

Industry must change people's minds – planner

By Mary Ferguson

THE number of brides who would hire a wedding planner has fallen, according to research.

A poll by consumer website WeddingChaos revealed that just nine per cent of couples would pay for someone to coordinate their big day, compared with 12.3 per cent a year ago – representing a 27 per cent drop.

David Cartledge of WeddingChaos said: "We spoke to the brides, grooms and businesses on our forums and the overriding impression they have of wedding planners is still that they will dominate or take over the wedding, whilst at the same time taking a slice of their budget."

Whilst more people are setting up in business as wedding planners – which should provide more choice and competition – David said they are failing to get across the message that they may save the couple money and can be trusted to act on their behalf.

He added: "The brides we talk to on our forums seem reluctant to hand

over the organisation of their wedding to a planner, especially when the perception is that it will cost more, take away control and add uncertainty."

There were some brides on the forum that were positive about the use of planners – some who were already using one and some who said they would if they could afford it. But the majority of those posting comments on the website defended their choice to organise their own weddings.

Wedding planner Sue White thinks ever-tightening consumer purse strings may be contributing to the drop in those employing a coordinator.

She added: "The slowing economy probably has a lot to do with how many couples think about using planners, but I think the main problem still lays with people believing a planning service is only for celebrities."

"I don't know if wedding planners should be worried about the results – my business is certainly growing – but it's up to us as an industry to change people's minds."

Comments from brides on the WeddingChaos website:

"I would not use a wedding planner because weddings are expensive enough as it is, it would be cheaper to just plan it myself. There are enough resources on the web and forums like this that I don't feel it's necessary to pay someone to do my planning for me."

"My impression was that only rich people or those having big elaborate weddings would use a wedding planner."

"I have looked forward to this

day my whole life so I wouldn't leave it to someone else to plan it. If it's rubbish then I only have myself to blame – even if I was a millionaire I would do it all myself."

"Weddings are expensive enough as they are let alone paying for a planner. All you need to do is search the net for deals."

"I don't really know what they are for – they cost a lot of money and do the same thing that I would. I can't work out why anyone would have a wedding planner."

Edible gold creates the ultimate drink

A HIGH-quality cava produced from organically-grown grapes, ORO is infused with edible pure gold, and takes receptions to new heights as wedding guests experience luxury and innovation.

ORO, named after the Spanish word for gold, has been launched by rnr Drinks Ltd as the result of an exhaustive worldwide search for the ultimate party drink.

Superplonk author Malcolm Gluck said: "It has that something extra special – it's great fun. I find the idea of taking a decent sparkling wine and infusing it with edible pure gold quite fascinating."

Countdown to bridal exhibition

THE countdown has begun for the British Bridal Exhibition in Harrogate, Europe's biggest bridal trade exhibition.

The event takes place from March 9-11, enabling buyers and retailers from across the world to browse a mix of 150 exhibitors showcasing over 250 collections.

In addition to BBEH, The Bridal Buyer Awards will take place on March 10, featuring eleven categories recognising designs, manufacturing and retailing excellence.

The Bridal Preview Fashion Show will give a sneak preview of the latest bridal trends and fashions for Autumn/Winter 2008.

Have you got a story for Wedding Professional? You can call editor Mary Ferguson on 01226 734712 or email:mf@whpl.net



A celebrity personal trainer has launched a six-week **Bride Body Beautiful** course aimed at time-poor women who want to look their best for their vows. Taking place at her **Power-Plate studio in London Bridge**, Jane Dowling will put brides-to-be through their paces on the vibrating machines, which are designed to tone three times faster than gym work. Previous clients have included Catherine Zeta Jones, Michael Douglas and Hilary Swank.

Cancellation claims

MORE weddings are being cancelled by the bride and groom, new figures have revealed.

Data from Debenhams Wedding Insurance shows a 50 per cent rise in claims – with almost half because of cancellation, compared to 22 per cent a year ago. A fifth of claims were for damaged suits and dresses, 15 per cent due to failure of suppliers stopping ceremonies and eight per cent were for loss and damage to rings, flowers, cakes or gifts.

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