



HOLLYHOCKS
Flowers...

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Taking the guess work out of wedding gifts

Josie, a newlywed from New York City, was disappointed with her wedding gifts. Although she had carefully registered for the china, crystal, and flatware patterns she wanted, most of her guests neglected to find out where. Instead, Josie received eight vases, five picture frames, three sugar-and-creamers sets, and only one-and-a-half place settings. She had hoped to begin entertaining friends at home right away, but all her free time after the wedding was spent returning unwanted gifts and haggling with salespeople.

The bridal registry will take the guesswork out of wedding gifts, but only if it's used correctly by the couple and their guests. Here, from *Bride's* magazine, are twelve golden rules for smooth and successful registering:

1. Register three to six months before the wedding. If you register earlier, some seasonal patterns and promotional items may be out of season by your wedding day.
2. Visit the store during off hours, to examine patterns and consider choices in a relaxed and tranquil environment.
3. Give yourselves plenty of time. These are important decisions, and you should think them over. Many brides-to-be first come in alone to narrow down their selections, then return with their fiancés to make final decisions.
4. Take advantage of registry consultants. These experts are invaluable sources of advice about everything from wedding etiquette to bone china.
5. Be descriptive. Don't write down just any number on the reg-

istry form-it may not be the style number. Include as much description as space allows.

6. Register in a price range. Include high-priced gifts for guests who can afford them, less-expensive gifts for shower guests and guests on limited budgets.

7. Use your imagination. China, crystal, silver, linen, and housewares are classic wedding gifts - and perennial favorites with brides and grooms - but consider registering for furniture, sports and camping equipment, gardening tools, computers and stereos. Several specialty stores and mail-order catalogues now offer registries as well, for gifts from antiques to CD's.

8. Don't overlap. Register for each item in one store only, otherwise you will go crazy keeping track of gifts that have and haven't been purchased.

9. Never announce your registration in wedding invitations - this implies that gifts are as important to you as guests. Friends and family can make sure word gets out.

10. Save mailing labels from the packages you receive. If you decide to return the gift, the label may be your only proof of purchase.

11. Keep a running gift list. Make a note of each item you receive, who sent it, and any thoughts that come to mind when you unwrap it. This will make writing thank-you notes easier;

12. Follow up with your bridal registrar. Contact her after the shower to compare notes; after the wedding, fill in any purchases that weren't received from guests.

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Cakes of Elegance

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Some things never change: Elegant brides prefer pearls

The more things change, the more they remain the same. Today's bride may be a little more sophisticated and savvy than in years past, but when it comes to wedding gems, her tastes are steeped in the classic American tradition of pearls.

Just as a diamond ring has become synonymous with engagements, cultured pearls, the queen of gems, have been an important part of the bridal ensemble for generations. Perhaps it is the natural beauty and purity of a pearl that has earned it a place in every bride's heart over the years.

Just as no two brides are ever alike, cultured pearls are as different as the individual who wears them. It is therefore important to match the right pearl jewelry for the right woman.

The main considerations for choosing the proper strand of pearls should be the style of gown to be worn and the complexion of the wearer. For gowns with scoop or boat necklines, 16 to 20 inch choker or princess length necklaces are best suited to delicately accent the neck and shoulder areas. High collar and V-neck styles call for long

strands of pearls either in 24 to 32 inch matinee or opera lengths.

Women with fair skin and light colored hair are best flattered by pearls with slightly pink or rose overtones. Creamy white or slightly golden pearls look best on women with dark skin and hair.

Since cultured pearls are products of nature, they are seldom, if ever, perfect. Every pearl grown by an oyster has its own individual identity. However, when choosing a strand of cultured pearls, it is important to keep several quality points in mind.

Probably the most important aspect, as far as quality is concerned, is the luster of the pearl. Luster is the clear shine on the surface of the pearl. It should be clear enough to reflect images of objects near the pearl.

Another important factor is the surface of the pearl. It should be relatively free of damaging blemishes that appear as cracks, bumps or pits.

And finally, all the pearls in a strand should be closely matched in terms of color, size and shape. They should all combine together to give an appearance of uniformity within the necklace.



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