

# Austin American-Statesman

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K10

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## BRIDAL

# Clamp down on crashers' costly frolics

By Melanie Spencer  
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

The ceremony has ended, the band has launched into a rousing rendition of "Celebration" and the bride and groom are ready to dance their newly married hearts out. The last thing on their minds is uninvited guests crashing their party.

Most of us have either seen or heard of "Wedding Crashers," the hit movie starring Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson. Two fun-loving dudes crash the weddings of strangers for free booze and the chance to meet women. It might be a riot to watch on the big screen, but in real life, it's not as much fun. Especially when you or whoever foots the bill for your special day gets charged for the uninvited guest or guests.

If you have ever planned a wedding or are planning one now, you know how expensive it can be to feed your closest friends and relatives, those of your parents and so on, and so on. For food, alcohol, rentals, linens, glassware and favors, the

average cost per person is usually near \$100 to \$150, according to wedding coordinator Christine Gerlach of Elite Weddings in Austin. Even one uninvited guest starts to sound pricey.

Wedding crashers can come in many forms, according to Erika Schlager, wedding coordinator with Event Design House in Pflugerville.

In addition to the uninvited stranger, Schlager says "wedding crasher" can also be used to describe two types of invited guests: the heavy drinker and the wacky groomsman/guest.

"You must always think about the people who drink a lot," she says. "I usually have my brides write down the names of any interesting people that might fit this category, and then I have my eyes set on them the entire night." If you don't hire a coordinator, Schlager advises assigning this job to a guest.

The wacky groomsman/guest should be dealt with the same way, Schlager says. "I always ask the groom if he foresees a problem with outlandish



NEW LINE CINEMA

Think 'Wedding Crashers' with Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn is just a movie? Our wedding consultants know differently.

behavior. Although the groom might be hesitant to give this information out, I remind him how upset the bride is going to be at the end of the evening."

Even though the heavy drinker and the wacky groomsman/guest are invited, they can often disrupt not only the reception, but the ceremony, too. Thinking ahead can help prevent an ugly wedding day memory.

So how do you handle the true wedding crasher?

First, know that the most likely candidates are single men, like the characters Vaughn and Wilson play in the movie, and couples looking for a cheap date.

Wedding coordinator Barbara Hearne of Barbara's Brides in Cedar Park had an experience with the Vaughn/Wilson variety during a New Year's Eve wedding at the Driskill Hotel. She says a man came in off the street wearing a party hat,

which normally would have been the clue, but not that night — it was an accessory donned by many of the guests. The item that did blow his cover was a backpack, and he was a tad underdressed. He left without incident when the staff busted him.

During another wedding, a group of six uninvited guests strolled up to the door. "I asked them the name of the bride and groom," Hearne says. "They just turned around and walked away."

*I asked them the name of the bride and groom. They just turned around and walked away.'*

Barbara Hearne

Wedding coordinator, Barbara's Brides

In most cases, the crasher leaves quietly, but there are always exceptions. Some brides and grooms elect to hire security. For example, while planning former University of Texas quarterback Major Applewhite's wedding, Denise Silverman of Soiree Wedding Coordination hired security when she learned the wedding details had been leaked to the media.

Schlager says some facilities require an off-duty police officer, and the fees range from \$100 to \$300 an hour. Some venues

offer security, so be sure to ask. If you don't want the added expense of hired security, Schlager says to be sure and give the banquet captain, wedding coordinator or facility manager a copy of the guest list with first and last names. Another tip is to enclose tickets with the wedding invitations.

In addition, the invitation should clearly state how many people are invited. The bride and groom obviously have a lot on their minds the day of the wedding. Be a good guest and don't add to their worries by bringing a date, or a friend, if only you are invited. Not only will your decision add to the cost of the wedding, but it could mess up the painstakingly coordinated seating chart.

If all else fails and you end up with pictures of a stranger in your wedding album, at least you'll have a story to tell.

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## Life & Arts

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It looks entertaining when Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson do it, but having your wedding crashed is no fun.

NEW LINE CINEMA

No matter where you say 'I do,' you can vow to look officially fabulous

## Wedded to nontradition

By Jean Scheidnes  
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Go in to the chapel is not for every bride. Some prefer civil ceremonies, followed by a tasteful celebration. And couples jetting off for exotic destination weddings might find it necessary to make things official in a small legal ceremony.

In Austin, the county courthouse would be the rightful place, actually. But with a City Hall like this, with all its shades and textures and a modern architectural pedigree,

who wouldn't want to dream of an old-fashioned city hall wedding?

A nontraditional wedding calls for a nontraditional wedding dress. Want something not too bridal and not too gowny? Look no further than a special-occasion dress in your favorite shade of white. It could be short and sassy. It could be drop-dead sexy. You might even want to wear it again. Imagine that.

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## BRIDAL

# Put down the punch; pick a perfect theme for a modern shower

By Melanie Spencer

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

The term "bridal shower" can send involuntary shudders down the spines of hip women everywhere. Images of tea served in dainty cups, finger sandwiches and toilet paper wedding dresses are hard to shake.

But those stuffy gatherings seem to be the exception rather than the rule these days. Theme showers and blow-out parties are popular among Austinites.

South Austin bride-to-be

Jenny Caldwell's girlfriends recently threw her a Mexican-themed shower.

"We had piñatas and margaritas, and it was a lot of fun," Caldwell says.

According to legend, the first bridal shower was held in Holland when a Dutch girl disobeyed her father's wishes and married a poor miller. The father refused the girl her dowry, but because the miller had been so kind to others, the townspeople came together and showered the couple with the items needed to set

up house.

Brides today don't have much in common with the poor little Dutch girl. "They are educated, working, sophisticated women and like to live life (outside) of the box," says wedding consultant Kayla Banks of A Perfect Touch Wedding and Event Consultants.

Among the more popular shower themes Banks has seen lately are spa soirees, "Martini and Manicure" gatherings and "Mad Hatter" tea parties.

Couples showers are also commonplace. Think barbecues

and "stock the bar" showers.

"Guys have been more involved and want to be part of the fun, and the girls want them to be a part," says consultant Christine Gerlach of Elite Weddings. "The showers are more like parties rather than just women and tea."

Of course, lingerie showers and parties that are heavy on the alcohol don't always appeal to everyone, especially Mom or Grandma. That's where multiple showers come in.

North Austin residents

Heather and Shayne Gatlin were given three showers before their November wedding: a traditional, ladies-only shower; a barbecue that included the guys; and a big party, complete with a band, on the back deck of North By Northwest Restaurant and Brewery.

"My grandparents, aunts and (others) in the family wouldn't want to listen to live music at a bar, but my friends would," Heather Gatlin says. "Because we had Shayne involved and guys were going to be there, we

thought it was the best atmosphere to have everyone get together and celebrate. It's a little less scary for the men."

"From my experience they might turn and run the other way unless you say there is good food, cocktails and music."

Gatlin and Caldwell say they felt the nontraditional route helped members of the wedding party get to know one another better and increased the celebratory atmosphere of events leading up to the big day.

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