

Advance planning will ensure a dream wedding

It's all about saving money — even the wealthy are careful not to splurge outrageously in these trying times.

Of course, there are certain occasions in which money, and a lot of it, is necessary in order to make a lasting, memorable, and forever treasured impression.

Birthdays, holidays, promotions — all are very special and important, but also occur more than once in a lifetime.

The singular glorious ceremony that is celebrated and treasured forever, is your wedding. And, although the wedding day is a precious one, and perfection is the ultimate goal, spending thousands of dollars and running yourself ragged is not the answer; it will only result in post-marital blues.

Saving, not skimping

It is nice to have a wedding with traditional touches, but this does not mean stretching your budget out of bounds just because you have a preconceived idea of how a wedding "should be." Don't be afraid to go against the laws of etiquette and invent your own ideas for your wedding in order to reduce the impact on your already slim wallet, your valuable time and, most importantly, your sanity.

If you gather all of your family and friends (and somehow get them to cooperate) you may be able to come up with some money-saving ideas for your wedding. For example, outside weddings or receptions are absolutely beautiful, and if someone close to you has a large backyard or piece of land, it

can be decorated lavishly enough to be compared to a garden, park or private grounds that some people spend big money to rent.

How about an evening wedding? By holding your ceremony at dusk, a romantic, elegant and memorable atmosphere is created.

An evening wedding also enables you to stretch your money a bit further, as some couples have a small after-party with hors d'oeuvres for the guests, and a dinner gathering for the wedding party and family later in the evening. This may save the money that would have been spent on an elaborate

hall.

A wedding gown does not have to only be worn once. There are beautiful gowns that have been designed in ways that allow for pieces of the fabric to be cut and/or added on so that the dress can be converted into a semi-formal or party dress.

Engaging ways: then and now

You're engaged, and suddenly everyone's got advice for you — your mother, his mother, friends and relatives, perhaps even grandparents. They all mean well, but as a bride of the nineties, you have the freedom to do things your way. According to *Bride's* magazine, engaged couples of just a generation ago followed a much stricter code of wedding "rules" than do brides and grooms right now. Today, you can choose to follow the traditions that mean most to you, and tailor the rules to suit your style.

The proposal

Then: The groom asked the bride's father for her hand.

Now: The couple decides to marry, and the proposal may be dramatic — a diamond in a champagne glass, the words, "Will you marry me?" flashed across a stadium scoreboard. News of the engagement is FAXed to family and friends.

The invitations

Then: Invitations were formal, engraved, and issued by the bride's parents.

Now: Invitations reflect the spirit of the celebration. They may be etched on glass, printed on hand-painted cards, collaged from memorabilia of the couple's courtship, lettered on scrolls.

The bride

Then: The bride's full-time job was to work on wedding details with her mother.

Now: Career-minded brides don't let wedding planning disrupt their jobs. Weekends and lunch hours are prime planning time, and an increasing number of professional brides-to-be hire a wedding consultant to handle the specifics.

The groom

Then: All that was expected of him was to show up on the wedding day.

Now: He takes part in planning his wedding, interviewing photographers, screening bands and helping select the wedding menu.

The shower

Then: Women gathered for an after-

noon to shower the bride with household items, linen, lingerie.

Now: Showers may be coed — and at night — and with gift themes that revolve around the couple's interests.

The site

Then: Couples planned to marry in a church, synagogue, hotel or at home.

Now: The trend is toward ceremonial sites which evoke a sense of history or have a special appeal — an elegant Victorian mansion, a museum, or a spacious loft, for example.

The cake

Then: The bride's cake was a white, tiered confection with white frosting, and a plastic bride and groom on top.

Now: Cakes are creative works, decorated expressly to complement the wedding theme. Flavors are for sophisticated palates — spice, carrot, cheesecake, lemon, orange, chocolate mocha, and sometimes all of them at once.

To top it off, couples choose something special: a pair of crystal swans, a miniature flower basket, Mickey and Minnie figurines, or a custom-made bride and groom painted to resemble themselves.

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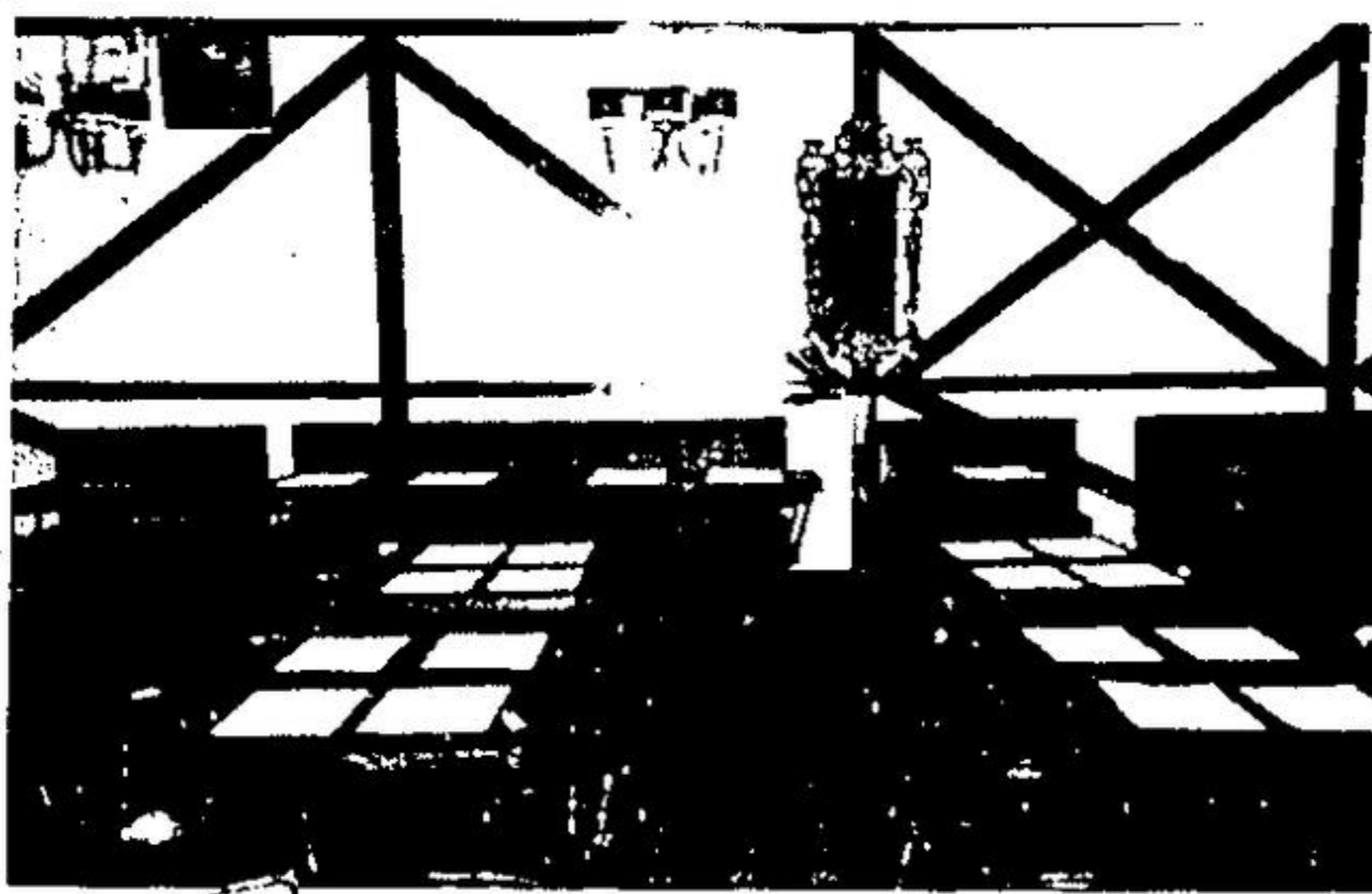
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About our front cover

The models on the cover of the Herald's Brides edition are Greg Higgins and Jennifer Tetreault.

The brides gown was supplied by Elizabeth's Fashion and was worn at a recent Bridal Show sponsored by Elizabeth's Fashion of Georgetown. The photograph is courtesy of Pinto Photography.

Gown's like the one in this photo and other Bridal items will be on display at the January 12th Bridal Show at the Georgetown and District High School.