

## 2nd, 3rd marriages come out of the closet

Nearly 30 percent of all marriages today are remarriages. But the number of remarriages isn't all that's growing. So is the spirit of celebration.

Traditionally, couples embarking on second and third marriages faced strong pressure to keep the wedding a small, quiet affair bearing little resemblance to a first wedding. Etiquette books addressed the subject with an abundance of negatives: "The remarrying bride does not wear white", "a second engagement is never announced in the newspapers."

All that has changed, says *Bride's* magazine. The emphasis now is a lot less on rules, a lot more on the importance of sharing a joyful new beginning surrounded by family and friends.

Some of the magazine's suggestions for a remarrying couple:

- As the bride, be a little bit selfish at this time. Wear an engagement ring. Include in a beauty day at the salon — complete with lavish hair care, facial and manicure.

- Feel free to marry in the outfit of your choice. The traditionally simple, cream-colored suit still is lovely — but so

is a romantically long and lacy gown, in white or your favorite color. The only accessory best omitted is the veil — long a symbol of youth. A more sophisticated choice might be a hat, cloche or wreath of flowers.

- If either of you has children, try to include them in as many plans as you can. They'll feel especially important playing a role in your ceremony. Depending on their ages, they can be ring bearers or flower girls, bridesmaids, ushers or honor attendants.

- Make your reception as extravagant a party as you wish, complete with all the wedding traditions — a receiving line, the first dance, the ceremonial cutting of the cake and a champagne toast. A warm way to welcome guests is to head up the receiving line yourselves, rather than leaving it to your parents. They, in turn, will be free to circulate among guests.

- Don't feel a honeymoon isn't necessary this time around. Getting married is tiring, even if you've been through it before. Plan a trip just for the two of you first, then a group honeymoon with your children so you'll all feel like a family.

## Showers — 2nd time around

Wedding showers are given for all brides these days, whether they're getting married for the first, second or even third time. Gone are the days when a remarrying was kept very simple and hush-hush. Now it's considered a joyful new beginning.

If you've been invited to a "second time" shower, you may be wondering if there isn't some difference. The original purpose of a shower was to outfit a bride with everything she'd need to set up a new household. But what do you give a woman who is older and who probably has all the essentials?

"A former marriage doesn't guarantee that a bride will have everything she needs to furnish a home now," said Barbara Tober, editor in chief of *Bride's* magazine.

Styles change and the bride's lifestyle probably has changed. Years ago she may have hoped for beer mugs to pass around with pizza; now she might want crystal stemware for more formal entertaining. Her former husband might have taken a share of their possessions. Or many of her original items might simply have worn out or been broken. Towels, sheets and glasses almost always are appreciated gifts.

IF YOU WANT to give a traditional present, it's a good idea to find out if the bride has signed up at any wedding gift registries. The bridal consultant there will be able to tell you exactly what service pieces your friend hopes to add to her flatware or which kitchen appliances she's lacking.

If you don't want to stick with the classics, you should view a second-time shower as the perfect opportunity to use your imagination.

"Think a little more frivolous and a lit-

tle more personal," Tober suggested. Depending on the bride's tastes and interests, consider something like a gourmet coffeemaker that comes with its own grinder or a professional copper fish poacher, something high tech such as a talking clock or a computer program that will help newlyweds pay their bills and balance their checkbooks in state-of-the-art fashion, a colorful quilt or wall hanging, a silver teapot or American stoneware.

Wedding registries are popping up in unusual places like bookstores, museums, shops, gourmet and liquor stores in addition to department and jewelry stores.

EVERY BRIDE is under some stress during the hectic days of planning a wedding. A remarrying bride often faces an extra challenge in attempting to care for young children and hold down a demanding job at the same time. So why not give her a gift whose sole purpose is to pamper? The entire shower could follow this theme with each guest bringing either a beauty product, such as soaps, a hairbrush, fragrance or lingerie, or a service such as a certificate for a facial, manicure or massage or a year's membership in a health spa.

Another thoughtful gift is one that puts you "at her service." You promise to perform a specific job that reflects her special situation. For example, you might commit yourself to taking care of her children during her honeymoon, to organizing a garage sale of all the things she doesn't want to bring to her new life or to helping her move.

You can give this special gift of your time in the form of an IOU with a sketch representing the job to be done or a tool, such as a paintbrush to be kept for the task.

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