

Bachelor parties show new trends

Long, long ago, bachelor parties were invented to raise a "fun fund" for the groom so he could carouse with his buddies even after his wife seized control of the household money. Later, as the festivities became more civilized, revellers would toast the bride, then shatter their champagne glasses so they could never be used for a less worthy purpose.

In the '90s, this ritual signifying the end of bachelorhood is still going strong, but old traditions are meeting some new and creative twists, reports *Bride's* magazine. And many of today's bachelor parties seem to be "a walk on the mild side" when compared to the decadent all-nighters of the past. A few features of the new attitude toward parties revealed by *Brides*:

Boys will be boys? While the bachelor party remains a rite of passage (it's a chauvinistic, male-oriented evening," one young man boasted to *Bride's*), some find the parties never quite live up to the hype. "I think most are overrated,"

one 26-year-old said. "They come across as such a wild, crazy time ... personally, I don't get my thrills by hanging out with the boys watching strippers."

It takes all kinds ... of themes. These days, a bachelor party could be a buffet dinner with a fund-raising raffle (the proceeds go to the bride and groom, or to their favorite charity), a private party at a billiard room, or a weekend trip to a ski resort. And the once-taboo guests - the bride and her friends - may be cordially invited to what are known as "Jack and Jill" parties.

The best man-for the job: The success of the event depends on the creativity of the best man, who traditionally organizes it - rounding up the guests, making the reservations, planning the entertainment. Usually, he pays the deposits, then tells guests what they should contribute.

Smart tactics: The party should be held several days before the wedding (never the night before), so everyone has time to recover.

Wedding guests must be informed

Bridal retailers, formalwear specialists, photographers, florists, caterers and wedding consultants across the country agree that more and more couples are involved in arranging their weddings together. They plan and save and spend to celebrate their union in style. Most often every last detail - except one - is given careful consideration, according to Harvey Weinstein, President of Lord West Formals.

An ardent observer of the wedding scene, Mr. Weinstein is concerned for those couples who arrive at their reception and see friends and relatives looking less than their best in spite of the fact that they were invited to a festive occasion. "Too many," he says, "wear clothes that would pass muster at a backyard barbecue, but certainly not at a wedding celebration where they will be photographed for posterity along with the bride and groom."

Speaking to about-to-be-marrieds, he discovered that many were reluctant to pressure their guests by printing "Black Tie" on reception cards enclosed with invitations. For others the phrase "Black Tie Optional" seemed to be identified with fund raising events.

Mr. Weinstein offers a logical solution for weddings scheduled for late afternoon or evening. The most gracious way for couples to indicate they are planning a very special event in their lives and want their guests to share their happiness in the best of all possible ways, is to let three words convey it all: "Black Tie Invited."

If the bride and the groom make this effort to tactfully inform those invited, Weinstein is convinced, "All

those sharing this momentous occasion will feel better knowing they look so special, brides and grooms will be joyous and wedding pictures will be especially treasured because everyone looked so elegant."

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