



REAL BRIDE’S ADVICE: WHEN TO SPLURGE OR SAVE

Your wedding budget is a balancing act, and you’re likely to have to make compromises. Jemimah was married in November 2011 and while her parents and in-laws covered the costs of the venue, catering and photography, she was surprised to see how the cost of the bits and bobs added up. Read on for her personal account on the importance of balancing splurge items with savvy cheaper thrills



In the lead up to my wedding, I did what most brides do. I sat down with my fiancé and worked out a wedding budget.

We both consulted our parents about said budget and it was agreed that my parents would cover the reception venue and catering and my fiancé’s father would chip in for our photography.

That left the rest to us, and although we had the two big ticket items paid for, we were very surprised at just how quickly all the other bits and bobs added up.

Prioritisation became the key. Each plan we made went through the “splurge or save?” test.

HOW WE SAVED:

Dress: After buying every wedding mag out there and visiting High Street in Armadale more times than I care to admit, I decided a couture wedding gown was not for me. I wanted something simple and elegant, but didn’t want to pay the world for a one-time-wear dress either. So I visited Lisa Ho

and found the perfect, simple and classic, way under the budget dress — which left me able to completely splurge on Jimmy Choo shoes!

Decorations: On all our other decorative items we really did save. We enlisted the help of very talented friends and family who made chalk boards, table markers and collected hundreds of glass jars to be used as tea-light candle holders.

Stationery: We designed and made our own invitations and other stationary items, as the style we wanted was very simple typewriter text on a brown card.

You can buy stationary items such as paper, envelopes and rubber stamps with whimsical designs from specialists like Papyrus (www.papyrusdesign.com) and Zetta Florence (www.zettaflorence.com.au) and have your invitations printed at Minuteman Press (www.minutemanpress.com.au). To save on your printing costs, choose one colour ink for the entire invitation and ask for digital printing rather than letter press or embossing.

Words: Jemimah Clegg Photography: Anna Rose Photography www.annarosestudio.com



WHERE WE SPLURGED:

Chair hire: Our reception venue, lovely as it is, has very ugly chairs. The function co-ordinator at the venue suggested chair covers. Now, chair covers can be a very nice and cost-effective solution to an ugly-chair scenario, but for my somewhat rustic and quirky dream wedding, they just weren’t going to cut it.

So the chairs became a “splurge” item. We hired 80 mismatched vintage wooden chairs and used them for the reception and our outdoor ceremony. And I’m so glad we did — they looked fantastic! Check out Place Settings for Hire (www.placesettings.com.au) and Dann Event Hire (www.danneventhire.com.au) for chair options in Melbourne.



Tips for keeping within your budget:

- IKEA has a huge range of decorative items including candle holders, vases and tableware for very reasonable prices.
- If your ceremony and reception are at the same location, ask if you can pay for your transport by the hour — as you will probably only need them for one or two hours max.
- Go through your grandmother’s wardrobe to find a treasure trove of vintage decorative items, jewellery and accessories.
- Visit Bunnings for decorating an outdoor wedding — they have some really great items like large tin buckets to hold drinks and citronella candles to add some light and keep the bugs away!
- Find a flower farm that does arrangements for weddings, they’re much cheaper than a florist and even a flower wholesaler, and often do arrangements that are just as beautiful.
- Check out Etsy.com for a huge selection of wedding stationary, bomboniere and accessories, all at reasonable prices.
- Choose frosting for your cake instead of fondant (rolled icing) — it looks just as good, tastes even better and is much cheaper. Also, ask your flower farm to provide fresh flowers for the top of your cake, it will work out much less expensive than edible ones.

Bomboniere: The other thing that pushed the budget to its limits were the bomboniere. I know what you're thinking; "this girl went for the off-the-rack dress, but splurged on gifts for her guests?!" Yes, it sounds crazy, but hear me out.

Orange was the colour for our wedding and my husband is a big classic novel enthusiast. One of my bridesmaids saw this fantastic bomboniere idea online: Penguin classic novels with orange covers.

We picked a different book for each of our guests to suit their personalities. It was a hit — everyone loved them and they looked great on the tables.

Honeymoon: The 8 months since our wedding have been spent gathering every last penny for our European Honeymoon — which, as I write this, starts in three days' time! Straight after the wedding, we also went on a "mini-moon" and stayed in a lovely hotel in Margaret River, Western Australia. It's definitely worth treating yourselves to a getaway, as it will be much needed after all the excitement of your wedding.



Bride's Advice

Bride's advice "If there's something you simply must have, go for it — just be prepared to scrimp a bit on something else. And remember — the best things in life are free!"