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Creative, Trendy Wedding Favors Get Personal For 2006

By Blake Kritzberg

We all know that today's brides feel free to mix it up. You'll see electronic RSVPs in place of card

stock, and you might find a handful of tiered key lime pies instead of the traditional French confection on the cake table. Favors are another spot where wedding couples put their personal spin on the proceedings.

The last few years have seen an explosion of favors to match the explosion in theme weddings — and to suit all those weddings that simply don't fit any rubber stamp.

Even so, brides hit the online boards and forums bemoaning that they haven't found the right favors. When you read between the lines, you realize that what many brides want is:

- A favor so unique (or so uniquely presented) that it could practically only show up at their wedding.
- A favor so perfect for their wedding that none other would do.

In other words, brides want to find the one favor that's just about as perfect a match as the man they've opted to marry.

** Do You, Jill, Take This Favor ... ?

It wasn't long ago that the ability to order scented pear soaps or silver-plated salt and pepper shakers came as a huge relief to brides and guests alike — what a refreshing change from five Jordan almonds wrapped up in tulle! But these days, a multitude of choices just isn't enough. Brides are looking for uniqueness with a capital U, and they're choosing:

* Favors that are Anything but One-Size-Fits-All. Instead of two truffles in ballotin box, brides are choosing "fair trade" truffles with a dusting of chipotle pepper. Instead a pair of enamelled chopsticks, brides are going for miniature bonsai or tiny Zen garden kits. Fortune cookies in a takeout box are sleek, but brides really want their cookies to come in custom flavors and colors (blueberry, anyone?) with a fortune they've penned themselves. You get the picture — brides want favors that looks like they

came out of a little shop of elves assembled just for their wedding.

* **Favors the Locals Love.** Brides are stealing items from the out-of-town baskets and retooling them as favors. Miniature gifts with major mouth appeal include jars of wild blueberry jam for a Maine wedding, leaf-shaped maple syrup jars for Vermont, cranberry "Bog Frogs" for Cape Cod, or individual salmon spice rub tins for Seattle (the "Rub with Love" tins by Tom Douglas are adorable).

* **Hi Ho, Silver.** This theme's as old as time, but silver's showing up everywhere in weddings, from sparkly sandals to silvery satin-lined favor boxes. It's not hard to go over the top with gold, but silver's innate restraint makes it a perfect choice for weddings ranging from ultra-traditional to celestial. Sleek placecard frames and silver key chains are both au courant and elegant.

* **Wild at Heart.** Brides are opting for favors that reflect the current lust for the outdoors — and all the weddings taking place on golf greens, beaches and vineyard hideaways. Favors that offer tactile

reminders of the natural world are hot: engraved sand dollars, for example, or votives or glass bottles graced with embedded sand and shells. Favors that reflect popular niches within the beach theme are strong, too: consider starfish soaps and coasters that support the increasingly popular starfish theme, and abalone or paua shell jewelry that's making a big splash at Pacific Rim weddings and bridal showers.

Of course, it's not just the favors where brides want something different — they're putting their individual spin on presentation too, tucking those unique little favors into unexpected packages, such as the new pyramid or triangular-shaped truffle boxes (which double as placecards), small apothecary jars, or lidded boxes in strong, unexpected colors like celadon and chocolate, red and black or hot pink and brown.

So as you can see, it's not that hard to find the one perfect favor for your wedding. Think local or outdoorsy, think presentation, or simply ponder your theme until you find the edges that lead to a fresh and exciting idea. Simply think for yourself and your favors will show it — just as if you really did have your own platoon of elves in the backyard, ready to turn your dreams into reality.

Blake Kritzberg is editor of *Wedding Favors* by FavorIdeas:

http://sbd.bcentral.com/bc__332058.aspx

Learn everything you ever wanted to know about wedding favors:

<http://www.squidoo.com/on-wedding-favors>

Every Bride Must Have It

By George Meszaros

Wedding favors are quickly becoming a trendy essential of the wedding celebration. Wedding favors are small gifts that are given to each guest at the wedding reception. It says, "thank you" for coming to our wedding and celebrating this most special day with us.

Wedding favors are becoming an important part of the wedding planning process. Before you make or purchase your wedding favors you have to determine the following:

1. How many people are invited to the wedding?

You need to know how many people are attending the wedding to determine the number of wedding favors needed. Wedding favors are usually bought after the RSVPs to make sure there are enough favors for each guest. Therefore, the favors are usually bought one month or closer to the actual wedding day.

2. What is your budget per guest?

You have to determine the budget for your wedding favors. You can buy some very nice wedding favors for about \$2–\$3. If you are crafty you can make your own favors, but most people leave it to the professionals and buy their favors.

3. What is your theme?

Your theme or wedding location or the time of the year can determine your wedding favors. For example, a beach wedding calls for a beach theme wedding favor such as a dolphin wine stopper, a seashell candle, or a beach chair candle or cardholder.

Just like the bridal gown, wedding favors are a part of the bride's to do list. The decision on what favors to give to the guest should be made by the bride and groom. You can purchase inexpensive but useful wedding favors that will end up in someone's home not in trash can of your reception venue. An elegant wine stopper, a pretty candle, a shiny bottle opener, a personalized chocolate bar all have the power say to your guest "thank you" with style and elegance.

George Meszaros with

<http://www.sweet-reflections.com>



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