

More and more newlyweds are thanking their attendants with gifts of gold jewellery

Taking part in the approximately 2,500,000 weddings this year will be a whopping 10,000,000 bridesmaids and ushers. For most, it's an experience that's an honour and usually a lot of fun, too.

To say a special "thanks", more newlyweds are presenting their bridal parties with something gold. Why? They know that Karat gold is a token of enduring sentiment and quality. What's more, gold jewellery is available in a variety of styles to fit any budget.

When shopping, it's wise to choose a gift the bridal party can wear at the wedding. If the bridesmaids are wearing skin-baring necklines with a lingerie look, perhaps a gold chain necklace is "right".

For Evening Glamour

Also, there are dainty links, sometimes adorned with stations of hearts, bows or semi-precious stones. A new type of woven chain is diamond-cut and sparkles, creating evening glamour.

Many designs are new but look "antique" or have a geometric art deco flavour. Both decorate the shoulder or collar in tasteful fashion.

Consider Individual Preferences

Don't forget to consider individual personalities when shopping for gifts of gold. Ask yourself, "Does she have short hair and love earrings? Are rings her passion?" These items are also available in gold in a multitude of looks.

Feminine gold ruffles that softly contour the face or gold beaded drop earrings will look great at the wedding and thereafter.

Stackable thin gold rings can complement an already existing collection. In this case, look for bands accented with semi-precious stones or in varying colours of gold.

Gold is also suitable for the ushers. Consider a classic gold collar or tie bar if the wedding look is informal. To complement the ascot of a morning suit, a handsome gold tac in ribbed or woven texture is appropriate.

To make the men in the wedding party look and feel "dressed", a pair of real gold cufflinks adds the finished touch. Traditional gold ovals or squares are often textured to look modern.



IN THE PAST, selecting just the right wedding rings was a difficult task. Couples wanted matching rings, but styles, at the time, were either too masculine or (usually) too feminine to be the perfect selection for both. Today, the problem has been solved by the introduction of complementary-style collections, which satisfy both the bride and groom, allowing each partner to select a ring distinctly styled to suit the femininity and masculinity desired.

Involving the bridal party in the wedding festivities from start to finish is fun for everyone. What's more, a special "thank you" perpetuates the moment for a long, long time.

If the wedding attire is ultra-formal and elbow-length gloves are being worn, a beautiful gold bracelet is the perfect gift.

Simple yet elegant, a gold bangle is etched with flowers and can be engraved with initials or a message. Lacy link bracelets are often accented with one dangling charm -- a reminder of the wedding day.

As many brides opt for an ensemble look -- a short jacket over a halter-type dress -- gold pins can be an important addition.

Bride and grooms remember: always shop carefully

Choosing small electric appliances for a new household can be easy. Here are several easy questions for couples to consider before choosing the right appliances for their lifestyle. Spending just a little time discussing them could make life after the wedding much easier.

-Will we be eating together. . . or will we both be so busy that eat and run will be more our style?

-Do we prefer to eat out, or eat deli food, or home-cooked meals? It is important for both bride and groom to know one another's food likes and dislikes.

-Who will do the cooking? Simple as it seems, many couples do not discuss this important issue. If one spouse will do the majority of the cooking, that person should get the majority vote on the appliances chosen.

-Do we like to entertain? If so, are we likely to have small, intimate dinner parties or are large, "after-the-game" bashes more our style?

Once these questions are answered, choosing the right appliance is a snap. Elizabeth Kathan, a bridal registry consultant, has several hints for engaged couples.

She recommends that couples register only for those appliances that they know that they will use. Any unnecessary appliances will sit, unopened, in a closet or cupboard, taking up space.

What to choose? Busy working couples may need time-saving appliances such as a convenient sandwich grill and an automatic egg cooker. Couples who entertain may need a coffeemaker, a warming tray, a fondue or a wok. . . and maybe a waffle grill.

For limited space

Even couples who prefer not to cook need small electrics. . . perhaps a small coffeemaker for visitors and a can opener for emergencies. And every couple can use a blender. Couples with limited counter space might like the convenience of an all purpose appliance.

Five-in-one

Five convenient appliances (a blender, a mixer, doughmaker, a slicer/shredder/saladmaker and a mini food processor) on one handy motor base saves time, space and money for busy couples.

"Don't leave any of the choices to your guests," concludes Ms. Kathan. "Your guests do not want to decide what colour appliances you need, how many speeds your blender should have or whether you need a clock on your coffeemaker. That information should be on the registry print-out."



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Some of the more popular wedding gifts

If your recollections of getting married include memories of thoughtful, but useless bridal shower and wedding gifts, take heart.

A recent survey commissioned by a leading manufacturer of kitchen and personal care products, sheds light on what people consider perfect, and perfectly awful, wedding presents.

The 1,000 people surveyed identified the nation's "Top 10" best wedding gifts, as well as the worst choices: Knickknacks, plaques and figurines. It appears that practical rather than fanciful gifts are most appreciated.

The "Top 10" wedding gifts, according to the survey, are:

-No. 1 - Dishes (11.2 per cent)

-No. 2 - Linens/bedding (11.2 per cent)

-No. 3 - Pots/pans and toasters (tied at 7.7 per cent)

-No. 4 - Towels (5.6 per cent)

-No. 5 - Silverware/cutlery (3.9 per cent)

-No. 6 - Television sets (3.5 per cent)

-No. 7 - Vacuum cleaners (3.1 per cent)

-No. 8 - Irons and washing machines/dryers (tied at 2.8 per cent)

-No. 9 - Coffee makers and bedroom sets (tied at 2.5 per cent)

-No. 10 - Microwave ovens (2.3 per cent)

The survey also reveals that money doesn't play a pivotal role in rating best wedding gifts (coffee makers tied with bedroom sets in ninth place).



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