

Bridal News Network

Trend Report

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Wedding Costs Continue to Rise

According to the Condé Nast Bridal Group, the average cost of a wedding in the United States is now \$26,237, up 17.7 % since 2002.

In another analysis, TheWeddingReport.com, an online market research study of weddings and marriage, reports wedding costs could reach \$31,400 by 2010, and offers examples of what consumers will spend in 2006 on their nuptials:

ceremony — \$2,337.00	reception — \$13,692.00
invitations — \$809.00	wedding cake — \$ 665.00
transportation — \$563.00	favours & gifts — \$1,104.00
flowers—\$1,136.00	jewelry—\$1,739.00
music — \$922	photography and video— \$2,659.00

Wedding Preparations: Slimming Down

Post-holiday weight loss season debuts in January with health related firms vying for a piece of the \$40-billion pie that consumers will spend to fulfill their New Year's resolutions concerning slimming down. Altar-bound couples have an added incentive.

This year 10 million new members will join health clubs according to the International Health Racquet and Sports Club Association. Weight Watchers alone will spend an estimated \$40 million in advertising, and Jenny Craig will feature actress Kirsty Alley shedding 50-pounds in ads and on an online blog.

Last year, with singer Naomi Judd as spokesperson, Post Cereals invited aspiring dieters to make simple changes in their daily routines and loose weight in a heart-healthy manner. By combining a diet including two meals a day with Post Cereal with daily exercise, dieters shed an average of 10 pounds over a twelve-week period.

Destination Weddings

The number of couples opting for destination weddings is on the rise. In June 2004, the Conde Nast Bridal Group reported, nearly one in every 10 weddings was a destination wedding-making such a non-traditional nuptial venue *the fastest-growing segment of the bridal industry*, according to the *New York Times* in a subsequent article that same month. In 2005 Conde Nast Bridal Group reported that the number rose to 16% of weddings, pushing the number of away-from-home weddings closer to two in ten.

Some of the stellar destination weddings in 2005 were the nuptials of Donald Trump—the New York real-estate mogul-turned-TV star—to Slovenian model Melania Knauss in Palm Beach, Florida; New

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York Mets star Mike Piazza and stunning Alicia Rictar in Florida's Fisher Island; superstar Renee Zellweger and Kenny Chesney in the Virgin Islands; Jennifer Garner and Hollywood hunk Ben Affleck at Parrot Cay in the Turks and Caicos Islands; and Alicia Silverstone and Christopher Jarecki in Lake Tahoe, California.

In keeping with this huge and ever-growing trend, Lisa Light, the foremost authority on destination weddings, has published her long-awaited and first book of its kind, *Destination Bride: A Complete Guide to Planning Your Wedding Anywhere in the World* (North Light Books; January 2006). Now, for the first time, couples have a comprehensive resource for planning their wedding in a memorable location away from home.

Bridal Fashion

Important trends in bridal gowns emerged from the Spring '06 bridal collections shown on the New York runways in October 2005:

- Empire high-waisted, soft, feminine silhouette made famous by the Empress Josephine when her husband, Napoleon, was Emperor of France.
- Princess fantasy ball gowns with layers of silk, tulle, and beaded embellishments.
- Lace all-over lace gowns or those layered over other fabrics Favorite classics include Chantilly, Alencon, Venetian, and Battenberg.
- Glamour Fitted, close-to-the-body gowns often with draping and flounces.



*Carmela Sutura
Empire silk
charmeuse gown*



*Carmela Sutura
Alencon lace layered
over silk lame skirt*



*Carmela Sutura
silk duchesse satin draped
and fitted gown*

Bridal Beauty

Leading French designers are likely to influence bridal hairstyles. During the January fashion collections in Paris, Karl Lagerfeld of Chanel and Christian Lacroix showed the most charming, romantic hair with their beautiful evening gowns. The look is soft, natural touseled hair worn long or gently swept-up and caught with bands of silk flowers, bows, or glittering combs.

Registry Trends

Changing demographics have contributed to an increase in less-traditional registries, a trend which first appeared in the '90s. With wedding costs continuing to rise, brides and grooms are using Internet registries as a way of asking guests to help pay for everything from flowers to photography to the officiant fees.

Those marrying for the second time perhaps do not have the same need to furnish their homes with traditional china and crystal. As a result, honeymoon registries are an increasingly popular alternative to the traditional registry. Sandals Resorts, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, and the island of Aruba are just a few destinations that have set up wedding registries to help capture more of the \$7 billion market for honeymoons.

Both in-store and online registries have also moved into the mass market. Retailers ranging from Wal-Mart and Home Depot to Linens 'n Things and REI sporting goods, now have gift registries. And a unique, truly innovative bridal registry has been launched by Suntrust Mortgage (www.suntrustmortgage.com) which helps a couple build funds to buy their home.

Weddings: A Hot Media Topic

At a Retail Marketing Society (RMS) roundtable discussion attended by BNN, on the \$120 billion bridal industry held in New York City in December, prominent industry panelists discussed trends. At the conference, it was pointed out that weddings were a "hot topic" in every branch of the media from magazines and newspapers to television.

Panelists noted that a recent episode of NBC-TV's *West Wing* included a White House wedding in which star designers Vera Wang and Monique Lhuillier were mentioned. Articles on celebrity nuptials, celebrities' elaborate destination weddings, plus anything to do with wedding planning in general, are widely published.

Designer Stationery

Famous designers who have put their names on everything from perfume to bedding are now going after the stationery business. Both Vera Wang, partnering with William Arthur, and Kate Spade, partnering with Crane & Co., will create full lines of stationery. In another move, Liz Claiborne, Inc., recently joined with C.R. Gibson to launch a line of note cards.

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Social stationery saw an increase in sales of nearly 12% from 2002 to 2004, according to Unity Marketing.

Encore Weddings

Another study by TheWeddingReport.com reveals that one in 10 of the more than two million American brides in 2006 will remarry. And about 67 % of these women will receive an engagement ring, said Dana Telsey, a luxury-goods research analyst with Bear Stearns. .

A New York Times article (December 2005), drawing on TheWeddingReport.com, on the above data, expressed the opinion that second marriages are planned in much more detail, and women that were once blasé about a fancy engagement ring are revising their notions about this classic symbol of commitment and love. The older bride wants a ring that proclaims: I'm getting married, I'm proud of it, and I want a way to show it.

Wedding Insurance

As weddings become more lavish the prospect of a costly accident or cancellation is encouraging more brides to buy event insurance, which protects against such contretemps. Both Fireman's Fund and PrivateEventInsurance.com (formerly Wedsafe Insurance Service, Inc.) have long been leading suppliers. Both companies sell liability coverage for the event as well as cancellation insurance.

Clarification:

The data on honeymoons in the BNN Trend Report Issue 3 Spring/Summer 2005 *Honeymoons Near and Far* came from Honeymoons/Romantic Getaways Travel from About.com.
<http://honeymoons.about.com>.

Bridal News Network *Trend Report* welcomes your comments, thoughts and ideas for future issues. Please email or call us anytime!

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