

"Year of the Groom" is an ongoing series.



Alright, decision had been made, what next? Suddenly there was a whole lot of pressure. You want to dazzle her by making it the perfect ring, perfect night, perfect moment.

But I needed to balance that with another set of expectations and goals-- mine.

First and foremost, I needed to purchase the [ring of fire](#) . It was Labor Day weekendish. Now I had the money in the bank for my one carat white gold. But Uncle Sam was getting his greedy little paws on most of that. Would she rather marry a solid citizen later or would she rather marry a tax evader now? Granted the "tax evader on the run" kind of thing might play up my nerdy bad boy image. Let's face it, not the smartest way to say "I want to commit to a stable relationship with you." I wasn't about to purchase this with an additional lump on my credit report.

So I start looking ahead to other dates. I could save up for it in about four months. In December, I was expecting a large bonus from my job.

Tahoe, CA . We usually spend New Year's Eve or Xmas up in Tahoe. My mom has a cabin up there and we usually spend the week snowed in with nothing to do. We nap by the fireplace, play board games, read and watch movies. It's the best week of the year. I could take her for a walk out into the backyard where we would instantly be surrounded by a stunning snowscape of white capped pines. Downside, the snow is pretty deep there and the kneeling position might cause irreparable damage to my nethers, which I would need if she said yes. Also, as I have gotten older, I have become increasingly uncomfortable with "doin' it" in my Mom's house.

Houston,Tx If I could pull off a couple of freelance gigs, I could do it for Thanksgiving. We spend the weekend in Houston at her folks. There is a park down the street that she has been running on since she was a kid. Giant oak trees overlook a little brook that chases across the running trail. If you actually get down into the brook it seems very Texasy. All it needed was a pecan tree. The upside is that I could ask her Father's permission in person. This is just a formality these days, but Dad's really don't get to participate in wedding types things until the bill comes. You only do this once, I wanted to ride all the rides. Downside: Thanksgiving can be stressful for folks, I didn't want to propose when she might be cranky. It rocks your "perfection"

Name the Date

Written by Dave Howard

bell curve.

Festus, MO About three hours east of St. Louis is a small winetown called Festus. I hadn't been and we were going to a wedding there. I only contemplated this for a minute as I reminded myself that proposing during someone else's wedding is tacky. It's about the couple getting married. Having never been there, I couldn't plan it down to the last detail, I didn't want to surrender the control .

This is a lot of waiting. It would better if we were engaged prior to the wedding, Thanksgiving and Xmas. I was brimming with nervous energy and didn't want to wait. I didn't think I could keep it a secret that long). Also it would better to be engaged for the holidays.

Just about every single guy I know had an unforeseen circumstance derail this perfect moment. This is usually caused by the women involved. Flysh had set up champagne and took her to the beach to watch the sunset. "Drinking in PUBLIC?" she cried in her rural Alabama accent "like some white trash girl?" So he put it away, the sun was falling into the ocean. He stopped to drop to one knee and a bohemouth of a fat man with a tiny Chihuahua stepped in the sight line creating a perfect natural eclipse. The Brooklynite went up to him and told him to move his fat ass in the harshest curses of his native land. Lesson learned: CONTROL ALL ELEMENTS

In another case, a friend had convinced his gal to spend a quiet night at home for New Year's Eve. He had his arsenal of candles, champagne and strawberries placed around the house in very secret venues. He scheduled a quiet dinner with a close mutual friend. Around the time the third bottle of wine came around, the friend had her convinced to go to rave on a Sunset. He relented and soon she danced past the metal detector. He waited for her to make it out of eyeshot. He knew he would set off the alarm once and sure enough he did. Carefully he opened his jacket to show he wasn't reaching for a gun. Withdrawing the ring box he displayed it to the guards with the "don't fock" scowl. Holding a shh finger to his lips, he mock proposed to the guard. Mr. Don't Fock waved him in without cracking his facial persona. He managed to get the proposal off right at midnight. Fortunately, he had hidden the champagne where it would still be cold. Lesson: DON'T GO SOMEWHERE WHERE THE ACTIVITY COULD BE EAILY ALTERED.

There was a park where we hike occasionally on holidays. It's a nice little pond in the Hollywood Hills, they used to shoot the Andy Griffith exteriors there. This meant packing a backpack and picnic. I had never done this before so this would look suspicious. I wanted to take her completely by surprise. We go to a lot of Dodger games and fans pay off the Blue Crew to show them on the Kiss Cam. Then a guy proposed. Except for singing "Take me Out To The Ball Game" this is her favorite part. She hates being the center of attention and had already stated that should I decide to propose no JumboTrons would be involved ("It's nice when it happens to other people"). Besides Chavez Ravine is not an attractive place, even at night.

Her sister had bought us all Neil Diamond (her favorite) tickets for the Hollywood Bowl in about month for her birthday. Again, the decision was easy. Starry night, Los Angeles landmark, activity could be easily altered and I could maintain control of the situation. The four of us would go to dinner beforehand and I had a few tricks up my sleeve for rest of the night.

Name the Date

Written by Dave Howard

It only created one problem. I wouldn't be able to afford the ring I wanted by then.