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Central Valley Dermatology

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*Treatment must be done by January 31, 2009.



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It's a family (and friend) affair

Every bride and groom wants their wedding day to be everything they've ever dreamed it would be, but the cost can be unbearable.

How about a way to make your wedding stand out while saving money at the same time? Get your guests involved. Whether you are having an intimate affair or a blowout with 200 people, here are some tips for having your friends and family help make your big day one of a kind:

DO have your guests help personalize your ceremony.

Who knows you better than the people who are going to watch you get married? Ask friends and family to send favorite photos of you together, and then arrange a slide show or a collage to display at the reception. Another great money-saver is to have your guests each bring a flower to create a bouquet or fill vases around the wedding hall to save on the florist.

DON'T expect your guests, family, or bridesmaids to "throw" you a wedding.

When you announce your engagement, it seems like everyone is offering to do something -- whether it be hire the caterer, find a great band or even provide the location. But remember, this is your wedding. The only way to assure a perfect day is for you to remain in control.

DO consider having a pot luck reception.

For a low-cost reception, ask your guests to contribute their culinary expertise by bringing along a main dish or dessert. Not only will you

save money, but your reception will seem more family-oriented and inviting, a sure recipe for fun.

DON'T use your guests as a maintenance crew.

Your guests are at your wedding to share in your celebration and enjoy themselves. Call a rental company, beg the hall's staff to help out -- any way so your guests don't have to get the job done.

DO tap your guests' hidden (or not-so-hidden) talents.

Are your friends musicians, vocalists or painters? Ask them to perform in the ceremony by singing your favorite song or creating a portrait of the wedding party. Perhaps your friend who is known for her fantastic confections can bake your cake. Or, a close friend can read a poem, passage or verse that is special to you. Even doling out disposable cameras for every table can save money on the photographer -- you can save the professional shots for the wedding party and leave it to your guests take candid photos of the reception.

But **DON'T** take advantage.

Remember that wedding cakes can run from \$600 to \$2,000, and musicians can earn just as much for an afternoon in a wedding. If you wouldn't expect your guests to shell out that kind of money for a gift, don't expect them to donate their services for free. Ask them how you can compensate them for their help.



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