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One Royal wedding and lots of love in the Swedish air

The announcement of the royal engagement of Crown Princess Victoria to Daniel Westling has brought the act of getting married back into business. Wedding fever is hitting Sweden.

TEXT: CHRISTINE DEMSTEADER PHOTO: LEIF R. JANSSON/©LEIF R. JANSSON-SCANPIX/WWW.IMAGEBANK.SWEDEN.SE

Crown Princess Victoria will wed fiancé Daniel Westling on 19 June 2010, the date that has been historically reserved for nuptials in the Bernadotte dynasty.

Visitors and well-wishers are expected to descend on Stockholm in their droves and summer tourism in Sweden is set to boom with the capital's hotel rooms already in short supply for the June weekend. This is expected to be a fairy-tale wedding.

The average Swedish couple spend SEK 80-100,000 on their day with around 60-80 guests, according to Bröllopsakademin. A wedding planner is not traditionally on the list, either, and there are only a few of them around. "Just like many Swedes want to renovate their houses themselves, they don't go out and ask for help as much as in other countries," says Mariella Gink of WeddingPlanner, Stockholm, Gink's first profession is that of ballet dancer, today with the Royal Swedish Ballet. "For me every wedding is like the premiere of a show." Her philosophy is to let the couple make the ultimate decisions while she makes things. That's especially important when you have couples and visitors with different nationalities. "Any one who has been to a Swedish wedding knows the Swedes like to give speeches and have a long dinner reception," she says.

Indeed, it's the small details that make for a characteristically Swedish wedding. "The long rectangular tables during the reception are typical whereas many international couples



prefer to go with round tables instead," Gink adds. "Big flower arrangements are not so typical in Sweden either and the wedding cake is not so elaborate."

The trend today is to make your big day as personal and unique as possible, she says, "It could be fireworks, an entertainer, a good band, a famous singer or maybe some sort of unusual transportation between church and reception."

Even for the secular Swedes, it's still popular to tie the knot in church, something to do with the unpredictable summer extremities, perhaps. But many do choose to take advantage of the Swedish nature, like having a boat

cruise as a setting.

The forthcoming Royal wedding could do a lot for making marriage something of a fashion statement. And the economic situation isn't seemingly putting a hold on getting hitched. "On the contrary I have more work to do right now than ever; I haven't noticed any difference, not this summer," Gink says.

In the years she has been planning weddings, Gink has never done the same thing twice. "Every couple wants something different, every couple is individual." She has, however, had some strange requests. "I had a bride who was thinking of covering the outside of the restaurant with white fabric because she didn't like the way it looked," she says. It didn't happen. ■

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