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DOMESTIC BLISS: FIVE FABULOUS WED-DING REGISTRY UPGRADES

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Getting ready to say "I do?" Of all the tasks in preparation for your big day, one of the most fun activities is creating your wedding registry. It's your chance to choose everything for your home, from towels and linens to plates, flatware and kitchen gadgets. Be sure to add choices in a variety of price ranges so guests can decide how much they want to spend, while still getting you and your new spouse something you really want. Dream big—in addition to the basics, take this opportunity to ask for premium gifts. Here are a few items any couple would be thrilled to receive and enjoy.

Mixing up magic

A high-performance blender is a must-have for any newly married couple or family. Ask for one that can help with every meal of the day, such as the Vitamix S55. With a smaller footprint than conventional blenders, this powerful machine offers the convenience of four pre-programmed settings and two container options, including a blend-and-go smoothie cup. Use the S55 to make breakfast smoothies in the morning, salad dressing for lunch, soup for dinner, and even dips and drinks for last-minute entertaining. Once you start utilizing this versatile tool, you'll wonder how you ever lived without it.

Multi-taskers

Pots and pans are a registry staple, but you should also add specialty cookware and bakeware, such as a roasting pan, rectangular baker or covered baking dish. Choosing ovento-table pieces makes it easy to go straight from cooking to presentation, all in one dish that works for both tasks. Many of these dishes also include lids for easily storing leftovers. By asking for a set that comes with multiple pieces, you'll be ready to create brunch casseroles, lasagna for dinner and a warm bread pudding for dessert.

Backyard barbecues

An outdoor grill can help set the scene for family gatherings, tailgate parties or just relaxing with friends. Decide if you prefer gas, which offers easy operation and clean-up, or charcoal, which many barbecue connoisseurs say provides a more intense, grilled flavor. Also, think about extra features you may want, such as a built-in thermometer, side burners, shelves or tool hooks. Don't forget skewers, cooking utensils such as spatulas, tongs and grill forks, as well as other accessories like a grill mitt, grill basket or pizza pan. Be sure to consider space as well. If you live in an apartment, you may opt for a smaller grill or one that hooks directly on to your balcony.

Serve in style

Be ready for dinner parties with formal dinnerware and crystal stemware. Select timeless patterns that will look fresh and inviting on your table for years to come. Add a pop of color and personality with low-cost, on-trend accent pieces, such as chargers or a coffee or tea pot. Register for a few different types of glasses including water goblets, wine glasses and stemless or highball glasses, depending on your drink of choice. Experts recommend requesting eight to 12 place settings, but you may want more if you plan to host large events.

Unconventional tools

Once you've got the basics covered, consider some out-ofthe-box kitchen items. Keep recipes handy by registering for a cutting board that has place for a tablet. For easy entertaining, a slate cheese board enables you to write the name of each cheese or appetizer right on the board. Or, pick one with a hidden drawer for knives and storage. Another "kitchen tool" you may want to consider is a subscription to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program that delivers local, fresh produce on a weekly or monthly basis. The website LocalHarvest.org offers a nationwide directory of CSA programs, so you can find one nearby.

Friends and family often like to give a signature gift that will make you think of them each time you use it. If you need extra advice on what to choose for your registry, don't hesitate to ask a consultant at your local department store or download checklists from popular wedding websites and blogs. Creating a wedding registry is often the first step toward building your home as a married couple, so get the right items to make it a happy one.