

Don't Let Your Special Day Be Marred by Complaints

Taking part in the approximately 1,500,000 weddings this year will be a whopping 10,000,000 bridesmaids. What will the experience be like for them?

Based on the theory that it pays to take a lesson from history, here is a list of the common complaints and suggestions how this year's brides can help smooth them out.

What they wore — Perhaps the most frequently heard complaint is that the bridesmaids didn't like the dresses the bride chose for them; they were the wrong color, the wrong style, were too expensive, or couldn't be worn again.

While it's hard for the bride to please everyone, you can make the effort by trying this approach. At first take only your maid or matron of honor with you shopping and narrow down the almost limitless choice to three or so styles.

Make sure to use your judgment in picking styles that will flatter your attendants' varied figures. For instance, full skirts and blouson tops look good on almost anyone.

You might try to include in your choices one two-piece or shorter style your maids will be able to wear again. Once you've made this preliminary selection, you're ready to schedule a time when the rest

of the maids can come into the bridal shop to vote on the final decision.

How much they spent — Costs can add up when you consider that it's usual for attendants to pay for their own outfits, including shoes, accessories and perhaps an extra dress for the rehearsal dinner, wedding and shower gifts; and transportation, lodging and meals if they're coming from out of town.

Just a few of the many ways to help them out: See if friends and relatives could put your maids up, let them select their own shoes (or wear a pair they already have) and provide all meals.

What their duties were — The problem was that no one really explained what they were supposed to do. For instance, many a maid was even more nervous than the bride when she came down the aisle because she hadn't

been given a chance to practice.

So at the rehearsal give your bridesmaids plenty of time to walk through their parts, including passing your bouquet and reading any special Scripture passages.

As for their duties before the wedding, simply ask them for help when you need it — in choosing your dress, addressing invitations, welcoming out-of-town guests — but be sensitive to how busy their own lives are.

How the wedding affected the friendship — Many bridesmaids complained that the bride was so involved in her plans and parties that she was in her own little world and not interested in them anymore.

Again, sensitivity is the key. It's up to you to show your bridesmaids that you haven't changed as a person or as a friend just because you're getting married.

Royal Weddings Not so Different

Toasts at wedding receptions in any level of society are, as a rule, not formal at all, so the toasts are not part of the official record. This was the case at the wedding of the late Princess Grace of Monaco. According to the private secretary of the princess, the toasts were addressed to the prince and the princess with the same informality as would be observed at the

marriage of any two young people.

The former Princess Elizabeth (now Queen Elizabeth II) and the Duke of Edinburgh enjoyed a private reception following their wedding where, once again, there was no record of the toasts or who made them. This information was confirmed by the queen's private secretary.



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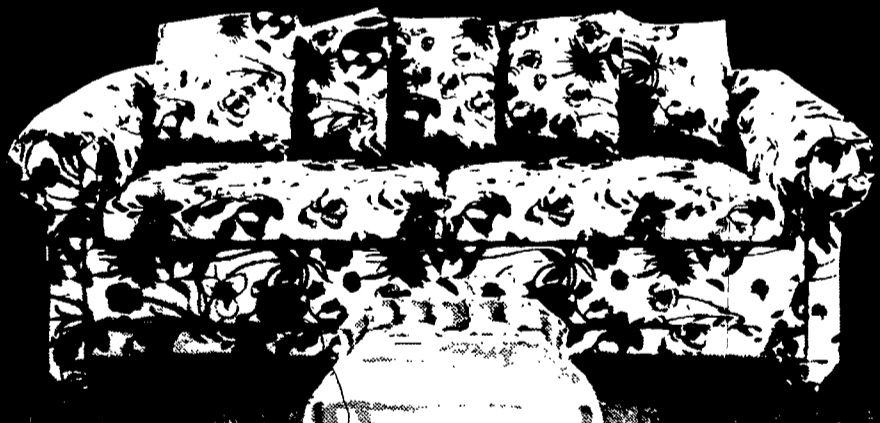
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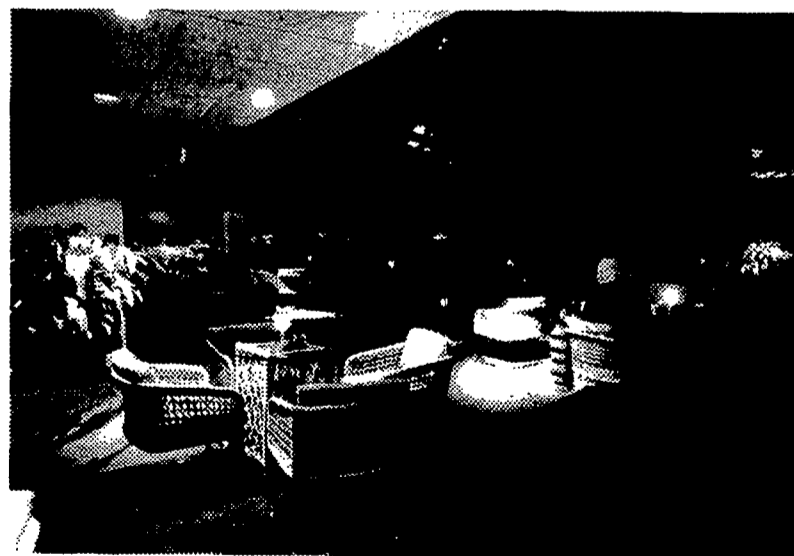
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