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China Cues for Smart Shoppers

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Chosen Tableware of Good Quality

By Doris Post, H. Ec. Jl. 2

China tableware of good quality is perhaps one of the most prized possessions a homemaker can have. And selecting a lifetime pattern often confronts the college woman planning for marriage or career. Here tastes, personality and individuality are reflected in her choice of china. Intelligent shopping can be hampered by misunderstanding some of the terms referring to china's construction and selection. Though the final selection of new tableware is essentially a matter of good taste, the following definitions may make shopping more profitable.

Terms to Know

1. Coupe— is the rimless tableware which has been featured by retailers and manufacturers during the past few years.
2. Ellipse— is the slightly oval shaped dinnerware which is usually found in modern settings.
3. Glaze— is the finish which gives the ware its smooth and lustrous surface.
4. Inlaid color— is the background color on dinnerware which is securely bonded to the china so that scratches don't mar the design's beauty.
5. Open stock patterns— are those china patterns which may be purchased either in bulk or as individual pieces for replacements or supplements.
6. Bone china— is very white china known for its translucency and durability. It is made from ground animal bones and clay. Prices for five-piece place settings of bone china range from $14.95 to $75.00. There are more expensive designs, but they are less common.

China or earthenware

China should be distinguished from earthenware, which is used in heavy picnic dishes as well as in some well-decorated tableware. Earthenware is generally opaque compared to translucent china. Porcelain ware differs from china mainly in the methods used in applying the glaze to the product during production. The consumer would be unable to distinguish between the two.

There are two tests suggested by the American Vitified China Association, Inc., that can be performed by the consumer to distinguish china from other similar products.

Simple tests help

For the first test hold a plate up to the light and put one hand behind the plate. You should be able to clearly see the shadow of your hand if the plate is made of china.

A second simple test consists of balancing the plate on the tips of the fingers of one hand and sharply striking the edge with a pencil. China will emit a clear bell-like sound when struck.

Professor C. M. Dodds, head of Ceramic Engineering, says that American china producers are making fine and durable products. Domestic products, particularly of recent vintage, are tested for durability of construction and design. They are made for modern living, and may be washed in detergents or in dishwashers. If treated with reasonable care, china will retain its beauty and usefulness for longer than its owner's lifetime, according to Dodds.

Choose design carefully

From the standpoint of design, tableware should have a decoration and shape that implies fitness for use. It should have simple lines and an elegant appearance. It should harmonize with modern or traditional interiors and with the way...
of life of its owners. Examine the china of your choice in surroundings similar to those in which it will be used. (Retailers will gladly set sample place-settings for prospective buyers.) Remember that the theme, whether coupe or a rimmed effect, sets the style for all other service pieces. Sculptured treatments, fluting, and embellishments on the edge of plates and cups set a definite style to be followed. It can’t be overemphasized that china, silver, crystal and other accessories should be carefully chosen to blend together to create a harmonious setting for the owner’s way of life.

Manufacturer’s guarantee

China bought from a well-known firm is backed by the firm’s reputation. If something should happen to a piece or pieces of a set because of poor construction, one should check with the retail store where the china was bought. Manufacturers often will replace damaged pieces with no cost except postage to the consumer, and the retailer will usually take care of packaging the damaged china.

If the consumer takes time to learn some of the terms used in the ceramics industry, and considers her tableware from the standpoint of good design and her own way of life, she will take pride in setting her table for family and friends.

Women at Iowa State have a way of decorating their mirrors with sayings and quotations clipped from various sources such as magazines and textbooks. These choice words range from tempting thoughts to spiritual philosophy, and often give a peek at the woman’s personality.

Take the more fun-loving person who has clipped and posted such sayings as “Live, live, live!” and “Well, why not?” Following this train of thought is a word from the matrimonially minded woman, “How does a woman choose a man?” You are left to draw the conclusions on this subject.

Iowa State academic life has its ups and downs, and many students find themselves lost in the maze of studies. Stepping into the room of a rather academically frustrated Iowa State coed, you see a mirror decorated with such sayings as “Rub, don’t blot,” “Keep smiling,” and “I’m so smart I make myself sick.” One woman in the Science and Humanities College ably stated the situation with a quote from James Thurber, “Scientists don’t really know anything about anything.”

Souvenirs from entertainment establishments decorate the mirrors of some of our more light-fingered coeds. “Ladies Lounge” and “Reserved Seating” may have once adorned your favorite night spot.

“Eyes are the windows of the soul” was found on the mirror of a more philosophical, religious woman. It seems to be a very thought-provoking and powerful statement for those who take a moment to stop and think.

How many of you have found yourselves in a so-called bind, a circumstantial situation out of which you just can’t seem to see a way? This may be anything from a bridge game to three tests in one morning to the very crisis of life. There is a one-word saying appearing on mirrors of many college women and also on the lips of the other students which gives a good satirical piece of advice. The word — “PUNT!”