

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-weddings23jun23,0,7050344.story?coll=la-home-center>

From the Los Angeles Times

THE STATE

Couples lining up for the seventh-year hitch

Thanks to a rare trifecta on the calendar, the wedding industry should have a banner day on 07/07/07.

By Martha Groves

Times Staff Writer

June 23, 2007

Thanks to a quirk of the calendar, the wedding industry is about to experience its very own harmonic convergence.

Across the country, tens of thousands of couples wanting to marry on 07/07/07 — for luck, or perhaps because bridegrooms will stand a better chance of remembering their anniversaries — have booked a corresponding number of photographers, caterers, cake makers, hair stylists and vintage Rolls-Royces months, or even years, in advance.

This year, July 7 falls on a Saturday, three days after the Independence Day holiday, and anecdotal evidence suggests it will be the most popular wedding day in recent memory.

It certainly is shaping up to be the busiest day for "I do's" that the Little White Wedding Chapel in Las Vegas has ever seen, owner Charolette Richards said. More than 400 weddings are booked so far, and the place is on target to reach 700 couples, with weddings to begin just after midnight and run nonstop for the next 23 hours and 59 minutes. Normally, there would be no more than 100.

Elsewhere in Las Vegas, the MGM Grand will cycle through 60 weddings, using, in addition to its chapel, two conference rooms and an outdoor patio where brides-to-be and bridegrooms-to-be have been warned that they will be H-O-T. (The typical high temperature July 7 is 104.) The number of weddings is double what the chapel would have on a normal Saturday, said Glynnis Qualls, chapel manager.

In Nevada and elsewhere, many couples are playing up the Lady Luck theme, with seven-course meals, seven bridesmaids and scratch-off lottery tickets as favors.

TheKnot.com, an Internet company that provides products and services to couples planning their weddings, said 38,000 couples among their users have set their nuptials for what some have dubbed the "magnificent seven." That's more than three times the usual number for a July Saturday, said Kathleen Murray, deputy editor.

David's Bridal, a nationwide chain of 273 stores, has recorded twice as many customers who plan to marry July 7 as on last year's busiest date. In the Los Angeles area, the retailer has sold 600 wedding gowns for that weekend.

"Judging from our 30% market share, that would mean you have about 2,000 brides getting married that weekend" in the L.A. area, said spokeswoman Cindi Freeburn.

Some vendors are going to great lengths to meet the demand.

Square Root, an Irvine event producer and floral design house, is flying in 30 designers from as far away as New York, doubling the number of workers who will be assembling centerpieces and bouquets.

"I've never seen a date so popular," said Jeff Johnson, Square Root's co-owner.

Gina Ludwig, owner of Hair Comes the Bride in Laguna Niguel and Beverly Hills, said she turned away clients because her nine hair and makeup stylists are already booked back to back to back with 14 weddings that day.

All six classic cars in Classy Chassis Rentals' collection in Tarzana have been booked for many months. Owner Mel Harrison said he could easily have filled a seventh Rolls-Royce or Bentley — or a 14th, for that matter — given all the callers who were gearing up for a grand entrance. His big problem now is finding drivers. "I still need three more," he said.

The symmetrical date has attracted a celebrity quotient as well. Event planner Mindy Weiss is handling the July 7 wedding in Paris of "Desperate Housewives" star Eva Longoria and San Antonio Spurs guard Tony Parker. And chef Wolfgang Puck will wed his longtime companion, Gelila Assefa, in Capri.

"Mostly for everybody, it's the luck factor," Weiss said. "If you add up the sevens, it's 21, a triple lucky number. A Vegas number. It's so neat."

By settling on 07/07/07 as their wedding date, couples are tapping into a number that through the ages has assumed mystical importance. Religious texts of many faiths, including Islam and Judaism, refer to seven heavens. The saying "I'm in seventh heaven" signifies bliss.

The seven heavens correspond to seven heavenly bodies visible to the naked eye (the sun, the moon and five planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn). In English, German and several other languages, the seven days of the week take their names from these celestial objects.

The ancient seven-branched Jewish menorah (not to be confused with the Hanukkah menorah) signifies the seven days of creation. There are seven colors of the spectrum, seven notes of the musical scale, seven deadly sins, seven virtues — and seven books in the Harry Potter series.

Even Wal-Mart has figured out a way to cash in on the festivities. Seven couples, beneficiaries of the giant chain's Lucky in Love Wedding Search, will receive wedding packages worth more than \$5,000, including wedding bands, invitations, digital cameras and wedding cake and party food. They will march down the aisle in the store's Lawn and Garden area July 7. The company said it launched the promotion after realizing that many of its customers were having trouble finding venues for the sought-after date.

Richards of the Little White Wedding Chapel in Las Vegas has also capitalized on the seven theme by designing a special group wedding: At 7 p.m. on July 7, groups of seven couples will be married together at a per-couple cost of \$77. Each bride will receive seven flowers in her bouquet and seven photos.

July 7, Richards said, is "without a doubt" the busiest day the chapel has ever had, topping the 300 or so weddings that take place on a busy Valentine's Day. Belying its name, the chapel is good-sized, featuring a dozen rooms (the Chapel of Roses, the Crystal Chapel, the Chapel of Promises, etc.), each with its own minister.

At the opposite end of the matrimonial spectrum are Eli Carmona, 33, and Tina Lally, 25, who will be reveling in their wedding extravaganza at the Montage Resort & Spa in Laguna Beach. The Sherman Oaks couple met in Las Vegas in 2004 but decided they wanted their wedding closer to home, at a venue that allowed only one ceremony per day.

"Since we met in Vegas, we thought it was really cool to do 7-7-7," Carmona, a contractor, said recently as he tried on his tuxedo at a Santa Monica tailor's shop.

Planner Carrie Zack recalls getting a frantic call from him in June of last year. "They had heard it was the most popular day of 2007 and that everything was booked," Zack said. But within days they had secured the Montage. With Zack's assistance, the couple quickly began making plans for an event with more than 300 guests. The couple declined to discuss costs but did agree to share some details.

The bride, a student at Cal State Northridge, will walk down the aisle to the strains of a 13-piece orchestra. A steel-drum band will serenade guests at a cocktail party after the ceremony. A 14-piece band will play for dinner and dancing.

The couple's custom cake is being created by the Cake Studio in Fountain Valley, where owner Linda Goldsheft said she had to turn down at least 20 callers who wanted cakes for July 7. "I only do three cakes a weekend," she said.

The couple's nod to Vegas will be a slot machine programmed to come up 7-7-7 about seven times an hour. Winners who hit the jackpot will get prizes, such as a fancy pen or an MP3 player. With any luck, the grand-prize recipient just might win a trip to Las Vegas.

The only downside to all this synergy is that some friends, including a would-have-been groomsman, won't be able to make it because of dueling weddings.

Meanwhile, wedding planners, vendors and hotel managers are bracing for next year, when two auspicious dates will have love-struck couples lining up: 06/07/08 and 08/08/08, either of which beats last year's 06/06/06 hands down. The Ritz-Carlton, Huntington Hotel & Spa in Pasadena already has two weddings booked for Aug. 8, 2008, a Friday.

Vegas bookmakers might wonder whether July 7 will prove a lucky charm. If not, come July 2014, there just might be a massive outbreak of the seven-year itch.

--

martha.groves@latimes.com

If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at latimes.com/archives.

TMSReprints

Article licensing and reprint options

Copyright 2007 Los Angeles Times | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)
[Home Delivery](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Archives](#) | [Contact](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Help](#)

PARTNERS:

