

# Get creative with wedding registries

(MS) — A marriage doesn't just bring together two people in love, it also serves as the catalyst for merging their worlds into one. For couples who may have had homes separately from one another before getting married, they may be bringing along housewares, furniture and other décor that's not necessarily of a cohesive style. This could mean it's time to rethink what should be included in their home together. It typically involves registering for gifts from favorite stores as a way to stock up on items that reflect mutual taste as a couple.

Today registries are an invaluable part of the wedding process, and one eagerly anticipated by couples. Registries needn't be limited to just one store or type of retail outlet. In fact, a popular trend in wedding gifts is offering luxurious throws and pillows as opposed to traditional linens and housewares. Brides- and grooms-to-be are also registering at places, such as Lowes and The Home Depot if they desire miter saws as well as platinum-rimmed china.

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 are some guidelines for using registries successfully, courtesy of fashion and home décor designer Adrienne Landau.

- Register three to six months before the wedding. If you register earlier, some seasonal patterns



are always recognized as her designs. This individuality transcends to her home décor collection with cozy, and visually appealing fur pieces that can be the focal point or conversation piece of a home. To learn more about Adrienne Landau and other ideas for furnishing your home together, visit [www.adriennelandau.com](http://www.adriennelandau.com).

- Don't overlap. Register for each item in one store only. Otherwise, you may get frazzled keeping track of gifts that have and haven't been purchased or end up with duplicates.

It has become the expected practice for couples to register for preferred gifts for their wedding and life together. But you can think outside of the box for unique or unconventional gifts.

and promotional items may be out of season by your wedding day.

- Visit the store during off-hours, so you can examine patterns and consider your choices in a relaxed and tranquil environment.

- Give yourselves plenty of time to select what you like. These are important decisions, and you should think them over. Many brides-to-be initially go into stores alone or browse online to narrow down their selections, then return with their partners to make final decisions.

- Take advantage of registry

consultants. These experts are invaluable sources of advice about everything from wedding etiquette to recommended place setting amounts.

- Register in a variety of price ranges. Include high-priced gifts for guests who can afford them and less expensive gifts for shower guests and guests on limited budgets.

• Use your imagination. China, crystal, silver, linen and housewares are classic wedding gifts — and perennial favorites with brides and grooms — but consider registering for other items as well. Adrienne Landau incorporate unusual combinations of materials in striking ways which

as guests. Friends and family can make sure word gets out.

- 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 on a master note pad. This will make writing thank-you notes easier. Once gifts start piling up cards are easily misplaced, and your memory becomes unreliable.

- Maintain your bridal registry. Many stores will keep a registry active for a year or more. This way you can see what wasn't purchased and fill in items you really desire. Additionally, some guests will refer to the registry for anniversary gift ideas.

## Just say 'no' to wedding, marriage stress

• Enjoy the ceremony and honeymoon without stressing over small stuff, says Christina Behrend, a newlywed who battled the post-wedding blues.

"Once you return home, open your gifts. Start on thank you notes. Look at pictures. Listen to music you selected from your wedding. This will at least help you relive and remember the good memories of your big deal."

• Don't let money woes cause wedding stress, says Jennifer Ahearn-Koch, spokeswoman for Mattison's Catering Co. in Sarasota, Fla.

"Right from the start brides and grooms need to set a budget and stick to it. Any good wedding planner will keep this in mind and try to make sure the couple sticks to the plan especially in times when it becomes tempting to overspend."

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# Engagement etiquette

BY JODI HARRISON  
 For Hearst Michigan Newspapers

Engagements and the etiquette associated with this brief wonderful period are often confusing for people. While the etiquette of weddings is much more straightforward, people are often confused when it comes to engagements and what is customary.

Engagement rings and customs associated with them have been around for quite some time. In A.D. 860 Pope Nicholas I decreed that an engagement ring become a required statement of nuptial intent. Rings at this time were typically made of gold. Two other customs were established in that century: If a man broke off the engagement, he forfeited the ring, and if a woman broke off the engagement, she needed to return the ring. As far back as the early 1500s, there are references to diamond engagement rings.

The custom of wearing the engagement or wedding ring on what we know as the ring finger started with the Greeks in the third century B.C. Greek physicians believed the "third finger" contained a "vein of love" that ran directly to the heart; thus the custom of wearing the ring on the "third finger" to symbolize an affair of the heart. From this simple beginning has come one of the most romantic traditions of love. Engagements have always had romantic mystery surrounding them. In the early 1800s, when a gentleman gave his intended a pair of kid gloves, it meant he was offering his hand to his beloved. So a heart held safely in a palm spoke of steadfast love — "heart and hand shall never part."

There are a few engagement customs all couples should know. When you decide to get married, the first people you share the news with should be your parents. It is hoped this is not the first time parents meet their son or daughter's intended. It used to be customary for the man to ask the woman's father for permission to marry her. This is no longer a fashionable custom. However, I have never

heard a father complain if he has had such an honor. If you have been married before and have children, the children should be the first told of your engagement, then your parents.

Once your parents have been informed, the parents of the bride-to-be or a close relative of the bride often hosts an engagement party. This is not a requirement, but it is a very nice gesture. If you decide to have an engagement party, it is held before the newspaper announcement of your engagement. These parties are simple affairs and do not usually include a dinner. It should be noted that anyone invited to the engagement party should also be invited to the wedding. If you choose not to have an engagement party, it is a nice gesture to send personal notes to close family and friends informing them of your engagement and upcoming wedding.

It is not customary for a guest to bring a gift to an engagement party. The couple neither expects nor desires anything more than their friends and families warm wishes for the future. If the parents or close friends choose to give a gift to the couple, they should do so in private. If you are unable to attend an engagement party or no party is planned, a simple note expressing your pleasure is always appropriate. It is traditional to only send "congratulations" to the groom-to-be and to send "best wishes" for the bride-to-be.

After your engagement party, it is acceptable to announce your engagement in the paper. If there is no engagement party, you can announce your engagement at any time. Most papers have guidelines available for you to follow. If you have been divorced or widowed for some time, it is perfectly acceptable to announce your engagement.

Jodi Harrison is the director of Harrison Associates, which specializes in business etiquette and protocol. She is a certified protocol consultant. She can be reached at [harrisonj@haeps.com](mailto:harrisonj@haeps.com) or (888) 738-6610.

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