

DIRECTORY

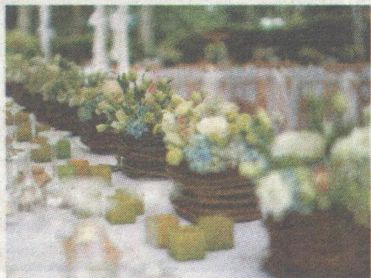
Happy memories for everyone

Planning is required to ensure guests come away with positive impression

From the moment the invitation arrives, guests anticipate a wedding to remember. Being memorable for the right reasons takes forethought, and guests will appreciate considerations that make their participation easier.

A shortlist of hotels and entertainment for out-of-town guests can save them time and money, while pre-paid parking spaces and smart seating plans can help everyone relax into the day.

Evelyn Mills, founder and creative director at wedding planning company Marriage Maestros, says the seating plan is one of the biggest challenges to keep guests happy. "You can't please everyone, but people closest to the couple or with stronger family ties, friendships or business relationships should surround



Getting the seating plan right is one of the biggest challenges to ensure guests are happy with the wedding.
Photo: Marriage Maestros

the head table. Extended acquaintances can be seated further away."

And resist the temptation to play matchmaker. "Group friends, family and business colleagues together on separate tables. Don't mix them up," Mills says.



"You want them to be comfortable by having common interests and topics to talk about."

Weddings are synonymous with feasts. Guests expect food and sometimes, unlimited alcohol. Dietary

requests such as vegetarian should be confirmed with guests and the caterer ahead of the day. "Unexpected requests on the day are a nightmare for the catering team, and it is not nice for guests to sit through something they cannot

eat," Mills says. "Be considerate to guests so they will want to come and also be able to enjoy the meal."

A free open bar is expensive but will keep a drinking crowd happy. "If budget is a concern, have the first hour on the couple followed by a cash bar, or arrange for a fixed drinks list to be paid by the couple. If it is a heavy-drinking crowd, emphasise on an extended bar time at the end of the reception," Mills says.

Guest comfort is important, but parents of the bride and groom should be given priority, especially their mums. "Incorporate everyone else in entertainment, in speeches that acknowledge colleagues or countries people are flying in from and get pictures of all the guests," Mills says.

"It should be your wedding, but for it to be successful you want people to go away and talk about it in a positive way," Mills says. "It is a reflection of how good a host you are and what an amazing wedding it had been."