

# Spirited Entertaining

## Polish Your Toasting Skills

(NAPSA)—Hundreds of toasts are given every day because it's a great way to give a heartfelt gift that costs nothing and can mean everything. Toasting also has a long and surprising history.

- The word "toast" originated, it's believed, from the practice of tossing a piece of bread into one's beverage to help drown out the taste of acidic wine.

- Toasting a person or group is a tradition dating back 5,000 years.

- In the 1600s, it was not unusual for people to have a sword, dagger or other weapon in their right hand. As an act of friendship, people would raise a glass in their right hand, rather than a sword. Most Americans follow this tradition when toasting today.

- The tradition of clinking glasses when toasting stems from the superstition that the sound kept evil spirits away.

- Never toast with tea, coffee or water but feel free to seal your toast with a sip of champagne, wine, a mixed drink or non-alcoholic punch. For really special occasions, you may want to try toasting with Ridgemoor Reserve 1792, a small-batch bourbon from the rolling hills of Kentucky.

- When toasting at a wedding, it's polite to toast the bride first, then the groom, followed by the maid of honor, parents and lastly the best man.

- More Americans toast on New Year's Eve than on any other single occasion.



**CLINK UP**—The tradition of clinking glasses stems from the belief that the sound kept evil spirits away.

The following toasting tips are from the experts at Ridgemoor Reserve 1792, the Official Toasting Bourbon of the Kentucky Bourbon Festival:

**Eye to Eye**—Always look the person you're toasting in the eye; never at your glass.

**Short and Sweet**—When giving a toast, make it short and relevant to the occasion and people involved.

**Keep It Clean**—Don't embarrass the subject of your toast.

**Think Ahead**—Know the toast well enough to deliver it perfectly.

**Just Joking**—Don't tell inside jokes that the audience won't understand.

**Be Poised**—If you are the subject of a toast, sit graciously, accept the honor with a smile and do not drink to yourself.

Finally, remember that done well, a toast can add extra warmth to any gathering.