

Thank You
After getting all those great wedding gifts, it's smart to send out thank-you notes promptly. But writing them can be a chore. Some tips from *Bride's* magazine:

- Acknowledge gifts received before the wedding within two weeks. Thank-you notes for gifts received on or after the wedding date should be mailed within a month of receipt.
- Preprinted or typed notes are unacceptable. Both are too impersonal; these notes should be handwritten.
- Keep careful records. As gifts are received, jot down notes about each, including the sender's name, a description and how you plan to use it. (CNS)

Love Is Blind

Canadian researchers studying 180 couples to determine what makes a happy pair found that individuals who viewed their partners more positively than their partners saw themselves were happier than those who saw their makes in a more realistic light. The happiest couples focused on each other's best traits, regardless of their true attributes.

Healthy Marriage

Common wisdom has long held that marriage is healthy for men, who outlive their single counterparts by three to seven years. However, *Psychology Today* points out that marriage isn't the only factor at work. Researchers tracking individuals since 1921 in the Terman study contend that people who are conscientious as children are more likely to have stable marriages and healthier habits. Both contribute to a longer life span for men. (CNS)

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Color, fit, style; new options in dresses

By Sharon Mosley
Copley News Service

Here comes the bride, all dressed in... red. Well, it may be a trend among avant-garde fashion designers like Nicole Miller, who recently introduced a line of colorful wedding dresses, but most designers still prefer traditional pastels and silhouettes.

"Elegant and refined" is how Michele Piccione, head of design for Alfred Angelo's bridal collection, describes spring wedding fashions.

Indeed, the "hottest" bride of 1996, Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy, chose a simple, but chic bias-cut silk sheath to wear for her famous marriage to John F. Kennedy Jr. Piccione sees a return to "drama provided by pure lines and lovely fabrics." She still likes white, the perennial favorite, but enhanced with touches of blush pink. While red is a little too daring for most brides, softer tones of rosy hues are blooming for spring dresses. Pale pink tones are also favor-

ies of the designing duo Bagdley Mitschka, who give their spring gowns a rosy blush in tulle covered with glass beads and layered over a silver satin slip.

Soft colors are saying "I do" in the Carolina Herrera Bridal Collection, too. At the end of Herrera's spring runway show, the designer sent out a gorgeous mint-green gown, swirling with a chiffon skirt topped with a sheer bodice covered in cut-velvet roses.

The sheer, layered look is waiting out of the ready-to-wear clothing out of the ready-to-wear clothing albums. Chiffon, tulle and organza are romantic choices for brides

this spring. Satin is also making a comeback, as is all-over embroidered lace and silk shantung.

Bateau, scoop and V-necklines; long, fitted sleeves or sleeveless dresses; and soft, flowing skirts or slim, body-conscious designs are all elements that make this year's gowns stand out at the altar and later on the dance floor.

But don't envision many Cinderellas walking around out there. Just a few fairy-tale princesses. The latest wedding gown designs are very sophisticated, according to Piccione. Princess and empire shapes are the most popular silhouettes marching down the aisles

this spring. Movie-star glamour is back with romantic dresses in shapely styles. Think Gwyneth Paltrow in the movie "Emma."

Or think Emma's Mr. Knightly, rather than Emma's Mr. Knightly. Bob Mackie's interpretation of the bridal gown for spring is a white crepe-and-satin spiral long-sleeve gown topped off with a cone-shape hat and veil. Perfect for modern-day Gulleveres.

The sheath dress is another stylish option for brides this season. Classically elegant in shimmering satin or covered with embroidered

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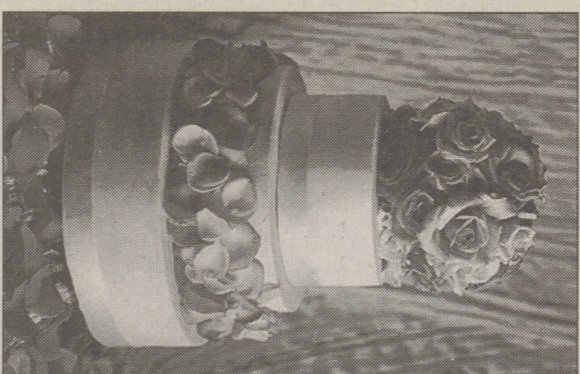
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