

# DIRECTORY

## Flexible approach pays off

Budgeting is probably the least romantic part of planning nuptials but, with an average wedding for 100 people costing HK\$250,000, it is also one of the most important.

Venues usually have a minimum food and beverage charge averaging from HK\$800 per head. "Although this can seem pricey, there are many alternatives in Hong Kong for a much more affordable wedding, particularly if your guest list is under 30," says Sonya Yeung, creative director at wedding and event planner Bliss Creations.

"There are public venues that can be used for ceremonies at little to no cost, while many top hotels and restaurants have private rooms that can be booked for small groups."

Some venues offer better rates for weekday bookings, while the cost may vary according to the season. A smaller guest list will automatically reduce costs.

"Remember to be flexible," Yeung says. "There are always options and alternatives. If a band is out of your

### Prioritise to make wedding budget go further

budget, try a DJ or even your iPod. A décor item you like may be sourced more cheaply, or you may decide that making it yourself is cost-effective and fun."

Always make allowances for unforeseen bills, particularly when it comes to setting up and dismantling the venue. Stormy weather can force a switch of location, which comes with the additional costs of last-minute arrangements and manpower to implement them.

"Depending on the complexity and your wedding venue and location, these costs can be significant," Yeung says.

Eva Ip, director of wedding designing at Match & Fusion Wedding Services, suggests allocating 10 to 15 per cent of total expenses for contingency plans.



Couples need to budget for unforeseen bills, say wedding planners. Photo: Bliss Creations

"This may include extra hours incurred for overtime, performance, extra transport and lai see."

Ip says that while the venue and food and beverage costs usually account for

40 to 60 per cent of the budget, other high-spend items include videography, photography and décor.

"Each couple will have priorities, so my advice is to work out a list that

mostly concerns you, it may be photography, invitations, attire and videography," Ip says. "This can determine how one allocates a budget to each item."