

## Simply Wedding Florals Introduces New Rental Program that Saves Couples Hundreds of Dollars



In a small North Carolina town, one bride is sleeping better tonight. With a job that pays just over minimum wage, Holly\* has had many sleepless nights worrying about her wedding budget. With the help of an innovative local florist, Holly is not only sleeping better, she knows she can afford the wedding of her dreams.

Venue cost is the largest part of wedding expenses nationally, and that was true with Holly, too. She, and her fiancé, dreamed of having their wedding at a gorgeous, historic plantation in the North Carolina foothills. And that's what they planned. The deposit was paid, which left a smaller budget for flowers.

In steps a small North Carolina florist who is putting wedding flower budget worries to rest. Based in a small town with high unemployment and lower national salaries, the recession is causing engaged couples to weigh unwanted options: DIY flowers (with no floral experience), reducing flowers used, and/or using the cheapest flowers available.

Realizing this challenge, the owner of Simply Wedding Florals, Kelli Clevenger, needed to come up with a way to help customers

*Business Name:*  
*Simply Wedding Florals*

*Location:*  
*Shelby, North Carolina*

*Type of Business:*  
*Wedding florals and design*

*Challenge:*  
*Help couples' save money and still have the wedding flowers of their dreams.*

*Impact:* --  
*\*According to [The Knot](#), the average wedding cost in 2015 was just over \$32,000, with \$2,300 spent on flowers.*

*\*The highest cost continues to be the wedding venue, while the floral cost comes in fourth, just under the photographer.*

*\*With the arrangement rental program through Simply Wedding Florals, couples can save an average of \$1,400, while still having their dream flowers.*

*\*The savings allows couples to splurge on another dream item, a honeymoon, or even a house down payment.*

and stay in business. So she came up with a plan to do both.

### **The Challenge: Help couples get the flowers they want, and the number of arrangements they need, without breaking their budget**

In 2009, Mrs. Clevenger launched an idea that would save couples money, allow them to pick the arrangements they want, and keep business flowing for her floral business.

"I've literally seen brides cry over wedding budgets," Mrs. Clevenger said. "They want the gorgeous flowers they see in bridal magazines. When they find out the cost, they're devastated."

"And even though my rates are very competitive, wholesale costs are up, too. It forced me to get creative. For customers and for my business."

### **An Idea That Could Save Couples Hundreds and Offer Choices**

With the cost of fresh flowers (and silks) skyrocketing, Mrs. Clevenger wanted to do something to ensure her future, as well as help her customers. Her idea had never been used in this area, but she felt it would go over well.

After brainstorming the idea with her husband, and getting his input, she decided to go with it.

Her initial investment could be recouped with just a few weddings. She could provide choices, savings, and peace of mind.

### **The Program**

Kelli's idea was simple: make four different sets of arrangements, using a variety of vase types and white flowers. Each would be comprised of different white silk flowers, with added greenery and berries.

Each bride could customize her chosen arrangements, with added options in her color scheme. Some options included tulle designs, rhinestone accessories, colorful bouquet pins, pearls or additional berries, vintage brooches, specialty vase wraps, or wire stem crystals.

Some brides would supply (or buy) extra flowers in their color choice; Mrs. Clevenger would customize each arrangement to their specifications.

### **Pricing**

A base rental price was assigned to each arrangement design; brides would pay for added pieces or supply their own. At the end of the wedding day, rental arrangements were returned to the shop.

### **Optional Wedding Day Set-up and Clean-up**

As an option, Mrs. Clevenger offered services to decorate the wedding and reception areas, as well as clean up (and removal) after the wedding festivities were complete. If couples didn't choose that option, family members often chipped in to help.

### **Savings Outcomes**

Because of the Simply Wedding Florals arrangement rental program, Mrs. Clevenger is able to save every enrolled couple hundreds of dollars.

That saved money gives couples more to splurge on other specialty wedding items, a honeymoon, or even a down payment on their first home.

After helping Holly and others realize their dream, Mrs. Clevenger is happy to have introduced an idea that stretches limited budgets and reduces unnecessary worries.

According to Mrs. Clevenger, "There's no reason for small budgets to limit dreams. Where there's a will, there's usually a way. And I'm thrilled I can help."

*"Had I not saved so much on the rental program, I would not have been able to afford the horse drawn carriage I had always dream of. I not only had the arrangements, and flowers, I wanted but also arrived in a horse drawn carriage. It was truly the wedding of my dreams."  
-\*Holly Ellison*

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy

