



New to the A-List!

If there's one thing we hear from readers again and again, it's that they couldn't have pulled off their event without help from a destination-wedding planner. Trusted pros have the local knowledge, connections and experience to realize any vision. Knowing how important it is to find a planner you can trust, we launched our *DWH* A-List Planners in 2010 — selecting 25 top industry pros whose work and professionalism speak for themselves. This year, we're adding 10 more deserving planners to the list. Read on to meet them and find one who can handle the details of your destination do — so all you have to do is show up.

Kate Bentley
HAPPILY EVER AFTER
WEDDING PLANNING &
DESIGN
KEY WEST, FL
SPECIALTY Destination weddings in the Florida Keys and getting to know clients well to make their event as unique to them as possible. "I love the fact that destination weddings span the entire weekend. People tend to be more relaxed and are able to enjoy each other longer while they create memories, share a vacation and celebrate!"
TOP TIP "Visit! Taste the food, get a feel for the place and get to know your vendors beforehand. This will help you remain calm throughout the planning process and leave you feeling more secure (and therefore relaxed) on your wedding day." *heakw.com*

Teresa Buescher
IMAGINE THAT! SPECIAL
EVENTS & DESTINATION
WEDDINGS
CHICAGO, IL

SPECIALTY Coordinating with local vendors in Mexico and the Caribbean to create unique weddings that make sense for each bride and groom and their guests. "I love the chance to let my team's creative juices flow. Planning weddings in unique locations opens up the opportunity for true creativity."
TOP TIP "Often you'll find you can do things inexpensively if you're open to bringing aspects of the destination's culture into your wedding. Serve local food, such as fresh fish, spices and vegetables, and use local musicians." *imaginethatspecialevents.com*

Karen Bussen
SIMPLE STUNNING
NEW YORK, NY
SPECIALTY Determining a location with the couple in the Caribbean and elsewhere, then finding the right setting, partnering with local vendors and creating an authentic expression of the couple's style. "Whether the celebration is on a sun-

kissed beach, in a grassy meadow or on the grounds of a historic home, a destination wedding is always magical and romantic. The place itself is a reflection of the couple's style, and we can be really creative with using local resources and personalizing details. Plus, we get to travel while we work, and what's better than that?"
TOP TIP "Don't forget to negotiate — you may be able to get a free room night or other upgrades if you're bringing a large group with you. And make sure to get everything in writing so you understand any restrictions and/or extra costs." *karenbussen.com*

Barbara Fancsik
EVENTFUL MOMENTS
VALLARTA
PUERTO VALLARTA, MEXICO, AND DALLAS, TX
SPECIALTY Handling the total wedding-planning experience for United States-based clientele marrying in Mexico, including design, food, flowers, venue, travel,

accommodations and more. "What we love most is making the impossible dream come true. Giving each couple an event that takes their breath away is what drives us and what we enjoy most. It has also been the key to our success."
TOP TIP "Do your research! Don't assume standard operating procedures are the same in countries outside the United States. Make sure the people you hire are well-versed in local customs, the language and the ins and outs of what it will take to make your event run smoothly. Ask for at least three references for anyone you're working with in a foreign country." *em-vallarta.com*

Tracy R. French
THE FRENCH CONNECTION
SAN ANTONIO, TX
SPECIALTY Full-service planning for the bride who truly wants to relax and leave all the details to the professionals, with experience in Mexico, in the Caribbean and throughout the United

States. "I love learning about each destination's history and cultural aspects so I can incorporate these things into each couple's wedding. We want the guests to enjoy the full experience by learning as much as possible about the destination the couple has chosen."
TOP TIP "Look at travel time to the locations you're considering. Will you and your guests have to travel a full day and catch multiple connections? If so, the cost of travel will likely be more expensive." *thefrenchconnectionevents.com*

Iraida Gonzalez
BELIZE WEDDINGS
AMBERGRIS CAYE, BELIZE
SPECIALTY Destination weddings in Belize at diverse locations, from beaches and jungles to boats and underwater. "I love meeting people from all over the world and making their dreams come true. Being a small country, Belize is very unique; we're still able to do one wedding a day at all the local resorts, which is very special to the couples — and the planner!"
TOP TIP "Most Caribbean airports have liquor stores, so buy your champagne duty-free, as you can get a top label for an excellent price." *belizeweddings.com*

Amy Rubins
FETE PERFECTION
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
SPECIALTY Planning weddings in Europe and the Caribbean and being the couple's representative

and watchdog when dealing with vendors and venues in foreign locales. "Destination-wedding couples have a certain sense of adventure and wanderlust, which I share and completely appreciate. I also love the opportunity to meet new people and connect with other cultures."
TOP TIP "Purchase healthy snacks, bottled water, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages to stock in a hospitality suite for your guests. They'll appreciate the opportunity to grab a few items and sit on the beach or around the pool without having to pay resort or hotel prices." *feteprecision.com*

Allister Simmons
THE BRIDAL SUITE
BERMUDA WEDDINGS
BERMUDA
SPECIALTY Designing Bermuda destination weddings that exceed clients' expectations, providing exemplary service and being an advisor and on-island friend. "Planning romantic Bermuda weddings with cofounder Carmen Simmons has been my life. Over the years, we have experienced many proud moments. Being able to delight thousands of couples with their wedding of a lifetime has truly been a satisfying and memorable journey."
TOP TIP "Marry during off-peak months, days and times to save money. Accommodations will be less expensive, and many hotels will offer incentives to entice you to stay at their property." *bridalsuitebermuda.com*

Anne Marie Williams
WEDDINGS IN THE
BAHAMAS
NASSAU, BAHAMAS
SPECIALTY Going the extra mile on Bahamas weddings, working with any budget and taking care of all the details so the wedding couple can relax and leave everything in the hands of the planner and trusted vendors. "I love making couples happy and seeing their wedding dreams come true."
TOP TIP "If you're holding a beach wedding, there's no need to add much decor. Arches, chair ties and other accents drive up the cost and aren't necessary when you have a breathtaking ocean backdrop, a cool breeze, the sun setting and your feet in the sand!" *weddingsinthebahamas.com*

Evonne Wong
EVENTS BY EVONNE
OAHU AND MAUI, HI
SPECIALTY Mid- to high-end destination-wedding design and planning at private estates and resorts in Hawaii. "What I love most about planning destination weddings is how intimate they are. The guest list is usually a lot smaller, and the guests are typically family and close friends. It's also great to see everyone so excited to be in Hawaii and enjoying what our islands have to offer!"
TOP TIP "Hand-carry your wedding dress; don't check it. If your wedding favors and programs don't make it to your destination, it's OK, but if you don't have your dress, it may be hard to find a new gown at your destination." *eventsbyevonne.com*

2010 DWH A-LIST PLANNERS

- LARISSA BANTING**
Costa Rica weddingscostarica.com
- DAPHNE BARBEITO**
Puerto Rico wedaffair.com
- NIKKI BEGG**
Bermuda bermudabride.com
- JO-ANNE BROWN**
Cayman Islands celebrationsltd.com
- QUENTIN CARMICHAEL III**
destinationweddings.com
- PAULETTE DAVIS**
Nassau, Bahamas bahamasweddingplanner.com
- JOANN GREGOLI**
New York, NY elegantoccasions.com
- TARA GUERARD**
Charleston, SC soireebytaraguerard.com
- BETH HELMSTETTER**
Los Angeles, CA bethhelmstetter.com
- ALISON HOTCHKISS**
San Francisco, CA alisononevents.com
- NATALIE JOHN**
Caribbean dreamyweddings.com
- TRACEY KUMER-MOORE**
Las Vegas, NV lvweddingconciierge.com
- TIFFANY LANIER**
Isla Mujeres, Mexico sunhorseservices.com
- LISA LIGHT**
Chatham, NY destinationbride.com
- KELLY MCWILLIAMS**
Cape Coral, FL weddingsbysocialites.com
- STACY MULCARE**
St. John, USVI usviwedding.com
- LINDA PITTELLI**
Los Angeles, CA; Vermont, Italy eventfuldesigning.com
- MICHELLE RAGO**
New York, NY michelleragold.com
- JANET RENNER**
Maui, HI royalhawaiianweddings.com
- STEPHANIE SKIBA**
Cozumel, Mexico cozumelweddingplanner.com
- TARA SOLOWAY**
luxedestinationweddings.com
- SUSAN SOUTHERLAND**
Orlando, FL justmarry.com
- SASHA SOUZA**
Napa, CA sashasouzaevents.com
- SOMCHIT SRIMOON**
Chiang Mai, Thailand thailandweddings.com
- ANN WHITE**
Denver, CO annwhiteweddings.com