

High-Tech Help for Brides and Grooms



Steven J. Dundas

Beth and Erik Kent decided to launch their informative Website (inset) after planning their wedding in 1994.

Ten years ago, Erik and Beth Kent had the foresight to see the Internet's incredible possibilities—particularly its ability to connect wedding vendors to future brides and grooms.

The Kents met their sophomore year at Rutgers College and were married on April 17, 1994. After planning their wedding, they decided to create a Website to provide wedding-planning information and links to local wedding professionals. On February 14, 1997, the Kents launched NJWedding.com to help wedding professionals advertise their services online and reach potential customers.

The Website started with one client (the minister who married them) and has grown to profile more than 500 wedding businesses serving New Jersey and parts of New York and Pennsylvania. Today they're gearing up for a future that's promising the largest marriage population since the Baby Boomer generation.

"For the past 10 years, the number of first marriages in New Jersey has remained flat,

averaging about 35,000 per year," says Erik. "But this is all changing as the 'echo boomers' (children of the Baby Boomers) move into their marrying years. The bridal market is projected to grow 22% over the next 15 years."

Changes are already in motion to meet these demands. Couples seeking help from NJWedding.com will find links to new vendors, wedding dress designers and exciting



contests. Wedding professionals can access the recently unveiled "Business Resource Center," where they can explore a virtual library of helpful links. Other highlights include contemporary advice from wedding expert, renowned author and New Jersey resident Sharon Naylor, and special sections devoted to topics such as South Asian Weddings,

Beach/Shore Weddings and Civil Union Celebrations. Plans are also in the works with Naylor to publish *An Insider's Guide To Planning Your New Jersey Wedding: Expert Advice & Tips from NJ's Wedding Community* in 2007.

The Kents attribute much of their success to their ability to provide a marketing tool that produces results for advertisers, backed up with personal service and a commitment to help their clients grow their wedding businesses. They are also proud of their business and personal partnership. "These 10 years have been a constant learning experience for us," say the Kents, who are able as home-based business owners to spend quality time with children Ellie, 7, Zoe, 4, and Ian, 2. "We're excited 10 years later to be running a business that's successful because we focus intently on it, build it together, and also have the balance of work and family."

To find out more, visit www.njwedding.com or contact Erik and Beth Kent at (908) 874-0417 or info@njwedding.com. □

Milestone: NJWedding.com celebrates 10 years of wedding business bliss