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 256.) Especially in Finland, many couples want to make some of the wedding decorations themselves, such as the wedding favors and can spend a lot of time in making them (Ranta 2017, 65).

2.8 Menu and drinks

Generally wedding food and drinks are the biggest expenses in every wedding, though of course some couples prioritize different things higher than others (Ranta 2017, 41). When a couple is choosing a service provider for food and beverages, a wedding planner should propose alternatives for the couple in a variety of price ranges. After this the couple should choose three to four best options and can then set up a meeting with the possible caterers. All details related to catering should be gone through at the meeting, including special diets or allergies to make sure that the caterers are able to provide this kind of food. In many occasions, the foods should also be tasted. Some special wishes for food

can also bring extra charges on top of the general cost of food. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 154-165.)

After a meeting, the catering company should send proposal that includes all details related to the food and beverage service such as cost of food and drinks, equipment costs, staff fees and possible delivery costs and taxes. There can be different unique touches to the food and drinks, for example drinks named after the wedding theme or place cards made from chocolate or similar eatable ingredient. Some catering companies have menus that cannot be changed easily, and some are more open to changes. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 154-165.) Many couples might want to choose for example starters from one menu option, main course from another and dessert from the third one (Malouf 2012,132). A good alternative for a traditional wedding cake, is to have cupcakes, cookies or other baked goods served after the wedding meal. An example of a cupcake wedding cake can be seen below in image 4. Traditionally there is a little edible treat in a box on the dinner table for the guests as a wedding favor, but there are many other options for this instead, for instance a polaroid photo of the guests. (Moran 2014, 168-169).



Image 4. Cupcake tower instead of a regular wedding cake (The Knot 2019 a.)

There are a couple of ways that the wedding food can be served; plated, buffet and French style. A couple usually chooses a buffet, if they want to offer a large variety of

foods for their guests. A plated service is somewhat more formal than buffet, but is not always suitable for all venues, for example if the kitchen is not close to the space where the guests are dining. French serving is done by bringing out the food in large dishes and put to the guests plated individually, this type of service is not used at weddings as commonly as the others mentioned before. The cost of food will vary depending on the way of service, how many options are wanted and of course the quality of food as well. Some venues allow the customer to bring the drinks themselves and do not insist that the drinks need to be ordered from the venue. This can save some money for the customer with a limited budget as well as having a bar where the customers can purchase their own drinks. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 154-165.) A couple can decide how many drinks they will offer for the guests during the wedding meal and later in the reception and that way control their wedding budget. In Finnish weddings there generally is alcohol served, but a one option is also to have alcohol free wedding, if that suits the couple better. (Ranta,2017,51-53).

When making a budget for food and beverages, it is important to know how many children are attending the wedding, because their food cost will not be the same amount as for adults. Additionally, a meal has to be provided also for all service providers that works at the wedding on the wedding day, this is an important cost to remember. It is crucial to know if tablecloths, chairs and tables are coming from the venue or the caterer or if they need to be rented from another vendor. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 154-165.)

2.9 Program and entertainment

The wedding program should be planned carefully, but the schedule should still have enough space for changes. It is important that all the guests know what will happen in the program and a good master of ceremonies will guide the guests throughout the wedding. It is crucial that the program is not too heavy on the guests and there is enough time for breaks. A good idea is to take in consideration any possible children that are as guests at the wedding. Having something to do for the kids can make the wedding not turn into a circus if the kids are getting bored just sitting around. A good idea is to have a play area for the kids or even hiring a nanny. (Ranta 2017, 64 – 67.)

Music is one form of entertainment during the wedding day. Usually there is music already before the bride walks down the aisle, which in professional terms is called prelude. This music will give the guest the first impression of the wedding. Traditionally, when the bride walks down the aisle there is a special song playing, and there usually may be different music when the wedding party members walk down the aisle before the bride. During the

ceremony a couple may want to have a performance by a singer or other musician or have a family member to perform. All these performances should be rehearsed well in advance and to take in consideration the acoustics of the venue. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 278-280.)

The music that is played when the married couple walks down the aisle after the ceremony, is called recessional music. Usually this music is uplifting and can be personalized according to the style of the couple. A good idea is to have a musician or a band to play the recessional music and lead the guest out of the ceremony area or venue. In a traditional wedding, a cocktail hour follows the wedding ceremony. If there is a cocktail hour, the music during this should be lights and not too overwhelming, so the guests can talk to each other without the music being too loud. For example, a pianist playing during the cocktail works well. Other music that is usually played during the wedding is when the couple dances their first dance, when the wedding bouquet and quarter is tossed, when the cake is being cut and possibly when the couple is leaving their reception. It is important for the couple to decide if they want for the music to be performed live, for example if they want to have a DJ or a band at the reception, a wedding planner can help them to make that decision. When booking entertainment or performance, it is crucial to make sure everything is booked and confirmed well in advance and that the wedding planner has all the contact details of the performers. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 282-290.) An important matter to take in consideration is that live music is always more costly than music just is played by a DJ. This matter should be discussed with the couple and considered if live music is a part of the wedding that the couple would like to invest in financially. (Moran 2014 153 – 154.)

2.10 Photography

There are styles of photography that are generally used at weddings; a traditional style and photojournalistic style. In the traditional style, the photos are more staged, for example a group photo where all the guests are posing. In the photojournalistic style the photographer is taking more realistic photos and telling a story through them, for example the photographer will take spontaneous photos of couple without them posing. The couple can ask some traditional photos as well and then have the rest of the evening photographed in a more spontaneous style. Especially in case it is a bigger wedding, the photographer can have an assistant with him or her which makes it possible to capture moments of the wedding day from different perspectives. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 262-265.)

A wedding planner should give their customer both options and let them decide which style or a combination would work best for them. Additionally, the number of photographs a photographer will take during the day and how long they will be present on the day, are matters that should be considered, when choosing the photographer. It is recommended to meet one or two photographers, to make sure the chemistry between the couple and the photographer is good and to look at the previous work of the photographer. A meeting with the photographer in advance can reduce stress for the couple on the wedding day. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 265-269.) A good opportunity to meet wedding photographers and other wedding professionals is at wedding expos, where the couple can find out who would be the best person to work with. (Ranta 2017, 26).

One option is to consider if the couple has any talented relatives or friends who would work as a photographer on the day though using a professional photographer has many advantages. A professional photographer has a lot of experience and also the professional cameras and other equipment that that will guarantee good quality photos and knows how to take flattering photos of the couple. Using a relative as a photographer would also mean that that person could perhaps not enjoy the wedding as much while taking the photos and would not be in the wedding photos either. It also has to be remembered that many professional photographers are booked a year in advance, so one needs to be early with making a booking. Ranta 2017, 27).

2.11 Wedding day schedule

In any successful weddings and all other events, making a detailed schedule for the event day is crucial. This schedule should include setup of the event and a detailed schedule for the day itself. The schedule goes often hand in hand with a script for Master of ceremonies to help to understand the program at the event (Matthews 2016, 179-180.) The more detailed the wedding schedule is the better. On average the duration wedding ceremonies is 30-60 minutes and the duration of most wedding receptions is 4-5 hours. One important matter to consider, is if the ceremony and reception are being held in the same venue. If they are held in separate venues, more time needs to be added to the schedule for the transit of all wedding guests between two locations. If the couple wants the photographer to take photos of the preparations, and have shots of the rings, wedding dress and hair and make-up for example, then the photographer should come to the location about 30 minutes in advance. (Kellogg 2017.)

There are tools invented to help to estimate the appropriate schedule for a wedding. For instance, The Knot website has an app where the wedding timeline can be planned easily. The Knot is a digital wedding planning brand, founded in 1996 that has all wedding related matters easily available for couples and also wedding planners. The Knot is also a wedding magazine and there are books as well available from them. (The Knot 2019.)

2.12 Transportation

Transportation may not seem such an important part of a wedding, but the guests will most definitely appreciate if all the transportation and logistics have been handled well. The wedding planner should discuss in detail, of how many guests will need transportation, so the correct transportation can be booked, whether it is a bus, taxi or a limo. First thing to consider is, how the couple will get to the wedding ceremony. In case the bride is escorted to the aisle by her father, as it traditionally is done, then the bride will usually travel to the venue together with her father. The transportation form should match the wedding theme, for example a limo matches a ballroom wedding better than a country wedding. If the couple does not travel together to the venue, then there should be a separate transportation planned for the groom and possibly his best man and groomsmen. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 350-353.)

Some couples want to offer their guests a transportation to the ceremony and maybe also from the ceremony to the reception venue and back. If there is an arrangement for the guests to be transported by the couple, the guests should be informed well in advance so they are prepared for this. Driving instructions should be very clear also for the guests who are coming to the wedding venues with their own car. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 353 - 358.) One idea is that the guests are transported to the reception for example by a bus and offered a little sightseeing tour at the same time (Ranta 2017, 81). Another special moment for the couple can be, when they leave their wedding reception and have booked a special vehicle to take them away for their wedding night. This could be a limo, beautifully decorated car or a motorbike, for instance. It is polite for the couple to consider how the wedding guests will be going home after the wedding, especially if the venue is located further away. One idea is to order a line of taxis ready for the guests when the reception is ending. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 353 - 358.)

2.13 Safety and legal aspects

There are certain safety issues that should always be taken in consideration at all weddings. If the couple has received presents that have been placed at a gift table during the wedding, a wedding planner should make sure that the presents are well looked after and taken to a secure place. If the wedding has any security concerns or if it is a large wedding in questions, the couple should consider hiring a security guard to make sure everything goes smoothly. The wedding planner will assist in making this arrangement. The wedding planner is responsible of the safety of the wedding and should always monitor the event and the guests to spot any problems and to inform other staff members of any risks. (Daniels & Loveless 2012, 376 – 378.) Other possible risks at any event as well as a wedding can be open flames, for example in cooking and using materials in decoration that are easily inflammable. In case a fire does start, it is important to know where the fire distinguishers are also the emergency exits. In addition to this, all exits need to be accessible and there cannot be any tables or other objects in front of them. (The Spring Events 2013.)

All couples in Finland who are getting married, no matter if it is a civil wedding or a church wedding will need Investigation of impediments to marriage carried out. This is done to make sure that there are no obstacles for the marriage. This obstacle could be for instance a previous ongoing marriage, being under eighteen years old, being related to each other. A couple can apply for investigation at any local registry office and the process will take approximately no less than a week to be finished. (Maistraatti 2019.) The investigation can also be done in the parish where the couple belongs to and the certificate needs to be delivered to the officiant (Ranta 2017,84).

3 Interviews as part of the product development

Through Mennään Naimisiin magazine, I was able to get contacts of four professional wedding planners and to send them interview questions through email. The interview questions were open-ended questions related to wedding trends, the wedding planning process and generally the wedding industry. The goal of the interviews was to help to meet the objectives of finding out what matters are popular among couples who are getting married, to look into the biggest wedding trends and to receive information on what is the average wedding budget in Finland right now. The questions related to the wedding industry and qualities of a wedding planner were designed to support my professional development as a future wedding planner. In addition to this, I interviewed the bride and groom in the beginning of the planning process to learn about their preferences regarding their wedding day and used this information as a base of the wedding plan. The interviews were done with semi-structured interview method that is part of the qualitative research.

Qualitative research can be defined as a method that aims to understand a certain story in depth and to hear the story with interviewee's own words, whereas quantitative research method is more concentrated on numbers. In the qualitative research the interview questions can be altered in the middle of the interview according to the interviewees. (Statistic Solutions 2019.) Semi-structured interview has open-ended questions and the interviewer can ask more questions to understand the subject better (Doyle 2019). When analyzing the interview material, the usual way is to transcribe it after the interview is done. The material can be written open on the computer or in a handwritten form. After this the interviewers aim is to find repetitive and meaningful themes from the interview and then draw some conclusions from the material (Aalto Yliopisto 2013.)

3.1 Interviews of professional wedding planners

In this subchapter the interviewees are first being introduced to give more understanding of their background and the answers of the four wedding planners is gone through. Alena Laptenok is the first interviewee. She is the owner of Alena La Kauniiden Juhlien Konttori. Alena studied wedding planning at New York Institute of Art and Design. The second interviewee is Janne-Caro Pykälä from Parone Design. As well as being a wedding and party planner, he is an event producer, florist and a decorator. Pertti Huhtilainen is the third professional wedding planner that answered to the interview questions. He is a wedding and party planner from a company Divine, located in Vantaa. The last interviewee is Sonja Wikström, a wedding and party planner from a company Orchidea.

Ecological thinking and sustainability were big trends of 2019 according to the professional wedding planners. Alana states, that eco weddings are popular and Janne adds that a sit-down meal instead of a buffet is popular, as people don't want to waste food. He thinks that authenticity in materials is important as well as sustainability and recycling. Additionally, environmentally friendly honeymoons are trendy. International wedding trends come to Finland later from abroad and the wedding planners think that the time frame for this is about 1-4 years. Creativity and individuality have also been in this year. Sonja thinks that making personal choices have been popular and Janne adds that the personality will be a big trend also in the coming years. Another trend of year 2019 has been metallic colors, such as gold and silver. Sonja considers that rose gold have been trendy as well as delicate pastel colours such as powdery shades. Alana adds that right now in Finland it is trendy to organize rustic, boho styled weddings and Pertti agrees that many couples are still interested in the boho trend. Janne considers that it is trendy to have the wedding ceremony in the same venue as the reception. Additionally, Alana and Pertti think that the wedding trends have not been so clear this year.

For wedding trends of 2021, Janne perceived that new trends are developed from the trends of the previous year. Alana says that many famous planners follow the trend colors of the year set by Pantone. The trend colors of 2020 will be announced in December 2019. Pantone is a color institute that forecast international color trends. (Pantone 2019). Janne says that couples see the trends on the internet or magazines and Sonja perceives that international wedding trends come to Finland rather quick right now via magazines and Pinterest, she adds that wedding planners also introduce new wedding trends to the clients. Janne states that in the next few years, individuality will continue to be a big trend as well as sustainability and ecological matters and using local ingredients in wedding food. Plastic free weddings will be a hit in the coming years, according to him. Related to sustainability, Janne says that real plants will be used so that the couple can use them later in their home or give out to guests. Additionally, couples might ask guests to donate money for charity instead of giving a wedding present. Sonja and Pertti agree that the emphasis will be on individuality and personality. For the years 2020 – 2021 Pertti foresees that coral color, in either bright shades or other shades will become popular. Alana considers that the trend of writing a script for a wedding will be popular in Finland. This means that weddings will have a manuscript like in a movie or a play and all decorations and program will be according to the manuscript. Sonja perceive that the boho style is going away slowly and more modern style is coming instead.

Janne adds that budgets are getting bigger and at the same time small, intimate weddings are getting more popular. He reminds that it is good to realize that small and simple does

not mean cheap. He states that 18th century weddings have come back in style, including dinner before the wedding day and a brunch after the wedding, so the duration of the wedding is longer. Additionally, Janne adds that it will be popular to have more than one WOW effect per wedding. Weddings in different seasons and winter weddings will be more popular in the few coming years, according to him.

The average wedding budget in Finland was estimated to be 10 000-15 000 euros by the interviewees, but they added that the budget varies between different areas. Pertti perceives that the amount is different when looking at nonmetropolitan area, where lot of people still like to make many wedding related things themselves, which will lower the wedding budget.

The most important parts of the wedding planning process according to the interviewees are making a good budget and schedule for a wedding. Alana says that it is important to remember that it is the couple's day and they have the final say in decisions and that it is important to make the guest list correctly and delegate and prioritize tasks. Pertti states that it is important to choose one direction and go towards that and adds that saving in food costs is not a good idea. Sonja states that the theme should be thought of in the beginning, so the search for the appropriate wedding venue will be easier

Reasons to hire a wedding planner are many, but the interviewees conclude, that a good reason to hire a wedding planner is to avoid problems and to save money. Another reason is that a wedding planner can help to divide the wedding budget correctly and can help to find the right service providers for the wedding. Wedding planner is someone that the customer can turn to whenever they need help or have stress. Pertti recommends using professionals instead of using only the help of friends as it is a good way of saving both money and efforts

Wedding planners need to have many qualities to be able to plan successful events. Alana states that a wedding planner should be calm, positive, creative and passionate about their work. Also, good customer service skills are important. "A wedding planner is also a bit of a psychiatrist", Alana concludes. Pertti states that a good wedding planner knows how to plan menu and wines, choose a wedding venue and take care of the lighting and decorations and help with styling. A wedding planner is also a hosting professional and a leader. He encourages people to be planners with a personal touch and style and to say no if needed. Pertti adds that it is important to follow what is happening around you and being able to read people. Janne states that a wedding planner needs to be reliable and have good verbal skills. On top of this, he describes a good wedding planner as "dip-

lomat, psychologist, a coach and a visualizer”. A wedding planner also needs to have good connections and a lot of experience, according to him.

The interviewees gave valuable tips on how to become a wedding planner. Alana says that a good advice for someone coming to the industry is that they must be hundred per cent sure that you are in the right business, as wedding planning business can be very stressful. A good option is to be an assistant for a wedding planner in the beginning. Pertti agrees that it is a good idea to do an internship with a good wedding planner. Janne adds that the best way to get into the business is by starting your own business or being employed by an already existing business. He says that in Finland there is not a proper education for wedding planners yet, but abroad there are already even higher education level studies available. Sonja recommends having an education in event management, if there is not a possibility for a wedding planning education. She thinks it might be a good idea to study another degree and then orientate towards wedding planning as this way there are other work opportunities than only wedding planning which is not so developed in Finland yet. Below, in image 5. there is a summary of the main themes that came up in the interviews.

<p>WEDDING TRENDS OF 2019</p> <p>ECOLOGICAL THINKING & SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL WEDDING TRENDS COME TO FINLAND AFTER 1-4 YEARS</p> <p>CREATIVITY & INDIVIDUALITY</p> <p>METALLIC COLOURS, SILVER, GOLD, ROSE GOLD</p>	<p>WEDDING TRENDS OF 2020-2021</p> <p>SUSTAINABILITY & PERSONALITY GETTING STRONGER</p> <p>WEDDINGS WITHOUT PLASTIC</p> <p>CORAL, PEACH, BLUSH COLOUR</p>
<p>AVERAGE WEDDING BUDGET IN FINLAND</p> <p>VARIES IN DIFFERENT AREAS</p> <p>APPROXIMATELY 10.000-15.000 EUROS</p>	<p>REASONS TO HIRE A WEDDING PLANNER</p> <p>SAVING MONEY AND EFFORTS</p> <p>TO RELIEVE STRESS</p> <p>WEDDING PLANNER HAS CONTACTS</p>
<p>IMPORTANT PARTS IN THE WEDDING PLANNING PROCESS</p> <p>MAKING A GOOD BUDGET AND A SCHEDULE</p> <p>PRIORITIZING AND DELEGATING TASKS</p> <p>ALWAYS HAVING A BACK - UP PLAN</p>	<p>HOW TO BECOME A WEDDING PLANNER</p> <p>STARTING OWN WEDDING BUSINESS</p> <p>INTERNSHIP IN A WEDDING COMPANY</p> <p>EVENT PLANNING EDUCATION</p> <p>A WEDDING PLANNER NEEDS TO HAVE MANY SKILLS</p>

Image 5. Summary of the interview answers

3.2 Interview of the bride and groom

The interview of the bride and groom was done on 28th of September 2019 in Porvoo at the couple's home. The bride and groom are Finnish and around 30 years old. They have been together four years. The interview was done as a semi-structured, qualitative interview and the duration of the interview was a one hour.

The questions that were asked from the couple had been prepared ahead of time and they were developed to gain understanding of the couple's wishes regarding the wedding date, venue, budget and number of guests as well as the visual look of their ideal wedding. On top of having an open discussion with the couple, I showed them some wedding related images, to make it easier to describe their wishes regarding the wedding and to help the wedding planning process. As I interviewed the couple, I asked open ended questions and some follow-up questions depending on their answers. I made notes on my laptop during the interview for later analyzing. I analyzed the answers on the same day by going through the notes and writing the answers open in a logical order. After writing the interview questions open, I made a table as a summary to make it easier to notice the important themes that came out in the interview. The summary of the interview results can be seen in table 2. later on in this chapter.

There were quite clear themes to be seen in the interview answers and the couple had a relatively clear ideas of what kind of elements they would like to be added to their wedding day. The follow-up questions that were asked during the interview made it clearer for the couple as well. The bride stated that the questions "woke her up" to think about new perspectives related to the wedding day. The couple is planning to have their wedding on New Year's Eve of 2020. They wish to combine the New Year's celebration to their wedding and do not want the celebration to concentrate only on themselves. They also find that New Year's Eve has a lovely atmosphere for a wedding. The couple would like the wedding to be an evening event. They would like for the ceremony to start about 4 pm and for the reception to continue until one am or until the chosen wedding venue allows the reception to continue. They estimate the amount of wedding guests to be from 100 to 110 people. Their wedding budget is 7000-9000 euros. They also said that the absolute maximum wedding budget for them is 10 000 euros. The couple would prefer the budget to be 7000 euros but do realize that it might not be possible with over 100 guests. The budget would include all parts of the wedding ceremony and the reception but the wedding dress, wedding rings and honeymoon expenses the couple will budget separately and will take care of those arrangements themselves. The hair and make-up expenses of the bride is also budgeted separately by the couple and will not be included in this wedding plan.

The couple lives in Porvoo and would like to have the wedding in their home city. They have already looked at one venue in Porvoo called Hotel Onni, but this venue was not completely appropriate and not big enough for their wedding. They might want to have the wedding ceremony in the same venue with the reception, or the other option is to have the ceremony in the church of Porvoo and then the wedding reception would be in another venue in Porvoo. It was agreed that I will suggest few venue options for the couple, that they can choose from. The couple does not necessarily want any specific theme coloring to their wedding, but they want the color scheme to be natural and down to earth, maybe including some metallic shades that would fit the New Year's theme. For entertainment the couple is hoping to have a singer with an accompanist, especially if the ceremony is held at a church. They would like a singer to sing during their first dance as well. For the reception they would like to have a DJ instead of a band, and they would like to make the playlist themselves.

They do not want to have a lot of traditional wedding program, although they would be happy to have the flower bouquet and garter toss, some speeches and cutting of the wedding cake. On top of this, they want to do the traditional first dance and the traditional Finnish wedding program "kidnapping of the bride". As part of the program, they would like to have the different dinner tables at the reception to be introduced, so all guests would get familiar with each other. Additionally, the bride requested something special for the evening related to New Year's theme. They considered if a firework show would be too expensive, but some unique surprise was requested when they year changes to 2021. The couple also mentioned that they would like to have a music quiz for the guests at one point of the evening, which the groom would be happy to be responsible for as he has done it before in gatherings with their friends.

The couple was shown pictures of four different weddings. One was a wedding held outside with a nature theme, the second one was a glamorous ballroom wedding, the third one was a rustic styled wedding with a lot of natural colors and the last one was a circus themed wedding with multicolored decorations. The images can be seen in appendix. ? with the interview questions. The idea of showing these photos was to get an idea of what kind of elements the bride and groom prefers. The couple immediately was drawn to the rustic styled image and their least favorite one was the ballroom styled wedding. The bride described that she especially liked the beautiful lights in the picture and decorations such as the wedding program done in a beautiful way. The couple do not want the decorations at the wedding to look self-made, even though they like the rustic style.

I asked the couple more specific questions about their ideas regarding the wedding and got many good insights regarding their wishes. The couple had the idea of having a candy buffet at the reception and they would also like to have some sort of photo booth or a photo wall. They do not necessarily want the photo booth to be ordered from a supplier, but for the guests to take photos themselves with a polaroid camera. They were not interested in having any props for the photos but only a nice backdrop. The bride wants the invitations and all other stationary such as menu cards to have the same visual look and they do not want to make them themselves, but to order them from a supplier to minimize any unnecessary paper or waste. Lights and flowers are especially important to the couple, but the bride noted that she doesn't want any Christmas flowers at the wedding, such as poinsettia. As colors for the flowers the couple mentioned white and green.

The couple would like to have a professional photographer to take their wedding photos and to take photos at least during the speeches and the wedding dance. They considered that the official wedding photos should possibly be taken before the wedding ceremony to save time. The bride was shown three different bridal styles; boho style, form fitting style and lastly a very traditional wedding dress, see images below. The idea of this part of the interview was to see the bride's wedding dress preference as it will tell a lot of her other ideas of the wedding style. The bride chose the boho style and again the glamorous. form fitting style was her least favorite one. The bride mentioned that she would like to stay in a nice hotel with her bridesmaids, the night before the wedding and have a makeup artist and hairdresser come to the hotel on the wedding morning. The groom would like to wear a tuxedo.

As for the food and beverages for the wedding dinner, the couple would like to order all services from the wedding venue and not purchase any food or drinks from an outside caterer. They would like to have seasonal food on their wedding menu and preferably food made from Finnish ingredients. The couple would like to have the emphasis on vegetarian food and fish, and they would like the food to not to be very heavy. They would like to offer their guests sparkling wine for a toast, wine during the dinner and digestifs with the wedding cake and coffee, plus few mild alcoholic beverages. In case the guests would like to have more drinks, they would purchase them from the bar. As a dessert, the couple would like to have a wedding cake and a candy buffet. The couple was considering of having an evening snack, but it was considered that the timetable might not have enough space for it. The bride suggested that some of the leftovers from the dinner could be displayed at the reception later in the evening. The couple would like to have set seats for the guests, but they want them to be organized in a way that all guests know someone at their table. When the couple visualized their ideal wedding, they described that they would like to

have a relaxed atmosphere and that the wedding wouldn't revolve too much around drinking alcohol. They added that the wedding should be romantic, but not overly romantic. Finally, they concluded that they would like the wedding to be a "great party, relaxed, fun and beautiful with good food and a traditional wedding".

Date&time	Venue	Guests	Budget	Theme	Theme colors	Program	Visuals	Menu
31.12.2020 16pm-1 am	Porvoo	100-110 Set seats	7000-9000	Rustic, New Year's theme	Natural and metallic colors. White and green in flowers	DJ for dancing Photographer Singer and accompanist for ceremony and first dance Wedding bouquet and garter toss First dance Kidnapping of the bride Introduction of tables A special surprise for New Year's Music quizz for the guests Photo wall	Flowers Lights Elegant decoration, not self-made Stationary in same visual style	Vegetarian Fish Seasonal food Finnish ingredients Light food Wedding cake & candy buffet

Table 2. Summary of the interview of the bride and groom

3.3 Results

I analysed the interviews of wedding planners and the bride and groom by first writing them open as a transcript and making a summary of both in written and visual form. After that, I started to draw conclusion of the answers on what were the main themes that were repeated. I compared the answers of the wedding planners and the couple and looked for similarities. From that I was able to make conclusions on the most important themes related to wedding trends and couples' wishes related to their wedding as well as the average wedding budget at the moment.

Several of the wedding trends that came up in the interviews of the professional wedding planners could also be seen in the interview of the couple. Winter weddings are getting

more popular according to one of the interviewees and the couple wants to have New Year's wedding, which goes hand in hand with the trend. Rustic and boho weddings have been popular in Finland, even though the trend is slowly going away, this is also in the hopes of this couple. Metallic colors were mentioned in the interviews as trendy and the couple wants to add metallic colors in their color palette, such as gold or silver. The couple wants to surprise their guests with a singer during their first dance as well as having the fireworks when the year changes and also the wedding planners mentioned that having more than one WOW moment to a wedding is getting more popular. It was also said in the interviews of the wedding planners, that couples want to get out of old patterns, and the couple of the case wedding does not want to follow all the old wedding traditions and do not want to add many wedding party games to their wedding, with the exception of the wedding quiz. Ecological thinking was mentioned as a big trend in the interviews of the wedding planners and the couple commented that they do not want to make any of the stationery themselves to minimize any unnecessary waste that might come if paper and other supplies would be ordered and then not used. Wedding planner Janne Pykälä considers in his interview answer, that it is trendy to have the wedding ceremony in the same venue as the reception. The couple also wishes to have their wedding ceremony and reception in the same venue, if possible. The average wedding budget in Finland was estimated to be 10 000-15 000 euros in the interviews of the wedding planners and it was stated that if some of the things in the wedding are done by the couple it will lower the wedding budget. The maximum wedding budget for the couple was also 10 000 euros. but they were not willing to make things, such as invites themselves.

It can be concluded that the biggest wedding trends can be seen in interviews of the wedding planners as well as the interview of the couple. There were many answers in the interviews of the wedding planners that are beneficial when making the wedding plan. The professional wedding planners stated that the most important parts of a wedding plan are a good budget and schedule. It was also said that it is important to listen to the customer and let them have the final say in decisions as it is their wedding day. This was also mentioned in the book of Daniels and Loveless (2012) that it is important to remember that it is the customer's wedding day and their decisions. Making a proper guest list and delegating and prioritizing tasks were also mentioned to be important matters in the wedding planning process. These observations will make it easier for me to concentrate on the important parts of wedding planning. Wedding planners Sonja Wickström stated that the theme should be thought of in the beginning, to help the search for the appropriate wedding venue, this was also explained in the theory of wedding planning earlier that a clear vision or a theme makes the planning process easier.

There are several good reasons to use the help of a wedding planner. The reason that came up in the interviews of the wedding planners were that using a wedding planner can help to avoid problems and to save money as well. It was mentioned that a wedding planner can help to divide the wedding budget correctly and to find the right service providers for the customer and save effort. Similar answers came up in other material used in the theory of wedding planning. It was mentioned that a wedding planner will help with budgeting and be involved with the planning without the same emotional input as the couple has towards their wedding. A wedding planner also has experience and contacts that the couple does necessarily not have.

The results related to the attributes of a good wedding planner and how to get into the wedding planning business can help in the professional development of anyone wanting to be a wedding planner. In the interviews of professional wedding planners, it was stated that good customer service skills and verbal skills are important. Creativity was mentioned to be an important quality and calm nature. It was clear from their answers, that a good wedding planner need to be able to handle many situations; from decorating, styling, planning and sometimes also being the “psychiatrist” for the customer. Similar qualities were mentioned in the reading material in the theory of wedding planning process. These notions help me to realize what kind of attributes a wedding planner needs to have and how to approach my customer in the planning process. Connections was also mentioned to be important for a wedding planner to have, which encourages to network with professional wedding planners.

On how to become a professional wedding planner, the interviewees gave tips such as starting your own business or doing an internship in a wedding planning business. Event management studies were also mentioned. These are good tips for someone wanting to be a wedding planner. One option is to study wedding planning abroad, as the education for wedding planning is only beginning in Finland.

4 Wedding planning process for a New Year's themed wedding

In this section the wedding planning process is explained in detail. The chapter starts from the search of the wedding venue, planning of the program and decorations and goes through the entire planning process. The objective of this chapter is to help to understand how the final wedding plan was created and how the decisions were made to reach the final goal.

4.1 Looking for the right wedding venue

The wedding planning process began with the search of the appropriate wedding venue soon after the initial interview of the bride and groom. The couple wanted to have their wedding in the City of Porvoo and the goal for the venue was that it should be big enough for 110 guests. The venue should also fit the rustic, New Year's theme. I initially did a search in Venuu.fi, which is a website, where one can look for event venues with specific keywords. The keywords that were used to look for event venues for this wedding were "Wedding" and "Porvoo". Additionally, the number of guests were added to the search, to find the best fitting venues. Venuu.fi website found ten venues that were suitable for this event.

The first venue that I considered suitable out of the ten venues suggested by the website was Träskberga event space, which has space for 110 guests. This venue is suitable for birthday parties, family celebrations and weddings. The event space is about 105 square meters with a stage and light and sound technique available. The space also has an 80 square meter terrace. (Uf Kamraterna 2019.) In this space the customers can bring their own food and beverages for events. The rent for one day is 200 euros. (Venuu.fi 2019). In images 6. and 7. the Träskberga event venue is shown from outside and inside. This event space was considered a good option, because it is in the right area and is big enough for the event as well as having a neutral look that can be adjusted to the theme of the event.



Image 6. Träskberga event venue from outside (Uf Kamraterna 2019)



Image 7. Träskberga event venue from inside (Uf Kamraterna 2019)

The second venue option that was considered was Sannäs manor in Porvoo. This event space is big enough for 125 guests for seated dinner. The rent for one day is 1650 euros. (Venuu.fi 2019.) Sannäs manor is an old styled manor with a romantic atmosphere and crystal chandeliers. The menu in the manor is made from fresh, Finnish ingredients and seasonal food with a twist. (Sannäsins kartano 2019.) Below are images 8. and 9. of Sannäs manor, where one can see that the event space is very suitable for a wintery wedding. Additionally, their menu would fit the couple's wishes regarding the wedding food.



Image 8. Sannäs Manor from the outside in winter season (Venuu 2019 a.)



Image 9. Sannäs Manor from the inside (Venuu 2019 a.)

A third alternative for the wedding was Vanha Navetta event space which has a country romance feel to it with local, high quality food (Kannonnokka 2019). The rental fee for this venue is 600 euros for a day (Venuu 2019). Below in image 10. and image 11. Vanha Navetta is shown from outside and inside where one can see that it fits the rustic wedding atmosphere that the couple is looking for.



Image 10. Vanha Navetta event venue from outside (Venuu 2019 b.)



Image 11. Vanha Navetta event venue from inside (Venue 2019 b.)

The final option was Villa hall event venue, that is part of Haikko Manor, a popular hotel and spa complex in Porvoo area. Villa hall is located in the seaside and fits the description for the wanted event space. The venue would have plenty of space as it fits 230 guests, (Haikko 2019.) Below in image 12. the Villa hall is shown from the inside.



Image 12. Villa Hall from the inside (Haikko.fi 2019)

Out of these four options, the couple chose Vanha Navetta and Sannäs manor as their two favorites. They considered Vanha Navetta to be “lovely, rustic and a relaxed venue”. They thought that the venue itself has such a good atmosphere that it would only need minimalistic decorations and it is not too fancy for their wedding. They considered for the space to be a good size for their wedding but realized that it might not be big enough for 110 guests in the winter. The couple had visited the venue and knew that they liked the food there. It is allowed to bring your own beverages to the venue, which is a good option budget wise, even though it isn’t the couple’s first wish to do so. The venue is located in Porvoo area which was important for the couple. A concern that the couple had about this venue was that the location is not so central that there would need to be a transportation for the guests to the venue. Additionally, they were wondering if the ceremony needs to be in another location as there might not be enough space in Vanha Navetta for all the guests and they were also considering if the ceremony could be held somewhere else than a church.

Sannäs Manor was the couple’s other favorite option. The couple thought that Sannäs Manor is beautiful looking place and has enough space for all the guests. They thought that the restaurant menus sounded delicious. The couple considered that venue rental to be expensive and wondered if the space was a bit too fancy for their relaxed wedding. This venue is also located further away from the center of Porvoo, so transportation for guests would be needed in this case as well.

I sent requests for quotations to both, Vanha Navetta event space and Sannäs Manor on the 7th of October and got replies approximately in a week. Sannäs Manor sent a quotation that contained most of the information that was needed at that point of the planning process. A staff member from Vanha Navetta replied that the event space is not big enough for 110 guests, but only 104 guests can fit in the event space and even then, there will only be space for dinner tables and no extra room for other program.

At this point I contacted the bride and groom and presented both options to them via email. It was concluded that Sannäs wedding venue would be too expensive for the couple as only the wedding venue and menu prices combined would be 7825 euros and this price does not include drinks or any program costs. Also, after getting the quotation, it was found out that the venue would not be big enough for the 110 guests. I consulted the couple about which elements of the wedding they were willing to leave out and which were vital to keep in the planning process. The couple decided that they wanted to still have the wedding in Porvoo area, and they were not willing to make their budget more than 10 000 euros at this stage. They were willing to lower the number of guests to fit the Vanha Navetta wedding space as they concluded that it was their favorite venue. As it was stated in the theory of wedding planning process, the venue can determine many things such as how many people can be invited to the wedding, or the couple can choose a venue that they love and then fit the number of invited guests to the venue. At this stage the couple decided that Vanha Navetta venue was the one they wanted to have their wedding at and wanted to continue the wedding planning around this venue.

I sent another email to Vanha Navetta to find out how many guests can fit in there comfortably so that the ceremony and the reception could be held in the same space. In this same request I asked for them to send a more detailed quotation with prices. I got a response from Vanha Navetta in a bit over a week. In the second email I received a lot of new information that helped to move forward with the wedding planning. Vanha Navetta sent four different wedding menu options and specific information of the space and how many guests can fit in to have enough space for a dancing and program. At this point I informed the couple about the maximum guest capacity of 86 in this venue. I explained that with this number of guests there would be enough space for dancing and other program, and they were content with this number of invites.

After the new information and a decision on behalf of the couple to choose Vanha Navetta as their wedding venue, I was able to move forward in making a budget around this venue. I sent yet another message to the venue requesting prices for drinks and asking if it

was possible to have the ceremony at the venue with 86 guests. I also asked how much earlier the event space could be decorated in advance and if the wedding cake is included in the price that was in the menu suggestions. I received an answer that had the details of drink prices and other questions that I had and also confirmed that both the ceremony and reception could be held at Vanha Navetta, only if all the guests would sit or stand around the dinner tables during the wedding ceremony. The other option is the upstairs space, but it is not heated up in the wintertime. After a discussion with the couple, it was decided that the wedding ceremony would be at church of Porvoo and then the reception would be at Vanha Navetta. At this stage, I noticed that many details had to be asked from the event venues, to be able to make a detailed budget and to make sure there would be no unwanted surprises later in the planning process.

4.2 Creating the visual look and decorations

I started to do a research for a solid visual look of the wedding at an early stage of the planning process, because it was important for the couple to match all the visuals of the wedding to each other. The goal was to search for different styles for stationary that would fit the criteria of rustic feel and New Year's theme given by the couple. The reason to give a variety of option was to find out which style the couple preferred the most and then match all the stationary according to that. I looked for stationery such as invitations, menu cards and program cards with neutral colours and gold accents. I did a search for the invitations with keywords such as "wedding invitation", "rustic" and "celebration". The couple emphasized that they wanted the wedding to be a good party so I decided that some regular party invitations might fit the new year's theme. There were quite many options for stationary that fitted the wedding theme, from which I chose four suggestions for the couple. The options can be seen below in image 13.



Rustic invitation (Calligraphen 2019 a.)



Invitation with golden dots (Vistaprint 2019 a.)



Golden invitation (Calligraphen 2019 b.)



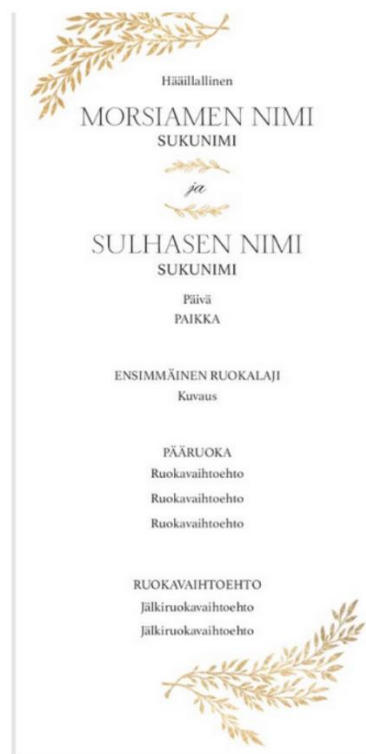
Copper invitation (Calligraphen 2019)

Image 13. Samples for wedding invitations (Calligraphen 2019 & Vistaprint 2019)

A suitable suggestion for menu card was found from a website called Calligraphen. The menu card had neutral colours and the menu text was written in a gold metallic text which matched the couple's wishes regarding the theme colours. The other alternative that was suggested to the couple was a simple white one with golden accents and that was found from a website called Vistaprint. These options can be seen below in image 14. As the couple wished for the visuals to match, I searched for place cards and table numbers in the same style and found few options that are shown in image 15. To match the rustic theme, it was suggested to use wood as a holder for the table card or to have a simple name card attached to a flower. These suggestions can be seen also in image 15.



Rustic menu option (Calligraphen 2019 d.)



Golden menu option (Vistaprint 2019 b.)

Image 14. Samples for menu cards (Vistaprint & Calligraphen 2019).



Simple golden table number (Calligraphen 2019 e.)



Rustic table number (Calligraphen 2019 f.)



Place card attached to a flower (Decorahouse 2019)



Wooden place card holder (Calligraphen 2019 g.)



Simple place card (Calligraphen 2019 h.).

Image 15. Alternatives for table numbers and place cards (Calligraphen & Decorahouse 2019)

For decorations, I started to do research for lights to be put above the dinner tables, and options for flowers that are available in the winter. I found good sources that gave me an idea which flowers would suit the bride's idea of white and green flowers and would be available in December. On 31.10.2019 I sent requests for quotation to three different flower shops in Porvoo area on, as I decided that it will be the easiest for the couple to pick up the flowers on wedding day from a florist located near their home. I added the photos of the flower types I planned to be used at the wedding in the email to get accurate price estimations. I got responses from all the three florists within couple of days and they provided me approximated costs for a wedding bouquet, four boutonnieres, centerpieces and flowers for the church benches.

4.3 Researching for program options

At this stage I started to make a research on the program. I looked for a DJ, a singer for the church, rental possibilities for a polaroid camera and photobooth backdrops. I found good options for the surprise moment when the year changes to 2021 including firework, sparklers and LED balloons to be released in the sky. After finding good options from suppliers, I added them in a Word file and then added the chosen options and their costs to the budget I had in an Excel file. I had a discussion with the bride, and she decided that they did not want to have the traditional "kidnapping of the bride" program included in their day, after all. The bride emphasized, that it was most important for them to have a singer and accompanist performing live during their first dance.

4.4 Transportation and accommodation on the wedding day

As the ceremony is planned to be held in Porvoo church, the guests will need a transportation from there to the wedding venue. The couple wants to offer this to the guests if they choose not to come to the reception by car and want to go home by taxi at nighttime. The distance between the two locations is 9,2 kilometers which is approximately a fifteen-minute drive (Google maps 2019). On 30.10.2019 I asked for a quotation for a bus with capacity of 86 people from Porvoon liikenne on, which is a bus company operating in Porvoo. They replied shortly after the message was sent, that they are not able to offer their services at that time. After this I sent another quotation to a company called Busmo to get a price evaluation for the wedding budget. I received a quotation from them which was added to the budget. As their own wedding car, the couple said that they will use a friend's car and will not need money budgeted to that expense. The bride wished to stay in a hotel in Porvoo with her bridesmaids and then to stay the same wedding suite with the

groom after the wedding. In Porvoo, there are few options for a romantic hotel, such as Hotel Onni, Hotel Ida-Maria and Hotel Pariisin Ville. The couple chose Ida-Maria Hotel as their wedding hotel and wants to book a room for them before the wedding.

4.5 Presenting the ideas to the couple

After gaining more information about the venue and doing a lot of researching online about different visual options, program and other arrangements, I made a PowerPoint presentation for the couple about all the ideas I had for the wedding and sent it to them via email. The visual PowerPoint included suggestions for invitations, menus sent by the venue, visual suggestions for menu cards, program cards, table numbers and place cards. In the PowerPoint presentation also, the program was presented based on what the couple had requested in the interview. Additionally, decoration ideas were presented including the flowers and the decorative lights. The objective of sending this PowerPoint to the couple at this stage was, that they could see my suggestions in a visual form and that it would be easier to discuss their wishes afterwards. I asked the couple to go through the presentation and to get back to me with their own ideas of which suggestions they would like to use and which ones not. I also encouraged them to let me know if they had any ideas of their own about a specific DJ or a photographer, they would like me to ask a quotation from. We discussed about the ideas on the phone and by that time the couple had made their decisions regarding the suggestions.

After getting quotations from the florists, we chose a florist together with the couple that had made the best offer for the wedding flowers and I added the costs to the wedding budget. I also found a good wedding photographer in the Porvoo area and suggested their five-hour or eight-hour wedding packages to the couple. I also presented the wedding budget to them and at this point the budget was rising over 10 000 euros. The couple decided to have the eight-hour full day package because, it was important for them to have a photographer also at the venue. I also pointed out to them that on New Year's the light outside will not be good for wedding photos late in the afternoon, which means that official photographs should be taken around midday, if possible. Regarding the wedding budget, it was discussed with the couple that some other decorative things need to be left out of the wedding plan or lower the amount of wedding guests so the budget would not rise a lot over 10.000 euros. I explained to the couple that the food and beverage costs are the biggest ones in the budget. The couple decided this point to lower the amount of wedding guests by ten guests to 76 people. To lower the wedding budget yet a bit more, the couple decided to not choose the lights that were planned to hang above the dinner tables as well as the led balloons that were planned to be put out when the year changes to 2020. Out of

the flowers, they decided to leave out small flowers that was planned to be placed on the edge of the church benches. These reductions helped to lower the budget at this stage. Below in image 16., there is a summary of the wedding planning process timeline. Many of the parts in the planning process were going on simultaneously, such as budgeting was happening throughout the process.

TIMELINE OF THE WEDDING PLANNING PROCESS

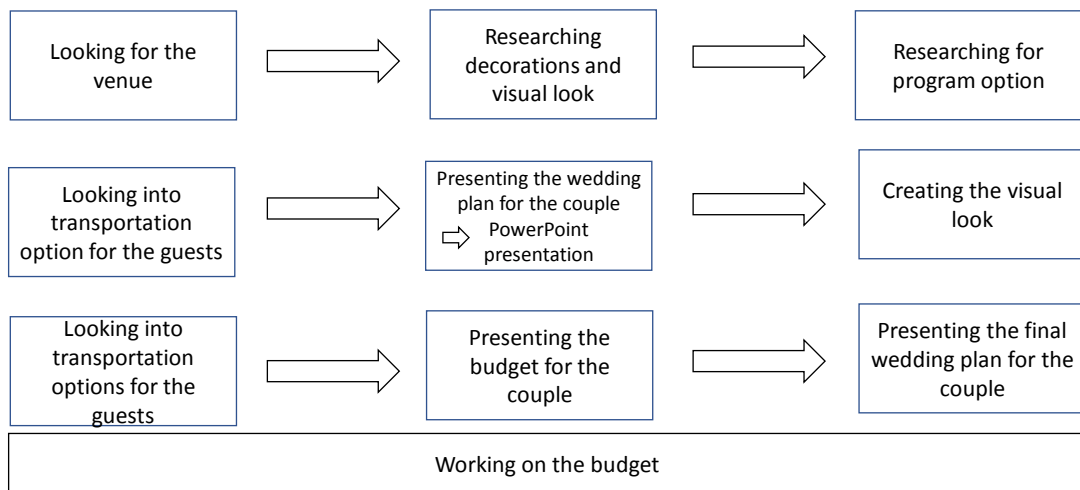


Image 16. Timeline of the wedding planning process

5 Wedding plan for a New Year's themed wedding

In this section I present the completed wedding plan I made for the New Year's themed wedding. I go through the different parts of the wedding plan, including the wedding theme, budget, wedding venue and stationery. I also introduce the plan for decorations, menu and wedding program as well as photography, schedule and transportation. In the end of the chapter I go through the legal matters that the couple needs to take into consideration before the wedding. The visual wedding plan was made in Canva and it can be seen in appendix 3.

5.1 Wedding theme and wedding colours

The couple had wished for neutral wedding colours with some metallic accents and in the final wedding plan this wish was followed with the wedding invitations, wedding flowers and other decorations. The theme of the wedding is the New Year's theme with rustic details. In the beginning of the planning process I had a vision of a more rustic theme, but as I discussed with the couple, I realized that they wanted to use more of the metallic colours and a little bit of the rustic feel added to it. The venue has a rustic feel to it, and it does not need many decorations to make it look festive. In addition to the New Year's theme, the wedding does not have any other specific theme to it, such as a time period or for instance, a movie related theme.

5.2 Budget

The budget of this wedding plan fluctuated many times during the planning process. I informed the couple each time the budget went over the limit they had given me as I added new parts in the budget. I consulted the couple and asked how meaningful the things added to the budget was, and if there was something else that could be left out. As it was shown earlier in the theoretical framework regarding the budget, it is important for the couple to prioritize all the things related to the wedding, and to decide which parts can be left out and which are vital to keep in the wedding plan.

The final budget for this wedding is 11223,90 euros, which is 1223,90 over the initial maximum budget that the couple gave me. The couple hoped for 8000 euros budget in the beginning but as we started to research the options they wanted for their wedding and the number of guests they had; it was quickly realized that the budget will be bigger. In the end of the planning process, we went through all the parts of the budget and the couple were not willing to leave anything else out of the plan and they perceived all of the parts to

be important. The couple were willing to have a bit over 1200 euro rise to the budget, to be able to have all the planned segments in the wedding. They had already lowered the number of guests to 76 and had left out some decorative features. I formed the budget in Excel and added all the possible costs are involved in the wedding. I added all the parts under correct categories so the budget would be easier to follow. As I received the quotations from suppliers, I added the costs in the Excel and removed the ones that the couple decided to leave out. I added notes in the Excel as well, when some of the costs needed an explanation. The final budget can be seen below, in table 3.

Table 3. The final budget

	QUANTITY	PRICE IN EURO	TOTAL	NOTES
CEREMONY VENUE				
Church of Porvoo	1	0	0	To get married in the church of Porvoo is free of cost
RECEPTION VENUE				
Vanha Navetta	1	700	700	Includes: Table setting, staff costs, preparations for the menu and waiting service
ENTERTAINMENT+ PROGRAM				
DJ	1	400	400	DJ Dick Berman
Photographer	1	1500	1500	8 hour photo package 12.00-20.00
Photo wall				
Rental of polaroid camera	1	89	89	Includes the camera + 6 films (60 photos)
Extra film for the camera	4	13,9	55,6	1 film has 10 photos
Backdrop	1	11,9	11,9	
Music				
Singer+accompanist for wedding dance	1	250	250	A singer the bride is familiar with
Music quizz				
Paper for quizz answers	4	2,95	11,8	20 papers in each packet
A special New Year 's surprise				
Sparklers	16	3	48	3 euros = 5 sparklers
Fireworks	1	39,9	39,9	Includes 9 fireworks
DECORATIONS				
Flowers				
Bridal bouquet	1	90	90	
Boutonniers	4	13	52	13 e/piece, 1 for the groom, 1 for the bestmen, 3 groomsmen
Centerpieces	10	20	200	
Bathroom baskets for men and women with toiletries	2	20	40	Baskets from home, product costs
Stationary				
Menu cards	25	6	150	25 was minimum to order. Free shipping for orders over 50 euros
Table numbers	10	1,94	19,4	Guests will be sitting in tables of 8. Some extra numbers ordered
Invitations	50	1,94	97	Bride estimated that 50 invitations needed
Name cards for tables	76	1,7	129,2	
Program cards	25	6	150	25 was minimum to order. Using the same card base as the menu card
Thank you cards, the couple will order later themselves	0	0	0	
FOOD AND DRINKS				
Wedding menu	73	58	4234	Welcome drink, 2 servings during dinner, 2 drink tickets, 1 digestif with coffee
Wedding cake	1	0	0	Buffet dinner, 3 babies
Drinks				
Sparkling wine for toast	73	5	365	1 serving each, 3 children who are not served
Red wine and white wine	146	5	730	2 servings during dinner
Digestif	73	5	365	1 serving each
2 wines, beers or ciders for each guest from the bar	146	5	730	2 serving each from the bar
Candy buffet				
Lakrits	5	3	15	Brunberg 5x liquorice = 1,5kg 4x rice chocolate bars=4kg,
Rice chocolate bars	4	9,95	39,8	1x Truffel=3kg, 1xGeisha chocolate =3kg
Truffels	1	33	33	
Fazer Geisha Chocolates	1	31,8	31,8	
LEGAL DOCUMENTS				
Investigation of impediments to marriage	1	0	0	The certificate is free in Finland, postal costs can be added
ACCOMMODATION + LOGISTICS				
Hotel for the wedding night	1	89	89	Ida-Maria hotel Porvoo
Transportation for guests	1	550	550	Bus with a capacity of 82 guests. Busmo.com
Wedding car for the couple	1	0	0	The bride 's fathers car will be used
Sashes and a bow for the wedding car	1	7,5	7,5	
Total			11223,9	

5.3 Wedding venue

The chosen wedding venue Vanha Navetta is suitable for the 76 wedding guests that is the final number. Vanha Navetta is an event venue and restaurant in Kerkkoo, about 15-minute drive from the Porvoo old town. The venue is suitable for weddings, family celebrations and meetings. The restaurant in Vanha Navetta offers high quality food for all occasions. (Kannonnokka 2019.) I was told by the contact person in Vanha Navetta that both the upstairs and downstairs areas in Vanha Navetta can be used in the summer, but in the winter the upstairs area is not heated. This stopped for the wedding ceremony to be held in Vanha Navetta as there is not enough space for all the guests, unless they sit already around the dinner tables during the ceremony. The couple decided not to choose this option, which is why the wedding ceremony will be held in the church of Porvoo instead. As a reception venue, Vanha Navetta offers an idyllic atmosphere for the couples' winter wedding and is still in a good location regarding the church. Choosing a separate wedding venue for ceremony and reception requires transportation for the guests and requires taking logistic matters more into consideration in the scheduling.

5.4 Wedding stationery

The couple preferred a white invitation with gold dots on it out of the suggested invitation samples, that can be seen in image 13. They requested, if the invitation could have a black base. Additionally, they wished that the other stationery could be done in black with the same visual look. A similar looking invitation was found online on a website called Zazzle.com. These sample can be seen in image 17.



Image 17. Invitation, place card and menu card chosen by the couple (Zazzle.com 2019 a, b & c.)

All this card samples were customizable, which means that for example even though the small folded card was designed for RSVP's, it can be altered as name cards for the dinner table. The program will be printed in the similar card as the menu card. After a discussion with the couple, it was decided that the menu cards and programs will be attached to a champagne cork to emphasize the New Year's theme. The type of menu holder that is planned to be used at the wedding can be see below in image 18. The couple decided to collect the champagne corks themselves with their friends and family members and to make the menu holders themselves, instead of purchasing them online.



Image 18. Champagne cork menu holder (Etsy 2019. Little house of details)

5.5 Decorations

The decorations that the couple decided on are the flower centrepieces that are going to be put on the dinner table. On top of this, multiple candles are going to be put in the reception venue to bring a cosy atmosphere. The couple decided to leave out the lights above the dinner tables, because of financial reasons. Otherwise the event space Vanha Navetta is rather beautiful as it is, so they did not think that it needed a lot of extra decoration. Also, flower decorations from the church benches was decided to leave out, because of the budget.

5.6 Menu and drinks

Regarding the food, the couple decided on a buffet instead of table service because it was a cheaper option and they considered that the buffet was a good option for their wedding. They decided that they wanted to combine two menu options, to make the ideal menu for their wedding. The chosen menu can be seen in the visual presentation of the wedding plan in appendix 3. The couple decided to offer welcome drinks for the guests as well as two servings of wine during the dinner and one digestif with coffee. In addition to this, they want to offer the guests two drinks from the bar, by using drink vouchers. After the dinner, a candy buffet will be displayed in the dinner area, with candies from Fazer and Brunberg.

5.7 Program and entertainment

As program the couple decided to concentrate on the music and an important part for them was to have a singer singing during their first dance. The singer is a person, that the bride has heard singing at her friend's wedding and wants to book for her own wedding as well. A DJ was chosen to play music later in the evening and to lead the music quiz together with the groom. There will also be a photo booth, where guests can take photos themselves with a polaroid camera, in front of a golden backdrop. In addition to this, they wanted to have the toss of the wedding bouquet and quarter. The highlight of the evening is the surprise moment, when the year changes. Fireworks will be displayed in the night sky and large sparklers will be divided to the guests. One of the suggestions I had for the wedding plan, was sparkly LED balloons that could be let out in the sky, but the couple decided to leave this idea out for budget reasons.

5.8 Photography

The photographer that was chosen for the wedding day is located in Porvoo and had such photos on their website that reflect the sort of photos the couple would like to be taken on their wedding day. The official portrait photos of the couple will be taken before the wedding ceremony near the church and Porvoo river, which has beautiful photo spots around it. During the ceremony the photographer will also take some photos and then continue to take more photojournalistic and spontaneous photos at the reception. The couple emphasized that it is important for them to have a group photo taken, so this will be taken at the beginning of the reception when the guests arrive to Vanha Navetta.

5.9 Wedding day schedule

The schedule for the wedding day changed throughout the planning process when there were alterations made into the wedding plan. The main objective with the wedding day schedule was that there would be enough time for all parts of the wedding. Once the couple decides to book the services, there will be a more detailed production schedule for the wedding day, with timelines for all suppliers such as the caterer, photographer and performer.

In this schedule, the day for the bride starts at 8.00 at the hotel Ida-Maria with the bridesmaids, while the groom will be at home preparing for the day. The photographs will be taken before the wedding ceremony, as the couple does not want to use time on the official photos during the reception. The photos also cannot be taken late in the afternoon, as there is not a lot of day light in December. The couple wants to have rather short ceremony, so the time slot for this is only half an hour. I also reserved some extra time for guests to move around from one place to another, for instance after the ceremony the bus to the reception leaves 17.00, when the wedding ceremony ends at 16.30. With large number of guests, it is always important to leave some extra time for transitions. For wedding dinner, I have reserved 1 hour and 30 minutes, as it is a buffet dinner. If the couple had chosen table service, the time slot would need to be longer.

The photographer offers eight-hour packages, so she will be leaving the wedding at 20.00, so all the photos that are important for the couple need to be taken before that. The first dance and cake cut will not be photographed by the professional photographer which the couple was content with. They were happy to have friends and family to take photos of the later portion on the evening and there is also the photobooth in use that groups can take photos at. After the first dance there will be some program such as the toss of the flower

bouquet and garter as well as the wedding quiz. At 22.00 the DJ starts playing and the more unofficial party portion of the wedding begins until at 23.30 the guest will start moving outside for the New Year's celebrations. After this the dancing will continue until 01.00 and by that time taxis will be ordered to the reception venue for the guests. The wedding schedule can be seen below in image 19.

WEDDING DAY SCHEDULE	
8:00	Bride and bridesmaids arrive at the hotel Ida-Maria
9:00	Make-up artist and hairdresser arrives
11:45	Photographer arrives to the hotel, photos of the couple and family members
12:00 -14:00	Couple at the photo session, photos taken next to the Porvoo river near the church
16:00	Wedding ceremony begins at Porvoo church
16:30	Wedding ceremony ends
16:45	All guests waiting outside to congratulate the couple
17:00	Bus leave to the reception venue Vanha Navetta
17:15	Bus arrives to the reception venue
17:30-18:00	Welcome toast and congratulating the couple in the dinner area, group picture
18:00	All guests sitting down for wedding dinner
18:00 - 18:30	Introducing the tables
18:30-20:00	Wedding dinner as a buffet, speeches
20:00	Photographer leaves
20:00-21:00	Cutting of the wedding cake and coffee
21:00-21:15	First dance
21:15-21:30	Toss of the wedding bouquet and carter on the dance floor
21:30-22:00	Wedding quizz with DJ
22:00->	DJ starts his own set
22 - 23:30	Partying
23:30-00:00	Special New Years surprise
00:00	Partying continues
00:45	Last song of the evening
01:00	Guests leave by taxi or own car

Image 19. The wedding day schedule

5.10 Transportation

The transportation of the bride and groom will be done with the bride's father's car that will be decorated with bows. A friend of the couple will be the driver. The wedding guests can choose to drive to the wedding reception from the church of Porvoo or join the bus ride that is booked in advance. Most of the guests live nearby Porvoo area, so they are able to make their way to the church of Porvoo, if they want to use the bus and not their own car to the reception. The couple does not have a transportation booked for the guests when they are leaving from the wedding reception at night- time, but taxis will be ordered for the guests to make sure everyone gets home safely.

5.11 Safety and legal aspects

The safety of the wedding guest will be the responsibility of the wedding planner and other staff working at the event. There will be a first aid kit at the venue and a staff member with first-aid skills. All the transitions from one location to another and inside the reception venue will be done with time so all the 76 guests will have enough time to move to another spot safely.

Any open flames are not used at the wedding and the safety of guests will be ensured during the fireworks display by making sure all the guests are standing in good distance from the fireworks. Best man of the groom who will be using the fireworks, will wear appropriate protective gear such as gloves and eye protectors. The staff members and the wedding planner will be aware of all the emergency exits and fire extinguishers and make sure there are no objects in front of them. The guests will also be informed of all the safety matters of the event venue in the beginning of the event by master of ceremonies and especially the location of the emergency exits.

The wedding planner will make sure that none of the materials used at the wedding are easily inflammable and if there is material like that, there is no open fire close to it. The guests will inform the couple of any food allergies, and it is important task for me as the wedding planner, to make sure the catering staff is aware of these possibly life-threatening allergies, and to check that the compensatory meals are available for the right guests. As there will be three children at the wedding, it is important to make sure that the children are safe during the celebrations. Of course, the parents are responsible of their own children, but it is important for the wedding planner and other staff members to look out for any possible risks for children such as risk of choking. The couple will need to have the Investigation of impediments to marriage carried out well in advance before the wedding day. I as the wedding planner, will make sure that they will apply for the investigations at least three weeks before the wedding day.

6 Assessing the wedding planning process and the wedding plan

In this section of the thesis I am assessing the wedding planning process and the final wedding plan. I am also evaluating what kind of things I learned throughout the process and how the objectives were met.

The main objective for this thesis was to find out what wedding related matters are popular among couples, what are the current and future wedding trends and average wedding budget. Another goal was to create a New Year's wedding plan for a couple. Additionally, a big significance for me was my own professional development as a future wedding planner, as I am planning to work as a wedding planner after finishing my studies.

I consider that the objectives for this thesis were met rather well, as the interviews of both the bride and groom as well as the professional wedding planners gave a variety of insights about wedding trends, couples' wishes related to weddings and average wedding budgets. The main trends that came up in the interviews were sustainability and personality as well as using metallic colours in weddings. Additionally, it can be concluded that wedding trends come to Finland about 1-4 years later from abroad. Rustic weddings have been popular in Finland and even though it was stated that it is slowly going away as a trend, the couple I made the wedding plan for still wanted to use the rustic style in their wedding in 2020. The commissioner Mennään Naimisiin magazine, is able to use the information regarding the wedding trends and average wedding budget as the research brought insights regarding the topic that they were especially interested in. Additionally, the wedding planning process can be used as a guide on what to take in consideration when planning a wedding. I also think that the goal of making a usable wedding plan for the couple was met, which is important as this is a product-based thesis. The couple was happy with the wedding plan and thought that they can plan their wedding according to the wedding plan I produced. The wedding plan included a detailed wedding budget that has all the parts in that the couple need to take in consideration when starting to make the bookings for the venue and services. I have contacted the venue and service providers on their behalf, so they have all the information researched ready for them. Overall the couple was content in the planning process and the wedding plan. They gave a feedback of the wedding planning process after I had sent them the final wedding plan:

"Johanna's idea for a thesis with a wedding topic and our wedding planning started at the same time, so we got the idea to utilize Johanna's skills in the planning of our wedding. The collaboration

was smooth and inspiring starting from the beginning. We got the interview questions before hand and saw the PowerPoint presentation with the initial ideas and discussed about the budget. I already had some ideas about the wedding venue, and Johanna listened to our wishes in detail. She kept us up to date at all times. The budget went over the limit, but the venue took the biggest amount of the budget and we did not want to change the venue. Johanna clearly had experience and knowledge in event management, and she understood our ideas and put them in a visual form”

6.1 Assessment of the wedding planning process

I started the planning process by researching for different kind of material for theoretical background. I found books, articles, wedding magazines, wedding blogs and received a beneficial guidebook form the commissioner about wedding planning. I noticed that a lot of the source material that I were made in USA or UK, so many of the ideas and wedding traditions were fitted to those cultures. I observed that some of the customs in the books might be more used for example in the USA, such as using different kind of music for each moment in a wedding day. In Finland it is not so common to have different songs for when the bride throws the bouquet and when the wedding cake is being cut. In Finland wedding budgets are also smaller than in USA. The guidebook for wedding planning called *Häitä Päin*, published by Mennään Naimisiin Xhill Oy had good perspectives for Finnish environment and wedding ideas adjusted to Finnish culture.

I made the questions for both the professional wedding planners and the couple by contemplating what kind of questions would give the most insights for the topic and help to achieve the goals. The interview questions were sent to multiple professional wedding planers by the commissioner and I received four answers altogether. Even though the number of answers was not so big, the answers were extensive, and the quality of the answers were very good which is important when using the qualitative research method. The answers gave a lot of insight about the wedding trends and average wedding budget of couples, which was the main goal for the thesis. I was able to use the information about wedding trends and adapted the ideas for the wedding plan I was making and to understand what kind of matters other couples have wanted for their wedding. The interview answers about the important parts of wedding planning process, such as budgeting and scheduling helped me to concentrate on them as they are one big part of a wedding plan.

The first meeting with the couple was a face-to-face meeting and that is when the initial interview was done. After this, the communication with the couple was done via phone, e-mail or WhatsApp. One matter I contemplate is if I would have received more in-depth discussion with the couple, if more than one of the contacts would've be done as face-to-

face meetings. The reason that the rest of the discussions was done by phone or other form, was difficulties to match our schedules. Nevertheless, I do think that the phone discussions were rather productive. Whenever I needed the couple's input on any matters related to the wedding planning process, I was able to contact them quickly via WhatsApp and the communication between the couple and I went very smoothly.

The wedding budget given by the couple went over the set amount by 1223,90 euros. The couple wanted to have the wedding reception in Vanha Navetta where the costs for a wedding meal for over 70 guests took a large amount of the budget. In each step of the way I communicated the changes in the budget with the couple, to allow them to make alterations if they felt like it was rising too much. Regarding the wedding budget I also realized that most services are expensive in Finland, especially when they are related to weddings. I found out that food and beverages are the biggest expenses in the wedding planning process, together with the wedding venue. If a couple wants to lower their wedding budget, the best way is to lower the number of guests, because that instantly lowers the cost that goes towards the wedding meals. I consider that there are some measures that could have been done to make the wedding plan more cost efficient. One way would have been to ask even more requests for quotations from suppliers to possibly find even more affordable alternatives. All the stationery could also be self-made to save money, but the couple wanted to have everything ordered ready from a company. Another option would have been to send the wedding invitations by email instead of using paper invites. Additionally, choosing a wedding venue that has cheaper menu options would have been the biggest saving for the couple, but in this case, they were set on this venue and were prepared to take the extra costs. Pertti Huhtilainen, a wedding planner that was interviewed for the thesis, stated that saving in food costs is not a good idea and the couple followed this advice in their wedding. The only food related part they saved with was having a buffet dinner instead of table service. The wedding flowers could be made by the bride's mother as she has done beautiful bouquets in the past, but the couple did not decide on this right now. In case they are willing to go with this option, it will save them money with the flowers, as they only need to purchase the flowers but do not have to pay for the labour costs. I think all the parts that were included in the final wedding budget, were important for the couple and they prioritized them as crucial to keep in the wedding plan and the ones that were not so important were already left out, such as some of the planned decorations.

When I researched possible wedding venues, service providers and vendors, some service providers took a while to reply and in some cases I had to send multiple messages, which of course slowed down the process. This reminded me, that it is crucial to contact

popular photographers and venues early as the communication can take a while and also the best ones will be booked early. The winter season gave more challenge to the wedding planning as it gets dark early in the afternoon and for instance photos cannot be taken outside later in the afternoon. Also, prices are higher on special holiday such as New Year's, which needs to be taken in consideration when making the budget. On the other hand, there are not so many weddings on New Year's as there is for example in July and August, so churches and venues might be more available for booking.

6.2 Learning outcomes

I had my own experience of using a wedding planner in my wedding in Portugal in 2016, so I also have experienced the customer's side of things. During that experience, I considered that using the wedding planner relieved a lot of stress especially when I was organizing a wedding abroad and she helped to keep the budget in place as there was no surprises during the planning process. I think it is a common believe that hiring a wedding planner only adds to the costs, but after reading the materials, I understood reasons why hiring a wedding planner can help to save money and efforts. Wedding planners also offer different level of services as well, so a couple does not have to hire the wedding planner to take care of everything, but to hire one to help with booking vendors for example.

Another good learning point for me as a wedding planner, was that some of my initial ideas differed from the couples 'regarding the visual look. I had concentrated more on the rustic feel and lighter colours, and the customer wanted to emphasize more the New Year's theme in visuals. The rustic feel in their vision came more from venue itself. As stated before in the theoretical framework, it is important to listen to the customer's ideas and to remember that their point of views are the ones that matter. Everyone has a different visual idea and they can differ a lot if there is not clear communication between the customer and the wedding planner. I think I could have asked the customer to show their ideas for example with a Pinterest mood board, to understand their ideas when they talk about a certain wedding theme.

Overall, I learned that communication is the key to plan a wedding successfully and a good wedding planner has to be able to say when something is not possible with the couple's wedding budget. I had to keep in mind that not all my visions and suggestions can be made to reality, because the customers wishes can be different. Additionally, in some cases I felt that some of my ideas would been perfect for the wedding, but they did not match the budget. These are all the challenges that a professional wedding planner needs to consider.

Additionally, I got new perspectives on time-management and budgeting. I learned to take all the small details in consideration when making the budget, as there cannot be any surprises for the customer and also developed my skills in using Excel.

The most important insight for me from this learning experience is, that I gained a lot of new knowledge and experience about wedding planning and can use it as I embark the journey of becoming a wedding planner. In addition to this, I learned many things about the current wedding trends and what kind of matters are important when planning a wedding. I also gained knowledge on what kind of attributes are important in a wedding planner and what are the best ways to become a wedding planner.

7 Conclusion

The wedding planning process is a complex journey and includes many steps that need to be taken before the final result is reached. The wedding planner needs to have a lot of knowledge and have to do a lot of research to be able to plan a wedding successfully.

Wedding trends of 2019 that came up in the interviews are sustainability and ecological thinking in wedding planning, creativity and individuality as well as metallic colours. Wedding trends come to Finland from abroad about 1-4 years later. The average wedding budget in Finland is about 10.000-15.000 euros, but it varies according to different areas. Sustainability carries on as a wedding trends in 2020 and 2021 and also plastic-free weddings. Coral peach a blush colour will be in as well.

The most important parts in the wedding planning process according to the interviewed professional wedding planners are making a good budget and wedding day schedule as well as prioritizing and delegating tasks. A wedding planner should always have a backup plan just in case. There are many good reasons to hire a wedding planner, but few of them are that a wedding planner saves time and effort from the customer. Wedding planners can relieve stress and have experience and contacts that the customers might not have.

Education for wedding planners has not begun properly in Finland, and the interviewees suggested to start your own wedding planning business or to try to get a job in a wedding planning business. They also recommended to study event planning as base studies and then to branch out to wedding planning. Wedding planners need to have multiple skills such as people skills, financial skills and time management skills, so anyone who wants to go into the business needs to be prepared for many challenges.

The couple who the wedding plan was made for was content with the final result as well as the planning process. They thought that the wedding plan was something they can use for their upcoming wedding as the wedding is now budgeted and put in a visual form.

References

Aalto Yliopisto 2013. Analysis and interpretation of the data. URL: https://mycourses.aalto.fi/pluginfile.php/195681/mod_resource/content/1/qualitative%20research%202013-10-28_handout.pdf. Accessed: 12 November 2019.

Brides 2017. How wedding planning has changed over the last 10 years. URL: <https://www.brides.com/story/how-wedding-planning-has-changed>. Accessed: 24 November 2019.

Business insider 2019. URL: <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-much-does-it-cost-to-get-married-average-wedding-2019-7?r=US&IR=T>. Accessed: 13 October 2019.

Calligraphen 2019 a. Kutsukortti. URL: <https://www.calligraphen.fi/fi/artiklar/kutsukortti-juhlat-rustic-party.html>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Calligraphen 2019 b. Fantasia. URL: <https://www.calligraphen.fi/fi/artiklar/fantasia-yksiosainen-metallinhohto-kulta-haakutsu.html>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Calligraphen 2019 c. Heart of copper hääkutsu. URL: <https://www.calligraphen.fi/fi/artiklar/heart-of-copper-haakutsu-2.html>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Calligraphen 2019 d. Rustic love menukortti. URL: <https://www.calligraphen.fi/fi/artiklar/rustic-love-menukortti-2.html>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Calligraphen 2019 e. Pöytänumerokortti vanilja. URL: <https://www.calligraphen.fi/fi/artiklar/poytanumerokortti-vanilja-2.html>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Calligraphen 2019 f. Pöytänumerokortti rustic love. URL: <https://www.calligraphen.fi/fi/artiklar/poytanumerokortti-rustic-love.html>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Calligraphen 2019 g. Paikkakortinpidike puu. URL: <https://www.calligraphen.fi/fi/artiklar/paikkakortinpidike-puu-6-kpl.html>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Calligraphen 2019 h. Paikkakortti Fantasia. URL:
<https://www.calligraphen.fi/fi/artiklar/paikkakortti-fantasia-varit-vanilja-3.html>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Celebration 2019. Blog. Wedding themes. URL:
<https://www.celebration.co.za/blog/wedding-themes/step-right-circus-theme/>. Accessed: 20 September 2019.

Daniels, M. & Loveless, C. 2012. Wedding planning & management - consultancy for diverse clients. Routledge. USA.

Decorahouse 2019. Rustica heart nimikortit. URL:
<https://www.decorahouse.com/products/rustica-heart-nimikortit-8-kpl>. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Douglas, M. 2017. The past, present and future of the wedding industry. URL:
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/part-1-the-past-present-f_b_9294420. Accessed: 24 November 2019.

Doyle, A. 2019. What is a semi-structured interview. URL:
<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-a-semi-structured-interview-2061632>. Accessed: 12 November 2019.

Elegant wedding 2019. All-white ballroom wedding with gold accents. URL:
<https://www.elegantwedding.ca/ballroom-wedding-with-gold-accents/>. Accessed: 20 September 2019.

Essense Design 2019. Garden inspired A-line wedding dress. URL:
<https://www.essensedesigns.com/stella-york/wedding-dresses/6776/>. Accessed: 20 September 2019.

Etsy 2019. Little house of details. Gold glitter champagne place card. URL:
https://www.etsy.com/listing/579579014/gold-glitter-champagne-cork-place-card?ref=search_recently_viewed-2. Accessed: 29 October 2019.

Fazer 2019. Reseptit ja ideat. URL: <https://www.fazer.fi/reseptit-ja-ideat/juhlavinkit/teemajuhlat/merellinen-karkkibuffet-hurmaa-vieraat/>. Accessed: 14 October 2019.

Google Maps 2019. URL: <https://www.google.fi/maps>. Accessed: 6 October 2019.

Haikko 2019. Villa Sali. URL: <https://www.haikko.fi/villa-sali>. Accessed: 6 October 2019.

Henderson castle 2019. How to plan an outdoor wedding. URL: <https://www.hendersoncastle.com/how-to-plan-an-outdoor-wedding.php>. Accessed 20 September 2019.

Hoffower, H. 2019. More couples are taking on debt to have Instagram-worthy weddings. Here's how much it costs to get married in the US. URL: <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-much-does-it-cost-to-get-married-average-wedding-2019-7?r=US&IR=T>. Accessed: 13 October 2019.

Huhtilainen, P. Interview. 6 November 2019.

Helsingin Sanomat 2012. Ruoka. URL: <https://www.hs.fi/ruoka/reseptit/art-2000002550419.html>. Accessed: 14 October 2019.

Kannonnokka 2019. Kannonnokka ja Vanha Navetta. URL: <http://www.kannonnokka.com/>. Accessed: 6 October 2019.

Kerran elämässä 2016. Kotimaan matkailu. <https://kerranelamassa.fi/kotimaan-matkailu/suomen-parhaat/joulukohteet/>. Accessed: 8 October 2019.

Kellog, K. 2017. URL: <https://www.brides.com/story/reception-timeline-tips>. Accessed: 14 October 2019.

Kotimaassa 2011. URL: https://www.kotimaassa.fi/index.php?article_id=2009&__from_id__=888. Accessed: 3 November 2019.

Laptenok, A. Interview 7.10.2019.

Lemon, K. 2017. Why weddings still matter. <https://www.avenuecalgary.com/Why-Weddings-Still-Matter/>. Accessed: 16 November 2019.

Maistraatti 2019. Investigation of impediments to marriage. URL: <https://www.maistraatti.fi/en/Services/Investigation-of-impediments-to-marriage/>. Accessed: 11 November 2019.

Makea Wedding blog 2018. Kuukauden kimppu. URL: <http://makeaweddingblog.blogspot.com/2018/01/kuukauden-kimppu-talven-utuisia-savyja.html>. Accessed: 13 October 2019.

Malouf, L. 2012. Events exposed. Managing and designing special events. John Wiley & Sons, inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Matthews, D. 2016. Special event production: The process. Routledge. New York.

Meidän Häät 2019. Vuoden 2019 häätrendit maailmalla. URL: <https://meidanhaat.fi/artikkelit/haatrendit-2019-maailmalla/>. Accessed: 17 November 2019.

Mennään Naimisiin magazine 1/2019. Mennään Naimisiin Xhill Oy. Helsinki.

Mennään Naimisiin 2019. URL: <https://www.mennaannaimisiin.fi/>. Accessed: 16 November 2019.

Mennään Naimisiin 2019. Hääblogit. Cutting the cake together. URL: <https://www.mennaannaimisiin.fi/karkkibuffet/haablogit/cutting-the-cake-together/>. Accessed: 14 October 2019.

Moran, J. 2014. How to start a home-based wedding planning business. Morris book publishing, LLC. USA.

Moore, W. 2009. Love and marriage in the 18th century. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236718375_Love_and_Marriage_in_18th-Century_Britain. Accessed: 16 November 2019

O.P media 2019. Kuinka hääbudjetti kannattaa suunnitella? Näin vältät yleiset kompastuskivet. URL: <https://op.media/talous/raha-ja-arki/kuinka-haabudjetti-kannattaa->

suunnitella-nain-valtat-yleiset-kompastuskivet-367dd774499f4c36b2b84ed950f3dbaf. Accessed: 13 November 2019.

Pantone 2019. About Pantone. URL: <https://www.pantone.com/about/about-pantone>. Accessed: 23 November 2019.

Pilato, D. 2019. What doe RSVP mean on an invitation. URL: <https://www.thespruce.com/what-does-rsvp-mean-on-invitations-1196806>. Accessed: 11 November 2019.

Pinterest. Emerald green and white rose boutonniere. URL: <https://www.pinterest.it/pin/531002612302594523/?lp=true>. Accessed: 28 October 2019.

Porvoon Seurakunnat 2019. Tilat ja kiinteistöt. URL: <https://www.porvoonseurakunnat.fi/tilat-ja-kiinteistot/tuomiokirkko/>. Accessed: 3 November 2019.

Pykälä, J. 15 October 2019. Interview.

Ranta, N. 2018. Häitä pain. Opas häiden suunnitteluun. Mennään Naimisiin Xhill Oy. Helsinki.

Sarah and Dave photography. Classic New Year's Eve wedding. URL <https://sarahanddavephotography.com/2019/01/28/classic-new-years-eve-wedding/>. Accessed: 28.October.2019.

Sannäsin kartano 2019. Weddings and parties. URL: <http://www.sannaskartano.fi/en/weddings-and-parties/>. Accessed: 6 October 2019.

Serpentiini 2019. Taustaverho kultasydän. URL: <https://www.serpentiini.fi/tuote/taustaverho-kultasydan/>. Accessed: 29 October 2019

Sinun kuvasi 2019. Vuokraa polaroid kamera. URL: <http://www.sinunkuvasi.com/vuokraa-polaroid-kamera/>. Accessed: 29 October 2019.

Stadissa 2019. Ilotulitus Helsinki. URL: <https://www.stadissa.fi/tapahtumat/36128/ilotulitus-helsinki>. Accessed: 29 October 2019.

Statistic Solutions 2019. Qualitative research approach. URL: <https://www.statisticssolutions.com/qualitative-research-approach/>. Accessed: 12 November 2019.

Talouselämä 2019. Suomalaiset rahoittavat häänsä vanhempien kukkarosta – Joka kolmas tarvitsee ulkopuolista apua hääbudjetin kasaamiseen. URL: <https://www.talouselama.fi/uutiset/suomalaiset-rahoittavat-haansa-vanhempien-kukkarosta-joka-kolmas-tarvitsee-ulkopuolista-apua-haabudjetin-kasaamiseen/28fc57e0-ef8f-46ab-a953-f7455cdb6b87>. Accessed: 13 October 2019.

The dressy women 2019. URL: <https://www.dressywomen.com/a-line-bateau-long-sleeves-backless-chiffon-bohemian-wedding-dress-with-lace.html>. Accessed: 20 September 2019.

The Knot 2019 a. 16 wedding cake ideas with cupcakes. URL: <https://www.theknot.com/content/wedding-cakes-and-cupcakes>. Accessed: 17 November 2019.

The Knot 2019 b. Fashion. URL: <https://www.theknot.com/fashion/8278-lisette-morilee-by-madeline-gardner-wedding-dress->. Accessed: 20 September 2019.

The Springs events 2013. URL: <https://thespringsevents.com/wedding-blog/5-tips-of-fire-safety-for-weddings/>. Accessed: 17 November 2019.

Town and country 2019. URL: <https://www.townandcountrymag.com/the-scene/weddings/g22549844/rustic-wedding-ideas/>. Accessed: 20 September 2019.

Uf Kamraterna 2019. Träskberga föreningshus. URL: <https://www.ufkamraterna.fi/start/traskberga/>. Accessed: 6 October 2019.

Venuu 2019 a. Sannäsin Kartano. URL: <https://venuu.fi/tilat/sannasin-kartano-kartanoravintola>. Accessed: 6 October 2019.

Venuu 2019 b. Vanha Navetta juhlatila. URL: <https://venuu.fi/tilat/vanha-navetta-juhlatila>. Accessed: 6 October 2019.

Vistaprint 2019 a. URL: https://www.vistaprint.fi/?no_redrect=1&xnav=logo. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Vistaprint 2019 b. Paperi tarvikkeet. URL:

https://www.vistaprint.fi/paperitarvikkeet/haamenut?project_id=cc47634b-29e4-498d-9266-0ff7d749ac17&Redirect=truemenu. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Wedding day sparklers 2019. 36-inc wedding sparklers. URL:

<https://weddingdaysparklers.com/36-inch-wedding-sparklers/>. Accessed: 29 October 2019.

Zazzle 2019 a.

URL: https://www.zazzle.com/faux_gold_foil_confetti_black_quinceanera_invitation-256405674765413569. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Zazzle 2019 b. URL:

https://www.zazzle.com/faux_gold_foil_confetti_elegant_wedding_menu_card-245687637158200270. Accessed: 27 October 2019.

Zazzle 2019 c. URL https://www.zazzle.com/pd/spp/pt-zazzle_foldedcard?tdid=69e138e7-7abf-46d7-8ee9-f255a5b44767. Accessed: 27 October 2019.



1. When have you planned to have your wedding?
Which season?
2. How many guests are you planning to invite?
3. What is your wedding budget?
4. In which cities/towns have you considered having your wedding at?
5. Is there any specific wedding venues you would like to look at?
6. Do you have any theme colors in mind?
7. What kind of entertainment would you like to have on your wedding day?
8. What kind of music would you like to hear at your wedding?
9. What elements of the following differently themed weddings appeal to you? (pictures on page 2)
10. Which kind of bridal style do you prefer the most?
(pictures on page 2)
11. What kind of food and drinks would you like to be served at your wedding?
12. What elements would you definitely **not** want to have at your wedding?
13. Describe your ideal wedding in your own words
14. Do you have any other wishes related to the wedding?

9. Which elements of these differently themed weddings appeal to you? (below)



10. Which one of these bridal styles do you prefer?



(Dressy women 2019)
BOHO STYLE



(Essense Design 2019)
TRADITIONAL



(The Knot 2019 b.)
FORM FITTING

Appendix 2. Interview questions for the professional wedding planners

What are the biggest wedding trends of 2019 and how can they be seen in wedding planning?

Which international wedding trends can be seen in Finland at the moment and how long does it take for the trends to come to Finland?

Which wedding trends of 2020 and 2021 can already be seen in Finland?

What is the average budget for a wedding in Finland at the moment?

What do you think are the most important things to be taken in consideration in the wedding planning process?

What kind of things can be done to avoid mistakes or problems in the wedding planning process?

Do you have any tips for someone wanting to work as a wedding planner or how to get into the business?

What are the qualities that a wedding planner should have?

Appendix 3. Wedding plan in a visual form



Place card (Zazzle 2019 c.)



Champagne cork place card holder (Etsy 2019)

Wedding invitation (Zazzle 2019 a.)



Church of Porvoo (Porvoon seurakunnat 2019)



Church of Porvoo in the winter (Kerran elämässä 2016)



Vanha Navetta venue (Venuu 2019)



Vanha Navetta menu option(Vanha Navetta 2019)

Starters:

Smoke salmon
Chantarelle and apple
Beetroot
Walnut with goat cheese
or bluecheese
Rocket and garlic with
fried champignons,
Eggplant
Fried peppers and
beans
Manchego cheese,
Pistachios with honey
and balsamic
Corn chicken with fennel
and truffel crème

Main course:

Grilled ox, smoked beer
barbecue sauce, parsnip
purée, spelt bred of the
house

Wedding cake:

Cheese cake with
raspberry sauce



Grilled ox (Helsingin sanomat 2012)

Dinner at Vanha Navetta venue (Venuu 2019)





Center pieces for dinner tables
(Sarah and Dave photography 2019)



Boutonniere (Pinterest 2019)



Brides bouquet (Makea wedding blog 2018)

Candy buffet (Fazer 2019)



Candy buffet (Mennään Naimisiin hääblogit 2019)

Polaroid camera (Sinun kuvasi 2019)



Backdrop for the photobooth
(Serpentiini 2019)





Fireworks when the year changes (Stadissa 2019)



Sparklers when the year changes (Wedding day sparklers 2019)