

SPECIAL GIFTS

Wellness
package from
Red Packet



Some couples turn to presents that tie-in with the theme of their destination wedding

Andrea Li

Wedding planning is a nerve-racking experience, but many couples realise their stress levels could be well off the charts were it not for the help of their closest friends. That's why many brides and grooms place so much thought on drumming up personalised gift ideas for their bridesmaids and groomsmen as a way of expressing their gratitude.

"The most special gifts are ones that reflect your friendship, and do not necessarily have to tie-in with the wedding," says Evelyn Mills, founder of luxury wedding planning company and bridal boutique Marriage Maestros. "It's really a way of saying thank you to people for their lifelong friendship, and for getting you to the stage of your wedding or, in some cases, introducing you to your partner."

The most common wedding gifts include strands of pearls, jewellery boxes and shawls for women, and engraved cufflinks, pens and cigar lighters for men.

Some couples have turned to presents that tie-in with the theme of their destination weddings. For example, parasols, matching bikinis, flip flops, beach towels and sun hats, while more unusual ideas include mini-photo albums featuring photos of the wedding day, art jamming and iPod nanos and iPod touches loaded with childhood photographs.

"Traditionally, the maid of honour and best man do get more expensive gifts, but it is not a must," Mills says. "However, I think if they are closer friends who have done a lot more to help you get through life and your wedding, then they should get better and bigger presents."

Hotels and gift companies say they have seen couples gravitate towards giving more unusual gifts, most notably, in the form of an experience rather than a traditional item.

"People these days tend to over consume and have too many things. That's why we have seen a definite trend of people wanting experiences instead," says Gerard Belicha, managing director of Red Packet.

Launched in December last year, Red Packet has seen a good response.

The company works with its partners to tailor-make

experiences with an edge. "We offer something with a Red Packet touch. These things aren't typically offered on the menu or aren't usually things you would be able to do yourself. We spend a long time working with our partners to define an experience that we feel is really unique," Belicha adds.

For groomsmen and bridesmaids, he suggests the Red Packet Very Him and Red Packet Very Her packages, with a price tag of HK\$1,888. The package offers men a plethora of options, including mixed martial arts sessions, to wine appreciation classes and bungee jumping in Macau. The For Her alternative features art jamming, a slimming massage and an image/style/fashion consultation.

Meanwhile, couples looking to go the extra mile for their maids of honour or best men can opt for the Red Packet Extravaganza, a package costing HK\$4,888, which offers gifts covering wellness, sport, gastronomy and escape.

Vindy Lui, director of catering at The Peninsula, has also seen couples surprise their wedding party with a dessert wonderland concept full of chocolates, ice-creams, cakes and sweets. "The hotel has a spacious foyer area in front of the ballroom, so we are able to use the layout to organise surprise parties," she explains.

Others have held after-event parties at the lounge bar Salon de Ning as a way of showing their gratitude for everyone's hard work, while some have taken advantage of The Peninsula's "high-flyer" package, which includes a helicopter sightseeing tour and a choice of lunch, afternoon tea or a spa treatment at the hotel.



iPod nano
5G with
camera



Very Him
box from
Red Packet