



## Registries are reliable source for gifts

**A**LITTLE help from their new friends in the bridal registry is what couples-to-be are relying on in these days of greater interest in home entertaining, but less time for shopping.

Typically, the registrar helps coordinate dinnerware, flatware and stemware patterns and also takes the bride — increasingly accompanied by the groom — through an ever-expanding list of choices to make in other categories. Gift-givers use the registry to select a gift that's wanted by the couple.

The return to traditional weddings carries over: in choices young couples are making for their crystal, silver and china, say registry directors in department and specialty shops. For example, there's a renewed interest in crystal among bridal consumers, according to Cleverley Stone, bridal registry director at B. Altman's in New York.

**SHE SAYS THAT** brides are registering for more items than they used to, including candlesticks, vases and pitchers. They're choosing more expensive stems, too. The average

price per glass is between \$27 and \$35. Many register for two stemware patterns to go with the two sets of dinnerware that they select.

Besides the silverware, fine china and crystal that are traditionally listed, the nation's estimated 5,000 bridal gift registries are increasingly listing more unusual gifts desired by brides and grooms-to-be.

Some examples on recent lists include exercise equipment, bicycles, fully-stocked picnic baskets, home electronic equipment such as camcorders and computers, cooking appliances such as ice cream makers and pasta machines, and art objects.

There are, however, some distinct geographic differences. California couples are registering for patio furniture, garden tools, beach umbrellas, barbecue grills and bikes, according to Rose Nahabedian, registry director at The Broadway in Glendale, Calif. "Couples don't always register for fine crystal and china. Many of my clients tell me they want to purchase those items later on in their marriage," she says.

**IN NEW YORK**, art objects and

handcrafts such as one-of-a-kind serving dishes are popular with couples registering at Saks Fifth Avenue's gift department.

Another New York area trend is registering at non-traditional shops such as Dean & DeLuca, a gourmet food shop. A source at the store noted that couples come to register for everything from pots and pans to cooking tools. Also popular are gift certificates for specialty foods.

All over the country, interest in ethnic foods has enlarged the range of utensils newlyweds want, says Anne Kupper, national spokesman for the gourmet gadget chain of Williams-Sonoma. Pasta machines, paella pans, even nutmeg and cheese graters are registry items with this chain.

"In the 15 years I've been with the company, I've seen some things that haven't been listed for years come back — like fondue pots and pressure cookers, which make it possible for working couples to cook quickly," says Kupper.

Although it's customary to include inexpensive as well as big-ticket items

on a wish list, Michelle Kahn, bridal registry director at Neiman Marcus in White Plains, N.Y., says that "a wedding celebration is one occasion for which you needn't be shy about extravagant requests."

Some couples have registered for one-of-a-kind crafts such as a \$3,000 punch bowl by Dorothy Halner or trendy silver, china and crystal such as that bearing the Swid Powell label.

**WITH COUPLES'** wish lists growing more varied, the nation's bridal arbiters are advising gift givers to be more original, too. Barbara Tober, editor of Bride's magazine, says wedding guests should give something the couple want, but also should personalize their gift.

For example, a donor might match up wine goblets and wine, a requested teapot with a basket of exotic herbal teas, fragrant soaps with chosen bath towels, family photos with a selected silver frame, a set of parfait dishes with an ice cream maker, or a crystal vase and a gift certificate for flowers-of-the-month.

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