



From left: "Pure Comfort" pillows, \$115 each, from Pure DKNY, bloomingdales.com. Bowls, \$17 each; salad bowl, \$24, both from Bambu; "Off Pitcher," \$158, from Esque, all at branchhome.com. "Daily Aesthetics" glass bottle, \$39, from The Conran Shop, conranusa.com. Vintage dish towels, \$39 each, from GRDN, grdrbklyn.com. Goblet, \$65 for set of four, from The Green Glass Company, greenglass.com. "Plantorb," \$104, from Perchl, perchdesign.net.

ECO-FRIENDLY REGISTRIES

FIND OUT HOW ENGAGED COUPLES ARE LETTING THEIR GREEN IDEALS DIRECT THEIR WEDDING WISH LISTS **BY MILENA DAMJANOV**

FOR MOST COUPLES, a wedding registry is a giddy opportunity to acquire both necessary and fantasy home accessories to help build a new life together. But for a growing number of brides and grooms, the desire to receive gifts is balanced by the need to act responsibly toward the environment—which means limiting unnecessary consumption and choosing items that are earth-friendly. For them, green registries, an emerging niche in the gift-giving business, are an ideal compromise.

Knowing that guests will be generous when it comes to wedding presents—bridal registries represent \$8.9 billion in retail each year, according to Condé Nast Bridal Media's American Wedding Study—most eco-minded couples derive a deep satisfaction from finding green ways to channel that kindness. "It feels nice to give people the option to choose things that are good for the environment," says Kate Hurowitz, who married Rich Jacobs in Bridgehampton, NY, in October 2007.

Kate and Rich, who moved from New York to the West Coast last year, discovered a green option in branchhome.com, a Bay Area-based Web site with a focus on playful, eco-conscious design. They quickly found much to love, from colorful Bambu wooden bowls, which they now use daily, to sculptural Esque glass pitchers. On Amazon.com, which partners with a wide variety of merchants, including über-green retailer Gaiam, they earmarked items including a ceramic tabletop composter (in San Francisco, a building's composting bin often sits next to the one for recycling). To appease traditional-minded guests, they also chose gifts from Crate & Barrel. Still, Kate insists there's an eco-conscious way to register even for old-school items: by choosing products that are basic, classic and sturdy. "It's an opportunity to get the gifts that you can hold onto for a long time," says Kate, the proud owner of a new bright blue KitchenAid mixer.

For Jill Fehrenbacher and Peter Rojas, who were married in San Francisco in July of last year, it was even more imperative that they take an eco-conscious route. "I'm a spokesperson for green living, so there's no question that I'd do a green wedding from top to bottom," says Jill, who publishes the earth-friendly design blog inhabitat.com. Jill and Peter's ceremony featured a recycled wedding dress (the groom's great-grandmother's lace gown from her wedding, in 1910) and a vegan cake. "I feel very strongly about not wasting resources," she adds. Although Peter was committed to the idea of asking for donations to favorite charities including Rainforest Action Network—philanthropy is a common request for many eco-conscious couples—they quickly realized they would get a lot of unwanted items if they didn't ask for specific home goods. So, like Kate and Rich, they created registries at Branch and Amazon and gave guests plenty of options: from Amenity organic bedding and hemp napkins at the former, to an LED lamp and Calphalon pots (to replace the couple's less eco-friendly Teflon pans) at the latter. Since their registries were modest in size, they got exactly what they

needed. "We're pretty much using everything," says Jill.

According to Danielle Venokur, a New York City-based green-wedding planner, both Kate and Rich and Jill and Peter exemplify the trend of combining eco and standard registries. "Most of my clients go for a mix," she says. But while these couples selected at least one green and one traditional store each, others find they are able to build an eco-friendly registry within the confines of a single traditional store. Alisa Leonard and Scott Hansen, who married in San Diego in March of this year, chose trendy, all-purpose store Target not only because it maintains a corporate commitment to the environment, but also because it sells a host of green items, including bamboo-fiber bedsheets and cutting boards. Upscale retailers like Bloomingdale's are also stepping up their green offerings; this summer the department store will begin featuring organically grown-cotton bedding from DKNY and Calvin Klein.

Those who know where to look are forging increasingly

alternative registry paths. Tara Prigge and Edwin Wang, who exchanged vows last March in Washington, DC, happily found the Alternative Gift Registry, a year-old site that encourages "non-material, second-hand, homemade and environmentally friendly gifts," including everything from carbon offsets to zero-cost ideas like recipes and wedding playlists. For Tara and Edwin, this meant registering for a recycle-friendly newspaper rack from the Museum of Modern Art store as well as unorthodox items like inexpensive 1950s cookware that they suggested guests search for on the Internet. ("Tara's also in love with vintage Dansk, which is readily available for under \$50 on eBay. Turquoise matches our kitchen goods, but red, yellow, white—it's all good!" read the item, next to a photo of an example.) A mix of laid-back requests and earth-friendly ideas, it's the kind of registry that is intended to suit not only the couple but their guests and the planet as well. And it gives "gifts that give back" a whole new meaning.

Milena Damjanov is a New York City-based writer. She has also contributed to The New York Times, Elle and Departures.

GREEN GIFTS

Consider these sites to build a top-notch earth-friendly registry:

BRANCHHOME.COM

A growing number of retailers are offering well-designed green goods, but the best of all may be Branch, which sells both the practical, like sustainably made towels by Bonjour, to the decorative, such as a sleek hanging planter from Perch.

GAIAM.COM

A favorite destination for those who are committed to the eco lifestyle in ways big and small, Gaiam offers a range of necessities, from manual lawn mowers to stainless steel water bottles.

ALTERNATIVEGIFTREGISTRY.ORG

Couples can use this new umbrella site to register for both tried-and-true home accessories (such as flatware from Target) and nontraditional items, like donations to favorite charities, carbon offsets and even trees from local nurseries.