

# Romantic Beginnings



Supplement to the  
**Berrien County Record**  
January 26, 1994

## Selecting the perfect cake

You have found the perfect dress, spent hours choosing just the right invitations and shopped for the bridesmaids' ensembles. Now, it's time to select the wedding cake.

To ensure the cake is exactly what you want, provide the decorator, local bakery or hotel caterer with photographs of your favorite cakes. Thanks to *Bridal Cakes*, Wilton's latest treasury of exceptional wedding cake creations, it's easy to narrow down your options and choose the cake styles, icing techniques and adornments you like best.

The book includes everything from country garden and Victorian masterpieces to the ultimate in glamorous contemporary designs. Many brides will find the cake of their dreams within these very pages! Complete step-by-step instructions, delectable recipes and Wilton's full selection of ornaments, cake stands, accents and fountains make it easy for bakers and decorators to recreate each cake to perfection. Or, you can borrow an icing idea from one cake and an ornament from another to design a cake expressly for you and your groom.

For an impressive tiered cake reminiscent of a lovely garden gazebo, the Gazebo Cake Kit paired with fresh flowers keyed to your color scheme easily transforms an ordinary wedding cake into an arbor fantasy. The kit includes the makings for trellises and arches, as well as complete assembly instructions. Top it off with a romantic bride and groom cake topper like the stunning Ribbon Delight couple — one of many contemporary hand-painted porcelain bisque figures available in the Ellen Williams Designer series.

Look for *Bridal Cakes* (\$7.99) and other wedding cake decorating supplies in stores where Wilton products are sold. It may also be ordered directly from Wilton, 2240 W 75th Street, Woodridge, IL 60517. Or, call 708-963-7100, ext. 320. To receive a free wedding cake cutting guide, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Wilton, Dept. WCCG, 2240 W 75th Street, Woodridge, IL 60517.



Gordon Food Service Marketplace, 2911 S. 11th St. in Niles, is the perfect place for couples planning to food service their wedding reception or other event. Manager Steve VanAcker said the store offers a variety of restaurant quality products, disposable paper good products, fresh cut relish trays, salads, meats, cheeses and a free computerized banquet planning service to help couples estimate how much food is needed, based on their guest list. Product demonstrations are given on weekends and there is no membership fee. For more information call 684-7720. (Photo by Jane Peterson)



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# Orth, Mitchell exchange vows in double ring ceremony

Marylea Gaye Orth and Timothy James Mitchell were united in marriage in a double ring ceremony Saturday, Nov. 27, in Pilgrim Congregational Church, St. Joseph. The Rev. Dr. Randolph Hellwig

officiated. Luanne DeLisle was organist. Jeff Roush played trumpet and Wendy Willis, flute.

The church was decorated with white poinsettia plants and white pew bows. White silk flowers adorned the

altar.

The bride, escorted down the aisle by her brother, Donald Orth, wore a satin, floor-length gown with a lace overlay and featuring a detachable train. Her headpiece was tiara-shaped. She carried a bouquet of star lilies and red roses.

The bride's sister, Marie Hiler of St. Joseph, was matron of honor. The bridesmaids were Wendy Whaley of Eau Claire, the bride's sister, Jane Mitchell of Buchanan and Dawn Mitchell of Stevensville, the bridegroom's sisters-in-law, and Shannon Gustafson of Benton Harbor, and Margaret Marutz of Stevensville.

Renea Myers of Dowagiac was

junior bridesmaid. The flower girls were Chrissie and Beverly Whaley of Eau Claire, and Rachel Hiler of St. Joseph, all nieces of the bride, and Ivy Gustafson of Benton Harbor.

Acting as best man for his brother was Dan Mitchell of Buchanan. The groomsmen were David Mitchell of Stevensville, the bridegroom's brother, Roland Walkerson of Grand Rapids, the bridegroom's cousin, Glenn Payne of Baroda, Ed Hojara of St. Joseph, and Kurt Krieger of Watervliet. The bride's nephews, Dane Orth of Stevensville, and Dean Hiler of St. Joseph, were ringbearers.

The bride is the daughter of Beverly Orth, 3594 Arlington, St. Joseph, and the late Dean Orth. She

graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1982 and attended Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor. She is employed by J. C. Penney Co., Benton Harbor.

The bridegroom is the son of Bud and Jane Mitchell, 1537 Madron Lake Road, Buchanan. He graduated from River Valley High School in 1981, and from Indiana Vocational Technical College in South Bend.

Following a 6.30 p.m. reception at D.A.N.K. Deutsches Haus, Benton Harbor, the couple left on a wedding trip to Amelia Island Plantation in Florida. They are now making their home at 13102 Burgoyne Road, Buchanan.

## Bridal traditions: pearls are a pure beginning

The tradition of wearing pearls on the wedding day is not merely a few generations old.

In fact, wearing pearls on the wedding day can be traced back to ancient times. According to scholars, the early Romans believed that pearls could promote marital bliss for as long as the bride wore them.

During the crusades that swept through most of Europe and the Middle East, pearls were the gift of choice for the handsome young knight to give to his fair lady on her wedding day. It's also no surprise to learn that, at the time, the pearl symbolized purity, chastity and devotion.

In the 20th century, women still embrace this time-honored tradition of a bride and her pearls. According to *Bride's Magazine*, more than 50 percent of all women married each year consider pearls to be an essential part of the bridal ensemble.

But unlike her ancient Roman counterpart, today's bride will probably wear a beautiful strand of cultured

pearls. Natural pearls, grown by an accident of nature inside an oyster, are extremely rare these days and command astronomical prices.

About 100 years ago, man discovered the secret of how to coax oysters into producing enough pearls to place them within reach of all. Such a pearl is now termed "cultured," and although it is initiated by man, it is still considered a fine gem and a very close cousin to the natural pearl.

Just as nothing should be faked on the wedding day, the jewelry to be worn should be as real as the emotions felt on this memorable occasion. Imitation pearls, manufactured by man from synthetic or organic materials, have no intrinsic value and are as inappropriate at weddings as a gold-plated ring.

When purchasing a strand of cultured pearls for the bride, it's important to look for several factors that will ensure that you are getting jewels of a quality and beauty that will be cherished for generations to come.

First, look at the surface of the

pearls. They should be as radiant and bright as the bride on her wedding day. Avoid pearls that appear dull or chalky as this is a sure sign of poor quality. The pearls should also be free of obvious imperfections such as cracks or bumps. The color of all the pearls in a strand should be even and well-matched.

The main consideration for choosing the proper length of a pearl necklace should be the style of the gown to be worn.

For gowns with scoop or boat necklines, a 16- to 20-inch choker or princess-length necklace is best suited to delicately accent the neck and shoulder areas. High-collar and V-neck styles call for long strands of pearls, either in 24- to 32-inch matinee lengths, or longer opera lengths.

Just as cultured pearls are perfect for the bride, they should also be considered for the bridal party. Consider pearl earrings, bracelets or freshwater pearl necklaces for bridesmaids. Cuff links or shirt studs are perfect gifts for the men.



Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Mitchell

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# Key to buying diamond ring

The diamond engagement ring has been a symbol of love and romance since 1477 when Archduke Maximilian of Austria gave Mary of Burgundy a gold ring set with a diamond as a token of his love. Today, the tradition of the diamond engagement ring continues. According to a new consumer survey, 70 percent of all brides-to-be receive one.

A diamond is an expression of individuality. Just as love is unique, no two diamonds are alike. Each diamond has its own personality and sparkle. Therefore, when purchasing a diamond engagement ring, it is important to become an informed consumer.

A little knowledge can go a long way to help unearth the best quality diamond within a budget. Understanding diamonds requires knowledge of the 4 C's, cut, color, clarity and carat-weight. These four variables are key to answering the elusive question as to why two diamonds of equal size may not be of equal value.

**Cut** — Although diamonds can be cut in several shapes, such as oval, marquise, pear or round, it is the quality of the cut which gives the stone its brilliant sparkle. Light is reflected best when all of the facets are perfectly proportioned.

**Color** — The best color is no color. Absolutely colorless diamonds are very rare.

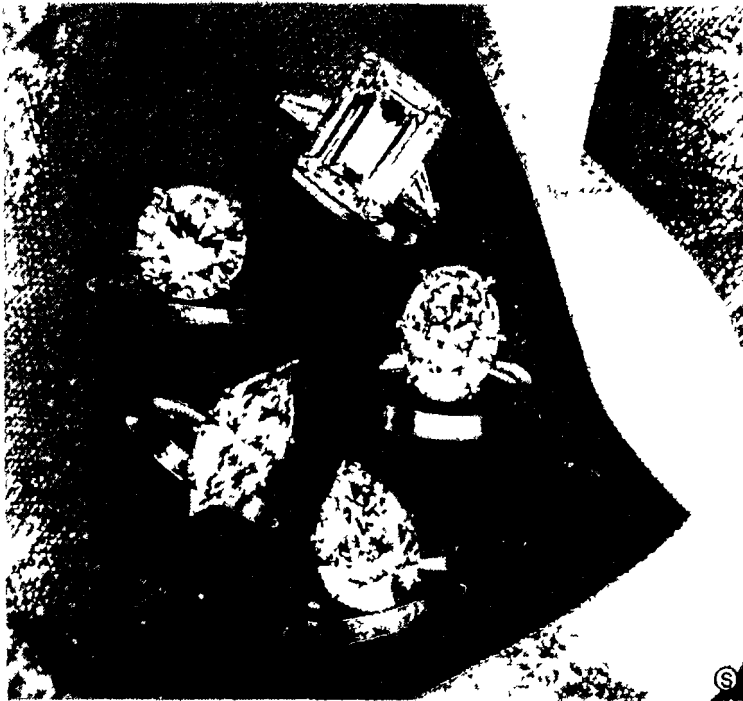
**Clarity** — The term clarity refers to a diamond's lack of naturally occurring inclusions, often called "nature's fingerprints," most of which are not visible to the naked eye. The fewer the inclusions, the more valuable the diamond.

**Carat-weight** — Carat refers to the weight of the stone. There are 100 points in a carat, therefore, a diamond of 50 points weighs one-half of a carat and a diamond of 200 points weighs two carats.

These elements will determine the cost of a diamond. For those who are unsure about what to spend on a diamond engagement ring, many jewelers suggest two months' salary as an appropriate guideline.

To find out how to get a quality diamond, consumers should visit a reputable jeweler whom they know and trust. The diamond engagement ring is a symbol of a couple's future, and like love, can grow more precious with time.

For a booklet entitled "How To Buy The Perfect Diamond Engagement Ring," call the Jewelers of America at 1-800-497-1480.



WHILE THE TRADITIONAL ROUND solitaire remains the most popular choice, a selection of classic diamond engagement ring shapes exists to suit everyone's fancy. These shapes, clockwise from top, include: the sleek and contemporary emerald cut, the intriguing oval, the feminine pear, the sophisticated marquise and the brilliant round. Diamond engagement rings courtesy of Louis Glick.



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## Tips for a smooth and memorable wedding day

For thousands of years, weddings have celebrated the love and joy a couple shares with one another. And every detail of this distinct ceremony, from the wedding cake to the flowers, makes a personal statement about the couple.

Yet amid all the excitement, after the engagement is announced and before vows are exchanged, the arduous task of planning a wedding lies ahead. The date and time of the ceremony must be decided, the site has to be chosen, invitations must be mailed, flowers need to be ordered, bridesmaids' dresses have to be fitted, musicians should be auditioned, a photographer needs to be booked, the reception must be planned. Decisions must be made. And all within a couple's budget!

For those distressed brides- and grooms-to-be, help is available. *Bride's* magazine offers creative time- and money-saving tips for planning a successful wedding. The following is a simple guide to cutting wedding costs from *Bride's* "100 Ways to Save Money, Time and Stress."

### The ceremony

When choosing a site for the special day, several options are available. The chamber of commerce in all cities and towns provide lists of mansions, country inns and town halls that are appropriate. A rural location may be preferred or the understated elegance of a university's or boarding school's halls. Parks and public buildings should not be ruled out, either.

To cut down on wedding costs, *Bride's* recommends a weekday or weeknight wedding for a lower rate, or off-peak ceremonies during the winter.

### Wedding attire

Couples on a tight budget should

shop early to find a large selection of clothing at reasonable prices, rather than settling on dresses and suits because time ran out. Give salespeople a budget they can work with and inquire about special payment plans.

Take advantage of bridal salons' offers of discontinued samples or stock dresses, which are reduced. Or shop out of season, if possible — material such as silk, satin and taffeta can be adapted appropriately for any season.

Also, consider informal or bridesmaids' dresses in ivory or white and suits for smaller, less elaborate weddings.

As for the groom, purchase a tuxedo he can wear for a lifetime, or rent one. Navy blazers and white trousers, classic apparel that can be worn again and again, are also great for outdoor weddings.

### The reception

Most guests remember a wedding couple's reception more than the actual ceremony, so plan early and decide carefully which food is to be prepared and what type of music is to be performed.

Work with the chef to create elegant dishes using inexpensive ingredients. Chicken is less expensive than beef or seafood, but when sautéed with wine, shallots, mushrooms or served with a savory sauce, it can be as hearty as heavy foods. Soup and salad are light and delicious appetizers before any meal.

The wine and champagne raised to toast the bride and groom are just as important as the toast itself, but moderation is the key. *Bride's* recommends serving a traditional wedding punch of fruit juices and spices since it requires little alcohol. Hot spiced teas, cocoas and mulled cider will warm up guests during winter ceremonies.

A reception wouldn't be complete without music, and the music should be

as special as the first dance. So take time to audition bands before booking musicians, because bad music can ruin a reception. For more intimate gatherings, consider hiring a harpist, pianist or classical guitarist. An organist and other musicians affiliated with the house of worship may be the most intelligent and economical choice for the ceremony music. They know the equipment and acoustics of the location, and they receive a salary from the site, so their fee shouldn't be so outrageous.

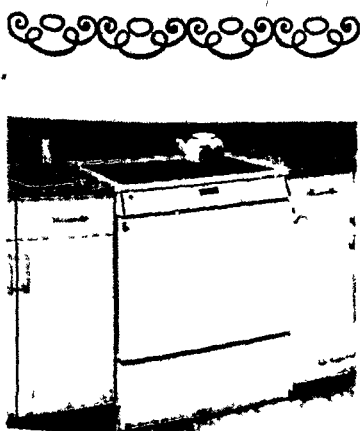
### Details, details, details

Flowers express the joy of a ceremony. In-season blooms are easier to find since they do not have to be shipped in, and most flowers are fullest and less expensive during their peak growing time. *Bride's Little Book of Bouquets and Flowers* advises couples to ask friends for florist recommendations and evaluate store displays for freshness and creativity. Other ideas include forming bouquets that use large flowers, like lilies, which require fewer blooms, decorating the reception site with arrangements used in the ceremony, adorning the head table with bridesmaids' bouquets using inexpensive cascading blooms of one flower and greenery for an elegant bouquet or tying multiple blooms of less expensive flowers together into one huge "flower" to create a lavish bouquet.

A wedding does not have to be a big production. A couple should decide what they want from the start — a small, intimate ceremony and reception, or a lavish wedding with hundreds of guests. Yet more importantly, planning a wedding should be a joyous occasion — not a tedious chore — celebrating new beginnings filled with hope and promise.



Beautiful wedding memories are created in formal splendor. Her gown by Michele Vincent is designed in silk shantung with an asymmetrically wrapped ballgown bodice. He wears "The Dream," a full dress variation with softly rounded notch lapels by Pierre Cardin. His accessories include a wing-collar shirt, coordinating vest with satin lapels and puffed bow tie, all by Pierre Cardin.



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# Lemon-Swaim wed

Sheri Lemon of Brighton and Michael Swaim of Buchanan were united in marriage at the First United Methodist Church in Howell on Oct. 2. Dr. David Russell presided over the double ring ceremony.

The bride is the daughter of Charles and Elizabeth Lemon of Brighton. The bridegroom is the son of Earl and Evelyn Swaim of Buchanan.

Given in marriage by her parents, the bride wore a candlelight ivory satin gown adorned in iridescent sequins with a drop pearl-covered bodice. The cathedral length train had a criss-cross pattern of pearls finished with a scalloped ivory lace. The bride wore a tiara headpiece with drop pearl accents, sequin appliques with attached five-layered floor-length veil.

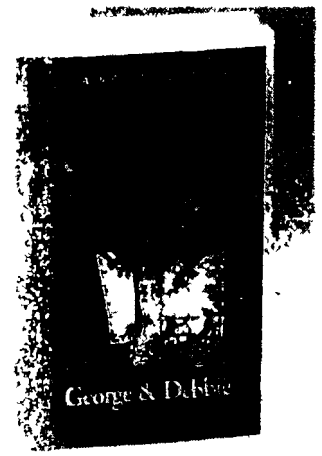
She carried a silk bouquet of ivory carnations and sweetheart satin roses trimmed with ivory lace fans and pearls.

Jan Bodine of Maybe was the maid of honor. The bridesmaids were Nicole Lemon of Roseville, and Bonnie Houser and Kim Tallman, both of Buchanan.

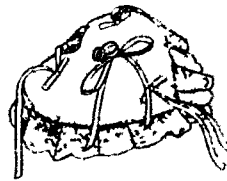
The best man was Earl Swaim of Buchanan. The groomsmen were David Tallman, Jason Forler and David Forler, all of Buchanan.

The bride graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a degree in occupational therapy. She is employed in a physician's office in South Bend, Ind. The bridegroom graduated from Ferris University with a degree in automotive and heavy equipment management. He is employed by Town and Country Chevrolet in Mishawaka, Ind., as a warranty administrator.

Following the wedding, the newlyweds greeted 130 guests at the Park Inn in Howell. After a cruise to the Caribbean, the couple will reside in Buchanan, and plan to move to Granger in March.



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## Flower tips for bouquet

There are few things on earth as well-appointed for the pursuit of romance as the diamond engagement ring and the bridal bouquet. To capture their timeless beauty, consider choosing flowers that coordinate with the color and style of the bridal gown.

"A couple spends months choosing the perfect engagement ring and may never even consider the meaning of their wedding flowers," says Marvin Markman, president of Suberi Brothers, the diamond experts who manufacture the Royal Cut Collection of fancy cut diamond engagement rings. "A couple will probably purchase more flowers for their wedding than for any other occasion, so the beauty and symbolism of their wedding flowers are significant," adds Markman, whose Royal Cut diamonds are the preferred choice of many brides.

To find a florist, ask friends for recommendations or visit local florists and ask to see samples or pictures. Be ready to discuss your color scheme, flower preferences and, most importantly, the budget. Many couples want their flowers to be more than just beautiful.

After you've made your selections, take time to review the fine points. Let the florist know when and where the flowers can be delivered, when deposits are due and the cancellation policy. And don't forget to order a tossing bouquet so that you can save and preserve the real one. Like the perfect rose, diamonds are the universal symbol of love. To learn more about the Royal Cut Collection of fancy cut diamonds, call toll free 1-800-777-DUCHESS to receive a free Royal Cut Collection diamond information brochure.

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# The bridal registry of the '90s: Great gifts for the modern-day bride and groom

Though traditional weddings might be back in style, today's bridal registries are anything but conventional. Many of today's newlyweds are older and already have fine china, cutlery and cookware. Instead, these brides and grooms are registering for electronics and recreational equipment — everything from camcorders to golf clubs, VCRs and ski equipment.

Because of this new demand, several electronics stores have even started bridal registry departments to make shopping easier for friends and family. To help brides and grooms select the best electronics to suit their lifestyles, Sharp Electronics Corp. offers the following suggestions:

**Camcorders** — Couples want to record all the special moments of their lives together for years to come, which explains why so many first camcorders are purchased at the time a couple gets married. Like bridal registries, camcorder options have changed tremendously since Sharp introduced the Sharp VIEWCAM line in 1992.

The VL-E30U Sharp VIEWCAM offers a host of benefits never before available on a camcorder. Newlyweds will love being able to record while still monitoring the action around them. And now they can, thanks to the Sharp VIEWCAM's 3-inch, full-color LCD view screen. And for the first time, couples can record themselves together on the honeymoon by simply rotating the view screen 180 degrees. And when the honeymoon's over, couples can share their videos and memories with friends and family right on the camcorder — virtually anywhere.

**Televisions** — When decorating their homes, today's fashion-conscious brides are looking to new options in televisions. One of the most common new televisions now appearing on bridal registries is the all-white TV. White TVs offer all the quality of their black or grey counterparts, but with a more stylish look that's perfect for bedrooms, kitchens or almost anywhere. Sharp's 13- and 19-inch televisions are all-white — everything from the cabinet to the remote control and cord are completely white.

**VCRs** — Sharing a life with someone also means sharing the remote control and VCR. While she wants to record the latest mini-series, he's intent on the football game. Two new VCRs from Sharp make it easier than ever for couples to record and view videos. The VC-A507U four-head VCR, and VC-H907U four-head, hi-fi VCR incorporate VCR Plus<sup>®</sup> program-

mer capabilities, as well as Cable Box Control, to better coordinate the interaction between the user's VCR and cable television service.

No matter how traditional or uncon-

ventional the wedding, one thing's for certain: Newlyweds in the '90s will enjoy useful, high-tech electronic wedding gifts that they'll treasure long into their lives together.



WEDDING DAY MEMORIES are too precious to trust to anything but the best camcorder. The Sharp VIEWCAM allows videographers to see everything they're recording on a large, easy-to-read, full-color LCD screen. Newlyweds will also want to save their honeymoon memories with a Sharp VIEWCAM — by rotating the view screen 180 degrees, the bride and groom can record themselves together.



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# Special ways to save wedding memories

As soon as the date is set, every happy couple begins to make wedding memories — from engagement parties to showers and, finally, the big day. Capturing and saving these special memories is a task that shouldn't be left to chance. This spring, The Exposures Catalog, a national mail-order source of products to safely store and display photos and keepsakes,

offers a variety of helpful ways to make sure that the joy of the wedding lasts long after the last toast.

• Wedding keepsakes come in all shapes and sizes. The beautiful Wedding Keepsake Box is designed for all of those cherished items that won't fit in an album. Lined with gold paper, the interior compartment measures 9"x11"x3" — roomy enough for the

bride's gloves, the groom's boutonniere, guest book, ring boxes, content pouches and more. The Keepsake Box can be personalized in gold with names and date. (189350, \$39.95)

• Today, a wedding gown is a major investment that many brides will want to pass down to their daughters. The Archival Wedding Storage Box will keep it pristine to be worn again with pride. Sturdy and stackable, the slate gray boxes have metal corner protectors and gleaming white, acid-free interiors. (189349, \$49.95)

• A Puffed Heart Frame to hold the perfect wedding picture. Made in Mexico exclusively for Exposures, this 15" high, handmade frame of copper and tin holds a 4"x6" vertical photo. (129364, \$79.95)

• When the proofs are as precious as the prints, the bride and groom will appreciate the Wedding Proof Album. The bonded navy leather album, decorated with gold stamping, can be personalized with names and date for the happy couple. It comes with 10 double-sized pocket pages to accommodate 20 5"x5" proofs. (169327, \$24.95)

• A beautiful gift for a bridesmaid, the Cotswold Sterling Silver Frame from England is handcrafted and hallmarked to indicate the purity of its silver content. It is a classic frame, with midnight blue velvet back, designed to hold a marvelous memory. (112895, \$59.00)

For a free catalog, consumers can call 1-800-572-2502, Department 00400



THIS SPRING, the Exposures Catalog offers special ways to save wedding memories, from photo frames and albums to a Wedding Keepsake Box for the mementos the bride and groom will cherish throughout the years.

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## Engagement announced

The engagement of Lori A. Wahlstrom to Bruce Wayne Leiter Jr. is being announced by her father, William L. Wahlstrom, 415 W. Fourth St., Buchanan. She is also the daughter of the late Jacklynn Ray Wahlstrom. The prospective bridegroom is the son of Janice Lee Leiter, 410 Hill St., Buchanan.

The bride-elect is a graduate of Buchanan High School and of Southwestern Michigan College, Dowagiac. She is employed by Inter-City Bank, Buchanan. The future bridegroom, also a graduate of Buchanan High School, is employed by Schneider Vending, Buchanan.

An Oct. 22, 1994, wedding is being planned.

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Theresa Antiedel puts the finishing touches on wedding reception decorations. Tan-Fastic Plus is a one-stop bridal shop offering wedding gowns, bridesmaid dresses, mother of the bride gowns, flower girl dresses, tuxedos, invitations, balloons and floral decorations. Free consultations are available. The business is located in downtown Buchanan. Phone 695-5429 for more information.



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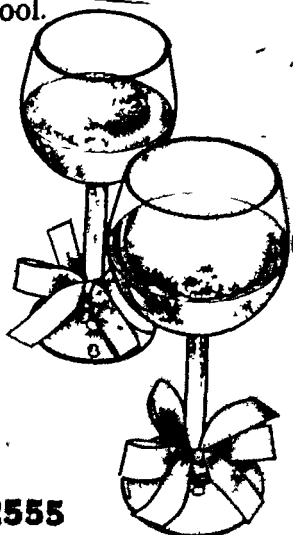
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## Honeymoons in the '90s offer romance and adventure

Romance and adventure are key considerations when a couple plans a honeymoon today. Responding to this trend towards more active honeymoons, destinations around the world are offering packages and itineraries that combine soft adventure and value with romance.

### Affordable Europe

Off-the-beaten-track Finland is now one of Europe's best values, giving honeymooners 50 percent greater buying power compared to a year ago. Summer in the "Land of the Midnight Sun" means extra time for special outdoor activities, such as 24-hour-a-day golf or the international Porri Jazz Festival with concerts into the wee hours. Hiking and white-water rafting in the Finnish wilderness, capped off by a traditional sauna, give romantic seclusion in an exotic setting.

One-of-a-kind Finnish winter activities include reindeer safaris, icebreaker cruises or watching the Northern Lights above the Arctic Circle. Through March 16, 1994, an eight-day "dollar stretcher" package starts as low as \$799 per person and includes round-trip airfare to Helsinki, accommodations, meals, a Baltic cruise and more.

For more information, call the Finnish Tourist Board, 212-949-2333.

### Closer to home: New England

The 220-year-old Equinox resort in Manchester Village, Vt., is one of New England's most romantic and diverse vacation destinations. Nestled between the Taconic and Green Mountains, the historic Equinox offers activity-loving honeymooners year-round recreation plus an on-site Fitness Spa. Canoeing, hiking, biking, golf, fly-fishing, sporting clays and horseback riding are available during warmer months. Winter brings downhill and cross-country skiing, as well as ice skating, nearby. And for incurable romantics, a sleigh ride through the picturebook countryside is an unforgettable Vermont experience.

The Equinox' honeymoon package, featuring three nights' deluxe lodgings with an upgrade to a suite when available, is priced at \$318 per person through May 22, 1994. Included are flowers and champagne, use of the Spa and mountain bikes (seasonal).

For reservations, call The Equinox, 800-362-4747 or 802-362-4700.

### Caribbean sunshine

Adventure on land and under water awaits honeymooners on sunny Bonaire in the Dutch Caribbean. Couples can enjoy world-class scuba diving, snorkeling, windsurfing, hiking, fishing and sailing on an island where pink flamingos often outnumber people.

Bonaire's progressive environmental policies ensure a safe home to exotic marine life and wildlife. Friendly locals, no traffic lights and picturesque Dutch architecture add to the island's

distinctive appeal. Honeymoon packages start as low as \$978 per couple for a seven-night stay, through April, 1994.

For more information, contact any travel agent or the Tourism Corporation of Bonaire at 800-U-BONAIRE.

### South of the border Mexico

From a full-service in-city hotel to a mountain hideaway, Mexico's Small Luxury Hotels give honeymooners a varied choice of escapes combining luxury and adventure. For assistance in planning, a free *Mexican Itineraries with Style* guide is available.

With Mexico City's endless shops, museums and other attractions at your doorstep, the luxurious, art-deco Hotel Marquis Reforma is the choice for the city explorer and culture lover.

Avandaro Golf & Spa Resort lies hidden in the forests of the Sierra Madre, offering romantic seclusion indoors with fireplaces and balconies, as well as outdoor privacy along endless mountain hiking and horseback riding trails.

If Mexico's colonial history is your passion, La Estancia, a hotel-cum-

European manor house with formal gardens and courtyards, is a well-located oasis in historic Leon.

Beachbound history lovers can find happiness in Cancun on the Mexican Caribbean. The 31-suite Casa Turquesa, a sun-drenched resort with water sports for every interest and level, is also near some of the country's best Mayan ruins.

Another favorite beach choice is the romantic 18-room La Casa Que Canta, located on Zihuatanejo Bay on the Pacific coast. Here, honeymooners stay in a setting reminiscent of a Mexican hillside village, complete with thatched-roof buildings with adobe walls.

A year-round favorite of honeymooners worldwide, Acapulco offers a gorgeous beach coupled with Mexico's best nightlife. At the Villa Vera Hotel & Racquet Club, honeymooners stay in secluded villas, many with their own private pool, and enjoy state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor fitness facilities.

For information on designing a honeymoon itinerary or for the free *Mexican Itineraries with Style* guide, call 1-800-525-4800.



The Tux Shop at 2811 Niles Ave. in St. Joseph (with locations in Niles and Michigan City, Ind.) offer most of the popular names in tuxedo rentals to fill your needs for any formal occasion. (Photo by Jim Dahlstrom)



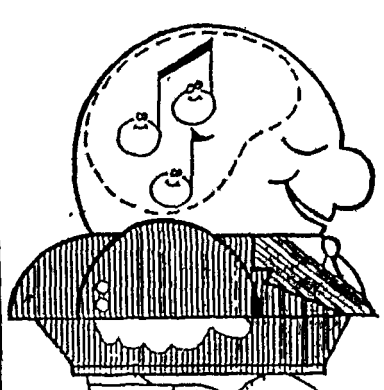
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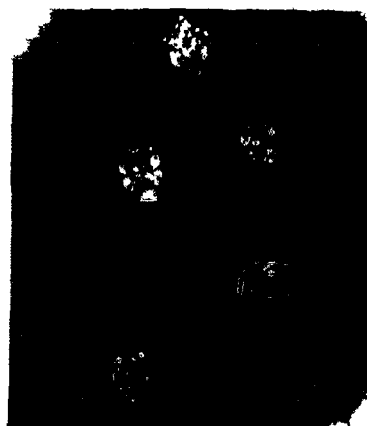


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# Marriages are sealed with a platinum kiss

Brides- and grooms-to-be are going platinum, and statistics prove it. Worldwide demand for platinum jewelry, the world's rarest and most precious metal, is up 73 percent in the past five years, according to Platinum Guild International USA Jewelry. In the United States, platinum consumption rose 40 percent from 1991 to 1992. That's quite a significant gain, and bridal jewelry accounts for a good portion of it.

So why are couples choosing platinum? According to Jewelers of America (JA), the national trade association that provides information about fine jewelry, platinum is a popular choice these days because it has a discreet elegance that is appealing. About 95-percent pure platinum is traditional, yet contemporary, and offers lifetime value and wearability. By choosing platinum, brides and grooms are selecting rings that will endure for generations to come.

In addition, today's brides and grooms are more sophisticated and often older than in previous generations, and the rarity and beauty of platinum strongly appeals to them. "Couples today are reacquainting themselves with platinum," says JA chairman Mike Roman. "Many remember their parents and grandparents wearing platinum rings that have been passed down for generations."

Platinum also appeals to many couples because of unique, contemporary designs that cannot be fabricated from any other precious metal. When combined with other metals, such as 18 karat gold, platinum has an exceptionally modern look.

Last, platinum is perfectly suited for bridal jewelry because it exhibits no

material loss, even after prolonged wear. It is nonallergenic and tarnish-proof. And despite its amazing flexibility, it is resistant to expansion or distortion and holds gemstones secure, offering added protection for dia-

monds. Platinum is ideal for jewelry that is worn every day over a lifetime.

For a free brochure offering tips on selecting platinum jewelry, contact Jewelers of America, 1185 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036.



Michelle Dickinson glances over some of the bridal floral books available to engaged couples at The Garden Gate on Niles-Buchanan Road in Buchanan. A friendly staff will help couples with fresh, silk or dried bridal arrangements for the entire wedding party and reception area. They can incorporate customer's ideas in the arrangements, which can range from simple to elaborate. The Garden Gate also has wedding and bridal party gifts available. For more information call 695-5431. (Photo by Jane Peterson)

## Soon-to-be-marrieds get tipped off on toasting

Many ancient customs and traditions surround the institution of marriage. Wedding veils, for instance, were first worn by brides in early times to ward off the "evil eye" of jealous rivals. Another custom involves the wedding ring, which is worn on the third finger of the left hand because our ancestors believed this finger and the heart were directly linked by the "vena amoris," or vein of love. The word "honeymoon" supposedly originated when brides were forcibly abducted from neighboring tribes. To avoid vengeful parents, the couple would hide out for 30 days through the phases of the moon, drinking a mead wine made from honey, according to legend.

Bridal toasts are also traditional within the wedding celebration. To help perfect the art of toasting, Martini & Rossi, producers of Asti Spumante, has introduced a complete toasting guide

for soon-to-be-marrieds. Wine has always been central to the wedding celebration throughout history and the traditional toast calls for using a sparkling wine. As a result, marriage myths and traditions that have developed over the years have been incorporated into the *Bridal Toasting Tips* brochure.

The informative brochure discusses the rich history of the bridal toast, including traditions from China, France, Italy and more. Also included are sections with suggestions of modern wedding toasts for those nervous members of the wedding party and ideas for beginning new traditions that are sure to create a lifetime of memories.

To receive a copy of *Bridal Toasting Tips* offered by Martini & Rossi, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to The Alden Group, Dept. M, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

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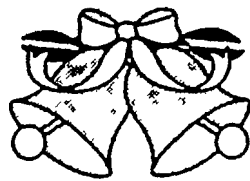
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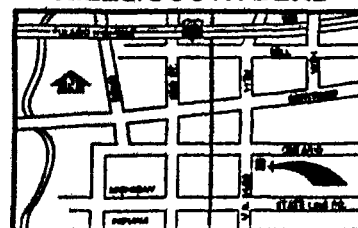


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