

CONSUMER

Make Your 'I Do' Last Forever

NewsUSA

(NU) - In between the guest list, the flowers and the perfect three-tier cake, it can be hard to find time to shop for your wedding rings. However, it is important to remember that most of the wedding details are fleeting and gone after a few hours of enjoyment, while your rings are enjoyed forever. So, whether you are having a smaller gathering or a more traditional affair, this important to-do on your event checklist should not be overlooked, especially since your rings mark your commitment to one another and will last a lifetime.

Jewelry and style expert Michael O'Connor has a few tips that are sure to help you find matrimonial bliss when it comes to ring selection:

- **Create a budget.** There are many details to consider when planning a wedding that can quickly drain your budget. It is important to set aside money for a lifelong symbol like your wedding bands. Not sure how much to budget? Consider that in 2006, couples spent an average of \$2,079 on wedding bands, according to the CN American Wedding Study. And since the age-old rule for purchasing an engagement ring is to spend two months salary, plan to spend one month's salary for the two wedding bands. Check out the "Budget Calculator" at www.TheKnot.com.
- **Shop together.** It is a good idea to shop for rings together. In fact, 80 percent of couples do, which isn't a surprise since your rings, which don't have to match, should reflect your personal styles and tastes.
- **Plan ahead.** Don't wait until the last minute to go shopping for your wedding bands, they're simply too important. Plan to start shopping for your rings six months



Don't let your wedding rings slip to the bottom of your list.

prior to your "I do's." Not only do you need time to research and shop, but you also need to allot time for custom orders, sizing and engraving.

- **Invest in quality.** Because you want your ring to last a lifetime, it is important to put thought into the quality of metal you choose. Platinum 950 is the most durable precious metal and will last a lifetime. It's 30 times more rare than gold, and for wedding bands set with diamonds, its natural whiteness will ensure the diamonds sparkle and stay secure. It is no wonder that Hollywood's A-list designers such as Tacori, DeBeers, Ritani and Kwiat are all choosing Platinum in their designs. But don't worry, you don't have to be a star to own a Platinum ring. Platinum engagement and wedding rings are available for a wide variety of budgets – making it an affordable luxury. Some resources that offer popular price points include Lieberfarb, Scott Kay and Blue Nile. "As the ultimate metal, Platinum's unmatched durability and beauty make it a top pick among designers and 81 percent of brides," said Michael O'Connor.

For more information, visit www.engagementguide.com and www.preciousplatinum.com.