

WEIRD WEDDING REGISTRY IDEAS

What You Can (and Can't) Ask for on a Wedding Registry

Some couples are requesting nontraditional gifts like vacations, fertility treatments, and even wedding expenses

BY DAEDALUS HOWELL, YESTERDAY

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There was a time when the father of the bride provided a dowry to the newly nuptialized—a chest full of linens or a goat or two. These days, many couples are already established in their lifestyles before hitting the altar and have little need for homewares or an even-toed ungulate.

And yet wedding registries, the upright and modern descendant of the dowry, persists—which begs the question, “If a couple already has everything, can they register for *anything*?”

Like, say, a billboard-sized TV, a down payment on a Tesla, or a Lego Death Star for your mancave?

“Registries evolved from the global custom of guests wanting to help you bolster your marriage by furnishing your home,” says April Masini, an etiquette expert and bestselling author behind AskApril.com. “Be respectful of your guests. ‘It’s your day,’ doesn’t mean you get to don a piggy suit.”

Masini is nonplussed by what she calls “gimme gimme websites” used to crowdfund nontraditional gifts. “This new trend crosses the line of good manners. If you need the cash that badly, downsize your wedding,” she says.

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Sara Margulis, co-founder and CEO of Honeyfund—a site that enables to couples to crowdfund everything from honeymoons to swimming adventures with dolphins—has raised \$279 million for couples to date, with individual gift price tags ranging from \$20 to \$500.

And some of the ideas are unconventional, to say the least. “We’ve seen several couples actually register for fertility treatments,” she says.

A basic a rule of thumb: If you don't feel comfortable asking for it, you probably shouldn't.

Margulis points out that not every wedding guest will be “comfortable with the more progressive and forward-thinking registry idea,” so she recommends signing up with a traditional registry as well.

There also seems to be a trend in forgoing material goods for more ephemeral gifts.

“Register for experiences,” suggests Kristen Ley Green of Something New for I Do, a wedding public relations and “bridal branding” agency. Green used **Blueprint Registry**, a platform that enables couples to register for anything, including offsetting the expense of the wedding itself.

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Though the nuptial crowdfunding trend may raise the ire of AskApril.com's Masini, it can be redirected in a manner that's acceptable to everyone, including etiquette experts.

Just don't say “Don't bring any gifts” says Jeff Kear, founder of Planning Pod, a web-based software solution for professional event and wedding planners.


“Most guests will want to give you something out of basic good manners, and because they want you to have something nice to remember this day by,” says Kear. “Say something like ‘We kindly ask you not to purchase any gifts for us, but if you must, you can make a donation to our favorite charity’ and then list the charity's donation information.”

In short, spread the love.

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