

goodstuff



WEDDING BELLES

Though some of us can't even manage a midnight smooch, New Year's Eve is one of the most popular holidays for marriage proposals — and why not, with so much celebratory bubbly already flowing? But popping the question opens up a Pandora's Box (and no, that's not the name of a strip club specializing in bachelor parties). Suddenly, pre-marital bliss turns into mind-blowing stress as the myriad details associated with actually planning the whole convoluted affair that we can barely afford — *ahem*, we mean The Most Important Day of Our Lives, darling — become more apparent.

But the **Boston Bridal Lounge** (125 Newbury Street, Boston), slated to open on January 11, sounds like it will help smooth the rocky road to "I do." Founded by friends and *Wedding Style* magazine alums Kerri Esposito-Bruneau and Eleni Granas, the space is intended to function as a showroom-style haven spotlighting new trends and classic approaches to linens, cakes, photography, lighting, floral designs, and more. Couples can drop in to browse work from 75 wedding-related vendors in the still-growing "research library" of portfolios, as well as find tactile (and sometimes tasty) inspiration from mock-up displays. "We have tabletops in the space designed with linens, china, [and more], arranged the way they would be at a reception, and every item on the table is attainable," says Esposito-Bruneau. "If you want the chandelier that hangs in the library, you can even rent that."

To narrow their choices, couples discuss their unique tastes with concierge-style staff members and get style- and budget-appropriate referrals to the lounge's vendors. The conversations "allow us to make a match between personalities," says Granas. "For example, we have one photographer who is like a fly on the wall [at weddings]. That's really appropriate for someone a little more on the shy side. But we also have a really fashion-forward photographer; for someone who's interested in doing a photo shoot on their wedding day!" Besides offering options for obvious wedding needs (napkins, invitations, and lighting, oh my!), the lounge also features less commonly considered vendors, from custom fragrance makers to "day-of" hair-extension stylists.

There's no appointment or charge necessary to visit, and couples get a free one-hour consultation to start. There are also \$250 VIP cards, which include unlimited concierge service, vendor discounts, and complimentary admittance to special events. "For example, we'll be having a special event around Mother's Day that includes beauty recommendations and invitation etiquette — things that are of concern for the mother of the bride," explains Granas. Other planned events include ones that emphasize resources for grooms and same-sex couples. Now if only there was a showroom for spouse shopping, we'd have everything we need. For more info, visit bostonbridallounge.com.

— **Scott Kearnan**

THAT'S A WRAP

The holiday shopping season is an annual exercise in excess — and that's not always a bad thing. (Aw gosh, yet *another* cashmere sweater from our doting childless aunt? If we *must*.) But once all the presents are opened, we feel awfully guilty when we stare at the mounds of tattered remains and realize that for every acre felled for Christmas trees, at least ten more were deforested for the wrapping paper underneath. So thank you, **Greenward** (1764 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, 617.395.1338), for providing us with guilt-free gift wrap: the eco-friendly boutique recently brought in gorgeous **chewingthe cud fabric wraps** (\$12.99). Printed on organic cotton, the reusable and machine-washable wraps come in neat 28-inch squares and deliver inspirational directives — like "Give Love," "Give Joy," and "Give Cheer" — in bright soy-based ink. Not only are the cloths gorgeous (and green), but because they avoid cheesy illustrations of frosty snowmen and red-nosed reindeer, their evocative designs are appropriate for gift giving all year round. (And they can also be used as holiday dinner napkins.) Finally, something we're not ashamed to re-gift — or repurpose.

— **S.K.**

