

A Time for Wine

Written by L.A. Plume

Wednesday, 31 August 2011 10:35



Dear L. A. Plume,

I have a dear old friend who now lives halfway across the country. On occasion, when we happen to be in the same place, he and his wife meet me for dinner. Being old school, he refuses to ever let me pay; although we don't see each other that often, I have gotten to the point where I am not comfortable with that arrangement and would like to do something in return. We go to restaurants of his choosing where he is known, so my trying to get the check in advance doesn't work, and would be an embarrassment to him. Any suggestions?

Patty

Dear Patty,

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Although I am all for men paying for dinner, there absolutely is that time when you must bring the proverbial bottle to the party. A woman trying to sneak the check away from a man in a restaurant where he enjoys his reputation is not good form unless you can order a cake, have them sing Happy Birthday, and pretend you thought it was his birthday and perhaps get away with paying under those circumstances. It might be the last time you have dinner with him though. I am always a fan of wine as a gift, and if they like wine you can order something lovely from a vineyard and have it shipped (but you have to check the state where he lives first). I am not a fan of gift certificates, mainly because I tend to lose them myself, but they come in handy in situations like these. Choose a restaurant you know they like and send a gift certificate in an amount ample enough to cover dinner and drinks for two.

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

I recently purchased a few birthday gifts for a friend. When she opened them in front of other people at a party, she told me she already had something similar. It was not very gracious of her and, quite frankly, I didn't know how to respond. She sort of put them to one side and acted like they weren't even there. Was I supposed to take them back, go out and get something else, ask her what she would like, or what?

Ashley

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Dear Ashley,

Yes, you should have taken them back and told her that you purchased them because you thought they were things she would enjoy and that, if she didn't, she didn't need to keep them. You could return them, keep them for yourself, re-gift them, or send them to me – I love gifts. Maybe a good idea would be to donate them to a good cause and send her the tax receipt, made out to you, and thank her for the opportunity to support a charity. Really, if she behaved like that with gifts, what kind of friend is she anyway?

L. A. Plume

Dear L. A. Plume,

I had a house guest who brought me a bottle of wine as a gift. It seemed to be a very thoughtful gesture until she drank it all by herself. Do I have to take her something the next time I go to her house?

Kay

Dear Kay,

Did you save the empty bottle?

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