

QUEST

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ETIQUETTE



TO THE MANNERS BORN

WITH DAISY DAVENPORT

THE ARRIVAL of a wedding invitation sparks a flurry of questions—what to wear, what to send, who will organize the shower, and how to respond. I've outlined below just a few basic rules of wedding etiquette.

R.S.V.P.

Today it appears that most brides, or rather Mothers of the Brides, have given up the tradition of having guests handwrite responses on their own stationery. Today, a printed response card, usually even with a stamp, is included to make the invitation easy to answer. The rudeness of not responding to such an important event is inconceivable and defenseless. Remember that most wedding lists have to be cut, and if you are lucky enough to be asked, the least you can do is RSVP in a timely manner so that another friend or member of the family may be invited if you do not attend.

ATTIRE

Traditionally, the rule for female guests was never to wear white or black. White is to be avoided as an obvious nod to the bride and black is considered to be too funeral for such a happy occasion (today, some brides even choose black bridesmaid dresses, but it still seems inappropriate to me). If you must wear black,

at least add a brightly colored accessory to lift the somberness. Also, if it's a religious ceremony, it is customary for women to cover their shoulders while in the church. If you find yourself in a quandary, take your cue from the invitation, as the style and time will relay the level of formality. For the afternoon wear short, for the evening (8 o'clock onwards, a European tradition), wear long.

STATIONERY

Wedding invitations and stationery cre-

ate other dilemmas, but Crane & Co. has published *The Wedding Blue Book* and *Blue Book of Stationery*, which cover most questions that could arise. The traditional thank-you note for gifts is written on a white or ecru fold-over note with the bride's monogram in the center or top of the front page. For notes written before the wedding, maiden initials should be used.

GIFTS

A fun and useful idea for a bridal shower could include monogrammed items for bed, bath, and bar. One of my favorite shops, The Elegant Setting in Southampton (631.283.4747 or theelegantsetting.com) has an array of items to be monogrammed that could be either shower or wedding gifts. Emphasis on bride's new initials can instantly add a spark of happiness and gaiety to any wedding event as they encapsulate the reason for celebration. There are also items that would be ideal for bridesmaid gifts, such as cosmetic bags and burlap totes.

A FINAL NOTE

Be a good guest and have fun, and maybe even be thoughtful enough to send a short note to the mother of the bride for including you in this most personal and memorable moment for the family. ♦



These monogrammed linens, blankets and totes from The Elegant Setting are perfect gifts for wedding celebrations.