

# Confessions of a New York wedding planner: Samantha Goldberg of 'Whose Wedding Is It Anyway?'

BY JANE RIDLEY DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER, Saturday, April 10th 2010



Top New York party organizer [Samantha Goldberg](#), 41, who appears on the [Style Network](#)'s "Whose Wedding Is It Anyway?," has been arranging other people's nuptials for more than two decades.

Juggling mud-soaked marquees and mad mothers-in-law goes with the territory. With the 2010 wedding season unofficially kicking off this weekend, Goldberg dishes on the highs and lows of her job.

**You're known for plain talking. How do you tell a bride that her dream dress doesn't suit her?** There is nothing about my personality that's subtle — but I try to be tactful. I don't generally accompany brides to dress fittings — her friends should make the call — but, if I do, I will speak the truth.

The biggest mistake is going for a mermaid style when you have womanly curves. Back fat is inevitable and [Spanx](#) in that area isn't an option. I'll say: "You know what? I like the way the front of the dress looks, but the back is not doing you any favors."

I'll mention the photojournalistic style of wedding photos, which include a back shot of the bride holding a bouquet. "You're not going to want a photographer to take an up-close pic of that." If you're a larger lady, spaghetti straps or camisoles are the way to go.

**You say you come across fewer [Bridezillas](#) these days and more [Groomzillas](#). Why's that?** I frequently run into grooms who are more demanding than the fiancée. Oftentimes, it's a case of him testing the bride to see how far he can push her. That's not a good sign. The plus side is that men tend to be good at prioritizing what's really important. Rather than the florals, the lighting, the textured linens and the menu cards, they focus on the entertainment and the bar.

Truth is, if the cocktail hour sucks because the liquor isn't premium or the band or deejay is no good, you're in trouble. The rest doesn't matter so much.

**Have you ever turned away a client?** We have someone right now with a six-figure budget, but he obviously thinks that the women on my team are beneath him. He is trying to get a cut-rate price on everything, but we won't compromise our standards. We're going to say: "Gee, I'm sorry, someone else booked that date." It's just a little white lie.

**What's your worst wedding horror story?** One couple on a half-million-dollar budget could have held their wedding anywhere. But the groom insisted on having it in a huge underground, walk-out basement belonging to his parents. There was only one exit and 300 guests. I strongly recommended a tent in the backyard in case there was an emergency. But the groom and his family wouldn't listen. What happened? It turned out to be a blisteringly hot, rainy night. It got increasingly hot inside the basement and, eventually, at the end of the cocktail hour, the air conditioner blew. There was silence. Everyone was trying to eat by candlelight and suffering from heat exhaustion.

**What's the weirdest experience you've had at a wedding?** Sharing the sweetheart table with the bride. The groom was a politician and was too busy networking with his guests! The bride didn't want to eat on her own and she asked me to sit with her. It did feel a little strange.

**What about misbehaving guests?** Mothers-in-law can be the worst. The mother of one groom changed into a low-cut white gown, with a brooch over the décolletage, midway through the evening. I couldn't believe my eyes. She was dancing on her own in the middle of the dance floor.

Another time, we had a huge photograph of the happy couple in the reception. Guests were encouraged to sign the border, rather than a more traditional book. The mother-in-law scrawled "Love Mom and Dad XXX" in big black letters right up the bride's arm. It ruined the whole picture. But I wasn't surprised; everything she did was designed to get in the bride's way.

**Have you ever had a wedding called off?** Once, the bride's father said to his daughter, in a stage whisper: "You know, it's not too late to back out, honey. Nobody will think badly of you." Everyone in the church heard. But she went through with it as she loved the guy, even though he was a bit of a jerk.

**By contrast, what was your best wedding?** There was a very touching occasion where I really felt like a close member of my client's family. I'd never seen a mother and daughter have such a great relationship. And the father wrote and performed a song about how he felt about his daughter moving on. It was gorgeous. It made me realize why I am in this job.