

Fall Bridal Showcase

Gifts say 'thank you' to wedding party

By Jennifer Plantier
Copley News Service

Just how do you thank the friends who spent hours suffering through formalwear fittings, to the flower girl who took her job so seriously or the supportive parents who footed the bill with a smile? Of course, the people who contribute to your wedding-day festivities do so because they care, and they certainly don't expect gifts in return.

Most couples, however, choose to express their appreciation with a thank-you gift — and its monetary value pales in comparison to its thoughtful nature. Wedding-party gifts should reflect what makes your relationship with that individual special and provide beautiful memories of your wedding day.

Usually, wedding party gifts are presented prior to the wedding, at the rehearsal dinner or another pre-wedding party (such as a tea or luncheon in honor of the bridesmaids).

Gifts for parents may be given on the day of the ceremony, or even in the aftermath when things quiet down.

ARDENT ATTENDANTS

Bridesmaids and groomsmen (or

ushers) deserve special thanks for the time, energy and money they invest in your special day.

One way to lighten their load is to pay for part of their wedding attire as a thank-you gift. The groom might offer to pay for accessories to the rented tuxedo, or the bride might spring for shoes or hairpieces that match the bridesmaids' dresses.

If you would prefer a more personal gift that is also commemorative of the occasion, choose a special piece of jewelry, a handbag, handkerchief or other item that can be worn both on the wedding day and beyond.

Each of the bridesmaids should receive duplicate gifts, perhaps personalized in some way. The same is true for the groomsmen. The maid of honor and best man, however, have probably earned something a little more special.

Great gifts for bridesmaids include: gloves, shoes, handbags or handkerchiefs that match the wedding attire; affordable fine jewelry, sterling silver or pearls, or nice costume pieces like necklaces, bracelets, earrings, charms or lockets; silver hair combs, makeup brushes or compacts; stylish picture frames with wedding photos or crystal bud vases; gift certi-

ificates to a favorite store.

Gifts to please ushers include: engraved money clips, business card cases or key rings; pewter mugs, silver flasks, bar jiggers or decorative Pilseners; Swiss Army knives; watches or cuff links; gift certificates to a favorite restaurant.

FAITHFUL FAMILY

Treat youngsters in the wedding party to a gift they can really appreciate. In most cases you'll want to sidestep the mature mementos for something more fun.

A children's book, teddy bear or favorite collectible (train, car or otherwise) would bring a smile to any little ring bearer. A bride doll, child-size necklace or bracelet or a music box will probably thrill your flower girl. Tickets to a favorite event, movie or theme park, or gift certificates to an ice cream parlor or other fun eating establishment, would be appropriate for any young wedding attendant — and earn you Brownie points at the same time.

Keep in mind the personality and age of the child when choosing your gifts.

Parents deserve to be recognized and honored for their contributions — whether it's wedding funds, moral support or mere genetic material!

In most cases, the proud parents are stressed, nervous or downright emotional by the time the big day arrives. Send them off on a weekend getaway or special night on the town. Provide all the tickets and make the arrangements in advance so there's nothing at all for them to worry about.

Or have a flower arrangement or special gift basket delivered on the day of the wedding — to be enjoyed once the festivities have ended.

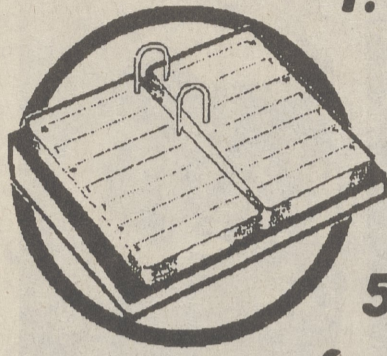
Other thoughtful gifts for parents include: silver or crystal picture frames with wedding or baby photos; leather-bound photo albums; engraved silver platters or bowls.

Think about the lifestyles, tastes, ages and sensibilities of your wedding party members when making your gift selections. With a little effort, you can help make your marriage almost as memorable and distinctive for them as it is for you.

BRIDEFACTS

Countdown to the big day

Here's what you need to do six to 24 months before your wedding:



1. Determine your budget.
2. Visit with your officiant.
3. Plan the reception.
4. Draw up the invitation list.
5. Select your dress.
6. Choose a photographer.

Source: Modern Bride magazine

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