

A wedding to remember



Brides and grooms are choosing to personalize their weddings — from venues to wardrobe — to fit their personalities and budgets.

Casual, intimate weddings see resurgence

Elegant, lavish weddings provide moments couples will remember for years to come. But while such storybook ceremonies and receptions remain popular, casual affairs are gaining popularity.

According to the bridal resource The Knot, more and more couples are opting for less pageantry and more laid back panache when planning their weddings. For those who prefer something more intimate and more personalized, casual weddings may be right on target.

There are many advantages to having a “luxé with less” wedding,

including the ability to break molds and impart more of the couple’s personality into the event.

Another advantage is the price tag. The average U.S. wedding, according to The Knot 2014 Real Weddings Study, costs \$31,213. In some urban areas, particularly New York City, average costs are three times that amount. Golden Girl Finance, a leader in financial digital media, has found that Canadian weddings average \$31,000 with honeymoon included.

Although wedding costs have gone up, the average number of wedding guests has gone down. As such, certain couples might look to rein in other aspects of their wedding. Transforming the festivities into a casual affair can help keep the overall budget low while still

allowing for an exciting and enjoyable event.

To put casual plans into motion, consider these ideas to help the wedding vision come to fruition.

VENUE

Catering halls and other reception sites do a wonderful job of meeting the needs of their clientele. However, food and beverage costs are often the most expensive wedding expense.

To reduce the per-guest cost and also incorporate some variety into their wedding days, couples can consider a venue change. Look for public locations that allow couples to hire their own caterer, which may be a favorite restaurant or specialty food shop. The cost per person may decrease dramatically from the venue costs.

Changing the venue also enables couples to pick unique spots that may hold special meaning to them. For example, couples can choose the site of their first date or the location where their proposal took place.

CONTRAST

Enjoy a casual, free-spirited wedding that incorporates some aspects of formality in an off-beat way. Think about serving fast food, such as fried chicken or pizza, on fine china. Those wearing tuxedos and gowns can opt for casual footwear, such as athletic shoes. Place wildflowers in crystal vases. These are just some methods to give a rich feel without removing the fun element.

PERSONAL TOUCHES

Menus or wedding programs printed at home in a fun font can set the casual tone couples are looking for.

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“If music be the food of love, play on.”

— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, “TWELFTH NIGHT”