

Wedding Trends

Couples Get Creative In Celebrating Marriage

(NAPSA)—Renting a costly message-plastered blimp to fly over a sports stadium is out and creativity is definitely in when it comes to marriage proposals—and not just because some couples aren't sports fans.

Let's face it, everyone is thinking about the economy. With the average wedding in 2007 costing more than \$28,000—up nearly 20 percent from 1990—many couples are getting back to what's truly important in the wedding process and focusing on more meaningful ways to celebrate their love.

Take the case of one groom-to-be—let's call him "Brian"—who recently posted a query on Yahoo! Answers for a novel way to propose to his fiancée of two years.

The "best answer," as chosen by Brian: replacing the normal background on his girlfriend's work computer with his own "will you marry me?" question.

"A proposal isn't about the money you spend," Brian was advised, "it's about how it makes her feel. Be creative. Spontaneity is good."

Yet spontaneity is only one technique for popping the question. At askmen.com, videotaping a proposal and then leaving it in a DVD player is advised. But for the men truly looking to be unique, substitute the traditional four-star restaurant and the engagement ring floating in her Champagne flute with a romantic picnic in the park.

Forgoing the lavish proposal and ceremony, of course, leaves plenty of cash to spend on what no wedding couple would do without: the three rings. As in, her engagement ring (signifying your promise) and his-and-her wedding bands (symbolizing your commitment). If



There are ways to propose without blowing the wedding budget.

you're worried about value, it's a good idea to invest in the long-term satisfaction you'll receive by choosing Platinum (which starts as low as \$1,000). It's the strongest, most durable metal, so engravings and patterns are permanent, and its natural white luster maximizes a diamond's brilliance and holds it securely in place for eternity.

You can also be confident that your fiancée will love your choice, given that Condé Nast Bridal Group found that about 81 percent of brides prefer Platinum.

"For a more unique style choice, look for Platinum rings with sapphires, rubies or emeralds for her," says jewelry and style expert Michael O'Connor, "and carvings and masculine finishes on bands for him." O'Connor—who's seen Platinum's popularity grow among both traditional and same-sex couples—recommends designers including Kirk Kara, Simon G and Bergio. But he says when choosing a ring, the best advice is to follow your heart and sense of style.

For more information on the latest engagement and wedding ring styles, visit the Web site www.preciousplatinum.com or www.engagementguide.com.