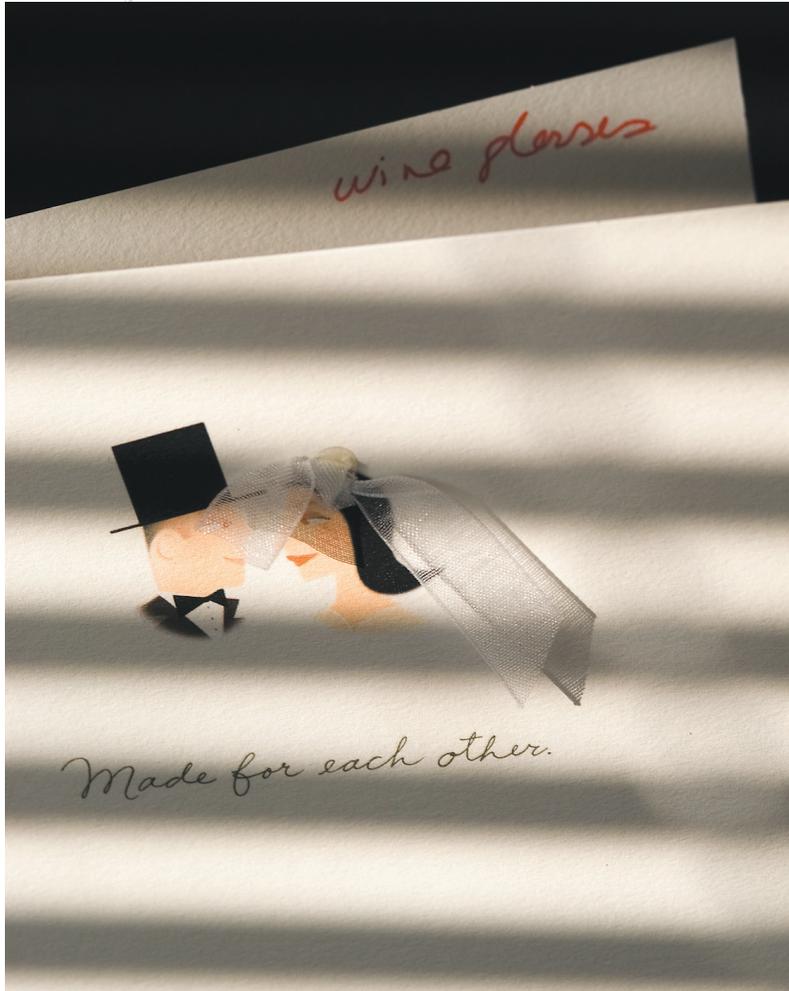


Dear Aunt Eunice, thank you for the beautiful (insert gift item here)



The index to Peggy Post's 400-page, fifth-edition manners bible *Wedding Etiquette* includes no fewer than 19 entries under the heading "thank-you notes." Did you know, for instance, that expressing gratitude for a gift received *before* the wedding requires a different strategy than for a gift received *at* the wedding? Have you even considered the myriad ways to thank your pre-marital counsellor? Did you know men could write thank-you cards, too? No offence to Ms. Post—her book is truly a font of thoughtful wedding ideas—but, really, if knowing how to say thank you gives you pause, you might not be ready to say "I do."

Indeed, the challenge of thanking all the people who helped you plan and decorate, bought you a gift and travelled across the country for your big day, is not so much a problem of *how* as it is of *when*. Post says the rule of thumb for sending personal handwritten notes of thanks is to get 'er done within three months of your wedding day. Or not. Anna Chow, owner of local stationery store Box Paper Scissors, says you've got a year. "That's the Canadian standard. Though I think it's too long."

To curb the inevitable procrastination, Chow recommends taking care of thank-you cards before the big day, while your enthusiasm for details is still running high. "Order the cards as soon as your RSVPs come in, when you're really focused on the wedding. If you wait until after the honeymoon when you're back at work, it'll feel like a chore." Address the envelopes then as well, or hire Chow to do it for you, so all you'll have to do later is write a quick note of thanks for the adorable ceramic love birds and, voila, you're done. And there's absolutely no need to follow the lead of the surprisingly large number of brides who visit Chow's store hoping to precisely match thank-you cards to a swatch of their bridesmaids' dress fabric. Let it go, ladies.

BOX PAPER SCISSORS, 318a 10th St. N.W., 270-1812.
Average cost per pre-addressed thank-you card: \$3.50.

Photos, Photos, everywhere (the positives of no negatives)

Wedding photography was a lot simpler back in the day. You lined up the principals and, as soon as everyone looked appropriately dour, the blessed event was captured in a puff of flash powder and reproduced as a sepia print to be hung on the parlour wall. Modern technology has broadened the colour palette and the scope. Today's weddings turn out hundreds of shots, and since it's the rare photographer who hasn't joined the digital revolution, they'll likely arrive on a tidy little CD-ROM for you to peruse on your computer or DVD player. This in itself opens a can of worms. Newlyweds used to have to meet with their photographer to view negatives and order prints. But online image-sharing platforms like Flickr and MySpace have changed the way people exchange