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Best of Friends Now and Always: Gifts for the Bridesmaids

By Jessica Rosenzweig

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(BNN) The tradition of the bridal party began in ancient Rome with a bride selecting close friends and relatives to accompany and protect her on the journey to the marriage ceremony. Times have changed, of course, and while bridesmaids have less of a bodyguard role these days, their participation is no less important.

Bridesmaids offer faithful support and generous advice as wedding plans take shape. As a remembrance of her cherished friendship, the thoughtful bride always presents each bridesmaid with a gift as an expression of esteem, love and gratitude.

Jewelry and accessories will always be a reminder of that special day and treasured for a lifetime. They also complement and enhance the bridesmaid's dress.

Diamonds, still a girl's best friend, add dazzle to bridesmaids' dresses. Diamond Essence, one of the world's best-known makers of artificial diamonds, has exquisite simulated stones. A stunning 2.0 carat pendant on a 14K gold chain is \$69 and 2.0 carat studs set in 14K gold are \$45 at www.diamond-essence.com/bridal.

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Bridesmaids will delight in luxurious pashmina shawls sprayed with Swarovski crystal beads in soft lilac, pink, champagne or black. Wear to the wedding and for years to come! \$119

www.pashminaboutique.com.

The gift a bride chooses reflects the strong bonds of friendship celebrated on this joyous occasion

None

Bridesmaids Gifts: a Token of Love, Appreciation and Affection

By Adriana Copaceanu

No one has as much fun as the bride to be on her wedding day, except, perhaps, her bridesmaids. Bridesmaids enjoy all of the fun of a wedding without the stress and headaches of planning the blessed affair. Bridesmaid's gifts are a popular item among wedding parties and the brides honored attendees. Often the bride to be offers bridesmaids gifts to her wedding party at a rehearsal dinner, in order to thank her friends and family for participating in her union ceremony, and recognize them for all of their assistance during the planning and preparation stages of her wedding.

Often the bride-to-be aspires to find bridesmaids gifts that are personal, unique and fun. Historically, a bridesmaid was a close friend or sister who is asked to take part in the wedding experience, or one who helps tend to the bride and help her prepare for her wedding. Traditionally, a bridesmaid was considered a bearer of good fortune, someone meant to protect the bride against evil. Legend has it that bridesmaids confuse any evil spirits that might be lurking around by dressing up similarly as a means of distraction. For this reason alone a bride is more than happy to bestow her thanks upon her maidens.

In contemporary society bridesmaids are often a bride's right hand 'ladies' helping her get into and out of her wedding dress, helping to infuse the bride with excitement and sharing tears of joy at the blessed event. Though the maid of honor traditionally carries the bulk of pre-wedding assistance responsibilities, the maids also are leaned upon to lend a helping hand whenever possible. Bridesmaids serve many purposes including helping keep the bride relaxed and focused on her wedding day. Wedding jitters are common among new brides.

Bridesmaids often play a strong supporting role during the wedding experience. They may be asked to help plan the wedding, address invitations, order decorations or help shop for a wedding dress. Perhaps the best part of being a bridesmaid is participating in all of the pre-wedding 'fluff'. This may include trips to the spa or salon for a little pre-wedding pampering.

The bride's helpers also often help out with guest seating arrangements at the wedding. For unmarried bridesmaids, the best bridesmaid's gift is the bouquet tossed by the bride at her reception. The receiver is said to be the next in line to marry.

Of course bridesmaids are not always the recipient of bridesmaid's gifts; many times the bridesmaids are responsible for offering classic gifts to the bride to be. These may include 'gag' gifts such as tiara's, gag rings, and other party favors often presented during the bachelorette party. No matter what type of wedding is planned, or where, bridesmaids often enjoy all of the same benefits as the bride, without, of

course, the benefit of going home with the groom.

Adriana Copaceanu provides people with creative gift ideas that don't blow the bank. Gift Baskets for Baby to Birthday and Beyond, are just some gift ideas you'll find at her site:

. Want regular reminders on gift-giving? Sign up for her free

monthly newsletter at

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