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**How To Thank 380 Million People With Class**

**By George Meszaros**

Brides and grooms have to thank close to 380 million people during the year 2006. It sounds like an impossible task, but there is help. Wedding favors are small tokens of appreciation presented to the reception guests. Historically, wedding favors were valued little and often ended up in the trash after the wedding. The wedding favors of today are not your mother's wedding favors.

As the average amount spent on weddings has skyrocketed to \$28,000 brides have a larger budget for wedding favors. Only a few percent of the total budget is spent on favors, so brides have to be creative to find unique products.

Brides have to provide wedding favors for an average of 165 guests. You don't have to spend an arm and a leg to buy stylish wedding favors. A couple of dollars per guest can get you a wedding favor that is going to be cherished. Make no mistake, though, a stylish wedding favor can make the difference between a good wedding and a great wedding

It is difficult to come up with gift ideas both men and women appreciate, so it make sense to have different favors for men than women. Men may appreciate an elegant wine stopper while you give a beautiful rose candle to your female guests.

Wedding favors can be a variety of different products. One of the most popular wedding favors is personalized chocolate. Chocolate is a sure hit with most people and it is only natural that chocolate wedding favors are a welcomed gift. One of the greatest advantages of chocolate favors is that they can be personalized. Often, the names of the bride and groom and date of the wedding is printed on the wrapper, while a short message such as "Thank you for sharing our special day!" is printed on the back.

Although destination weddings cost a couple of thousands dollars less than traditional weddings, brides don't have to do without stylish wedding favors. Many destination weddings are in exotic beach destinations where beach theme wedding favors are most fitting. Seashell filled gel candles are favors your guests can cherish for years to come. Dolphin wine stoppers or bottle openers are functional wedding favors that perfectly fit the destination-wedding theme.

## How To Thank 380 Million People With Class

Although millions of dollars are spent on wedding favors, many brides leave ordering to the last minute. The best place to start your search for wedding favors is online. The prices and selections are abundant. The fierce competition among online favor retailers drives prices down benefiting the brides. It is possible to find functional favors for less than a couple of dollars per guest. Just a little effort and creativity can promote a favor from a throwaway item to something wedding guests will have in their home as a keepsake for years to come.

George Meszaros

<http://www.foreverfavors.com>

### **Booming Wedding Market**

**By George Meszaros**

According to a recent survey entitled "American Wedding Study 2006," conducted by The Conde Nast Bridal Group, concludes that the average amount spent on weddings has increased to almost \$28,000.

It is predicted that 2.3 million Americans will get married this year, and there will be more than 44,000 weddings each weekend with 380 million wedding guests attending.

With an average age of 27, brides are becoming more mature than ever. About 70 percent are paying, at least partially, for their own weddings. Unexpected costs are common as over one third of couples are spending more than planned.

"This authoritative survey shows that the wedding industry is not only vital but is in fact thriving," says Daniel Lagani, vice president and publisher of The Conde Nast Bridal Group. "Couples are entering this 'Wedding Lifecycle' from the engagement to the reception right up to the honeymoon in ever growing numbers flush with happiness and optimism," Lagani says.

Approximately 16 of all weddings are destination-weddings. Destination-weddings are still expensive, but, on average, cost a couple of thousand dollars less than traditional weddings.

Destination-weddings are expected to have an average of 63 guests while traditional weddings are estimated to have 165 guests.

The most popular time for engagements are still the winter holidays with December being the busiest month of engagement. The time frame between engagement and marriage is 14 months.

In light of significant cost increases and a considerable delay in getting married, expect "The Echo Boom," children of the Baby Boomer generation who make up 71 million men and women to emerge. "They are the next big generation to move into the 'engagement zone,' as the oldest in the group will reach the marriage age of 27 in 2006," Lagani says.

The top three growth categories in wedding spending are wedding photography, attendants' gifts, and

wedding rings.

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