

Changing lifestyles alter gifts for today's bride

The bridal season is here. Although weddings take place all year long, June remains firmly entrenched as the favorite month for wedding.

What has changed is the bride. Today, at an average age of 24, she is older than in any previous generation. And several marriages are on the rise.

The older age of today's brides and the increasing rate of remarriage mean that most women have furnished at least a small household—even if it is a studio apartment.

The centuries-old tradition of wedding gifts, and the American improvement of the bridal shower were designed originally to outfit a first home. Now, a new look at gift-giving is required in order to meet the contemporary lifestyle of today's bride. Black & Decker, a leading manufacturer of small appliances, for the bride offers the following suggestions:

• **Gifts that match the couple's lifestyle.** In most of today's married couples, both spouses work. Working women—and that includes 70 percent of all women today—require items that make work around the house easier.

Easy-to-use food preparation appliances, such as Black & Decker's Handy Chopper™ Mincer/Chopper—can save time and effort every day. Flat and easy operation and dishwasher-safe parts will make a working woman's life easier.

• **Coffermakers that can be set to automatically begin brewing before breakfast** will prevent a morning rush for the working couple.

• **Consider high quality small appliances.** Many couples already own "the basics," so gift-giving offers an opportunity to upgrade. Given the popularity of both thermal carafes and coffermakers as requested gifts, "trade up" to a special appliance that combines both—Black & Decker's



CARF FOUR DEUX. Black & Decker's 4-Cup Thermal Carafe Coffemaker made especially for couples, brews the ideal amount of fresh-tasting coffee. For those "linger-overbreakfast" mornings, the carafe's thermal carafe keeps the last cup of coffee as fresh-tasting and hot as the first. The suggested retail price of the 4-Cup Thermal Carafe Coffemaker (model TCM2H) is \$44.98.

Thermal Carafe Coffemaker. It doesn't have a hot plate, so the coffee doesn't burn. Instead, the thermal carafe keeps coffee "just brewed" hot and fresh for hours.

• **Practical gifts are often welcome.** The Bridal Market Retail Spending Study, conducted by Modern Bride magazine, reports that household necessities, like the Dashinator, top the list of household appliances, followed by microwaves, the coretimes Dashinator.

Can there be such a thing as a man of honor at a wedding? What are the ground rules for an interfaith ceremony? It is easy to invite some co-workers to the wedding, and not others?

According to Bride's magazine, wedding dilemmas have changed—dramatically—in the last decade.

Bride's and some of the country's leading authorities would give you these new views on wedding rules.

Question: My best friend is male. Is it all right for him to be my "man of honor"?

Judith Martin (Miss Manners) responds: Absolutely! He also has to be given to select a female "best person." A man of honor wears the same as the brides, a boutonniere pinned to his waist, a dress compatible with the bridesmaid's attire.

Question: Is it common for the groom's family to share wedding costs? How can we tell them we'd appreciate contributions?

Abigail Lee Basse (Dear Abby) responds: If the groom's family can afford to contribute, the sensitive thing is for them to make the offer.

Question: My fiancé and I are planning to pay for our own wedding. Should my parents' names be on the invitation?

Barbara Fisher (Editor-in-Chief, Bride's magazine) responds: Having your parents' names on the wedding invitation not only honors them, it reflects their approval of your marriage. It is also acceptable for engaged couples to name the invitations in their own names, especially if they have been involved for many years.

Bride's magazine is designed to help you with the way through contemporary wedding dilemmas," says Barbara Fisher. "Using things 'right' is no longer the main issue, what counts is being thoughtful, kind, and courteous."

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