

Make it a magical night

For girls, prom is all about the dress. For guys, it's about the planning. Here's a guys guide to the best prom of her life.

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The Tip Top Grafton & Co. Grad package includes a black suit, white dress shirt and silver tie for \$199.

Photograph by: Photographer: Andy Regendanz

Prom night jitters aren't only for girls and it's easy to get them when you're unprepared. Being spur of the moment is not an option for prom when your date is adorned in sparkles, hairspray and lush fabric.

The first thing guys need to know is: Planning is key, so do not leave stuff to the last minute. There are plenty of things that need figuring out — from transportation to the type of cologne you will spritz on your beautifully suited body. I said spritz, not bathe in. Remember that.

This is likely the first big night of your life, so let's cover the important stuff:

Attire

You might want to go hunting for a suit with your comrades, but this is serious stuff; it's the first and last time you will spend a night like this with all your beloved friends. Leave them be and ask your mom to help you instead. After all, she's done this before.

"Guys are getting bolder with colour," said Walter Dimini, merchandise manager at Tip Top Tailors. "The general trend is a black two-buttoned suit jacket, flat-front pants and modern, slim cut."

For most grads, prom takes place in June, when evening temperatures hover in the high teens. You're not going to be sporting your suit jacket all night without breaking into a sweat.

“You get really hot. You should wear a vest so you can take off your suit jacket,” said Robert Clennett, assistant manager at Stroked Ego, a men’s store on Bank Street. “I chose not to wear one when I had my prom, but going back, I would.” When getting fitted for a suit, keep in mind that the height of your everyday shoes might not be the same height as the shoes you will wear during prom.

“A lot of guys show up for their fitting in shorts, flip flops and a T-shirt, and that makes it hard for sales associates. Bring in shoes that you’re wearing (at your prom), or shoes with the same height. Try on the shoes and dress shirt at the same time. Bring or buy a belt,” said Dimini. “When you try on a jacket with a dress shirt as compared to a T-shirt it makes a big difference.”

There is usually no prom-goer who is not dressed to the highest sophistication possible. Your date (we’ll talk dates shortly) is going to be putting in a lot of effort to dress up and make sure she looks her best. You want to be on the same level of elegance.

“Have fun with accessories too and match with your date,” said Clennett.

Accessories such as vests and cuff links, even the colour of your dress shirt, socks, tie and belt, can add personal style.

“What I notice in prom dressing is the dress shirt co-ordinates with the date’s dress,” said Dimini. “That’s always a nice way to add colour without being too ostentatious. And ties match too. Guys are going for narrow ties now with narrow (jacket) lapels to keep the proportions the same.”

Your Date

If you’re hoping to impress a special someone with your dashing garments, take care to ask them early to go with you to the prom. Make sure your behaviour and attitude match your charming looks that night. The most important thing is to keep your attention focused on your date and not on your alluring cellphone, which might be tempting you from inside your pocket.

“I talk to high school students all the time. Girls aren’t impressed if guys check their phones on a regular date, so how would they feel if it happened at prom?” said Cecilia Pita, founder and director of etiquette consulting firm Savoir-Faire. “If you need to keep it on, ask your date if she’s OK with it. Keep it on silent and don’t check it incessantly.”

Make sure you apply all the gentlemanly moves you’ve seen in movies on this night. If you need to watch a James Bond film to be reminded of how to act, do it.

“Chivalry is not dead. Hold the door open, give her your jacket if she’s cold,” said Pita. “And compliment her. She’s put a lot of effort into the way she looks.”

When you sit down for dinner, remember this is not the cafeteria. It’s not a good idea to shout across at someone sitting at another table. And once you’ve eaten that first-class dinner, get ready to move those dancing feet.

“Don’t be afraid to dance. Go out and have a good time. Put in effort and be fearless. Make it fun for you and your date. Don’t be shy,” said Pita.

Transportation:

“Figure out if you’re going as a group or just arriving with your date. Should you book a limo? Or are you taking your own car?” said Pita.

If you’re taking your own car, make sure it’s gassed-up and clean. Your date doesn’t need to be standing on the side of the road in her beautiful dress covered in dog hair waving down another car for assistance.

Picking her up sets the mood for the night, so make a good impression right from the beginning.

“Don’t honk on your arrival or call her on the phone. Ring the doorbell and shake hands with her family. Be polite and make her feel special,” Pita said.

You will probably make pre- and post-prom plans, either to have photos taken or to go out afterward. Whatever your plans, make sure you arrange for transportation.

Happy ending

“Anticipate her needs,” said Pita. “That’s an easy way to be kind and courteous. But make sure to focus on one another. It shouldn’t just be about the guy making the girl feel special. Girls should be gracious and welcoming and thankful to their dates or else these guys are never going to act that way again.”

Quick tips for suiting up

There’s a six-inch size difference between the jacket and the pants. If you’re a size 34 waist pant, you’re likely a size 40 jacket.

Pockets of new suits are always sewn shut; same with the vent at the back (flap). Make sure you remove the stitching.

Vests should be long enough so the shirt isn’t popping out between the belt and the vest.

Belt should tuck into the second loop hole of the pants and buckle up around the middle hole.

Never do up the lower button of a suit jacket.

Wrist corsages (the most popular corsage) go on her left wrist.

Limo drivers should be tipped about 15 per cent.

Checklist

Purchase prom tickets

Buy or rent a suit

Ask a date

Make pre/post prom plans

Arrange for pictures

Arrange transportation

Buy her a corsage

Remember your manners, breath mints, tissue, cash

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