

Savvy Splurging

Though we are all more budget-conscious at the moment, your nuptials needn't suffer. Here are a few tips from industry insiders on how to spend your wedding budget wisely and still have a beautiful, meaningful celebration.

CATERING

“Buttercream cakes with fresh flowers are more cost effective than fondant-covered cakes with hand made décor,” suggests Carla Fellicella of Culinary Cakes.

Since many wedding guests don't eat their portion of the cake, consider doing a smaller cake, or even a fake cake.

Consider having a brunch, lunch or cocktail reception instead of a sit down dinner. Set out funky cocktail snacks during the cocktail hour and let guests help themselves. Suggestions from Culinary Capers Catering include popcorn with truffle oil and Parmesan cheese in small paper cones, Chai spiced nuts, beautiful Antipasto platters with a variety of savoury selections.



CATERING

“Limit options at the bar, close the bar during dinner time and consider serving only soft drinks, wine and beer at your wedding to save money. If you really want a bar, it doesn't hurt to set a budget for it,” says Shannon Lorenz, sales and events coordinator at Furry Creek Golf and Country Club. “If you only want to spend \$1,500 on the bar, then ask the catering facility to ensure your group doesn't run over this amount,” she advises.

FLOWERS

Arrive at your floral consultation knowing your floral budget, as this allows designers to provide bouquet and arrangement suggestions that fit your price point.

Use flowers that are ‘in season’ at the time of your wedding, as these will be less expensive than imported varieties, and better quality.



Choose fewer varieties of flowers and flowers in the same colour tones to ensure visual effectiveness. In so doing, you also enable the florist to purchase flowers in larger quantities, at less expensive prices.

“Double-Duty” your bridal and bridesmaids' bouquets by placing them in a vase at the signing table, gift table, at the bar or along the head table as a floral decoration.

Use fabric from the bridal and bridesmaids' gowns to wrap the bouquets instead of costly ribbon.

Re-use ceremony flowers at the reception. If two large arrangements are being used to flank the wedding ceremony then they could be used for the reception and placed on either side of the head table or at the entrance to the space. Flowers used as pew markers could be gathered together to make a larger arrangement and used for the cake table.

For table flowers that double as wedding favours, arrange individual vases with a gerbera, rose or orchid, each vase varying in height and shape and grouped together in the centre of the table or at each table setting. “This visually interesting table décor creates a spectacular and memorable touch for each of your guests to remember this special day,” says James Andrews of West Van Florists.

WEDDING FAVOURS

While you may cough up lots of cash for your wedding favours, many are left behind by guests, says Hazel Egerton of Barwick Designs. “Guests get side-tracked with dancing and

drinking, and then forget to collect the gifts at the end of the night,” she says. Egerton advises brides to create favours themselves, such as home-baked cookies in cute boxes or votive candles in the wedding colour scheme, or to make donations to their favourite charities in lieu of favours.

WEDDING ATTIRE

“When you purchase a gown, get one that fits at full price, rather than a sale gown that requires hundreds of dollars worth of alterations and cleaning,” says Gerri Charles of Champagne & Lace Boutique.

VENUE

Plan an afternoon wedding instead of an evening one, which can save in venue fees. Reducing the length of the reception is another way to keep your costs down. Who says you have to dance until 2 am?

Consider holding your wedding at a venue that can accommodate your ceremony, reception, photographs and pre- and post-wedding events. This will save money on extra venue and transportation costs.

“Choose an off-season wedding between January and April as many vendors offer great discounts for off-season or lower demand days. A weekday wedding is another great way to obtain discounts from venues,” says Elana Lancit of A Sweet Beginning.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Schedule your first dance as you are introduced into your reception hall as this sets a fun, festive tone and helps with your photography budget. Your photographer gets to capture this very special moment, but you don't have to hire them for the entire reception.

Your photographs will become part of your family heirlooms, but if budget is a major concern, ask your photographer if they can customize a package based on your budget or if there's an element within that package that can be removed or exchanged to help reduce costs, suggests Sandra Leung of Yaletown Wedding Gallery.

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