

China Selection Requires Thought

The purchase of dinnerware is something most prospective brides look forward to, but before you decide on what pattern to use in your home, it is advisable to stop and think a minute. What kind of china do you want? Do you want fine china plus a second set of earthenware or melamine? If so, what do you expect from them in the way of performance?

The word "china," in current use, loosely includes all categories of dinnerware, such as porcelain, bone china, stoneware, earthenware, pottery, and many others. The qualities of each vary greatly, depending on the raw material used and the degree of firing.

The finest dinnerware you can buy is china or porcelain — the main difference between the two is historical. Both are made of highly refined clays and minerals, which are fired at such an intense heat that the components melt and fuse into a strong, translucent body. This process is called vitrification and the color of the china depends on the clay being used.

Because of its bone ash content, English bone china is characterized by a pure white translucency while American china has an ivory body, achieved by a special hardening agent.

Despite its appearance, china is tougher and more resistant to chipping and breaking than other ceramics. The glaze will not crack and even if it does chip, the non-porous body won't absorb food stains.

When shopping keep these points in mind:

- Hold the plate in front of the light: Can you see your hand through it?
 - Balance a plate on three fingers and tap it with a pencil to see if it has a bell-like tone.
 - Run a finger around the rim or foot of the plate: Is it smooth and glazed?
 - Examine the cup handle to see if it is balanced, so that even a six-foot bachelor will find it easy to grasp and hold.
 - Test the rim of the cup to see if it is perfectly smooth without any rough or wavy spots.
 - Examine the saucer to see if the depression is designed to hold the cup securely.
- Because it is fired at a lower temperature and made of clay which is less refined, earthenware

is not as durable as china even though its finer forms closely resemble china. Chipping is more common and cracking and discoloration can be caused by extremes in temperature.

Both earthenware and its still less refined porous partner, pottery, are less formal in appearance and less expensive than china.

Molded plastic or melamine dinnerware is popular because of its practical qualities. It resists chipping and cracking and can be placed in a dishwasher without fear. However, care must be taken never to expose it to an open flame. Quality varies considerably, depending on weight and care used in finishing.

Gifts Presented To Bridal Party

By KATHY HOWARD

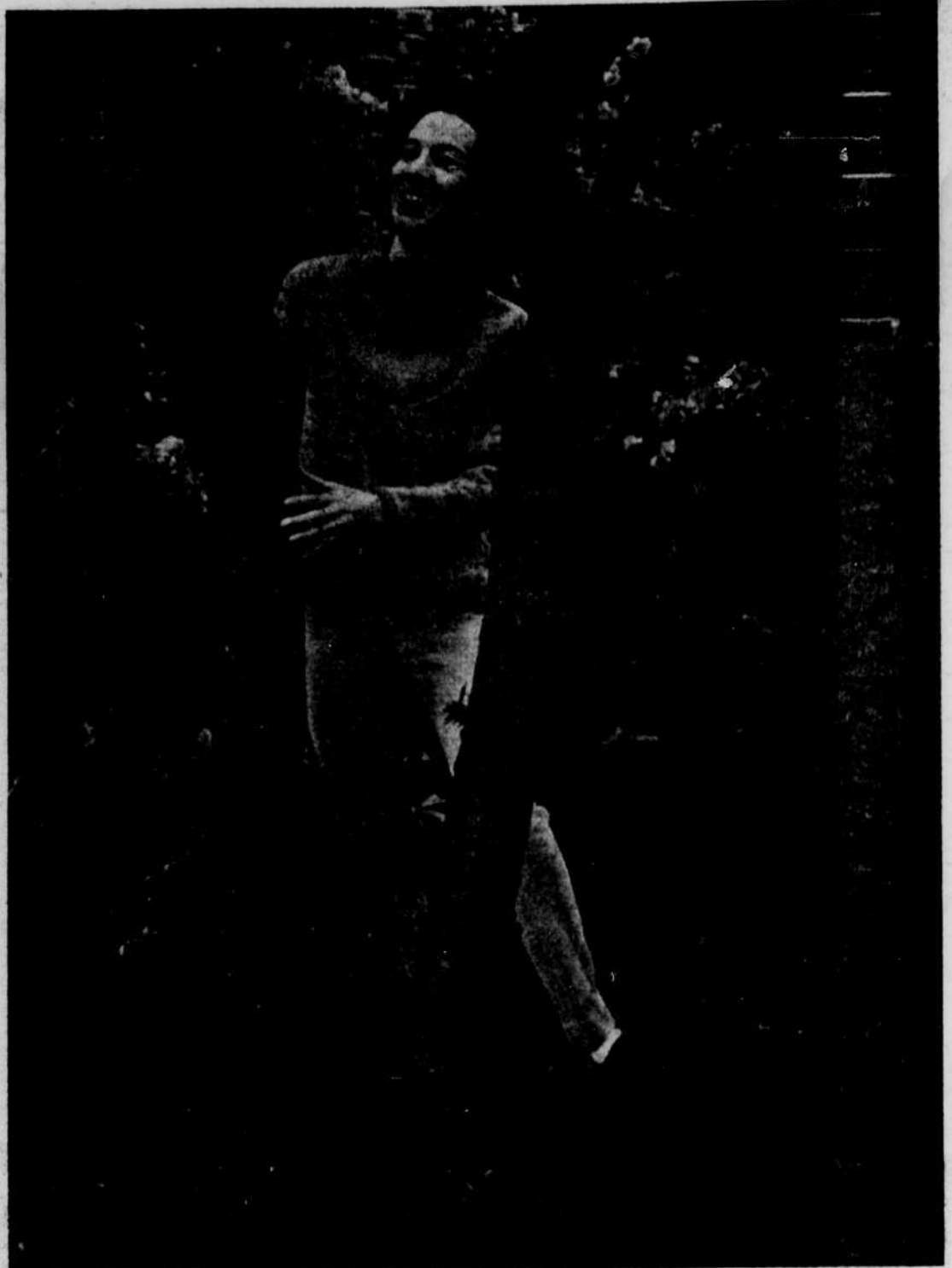
Traditional in the wedding protocol is the presentation of gifts to the bridal party. Included in this, are gifts to the bridesmaids, maid of honor, the best man and the ushers.

Gifts selected are usually small tokens that can be kept for their sentimental value. Many department stores have consultants to aid in the selection, however, many girls usually choose similar gifts.

The most popular gifts for bridesmaids include compacts, small necklaces in the shape of a bell or cross, bracelets, charms or jewelry cases. The maid or matron of honor usually receives the same gift and also a corsage. It is not considered proper to give the girls their dresses as it is considered a privilege to be included in the wedding party.

Presents for the ushers can include jewelry. Often they receive a key ring or tie clasp. Billfolds are also considered appropriate. If the wedding is exceedingly formal and requires the men to wear gloves, they are presented to the men as a gift.

It is also traditional for the bride and groom to present each other with gifts. This is a time for a wide range of choices depending on personal interests. Brides often present their spouses with pens, watches, portraits of themselves, or cameras.



CASUAL clothes, fashionable at any time of year, include outfits such as the ensemble modeled by Merilee Somner, a senior in art education. Her turtle-neck turquoise sweater and matching slacks are perfect for almost any active sport — even climbing trees.

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