



(how-to)guide

What you really want to know...



**Q** How can my fiancé and I save on the bar tab without looking cheap?

**A** START BY CUTTING BACK ON THE options. To prevent guests from noticing, vary the types of drinks and liquor you do offer. David Wondrich, author of *Killer Cocktails* and consultant to 5 Ninth restaurant in NYC, suggests selecting three specialty drinks: one that's "girly," such as a fruity daiquiri; another that's masculine, like a Manhattan, made with whiskey; and a third that's in between, such as a champagne cocktail (made with a dry sparkling wine, which is less costly). Also provide a red and a white wine, and only two types of beer. Have the cocktails premixed in pitchers so you can save on bartender fees—all they'll have: to do is shake and serve—and buy larger bottles of liquor, which are a better value. A final trick, Wondrich says, is to have the cocktails passed as guests enter the room. "More times than not," he notes, "they'll happily accept a drink from the tray and won't even realize there's a limited bar." **-BETSY GOLDBERG**

**Q** A B-list guest just figured out she's a B. What do I say?

**A** YOU SHOULD APPROACH THIS situation the same way you would when you unintentionally hurt someone's feelings, advises Elayne Savage, Ph.D., communication coach and author of *Don't Take It Personally!*

*The Art of Dealing with Rejection.* "Explain your actions and apologize for hurting her feelings," says Savage. "Although you might be tempted to try to sugarcoat the situation by telling a little untruth, anything less than an honest response from you only makes the situation worse." Your friend might still walk away offended, but keep reminding yourself that you tried your best to right the situation, notes Savage. "Try to look at it as you would any other necessary regret, and move on."

**Q** How can my fiancé make sure his tuxedo is altered properly?

**A** IF HE IS RENTING A TUX, HE'LL need to find one that fits as closely as possible since it's likely the only alterations a store will do are adjustments to the length of the sleeves and pants, says Mark Rykken, principal and managing partner of the Alan Flusser Custom Shop in NYC. However, if he is buying a tux off the rack, know the four key areas on the jacket that need to fit properly. "First, check the shoulder width to see if it looks visually proportionate to his physique," says Rykken. If it's too wide, your groom's head will look too small and vice versa. This indicates that he needs to try a different size jacket. Next, the collar of the jacket should fit correctly around the neck. If the collar is too big, there will be a gap behind the neck and if the

collar is too high, there will be a roll in the jacket directly under the collar. Shortening and lowering the collar will fix these problems, respectively, notes Rykken. For the length of the jacket, have your fiancé put his hands down by his sides. The jacket's length shouldn't extend past his thumbs. And finally, the sleeves should reveal only approximately one half inch of his shirt cuffs. When it comes to the length of the pants, Rykken says, "look for a slight break on the shoe." No floods, please!

**Q** Is there a way to regift a present without getting caught?

**A** IN THE RARE INSTANCE THAT YOU receive a present outside your registry that can't be returned, regifting can be an option. However, before you send that unwanted present back out into the world, here's what you should consider: For starters, don't regift in the same social circles. "You need to make sure that the person receiving the gift doesn't know the person who gave you the gift," says Jacqueline Whitmore, etiquette expert and founder of The Protocol School of Palm Beach, FL. Avoid this by keeping a log of all gifts, when you received them, and who gave them to you. Next, Whitmore emphasizes, you should pay close attention to the packaging the gift came in. Has all evidence of it being a recycled gift been removed?

And finally, think about whether the couple who receives the gift will enjoy it. "If you're unsure, don't give it to them," stresses Whitmore. Otherwise, it might end up on the regift circuit again and the goal is to find this gift a good home - as long as it isn't yours.

**Q** My future mother-in-law has bad taste. How do I ensure she wears something appropriate to my wedding?

**A** YOUR BEST BET IS TO INVITE her to go wedding-dress shopping with you, since bridal salons often have dresses that are perfect for moms, too. While you're there, try to steer her toward an appropriate dress, suggests Samantha von Sperling, director and owner of Polished Social Image Consultants in NYC. When you find a good one, pile on compliments like, "You would look great in that," or "This dress would really show off your legs." If she's not interested in accompanying you on your shopping spree, "another idea would be to 'treat' her to a personal shopper who can help her pick out a dress," says von Sperling. In fact, many big department stores offer this service for free. If your future mother-in-law won't budge and insists on shopping alone, then know you tried your best and let it go. "Ultimately, what she chooses to wear is her problem, not yours," von Sperling notes, "and her bad taste will not reflect on you."