



The price of happiness

Darf eine Hochzeit ein Monatsgehalt kosten oder soviel wie ein Haus? Unsere Kolumnistin berichtet, wie man beim Heiraten mit kleinem Einsatz große Gewinne erzielen kann. medium US

Arriving at the church, I wait for the usher to take me to my seat. The wedding ceremony is a traditional one, with bridesmaids and a maid of honor. As Wagner's "Wedding March" is played, the bride, wearing a beautiful long white dress, comes down the aisle with her father. The groom is waiting for her with his best man and ushers at the front of the church. It's a storybook wedding.

Eighty percent of American couples still prefer to have their wedding in a church or synagogue. Others prefer unusual locations, such as a fancy hotel in the mountains, a beach in the Caribbean, or the deck of a cruise ship.

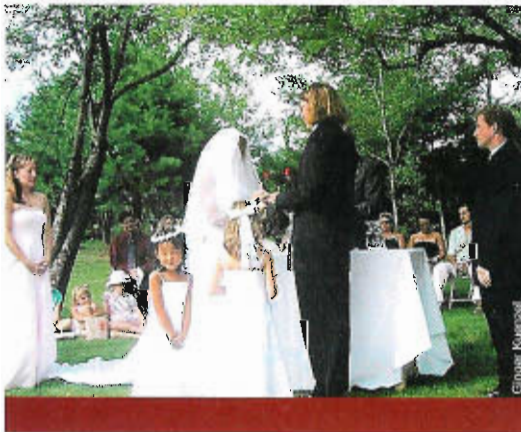
There's a lot to be said for a backyard wedding, particularly if it's important to keep costs down. I read recently that the average wedding now costs \$25,000. Traditionally, the bride's parents paid for the ceremony and reception, and the groom's parents for the rehearsal dinner. These days, couples often pay these costs themselves, which also gives them more control.

Although Stefan and Darcy made certain that all of their guests enjoyed a great party, they did much of the work themselves. Many of their friends also helped, setting up the huge backyard tent, creating decorations for the tables, and even working at the bar during the reception.

During the ceremony, the guests sat under a beautiful old apple tree. Darcy and Stefan stood before them with Gabby and Brianna, Darcy's two young daughters from her first marriage. The ceremony began with a symbol of unity: Darcy's mother had brought a bottle of sand from a beach

near where Darcy had grown up, and I had sand from the lake where Stefan had spent his summers. We poured our sand into a third bottle; this represented the joining together of our two families. After exchanging wedding vows and rings with Darcy, Stefan got down on his knees and gave Gabby and Brianna each their own "family ring," telling them that he was not only marrying their mother, but that all four of them were now a new family. As the little girls smiled with pride, I couldn't help but notice that I was not the only guest reaching for a tissue.

It was just a short walk over to the tent where the food and drink were waiting. In keeping with the beach theme, Stefan had filled a canoe with ice and packed it with beer, wine and other drinks. The dinner was seafood, a natural choice in Maine. The wedding cake was placed in "sand" (sugar mixed with cocoa powder), with chocolate shells all around. As I drank champagne and watched the bride and groom enjoy themselves, I thought to myself that there's a lot to be said for keeping things simple on your wedding day. In the words of Walt Whitman, "I have learned that to be with those I like is enough." Isn't that what love and marriage are all about? ●



"There's a lot to be said for keeping things simple and inexpensive on your wedding day"

My son Stefan recently got married. He and his bride, Darcy, decided to hold a beach-themed ceremony outdoors on the Maine coast, where they live. Of course, not wanting to remove all tradition, they kept such things as the bridal shower and the bachelor party. The bridal shower, generally held by the maid of honor, is a quiet event with lemonade, cookies and girl talk. The bachelor party, on the other hand, is a wild and crazy event celebrating a man's last night as a single man.

<u>aisle</u> [aɪl]	Gang
<u>bachelor party</u> [ˈbætʃələr ˈpɑːrti] N. Am.	Junggesellen-Abschiedsparty
<u>backyard</u> [ˈbækˈjɑːrd] N. Am.	(im eigenen) Garten
<u>best man</u> [best ˈmæn]	Trauzeuge (des Bräutigams)
<u>bridal shower</u> [ˈbraɪdʃəʊər] N. Am.	Brautparty
<u>bridesmaid</u> [ˈbraɪdzmeɪd]	Brautjungfer
<u>groom</u> [ɡruːm]	Bräutigam
<u>in keeping with sth.</u> [ɪn ˈkiːpɪŋ wɪð]	im Einklang mit etw.
<u>maid of honor</u> [meɪd əv ˈɑːnər] N. Am.	erste Brautjungfer
<u>reception</u> [rɪˈsepʃən]	Empfang; hier: Feier
<u>rehearsal dinner</u> [rɪˈhɪːsəl ˈdɪnər] N. Am.	Essen für die Beteiligten der Hochzeitsprobe
<u>shell</u> [ʃeɪl]	Muschel
<u>tissue</u> [ˈtɪʃuː]	Papiertaschentuch
<u>usher</u> [ˈʌʃər]	Platzanweiser(in)
<u>wedding vow</u> [ˈwedɪŋ ˌvaʊ]	Jawort