



BRIDAL BARGAINS

Looking to cut corners in today's economy? Kathy Byrum, of Dream Wedding and Event Planners in Canton, advises couples to prioritize and distinguish nuptial needs from nuptial wants. Some couples focus on the wedding setting; others spend more on photography or fine wines. "Decide what the most important aspects are to you as a couple," Byrum says. "Then look for ways to economize elsewhere."

Other tips:

- 1. Get married on off-peak days.** For example, a Thursday evening at Dearborn's Henry Eord Estate is \$1,500 compared to \$2,500 on a Saturday.
- 2. Hold the ceremony and reception at one venue** — bed & breakfasts, public parks, or golf courses — to minimize rental, décor, and transportation costs.
- 3. Inquiries for gown rentals** — which run about \$250, including cleaning fee — are up this year, says Richard Kreiner, of the Elegant Lady bridal salon in Oak Park. He also counsels clients to ask for discounts: Many shops have unadvertised price-matching policies.
- 4. Décor, centerpieces, and more may be available for the taking** at *freecycle.com*, says wedding and etiquette author Leah Ingram, who also hosts *suddenlyfrugal.com*. Cash-strapped couples can even use digital services such as *evite.com* and *pingg.com* and eschew paper invitations.
- 5. Tell your photographer you want a CD rather than prints.** You'll get raw images with no cropping or retouching, but you'll write a much smaller check. "You can [always] come back later for the other services," Byrum says.