

The Dallas Post Fall Bridal Showcase

Creating a memory

By Sharon Achatz
Copley News Service

Ask bridal couples what they want most from their receptions and two ideas surface time and again: Guests should enjoy themselves and the occasion should be memorable.

While guests always remember major disasters, the best way to make a reception memorable without mishap is by incorporating an unusual element that reflects a bit of the bridal couple's personality.

That element could be something as simple as a unique setting or an uncommon favor or as complex as a theme wedding that authentically recreates an era, location or family's ethnic roots down to every detail — including menu, music, entertainment, invitations, decor, dress and transportation.

Whether your affair is destined to be elegant or easy-going, elaborate or economical, here's a sampling of reception suggestions for making the day more memorable.

FANTASTIC FAVORS

Traditional tulle-wrapped almonds increasingly are being replaced by more delectable treats, such as elegant chocolate truffles or a split of your favorite wine.

An environmentally aware couple may opt to give guests seed packets or flower bulbs, perhaps planted in pretty pots. Or, make a donation to a favorite charity — such as a local food bank or boys' club — and leave a card at each place setting to let guests know that a donation has been made in their honor.

Another option is to make a play on the wedding's location or theme: pass out lobster lollipops for a Cape Cod celebration, give small straw doll hats at a country event, gift pinatas at a Mexican-theme wedding or ornaments at a Christmas wedding.

Savvy couples can create a fa-



When you receive beautiful china, crystal and flatware as wedding gifts, don't hesitate to use them often.

vor for themselves as well. Instead of having guests sign a book, ask them to sign a tablecloth with indelible pens or a photo mat into which you later can insert a wedding photo.

SENSATIONAL SITES

Couples are moving away from catering halls and toward locations that match their personal interests — including yachts, mansions, museums, wineries, ranches, amusement parks, zoos, wildlife preserves and botanical gardens. Check with your local parks and recreation department, historical societies or the local chamber of commerce to see what sites are available in your area.

Sports settings provide an un-

usual atmosphere for a reception as well. Locations to consider: a football or baseball stadium, skating rink, tennis club, golf course, racetrack, ski lodge, bowling alley or pool hall.

An extraordinary location offers extraordinary charm, but it may mean an extraordinary planning effort as well. You have to deal with the logistics of transportation, parking, guest accessibility and seating in addition to food, flowers and music. Some venues prohibit alcohol or music; others may require the purchase of a permit for private use.

More traditional sites that present the convenience of package deals that provide food, beverage,

staff, tables, linens, china — and maybe even flowers, music and cake — include restaurants, hotels and country clubs.

EYE-POPPING EATS

Some creative ways to cope with a large guest list and minimal food budget is by hosting a high-tea or mid-morning brunch reception. Both are elegant ways to get by with an hors d'oeuvres only menu.

Ethnic food is being requested more frequently as a way to bring out the heritage of one or both families.

Rather than plan the entire menu around a particular nationality, several hors d'oeuvres or a side dish at dinner may be adequate.

Troubleshooting tips before the big day

By Mike Dale
Copley News Service

Your wedding is supposed to be a perfect day. But things happen. You have been planning your wedding for a year; it rains on your special day.

The photographer breaks his arm two days before the wedding.

Your mother-in-law wants all her relatives included on the guest list. Your father wants to bring his new girlfriend to the wedding — the one your mother doesn't know about.

Weddings are the subject of many a comedic movie; you were hoping for something with a documentary feel to it.

Remember, anything can happen during a wedding. So on your special day, expect the unexpected, keep a cool head, be flexible and don't stop smiling.

NUPTIAL NERVES

There's nothing wrong with being nervous on wedding day. It could be the biggest performance of your life.

If pure nerves are your stumbling block, hopefully you would have prepared by having established a wholesome sleeping schedule, as well as eating properly and getting plenty of exercise.

Other questions may pop up concerning your decision to marry in the first place. Are you doing the right thing? Can you maintain your individuality? Will your marriage end up a divorce statistic?

The "cold feet" syndrome is quite common. Mental health experts say the culprit is usually the fear of change.

If you're generally afraid to get married, then talk with your intended. Psychologists say 50 percent of a fear is alleviated once you discuss it openly. Find solutions together.

There are warning signs that the relationship isn't destined for the altar, even though wedding

plans are moving full steam ahead.

Among them:

- You say to yourself that things will get better after the marriage.
- You constantly try to rationalize away your doubts.
- You have different views on life's decisions.
- The relationship is emotionally or physically abusive.
- Your fiancé makes big decisions without consulting you, or you suddenly have health problems.

DELEGATION BRIGADE

Delegate, delegate, delegate. What works for successful business executives can succeed for you.

Assuming that they're under your skilled leadership, involving family and friends in wedding preparations can give you peace of mind.

Examples? Your mother can provide recipes and menu ideas to the caterer. Your father can set up travel arrangements for out-of-town guests. Maids of honor can write place cards and put together favors such as potpourri sachets.

Friends can direct photographers to relatives. Your aunts and uncles can act as hosts, making sure everyone's comfortable. Brothers and sisters can run errands.

Hiring a wedding consultant may be an attractive alternative for those with breakneck schedules. Consultants scout sites, set up registries, write budgets, supervise the parties, mediate conflicts and arrange for hotel rooms.

To find a good one, get referrals from friends. Ask caterers, hotels or clergy who they recommend. A wedding consultants' average charge is \$2,500.

Computer programs also can help with planning. "Wedding Planner" is an IBM compatible

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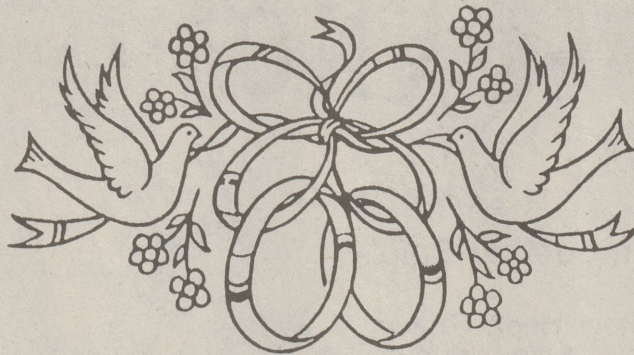
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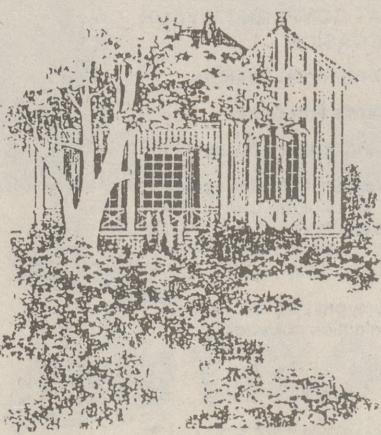
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