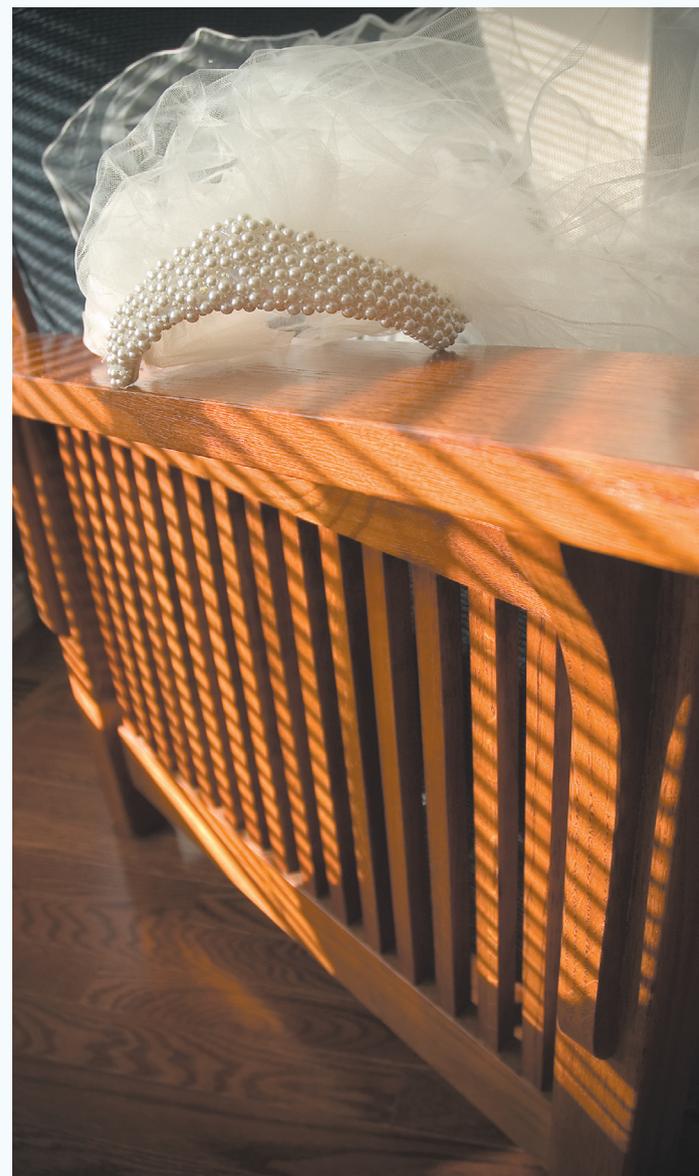


having to answer the terrifying questions *Martha Stewart Weddings* magazine never so much as hints at. For instance, exactly how long can you procrastinate before sending out thank-you cards without being perceived as an ingrate? Do you have to entertain out-of-town guests who stick around for days after the wedding? Is it absolutely necessary to get your dress boxed, shrink-wrapped or laminated? And, most pressing, is it wrong to exchange the Tibetan yak-bone love beads from your cousin Cedar for an omelette pan?

Indeed, it's these conundrums that threaten to take the honey out of your honeymoon if you don't get a handle on them ahead of time. There you'll be, sprawled out in a hammock between two palm trees on a Jamaican beach, your newly minted husband rubbing your feet, another rum-punch cocktail on the way, and *bam*—you'll remember that you didn't arrange a ride to the airport for Uncle David. Or that you forgot to pay the caterer before you left town. Are these things you should be worrying about on your honeymoon? Taking it a step further, should you even *be* on a honeymoon the day after your wedding? Was it rude to give the morning-after brunch a miss? Is the red-wine stain on your dress going to set before you can fly home and get it to the cleaner? You see what we mean.

The last thing we want to do is put a dozen more decisions on your to-do list when you're already overwhelmed with the details of your approaching nuptials. Instead, the take-away here is how to avoid falling into the etiquette traps that leave you feeling guilty, inadequate or preoccupied with crazy-making, completely unnecessary post-party minutiae. Just as there's no wedding police checking in to see if you gave out party favours (*so* not necessary), there's nobody (except maybe your new mother-in-law, but now's a good time to start asserting yourself) telling you there are no alternatives to painful traditions like the day-after gift-opening, or that you have to hand-address 200 thank-you cards all by yourself. After all—after the dance, after the cake, after you realize with a wistful sigh that the big day is over—it was your wedding.



“ When you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible. ”