

From horse-drawn carriage rides and custom-made bride and groom bobbleheads to fireworks and even live camels, special event and wedding consultant **Anne M. Berman** can make dreams come true. Equal parts therapist and magician, Baltimore-born Berman started planning weddings nine years ago and since then has ushered nearly 350 brides and grooms down the aisle. Yes, she still tears up at weddings. Interview by Sarah Achenbach



From the flowers to the shrimp cocktail, Anne Berman makes sure everything is perfect.

SHARON REDMOND

1. What's the biggest misconception about wedding planners?

Some people think that I am the ultimate party girl and that I am at a party every Saturday night. I'm not one of the guests. I'm on my feet for 12 to 15 hours each wedding day. I work with a couple planning every detail of their wedding. To me, it's like putting all the pieces of a puzzle together. The wedding day is fitting in that final piece.

2. What is one of your most memorable weddings?

One couple had taught in France, so there was a French theme with strolling strings during the reception and a French song for the first dance. They surprised their guests by learning a dance routine like you'd see on 'Dancing With the Stars.' This couple was a little on the shy side, but when it came time for their dance, they strutted out like they were on television. He flipped her and the crowd roared.

Wedding wizard

Tears were in people's eyes at the end ... I am sure that people are still talking about that wedding.

3. Have you worked with many bridezillas?

I had a bride who wanted to have a personal maid follow her the entire day and fetch for her.

4. Any wedding planner-to-the-rescue stories?

During Hurricane Isabel, I had an outdoor wedding on the Eastern Shore. One of the two tents blew over in the morning, so we had to rearrange the remaining tent to accommodate cocktails and the reception. We put wood planks over the mud for guests to walk over. By 4 p.m., it was beau-

tiful, and the wedding was everything the bride wanted it to be. My shoes went directly into the trash can at the end of the evening.

5. What's the most important thing you've learned about weddings?

Attitude makes a wedding day perfect. When the bride and groom know they're really in love and that it's about the two of them being together, that's the most important thing— not the party. Because it's my job to be behind the scenes, I sometimes happen to catch a very tender, private moment and it just brings tears to my eyes. When you see a couple who are really in love, everybody else looks on in awe. □