

## ETIQUETTE

## THE INS AND OUTS OF MODERN DAY ETIQUETTE

WHEN IT COMES TO WEDDINGS THERE ARE TRADITIONS FOR JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING, INCLUDING THE GIFT GIVING. HERE ARE THE GUIDELINES.

## MATERIAL GIRL

Presents do count, let's not kid ourselves. A wedding is an occasion when a card and good wishes just won't do from a guest. Although guests really have no obligation to give presents, any guest who arrives at a wedding empty handed (unless they have delivered their gift beforehand) would be regarded as unusual. In every culture wedding gifts are expected as an important gesture of respect for the new couple.

What to give is up to individuals, the bride's parents often give their daughter silver; the groom gives his wife jewellery, so they have visits to the jeweller ahead of them.

For everyone else, the dilemma of what to buy can be minimised by a gift registry. As long as guests are advised of the option tastefully, a registry is very acceptable in modern gift giving.

The registry is actually put in place so guests can see what the couple would like, very helpful for those guests without a clue. It is not compulsory to give presents on the list.

The registry can be lodged at more than one store; in fact it gives guests a wide option and the wish list should include items that cover inexpensive items as well as expensive ones, so there is a pricepoint for everyone. This form of shopping is convenient for overseas, interstate and country guests who can purchase gifts online or over the phone.

A travel registry is quite new and suitable for couples who really do have everything and would prefer their guests to contribute to their honeymoon.

An alternative for couples who don't want to go down the registry path is to advise parents of the area of the home that needs items. Let them spread the word, although this is fraught with toaster overload.

Notifying guests of the wish-list can be an etiquette minefield. Details should never be included on the invitation as this looks tacky. Instead include a tastefully designed card in the same envelope, or better still, ask family to advise of the details by word of mouth. Long winded poems asking for money are most unpleasant and should be avoided at all cost.

Many department stores and gift registries offer notification cards as part of their service but check to see the style of the card is discrete and in keeping with the other items in the stationery suite before bundling it off to guests.

It is common practice for gifts to be delivered a week before the wedding, if this is not practical, the gift table at the reception will display the packages on the day.

When it's all over and the packages have been opened, the bride should always handwrite a thank you note to each guest who gave a present. Thank you notes should be sent within one month of receiving the gift and they should be worded personally to each guest according to the couple's familiarity and relationship with them.