



Top left: Flying dove. Photo: fotolia/ackley road  
 Above: A wedding couple letting the doves fly. Photo: Cristina FLOREA by christine photography  
 Left: Doves in a cage. Photo: Claire MORGAN

# A centuries-old tradition to make your special day perfect

**White doves have been representing hope, faith and peace throughout history and in different cultures and religions. The ritual of letting them fly on a special day expresses peoples' thoughts and wishes. With Ingrid and Hans Hausknecht and their Friedenstauben (German for 'peace doves'), one can revive the tradition.**

TEXT: INA FRANK

Ingrid Hausknecht explains her motivation to carry out the ritual with a quote by the author Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach: "You can only have peace if you give it! The most important peace is the one that begins in our hearts. With an individual ritual – how we do it – one can experience this feeling. The white dove serves as a metaphor. It is a symbol of peace worldwide. For us, it is a privilege to pass on the message of the inner peace to people through the dove ceremony."

Carrier pigeons fly together in schools. Therefore, at least 12 of them take part in each ceremony. They can find their

way home all by themselves. With Hans Hausknecht having an experience of more than 30 years as a pigeon breeder, one can be sure that the doves are kept in a species-appropriate environment.

The dove ceremony can be booked for different occasions, like baptisms, funerals, birthdays or jubilees, each time conveying a specific meaning. At baptisms, for instance, doves are a symbol for the Holy Ghost. However, they play a particularly important role at weddings.

"The white dove is an ambassador of luck; it should reinforce the lover's bond.

In Greek mythology, it is said that the goddess of love, Aphrodite, put doves in front of her carriage. Therefore, doves are a symbol of luck for the lovers," Ingrid Hausknecht explains. The wedding couple can choose whether the doves fly from a basket or from their own hands. A poem, an anecdote about the couple or an explanation of the dove's meaning can be part of the ritual, too.

Ingrid and Hans Hausknecht accompany ceremonies in Vienna, Lower Austria and the Burgenland. With them and their Friedenstauben, you can spread the message of love, luck and inner peace at your own very special moment.

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