

## A Simple and Sweet Houston Quince

### Simple and Sweet

A Houston quince is a special mix of fancy details and creative touches.

For awhile, Gloria's quinceañera celebration was not a sure thing. Her father Alfonso offered her a car or a trip in lieu of a party. But once the Villalobos family decided to celebrate their only daughter's quinceañera, Gloria knew for sure what tiara she would wear.

### Luxe touches and sweet dreams

She had seen it two years earlier. It was not just any tiara, but was made to match her dawn-colored pink satin dress with silver embroidery. The rosy, golden tiara, adorned with fine-cut crystal, is the keepsake of a lifetime. Gloria keeps it safe in a velvet purse and says she will wear it again at her wedding. And she wishes she could rewind time, so that she could live her dream quinceañera all over again.

### Making arrangements

The first thing Gloria and her mother arranged was the June 18 mass at their parish, St. Cecilia's Catholic Church, just one day after her birthday. "The party is the fun part, but without the mass, you don't feel the fiesta," said Mrs. Villalobos. About 50 people attended the religious ceremony in the spacious, modern church with its vaulted ceiling. As part of giving thanks, the Villalobos gave roses in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Ten friends—many of whom she'd know since kindergarten—and four other children, including her 3-year-old niece, attended her intimate quinceañera mass. (Gloria and her mother sidestepped tradition with the damas: "I didn't want the other girls to take attention away from her," said Mrs. Villalobos.)

### A family fiesta

Afterwards, nearly 300 people joined the fiesta in the parish hall. The celebration was family reunion, of sorts, with many traveling from Chicago, the Valley, Monterrey, and Guadalajara. After music by Mariachi Zacatecano and a home-cooked dinner of brisket, potato salad and Spanish rice (a special family recipe), the dancing commenced.

During the waltz "Amor Real", the chambelanes encircled Gloria and presented her with a rose. Then Gloria, a veteran of her school's drill team, livened up the party with her surprise dance: a sassy medley of salsa and merengue.

### Sacrifices for success

A lot of sacrifice helped make the party a success without going over budget. Gloria forfeited her ice-skating lessons for four months; the money they saved paid for the decorations and transformed the parish hall into a pink and white banquet salon with Grecian columns.

Most of all, Mrs. Villalobos combined practicality with creative ingenuity, making the planning easier and the party even more special. Together with friends, she arranged the corsages and the table adornments—a minimalist look using carnations and mints and commemorative champagne bottles. Scattered with petals and blooming with natural roses, the cake was like Gloria's entire quinceañera: simple yet sweet!

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