

# Getting the List of It

What your bridal registry says about you.

By Beth D'Addona

According to industry statistics, the average bridal registry adds up to \$10,000 worth of gifts. While that's a lot of loot, registries in 2011 are usually reasonable in the deposit of formal china and crystal that our grandmothers held so dear. Increasingly, bridal registries are morphing into a hybrid wish list more relevant to couples approaching matrimony from all different angles. Unlike the old days, when young brides confided in their parents' kuno for their husbands', many couples are already living together and bring all kinds of stuff to the table. Or, each partner has lived solo for years, and now the challenge is collecting dual wedding gifts without kissing each other's cheeks.

Good for you! Dunkin' donuts recommends that brides register as soon as the engagement is announced, and she's tracking definite trends in the registry world. "We're seeing couples wanting to make their homes a haven of comfort and coziness," said Dunkin' Donuts, owner and executive producer of the *Straw Hat*, a bridal shoe company that produces about 20 styles in the 48-state area each year.

"Very few brides register in just one place, picking from multiple sources. And they're expanding into alternative gifts that reflect a definite lifestyle," she added. *Life in a Glass*, *Me & My*, *Big Bath & Beyond*, *Costa and Barrel* and *Target* lead the charge. When it comes to more traditional gift-giving for the

home, followed by a myriad of specialty items, from sporting goods to big-box home-essentials stores. Beyond traditional china and glassware, couples inspired by popular culture on HGTV and Food Network are wishing for outdoor grills and petic accessories, apartment cookware and kitchen tools and multiple sets of high-thread-count bedding.

Philadelphia Wedding planner Lynda Barans, owner of I Do Wedding Consulting, sees glassware and ceramics as a very popular category reflecting couples' hot cocktail culture. From multiple glasses for wine, even beyond just red and white, to martini, old-fashioned and highball glasses, her client designer Michael Aron is a proponent. Some on her brides' lists, with couples registering for his modern, water-inspired barware along with serving sets, cheese boards and cake servers. "And kitchen trends like food scales, mandolins and candy thermometers suggest couples still enjoy adventures," she said. She sees traditional items as still in the mix, including both formal and everyday china and dishware.

The bottom line is that it's not like registering gifts that you don't want, as getting your registry right the first time matters. Those gifting trends will get you pointed in the right direction.

## Going Local

Shopping at local isn't just about frills and vegetables. Beiche Donuts likes *Beaches* (6 Wedding Services.com). Be it a list of things, those dollars back

to local businesses by allowing couples to purchase bride and groomer companies in their own community. With hundreds of gifts and services from which to choose, Registry includes everything from a year's worth of housecleaning to the art by a local artist, tickets to the Arden Theater, dinner at City Towers restaurant, cooking classes by *American Cooking School*... the options are real and eclectic. Dog training? Check. A basic nail package? Yep. Electric bike rental? Sure. You can even give to your charity of choice using *Wish Upon A Wedding*. All in all, a brilliant idea.

## The Gift of Experience

New Jersey event planner Adria Hink of AART Event Planning goes a more complex register for some or all of their honeymoon experiences. "That could include everything from a gift certificate towards a tux or hotel to an anniversary while they're away," she said. "Couples are seeking adventures they can do together," noted Beiche Donuts. "That might be parasailing or swimming with dolphins on their honeymoon or even skydiving together."

Stacy Halverson of Create the Moment wedding planners, who sees couples meeting websites which compile things they would like to do on their honeymoon on the *Drive* websites, *Imey*, *Divans*, etc.), giving brides and grooms the chance to treat them to a one-in-a-lifetime experience. "They can use the register for travel for travel costs, which helps stretch the wedding budget."



What do these items have in common? They're likely to end up together on today's bridal registries. Clockwise from top left: Cannondale mountain bike; neckties available at [pale.purple.com](http://pale.purple.com); a Michael Arms grilling set; KitchenAid stand mixer.

## Wedding Gift Mixzaks

Events coordinator Michelle Schwartz, who was part of the team that launched *Divany Weddings*, now helps people organize modern Jewish celebrations of their wedding anniversaries. "Checkable gifts in lieu of gifts is gaining in popularity" she said. "And the trend of incorporating tradition has crossed over to modern weddings of all faiths. Technology has made it easier for the service to include a charitable component to a wedding, reception and shower, or as a wedding party gift. Sites like the *I Do* *Prize* edition include a way for you to not only register for donations from guests in your honor but also for you to make gifts in honor of your guests. They will even send you donation cards to share with your guests. That's a trend that will see this modern Jewish woman smile!"

## One-Stop Shopping

Although multiple registries have all but replaced a sole department store option, keeping track of them all can be a pain for both the intended couple and the gift giver. MyRegistry.com is the answer. Founded by Debi Korman in 2005, the *Best List*, a 5.2-point company list, has listed services create one universal gift registry from any store

anywhere in the world. After a simple drag-and-drop that puts a kitten on your list, you can then be added to your customized list. The bride or groom can easily add notes ("Katie, this one's for you") and the list is easily updated as items are purchased and added. If you already have a registry created at a company like *Costa and Barrel* or *Williams-Sonoma*, you can import that list to MyRegistry.com and add to it. "We're seeing a lot of Jewish brides using the site to bring gifts into the mix," said one party planner Nancy Lee. "It would be nice to get going to register for everything at a store like *Gilley's* (shirts), but you need a fabulous, modern look to your new home. This site lets you mix and match, ask for cash donations to charity." Beiche.com is so connected their *Life's Facebook* making it even easier for friends and families to give. Lee said that the biggest trend she's seeing is couples defying expectation when it comes to registering. "They're going in a million directions, with occasional likes sent to *KitchenAid* customer support to compare options and 'Waterford crystal,'" she said. "A bride texts about MyRegistry.com, she's going to two or three places. It's so simple for her."

## Cash is King

Asking for cash on a list is still a little taboo. "Couples have also started opting for cash gifts to offset wedding and honeymoon costs instead of traditional wedding gifts," said Schwartz. "This is not as common in the Jewish tradition, which tends to focus upon making such requests." But thanks to a new wedding registry site, *Impact a Gift* ([www.impactagift.com](http://www.impactagift.com)), founded by Dana Osterson, engaged couples can easily register for money towards anything from honeymoon to home down payments, retirement activities to charity. Inspired by her own traditional Jewish wedding to Mark Vogel in 2008, Osterson founded her New York City business to give couples a more practical way to apply a gift's purpose. *Impact a Gift* shows the giver where his funds will go, eliminating the awkwardness that many people find in asking for cash. The multiple fills out a gift registry using a database of images or by clicking on a product list. An added bonus: giving grandparents either a handy access option — to curbside delivery from shipping, returns or

Beth D'Addona is a frequent contributor to *Special Sections* and *Dance*.