

Do It For Less! Weddings: How To Create Your Dream Wedding Without Breaking the Bank

Denise Vivaldo

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About 2.5 million weddings occur annually in the U.S., costing roughly \$40 billion; wedding budgets often run as much as a new car or even a home down payment. To bring sanity back to wedding costs, Vivaldo, a Hollywood chef, caterer, party planner, and author of *Do-It-For-Less Parties*, delivers the details for creating a personalized once-in-a-lifetime day that doesn't leave newlyweds married to debt.

In this bridezilla-free, no-nonsense guide, the author acknowledges that do-it-for-less success requires reasonably well-organized brides and/or friends with organizational and logistical skills. Specific, detailed how-to information encompasses every aspect of wedding planning to give brides the confidence to successfully carry through on the event.

From the initial planning, budgeting, and list-making, to enlisting the right friends to help, all the way through the details of the reception and refreshments, Vivaldo serves as the reader's personal wedding planner, cheerleader, and step-by-step guide. With hands-on expertise, and with more than 10,000 parties and catered events to her credit, Vivaldo offers a professional's insights for making wise choices for a memorable wedding on a budget and names resources in the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) appendices. Sidebars, hints, and lists offer inspiration and numerous ways to shave corners without affecting the event's beauty.

Commonly, half the wedding budget is spent on reception-related items, so the author's experience as chef and caterer serves her readers well. Nearly two-thirds of the book focuses on the reception—including venue, envisioning logistics, bar and beverages, and detailed, innovative seasonal wedding menus that include ingredients, recipes, presentation tips, and amounts for 12, 25, 50, and 75 people. The tantalizing wedding cake section alone encompasses more than ten percent of the book.

Not every bride is ready to take on these daunting tasks of doing it all herself; those working full time might find it especially challenging. But even the partial DIY girl will find plenty of money-saving ideas. The real strength of the book is its presentation of ideas and resources from a pro, who inspires brides to take conscious control of the process to be able to enjoy a uniquely special day without putting their future into hock. For brides-to-be looking for a dream-wedding idea book that is firmly grounded in financial reality, this is an eye-opening, must-have guide filled with an expert insider's tricks of the trade.

BOBBYE MIDDENDORF (October 13, 2008)

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