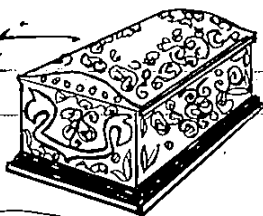


The Gift



Time was you could select a wedding gift from a tried-and-true assortment of objects guaranteed to please any bride: silver salvers and glass-lined compotes, monogrammed luncheon sets and real linen bedsheets.

Was everyday life ever that formal, really? It seems like a remote time in history when young husbands marched off to work in starched collars, leaving their new wives at home . . . presumably to iron more shirts, not to mention those wedding-gift linens.

Can you picture yourself giving a 1973 bride any of the above items? Visualize her face when she discovers the gift is neither drip-dry nor self-polishing, and you're starting to get the message. Simplicity is going to be the key to her housekeeping: so keep the presents elementary.



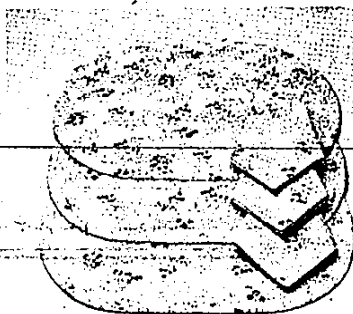
DEMITASSE coffee sets are the perfect gift for the newly-married couple.

French porcelain. With either style, the nicest gift enclosure of all would be a favorite custard recipe which she will remember long after the cups have broken.

YOUR THANK-YOU NOTES

It's a smart bride who starts writing her thank-you notes the moment she receives her first wedding present. Putting them off makes the task more difficult and causes hard feelings all around. You must write a personal, handwritten letter of appreciation for each and every gift you receive—even one from a close friend you've thanked in person and see every day. The only exceptions to this "thanks-in-writing" rule are gifts from your parents and your fiancé.

Thank-you notes need not be long, but they should be prompt. In general, you should try to acknowledge gifts which arrive more than a week before your wedding within two weeks of their arrival, those arriving later within a month after your honeymoon. If you expect to receive more gifts than you could possibly acknowledge within this length of time, you might send engraved or printed cards to let your friends and relatives know their gifts arrived safely.



QUILTED mats and matching napkins bring spring whatever the season to the bride and groom.



GLASSKETS, not baskets. Set a charming table with this lovely centerpiece.

In lieu of a silver bowl, why not substitute a big wooden salad bowl. Contemporary Scandinavian designs are superb, and almost all can be left to drain in the dishrack overnight. Stainless flatware is apt to be more popular than sterling for the same reasons. Ask for the bride's favorite in flatware pattern, and surprise her with a bunch of iced teaspoons or fish forks or extra serving pieces.

You can be practical and extravagant at the same time! In the linen department, skip the traditional monogrammed white things. Find out what her color schemes will be; then tour the local department stores to see what's new and smashing in drip-dry tablecloths and polyester sheets.

Bowers of flowers or jazzy geometric prints make a happy addition to a new household, and the bride will really light up when she sees that she won't have to try out her steam iron on your wedding gift.

In kitchenware, too, there's a marvelous selection of items both pretty and practical. How about a set of custard cups? If the bride's tastes run to Americana, choose the old-fashioned brown cups with white interiors. More elegant -- a set of pot de creme dishes in classic white



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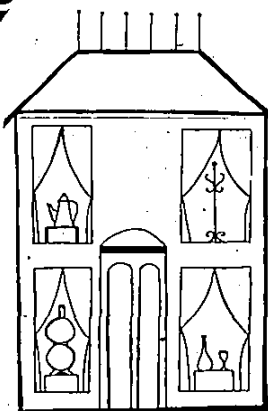
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