

Smart brides-to-be use in-store bridal gift registry, a handy timesaver for all

One of the best tools available for the bride-to-be is the in-store bridal gift registry. A service available at most major department stores, the gift registry is a handy timesaver for the bride and her wedding guests.

The use of a gift registry allows engaged couples to choose specific items for their home before they are married.

Individual preferences count
Couples should consider their individual preferences for their new home... then decide together on color combinations for each room, as well as china, silver and casual dinnerware patterns, items for entertaining... and the right small appliances for their cooking styles.

Most gift registries are computerized. Once a couple has made up their "wish list," the registry coordinator at the store inputs that information into the store's computer.

Assign a family member or friend to purchase one of the items listed for the couple. The list is updated accordingly. This eliminates duplication of gifts so there is less return to the store—and that means less paperwork for the busy couple!

It is important for registering couples to be as specific as possible when filling

out their registration form.

Be specific

Couples should list exact colors, sizes and all other available information for the items on their list. For example, when choosing small appliances, be sure to specify the size, model number as well as its brand name and color. It is important for guests to know that they are purchasing exactly what the bride and groom desire.

Choose items with the complete room in mind. Keep linen color coordinated in the bedrooms and bath.

Choose silver, china and glassware patterns at the same time so that they complement one another as well as the dining room decor.

In the kitchen, make sure all of the appliances are in the same or complementary colors. For instance, Don's Designer Line features many small appliances in crisp white with red and grey accents. There are several sets available in complementary red to highlight that color scheme.

Bridesmaid looks: New air of refinement

- Satin gowns coordinate pale pinks, that keep their cool, unadorned appearance;
- Tonal florals with an impressionistic feel, reminiscent of Monet's gardens;
- Lovingly printed lace;
- Fresh-looking jacquards, with high textural interest;
- Delicate sheers;
- Alternative hemlines, like the new tulip skirt.



A LOOK OF RADIANT BEAUTY on your wedding day is easily achieved when you plan ahead and follow advice from the experts, says Glenn Roberts, creative beauty director for Elizabeth Arden.

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Marrying the new stepfamily

Over 20 percent of \$1.5 million U.S. households are now "blended" families, with more than 1,500 new stepfamilies being added every day. The Gracie and Harlan nuclear family is branching out. Recent studies show that the "average" American family now includes as many as eight parents and countless children.

Complexities that arise with adoption and adoption can make remarriage an emotional event for all family members. *Bride's* magazine offers these suggestions for smoothing over the transition from single parent to strong stepfamily.

Before the wedding: Planning a life together is important for every couple but, as a stepfamily, it is essential. Tips that can create conflict in marriage—how time, money and energy will be spent—become exaggerated when father by the many family members whose opinions need to be considered.

Dealing with conflicts
Other conflicts can result from differences in temperament, background and traditions. The best forum for working out such conflicts is the family meeting, where each member expresses his or her feelings and needs, while everyone contributes possible solutions.

Parents should also discuss before the

marriage what role the stepparent will play in the child's upbringing. "Some of the most successful stepparents have seen their role as similar to that of a camp counselor, an adult who shows interest and affection yet provides leadership," says Carol Brady, I.D., a clinical psychologist in Houston, Texas.

During the wedding: From the invitation, which can be issued with the children's names announcing the formation of a "new family," to the reception, where the children's favorite music can be played, there is one rule: When children are a part of your life together, include them in your wedding as much as possible.

Let children participate
They can be your attendants or altar boys, ring bearers or flower girls. Your vows to each other might be followed by a family vow as a parent of family unity with each member adding a phrase.

Your child could take the place of a member of the bridal no longer alive; if the bride's father has passed away, her child might escort her to the altar. Or, as *Bride's* magazine's associate editor Julie Martin and her fiancé decided, show the importance of the child by having

him or her at your side at the altar. "Cici, John's daughter, served in the role of 'best man' at our wedding," Martin explained. "John felt that there was no one else he'd rather have beside him as he made this important commitment, and she was excited to be asked."

Even if your child seems to have adjusted to the idea of your marriage, the wedding day may surprise all of you by

making him or her feel insecure. Assign a close relative to reassure and give hugs when needed throughout the day.

If your children feel uncomfortable with the idea of participating in the ceremony, include them in other ways. Assign them seats of honor, or mention their names in a special prayer.

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