

the bachelor guy

by Eric Rogell

Because someone's gotta tell you these things.

PREPARING FOR THE BIG DAY

February 4th may be the Big Game, but February 14th is the Big Day. It doesn't matter if you're casually dating, in a serious relationship, or happily married, on Valentine's Day it's go big or go home.

She'll remember what you gave - and how you gave it - all year. This is your one shot to be Mr. Romantic, instead of Mr. Lazy-Ass-Watches-Football-All-Day, and trust me it'll pay dividends.

There are a few major (and expected) Valentine's gift categories: Flowers, Chocolate, Lingerie and Jewelry. Make the right choice from one, or more of these and you're in. So, in the interest of helping you score more than the Manning-to-Harrison tandem, I have put together this guide to V-Day success.

CHOCOLATE

You can run down to the 24-hour chain pharmacy and grab a Sampler at the last minute, like you do every year. And she'll smile and say thanks. (Then crush them all to see what's inside.) Or you can get her chocolates that will leave an impression. Here are some chocolate choices that she'll remember for a long time.



CHOCOLATE FUN

Chocolate Lover Boy and Lover Girl

Now she can have a guy who'll listen to all her stories and won't mind going shopping. And when she's in a foul mood, she can bite his head off instead of yours. \$6.95

Quickies Body Frosting

Looking for a quickie? Quickies Body Frosting is edible body art that comes in portable packets. Perfect for sliding in a Valentine's card. Tell her dessert's on her tonight. \$1.95

Both from www.gourmetchocolate.com

CHOCOLATE TALK

Chocolate Conversation Truffles

Too shy to come out and tell her what you're thinking? You can say it with Conversation Truffles from Route 29. Rich milk and dark chocolate truffles are topped with those candy message hearts you ate as a kid. \$6

XOXO

These milk and dark chocolate Xs and Os stand for kisses and hugs. Not for "Wanna play tic tac toe?" But she'll know that. \$8

Both from www.route29napa.com



Want more? Sure you do. Head over to www.TheBachelorGuy.com. Sign up for my free email newsletter and get info and tips on all the best in food, drink, gear, and more. Plus daily posts on all the stuff you need to know. And tell a friend.

FLOWERS



There are three people every guy should know: a good barber, a good jeweler, and a good florist. Build these relationships and any one of them should be able to make you shine when you need it most. On V-Day you might need all three.

Everyone, and I mean everyone, gives roses on Valentine's Day. There's something about getting a dozen of those long-stemmed red beauties that makes women swoon. Guys know this. And florists know this, too. That's why the cost triples for the 24 hours that is February 14th.

Talk to your florist. Tell them you want something different. Unusual. Something that will set you apart from every other guy who runs in, grabs some roses, and bolts. Trust me, florists are creative people by nature, and they love the opportunity to be able to do something unique. Your girl will appreciate it too.

CHOCOLATE UNUSUAL

Wellfleet Chocolate Oysters

You've heard oysters are an aphrodisiac. And chocolate stimulates endorphins in the brain. Now you can get her happy and horny with the Wellfleet Candy Company's chocolate oysters. No, they're not oysters dipped in chocolate. They're handmade gourmet chocolates molded from an actual Wellfleet oyster and filled with homemade fillings. Giving pearls as a gift? Hide 'em in here. \$7 each, 6 for \$35.

www.wellfleetcandycompany.com



JEWELRY

Buying jewelry when you don't have a trusted jeweler can be tricky. There are so many ways to trip up. When you shop this year, take this knowledge from the master jewelers at the Independent Jewelers Organization (IJO) to make sure what you give this Valentine's Day isn't fool's gold.

Gold:

- The "K" in 14K or 24K stands for karat, and is the percentage of pure gold in a piece. 24K gold is pure gold. 18K contains 18 parts gold and six parts alloys, making it 75% gold. 14K contains 14 parts gold and 10 parts alloy, making it 58.3% gold.
- The higher the gold content in the jewelry, the less likely her allergies will act up.
- White gold is an alloy of gold and some white metals such as silver and palladium.

Silver:

- Sterling Silver is 92.5% (925 parts) pure silver and 7.5% alloy metal.
- Only jewelry that is 92.5% pure silver can be called or labeled "silver", "solid silver", "sterling silver" or "silver"

Platinum:

- Platinum is a white metal, but unlike gold it is used in jewelry in almost (90-95%) pure form.
- Platinum is extremely long-wearing, very white, very dense and significantly more expensive than gold.

Gemstones:

- Gemstones can be naturally mined, laboratory-created (synthetic) or imitation (simulated).
- Lab-created stones are less expensive, but look very much like stones mined from the earth. Imitation stones resemble naturally mined stones and are usually made of glass or plastic.
- Gemstone treatments - such as heating, dyeing or bleaching - can improve a stone's appearance or durability.

Semi-Precious Gems:

- Traditionally, semi-precious referred to gemstones other than the big three - ruby, emerald and sapphire.
- With all colored gemstones, quality rules price. Better color costs more... a lot more. Better clarity costs more. Better cut may cost a little more, and it is worth it. The bigger the stone, the more it is per carat.

For more information on buying quality jewelry, or to locate a master jeweler who can help you find the perfect Valentine's Day gift go to www.masterjeweler.com.

LINGERIE 101

You love seeing her in it. She feels sexy wearing it. So you want to buy her more of it. But you don't know a chemise from a chamois. And you're getting tired of buying teddies, cause it's the only thing you know how to ask the salesperson for.

Donna Wittrig, Sexpert and president of SurpriseParties.com, says, "By taking the time to select a special piece of lingerie, you are communicating to her that you care about her and what turns her on."

Here's a primer on what's what, so you know what to ask for when you hit the store, featuring Tyran Richard, cover model for Shirley of Hollywood, modeling some of their designs. (Cheap excuse to show pictures of a sexy model in revealing lingerie? Sure. Do you care? Didn't think so.)



Baby Doll

One piece that's short and flows softly out at the sides. Advantages: Easy to buy because you don't need to know her exact size.



Bustier and Corset

Tight and running to the waist or ribs, these pieces date back to ancient Greece and are designed to push up the bust and gently shape the waist. Can't tell the difference? A bustier has cups, and corsets don't.



Bra and Panty Set with Garters

This one's obvious. I just wanted an excuse to show the picture.



Chemise

One piece that is usually longer than a baby doll and more form fitting.



For information on how and where to buy the outfits pictured here, go to www.shirleyofhollywood.com

DRINK

Here's a couple of Valentine's cocktails she'll love... because sometimes you need a little liquid lubrication.



The Sweetheart
1.5 oz Cuervo Citrico*
Splash of sour mix

Add all to shaker. Shake and strain into a shot glass. Add lemon wedge and sugar on rim.

*Cuervo Citrico is their new flavored tequila with hints of citrus.



Valentine's Kiss
1 1/2 oz. Jose Cuervo Especial
2 oz. Chilled Cranberry Juice
2 oz. Chilled Apple Juice
Club soda or seltzer
Ice

Fill a glass with ice. Add tequila, cranberry juice, and apple juice. Top off with soda.