

# Bridal flowers are back, fresher than ever

We may be on the brink of a new century, but many old bridal traditions are back and fresher than ever. Whether the couple chooses an extravagant ceremony or a simple one, each wedding is imaginative and uniquely suited to their tastes.

Although many economic forecasters are predicting weddings won't be as splashy this season (guest lists will be shorter, buffet meals will take the place of sit-down dinners and family cars will be driven instead of rented limos), one thing is clear: Couples are embracing family values and traditions with a newfound enthusiasm.

Regardless of what style the bride chooses for herself and her maids, the season's soft lines make attention to accessories a must. The ultimate accessory is, of course, flowers. Flowers remain a focal point in the wedding and reception planning. Vivid, fragrant, exploding with color and fragrance, the flowers a bride carries make as unique a statement as her wedding dress.

Texture and drama come into play in the blending of flowers in unusual ways, and over the years no single flower has been so loved, so revered, so renowned, or so admired as the rose. Roses, love and marriage remain synonymous.

So here comes the bride and her bouquet — a match made in heaven. The flowers and the bride who carries them have everything in common. Coincidence? Not according to floral industry experts. Today's bride is older and more sophisticated in her floral tastes. An overwhelming number of brides this year are leaning towards traditional, romantic and classical bouquets and arrangements when ordering their wedding flowers. High-style and contrived looks are out. Brides prefer bouquets that look "comfortable and natural," not "arty and far out."

In order to present the look that best suits you, plan on visiting your florist at least two months before your wedding — sooner if possible. Consider several ways in which you can use roses as accessories. You may want to

use them as a decorative piece on the brim of your bridesmaids' hats. Many floral industry magazines are also showing roses worn as neck and ankle pieces. Ask your florist for suggestions.

Familiarize yourself with the site of the ceremony — church, synagogue, hotel or home. Make a mental note of how much space is available. Ask the church custodian the length of the aisles so your florist can supply the correct runner. Also, ask about any regulations they may have on lit candles, use of roses on the pews, and around the altar. Little things like this can become big important things the day of the wedding.

Since most of your time is spent with relatives and friends at the reception, decorations are of the utmost importance. The food, drink and flowers all

must work together.

Floral centerpieces should be constructed so that guests can see over or through them. Possibilities include roses in low-lying arrangements, tall branches with roses attached to the top (such as a toptiary), several rose stems in a high vase, or a tall candelabra. Have your florist create a mood by adding seasonal greenery or materials such as a piece of fabric, something similar to the bride's dress, to the arrangements.

Personal gestures thank those who've played a special part in the wedding. Roses can be handed out to departing guests, or centerpieces can double as favors. Leaving one rose and a note in a hotel room is a nice way to welcome family members and friends traveling long distances.

Your parents would love to receive a dozen roses from you as a special thank you. This simple gesture lets them know you appreciate their efforts and support.

As the years go by, roses become an extension of the love that is shared between a husband and wife. A gift of roses for your first anniversary will activate a radiant remembrance of the life you began together.

While planning your wedding flowers, have your florist file a card on your wedding date. Note on the card that you

would like to be reached one week prior to your anniversary. In this way you can arrange for roses to be sent marking the special occasion. Your florist can also give you other ideas on anniversary gifting.

Your wedding and reception will come and go all too quickly. By planning in advance and coordinating what may seem at first to be the little things, you can make your wedding and reception a unique statement of your personal style.

## Gifts for the wedding party

Gifts for your bridal party are just as important as the wedding gift for your future spouse. It is customary for the gift exchange between the bridal couple and bridal party to be made at the wedding rehearsal dinner. However, the bride may also give her attendants' gifts to them at the bridesmaids' luncheon, the trousseau tea or at home before leaving for the wedding ceremony. Likewise, the groom may gift his best man and ushers at the bachelor dinner.

Traditionally, the bride gives her attendants a gift that will coordinate with their gowns, but can also be worn after the wedding.

If the gifts are to be engraved or monogrammed, the bride and groom should take the precaution of purchasing them well in advance so that they will be ready prior to the wedding.

### For the bride

Pearl necklace  
Diamond earrings, pin or pendant  
Diamond watch  
Gold bracelet, earrings, pin or pendant  
Bracelet watch  
Dinner ring

### For the groom

Watch  
Ring  
Gold cuff links and tie tac  
Gold and diamond cuff links  
Pearl links and studs

### For the honor attendant

Pearl necklace or bracelet  
Stone set necklace  
Picture frame  
Novelty watch

### Ring Jewelry box

### For the bridesmaids

Bangle bracelet  
Gold or silver charm  
Pearl bracelet or stud earrings  
Fashion jewelry  
Gold or silver bookmark

### For the flower girl

Locket  
Pearl pendant  
Birthstone ring  
Bracelet  
Religious jewelry  
Gold or silver barrette

### For the best man

Gold, silver or stone set cuff links  
Gold or silver money clip  
Desk accessories  
Gold or silver key ring

### For the ushers

Belt buckle  
Gold or silver key rings  
Pen and pencil set  
Wallet  
Bar jigger  
I.D. bracelet

### Other gifts

The bridal couple may wish to thank someone who has been especially helpful or thoughtful in the busy days before the wedding. The jeweler is sure to be able to suggest the perfect expression of their thanks in a gift item.

It is no wonder the jeweler is the person the bride and groom turn to with confidence for their every wedding gift need.



THE SOPHISTICATED wedding guest wears a black velvet strapless cocktail dress and organza wrap trimmed with gold lace. By Carolina Herrera for fall/winter '91. Photo: Jill LaBarbera.

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