

Traditions of marriage

In Medieval times, the bride and bridegroom kissed over a pile of small cakes. When an enterprising baker decided to mass all the cakes together and spread frosting over them, the modern tiered wedding cake was born.

The practice of tossing the bouquet originated during the Colonial period in American history when the bridal party seized the newlywed's stockings and tossed them over their shoulders at the bride and groom - the first ones to hit the target, ushers aiming for the groom and bridesmaids aiming for the bride, the next to be married.

And, with the Victorian era was born the white wedding gown, a symbol of purity.

Marriage has survived through the ages and, along with it, tradition. Although the customs, rituals and beliefs associated with

marriage and the wedding ceremony have been altered and updated, they are still a part of the modern-day wedding.

Courtships, engagement rings, flowers, gifts, the act of "giving away the bride", the exchange of vows and wedding bands, and the honeymoon all define this "rite of passage".

From the days of the Romans, traditions have been handed down, changing along the way as they are reinterpreted by people.

The institution of the family was once thought of as a liaison formed for political, economic and emotional security. The partnership was often pre-arranged, with each member taking on clearly defined duties.

Today, couples enter into marriage based on love. The roles of husband and wife are

not as cut and dry as they were in the past - partners grow individually as well as together.

Although the original meanings of certain rituals have gone by the wayside, the rites remain.

We no longer believe, as did the citizens during the Middle Ages, that a vein runs from the ring finger to the heart. However, it is on this finger that the wedding band is still placed.

The Romans also believed that the goddess Juno blessed those married in June. Today, the month of June is still the most popular month in which to be wed.

And, everyone gathers together, dressed in special clothes, to wish good luck and happiness to the new couple.

There is something special, sacred, about an action or belief that has

survived since the days of Caesar, passed from generation to generation by young, old, rich and poor.

Although recent years have shown a return to tradition, the future will inevitably bring further change as couples write their own vows.

Original gift ideas

Need some original gift ideas?

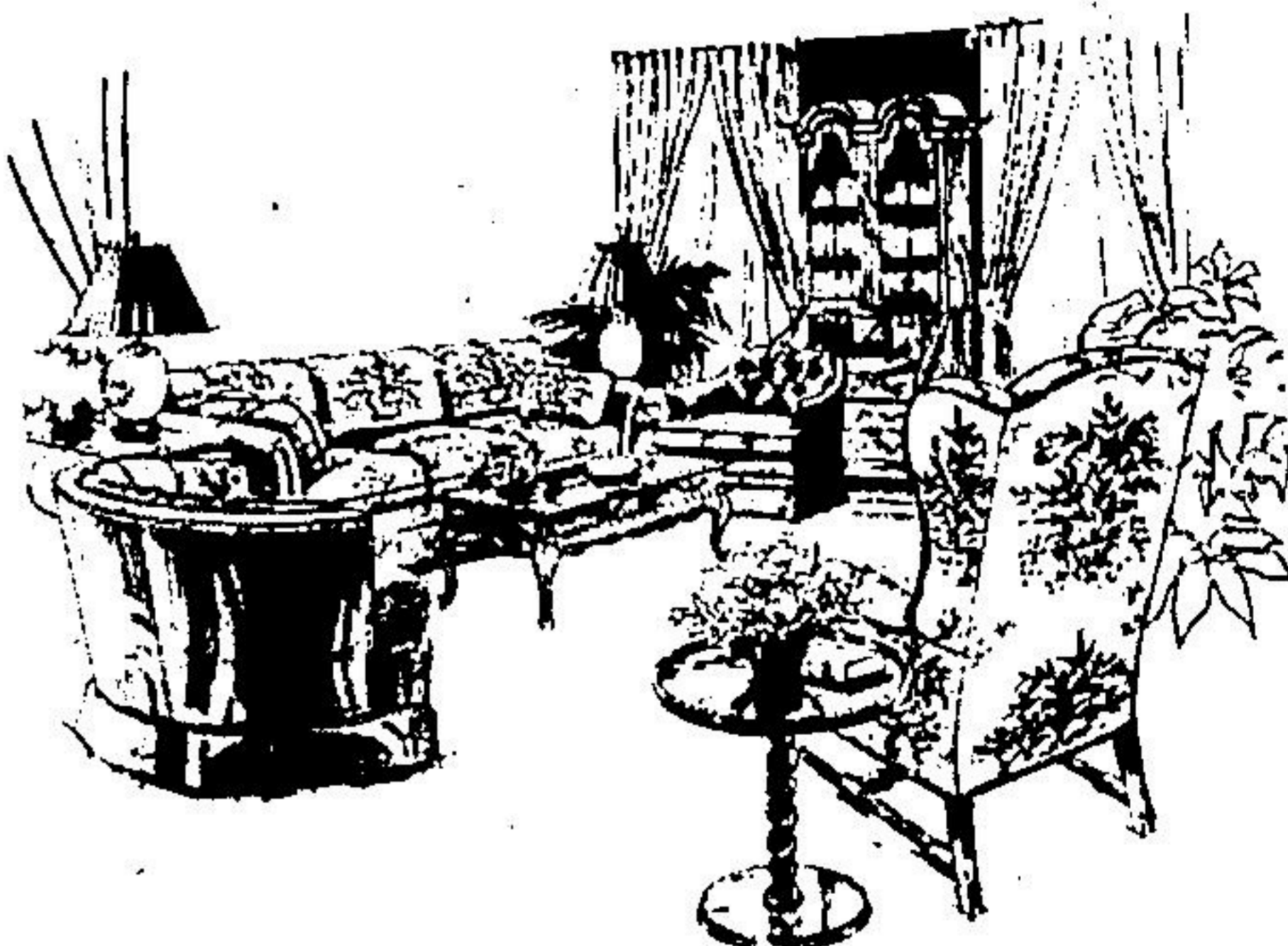
If possible, find out the color and decorating preferences of the couple and select a wall hanging or painting that complements their taste.

Give a planter or hanging basket in an interesting macrame weave, made from various types of ropes and cords. Fill the basket with a plant or a bouquet of flowers.

Champagne buckets, wine decanters, dessert dishes, bases and cheese boards are more traditional gifts yet items that are not commonly part of a newly put-together household - they are luxurious for the twosome just starting out.

Hobbyists will appreciate any addition to their favorite pastime, such as the latest in camping gear, sailing equipment or a weekend of skiing.

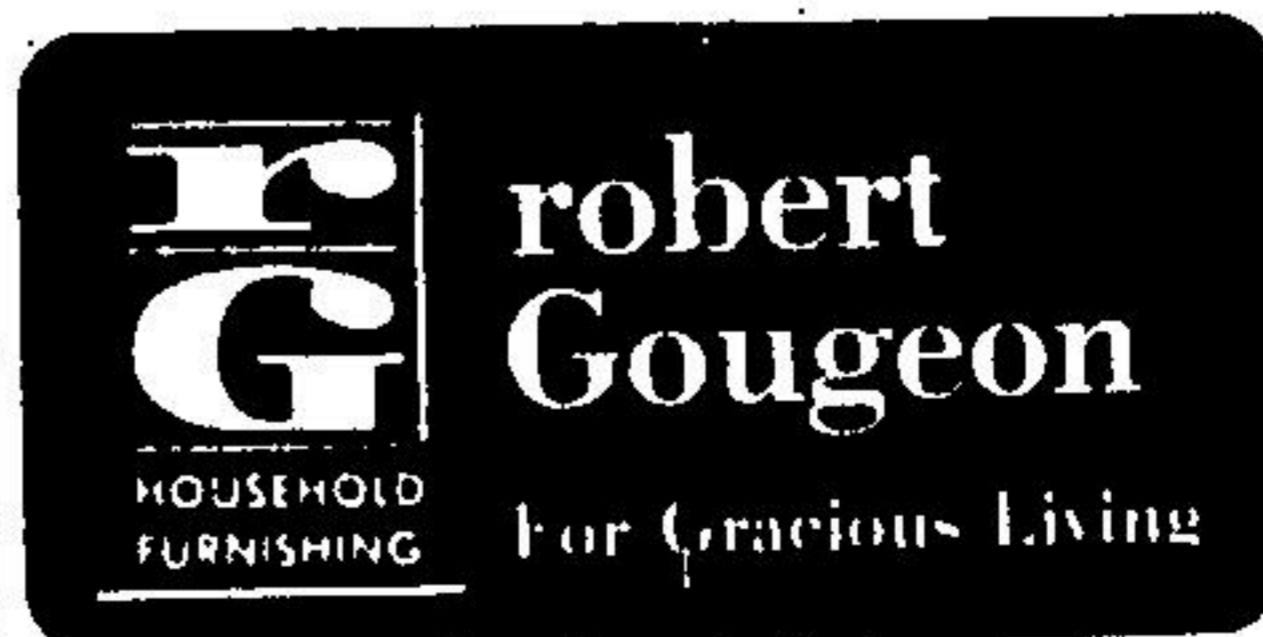
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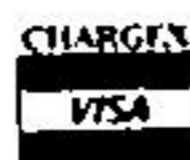
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