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Why Some Couples Are Turning Their Weddings Into Trivia Night

abridged version

By Perri Ormont Blumberg

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Lee Dyson, right, a D.J. from Los Angeles, hosted a trivia game at the wedding of Allison Richards and Jian Guan last year. Credit...Kara Coleen

Allison Richards, a nurse educator at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Jian Guan, a neurosurgeon at Pacific Neuroscience Institute, both 31, of Los Angeles, wanted something different for their wedding at Shutters on the Beach in Santa Monica, Calif., last October. “We went to a wedding last spring when we didn’t know a single person, but they played a couple of interactive games and we felt it really opened up the whole room,” Ms. Richards said.

The couple hired Mr. Dyson to lead their 42 guests through a trivia game about their love story, played on guests’ phones with answers populated on a screen, and another round of general trivia, played with buzzers. A third competition called the “happy couples” game pitted Ms. Richards and Mr. Guan against three other couples to see how well they knew their spouse.

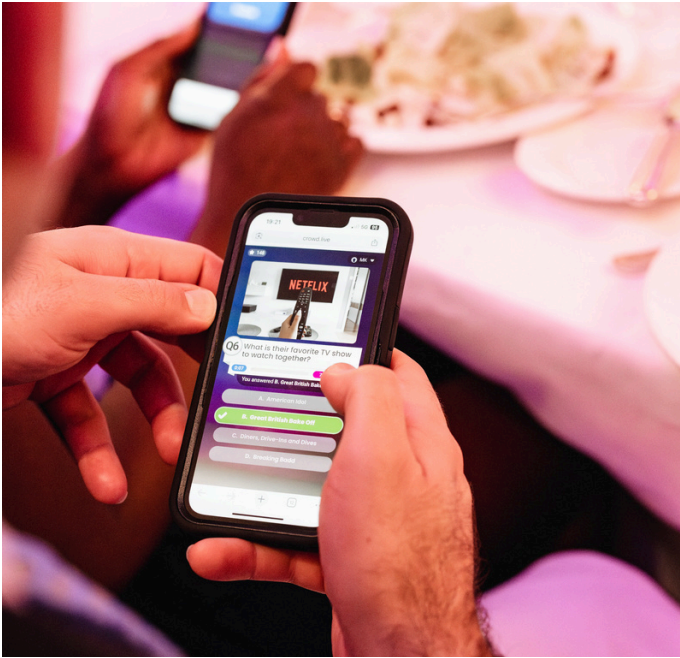
“It flowed really nicely, and it broke up the usual wedding stuff,” said Ms. Richards, noting that the games took about an hour total, spread out over dinner and dancing. To enhance the experience, the couple distributed fun-facts cards about themselves during the cocktail hour with tidbits of information later used for reference in the trivia contest. The couples’ trivia winner was given the prize of selecting a charity to which the newlyweds donated \$1,000 in their name.



“They didn’t think anyone would dance, and a point of pride is that the games got everyone so riled up we were able to pivot, and we got everybody dancing,” said Mr. Dyson, who started Let’s Play LA in 2020 when he transitioned during the pandemic to virtual game shows. He had organized about a thousand of these shows at various events from 2020 to 2023, he said.

“Every wedding has dancing and a photo booth,” he said. “It’s just very cookie-cutter. So clients have been saying, ‘How can we stand out?’” They also serve as a “huge icebreaker,” Mr. Dyson added, especially since not everyone at a table maybe acquainted with one another.





“Games can be a real bonding experience,” he said. “It gives everyone something to do other than being nervous about ‘How am I going to carry a conversation at this table for 60 minutes with these people that I don’t know or potentially don’t like?’”

Trivia about the couple is Mr. Dyson’s most popular offering at wedding receptions. Other games he frequently plays are Name the Jam, Wedding Speech Bingo and 20-Second Challenge, where contestants spin a wheel and have 20 seconds to complete a task like pretending to be a robot or naming eight romantic comedies.

Whatever games a couple selects, Mr. Dyson said, it’s important to keep track of the time. “The sweet spot range is 30 to 90 minutes,” he said. His add-on packages typically cost \$1,000 to \$2,500, depending on the level of production — think projectors, buzzers, lighting, tech assistance.

