

Simple solutions to EVERYDAY PROBLEMS

IN A GLASS OF ITS OWN

Q How many different-sized wine glasses should I have for entertaining?

A There's really no need to worry if you have only one set of wine glasses – it's what's inside the glass that counts! That said, the shape of a glass can affect the taste of a wine by directing the liquid to distinct areas of the mouth, creating different sensations, so having two or three styles is good. It's nice to have a set of tall, narrow-topped sparkling wine flutes, as this shape prevents bubbles escaping quickly. A set of rounded glasses with a large bowl will do justice to most red wines while for white wine a set of all-purpose, tulip-shaped glasses are ideal. You

may like to add a smaller glass for sherries or port, if you enjoy those drinks often.

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS

Q My daughter keeps saying I should get an MP3 player but I'm a technophobe. Help!

A For listening to music on the bus, at the gym – anywhere, really – a portable MP3 player is brilliant, but the choice can seem overwhelming. First decide how much storage space you want for songs. Memory size is measured in gigabytes (GB), with one GB enough for about 250 tracks. Then look at battery life – if you're always on the go, you'll need a model that can run for at least ten hours before it needs recharging. Look for a well-known brand – Apple's iPod is very popular. You'll need a computer, but MP3 players come with all the software to access songs online. Visit www.kelkoo.co.uk to compare prices.

BRIGHTEN YOUR BLING

Q Is there a way to make my gold and silver jewellery really sparkle?

A Your treasures can end up looking dull if you wear them daily, but it's easy to restore their shine. To clean gold items, add a drop of mild washing-up liquid to one cup of warm water and drop in your jewellery. After ten minutes, gently scrub with a soft toothbrush to loosen deposits. Rinse with warm water and dry with a cloth. To clean silver jewellery, simply rinse in warm water and pat dry. If tarnished, use a cleaning product such as Ernest

For every one of your quandaries, we've got the answers. So just relax and let us lighten your load with our handy tips and advice...

Jones Silver Jewellery Cleaner, £3.99 from www.ernestjones.co.uk. Always rinse well – allergic reactions can occur when detergent is left on the metal.

MAKE OVER YOUR MAN

Q My husband wears some truly dreadful clothes. Can you offer any advice?

A If your other half runs a mile when you ask him to go clothes shopping, all is not lost. Style expert Jules Standish from www.colourconsultancy.co.uk says, 'Take him out for lunch, then suggest popping into a shop on the way home. Pick something for him to try on, then flatter him and get a shop assistant to back you up. Or, provided you can have a refund, buy the clothes yourself and get him to try them on at home. Introduce him to a new colour with a small item, such as a tie. If he hates your choices, ask him about his likes and dislikes so you can get it right next time.'

TOP TARIFFS

Q My mobile phone bill seems so high now. Are there any ways to reduce it?

A A mobile phone can work out to be a costly monthly expense, so it pays to hunt for the best deal. Nic Cicutti of www.inspiredmoney.co.uk says, 'Work out how you use your mobile phone – for example, whether you text regularly, call friends at weekends, download or use any other services. Then, to find the best tariff to meet your needs, check comparison websites such as www.mobilephonechecker.co.uk and www.moneysupermarket.com. Avoid "cashback" deals where you sign up for an expensive tariff for up to 18 months. You're promised cash refunds at set intervals, but many people find they're almost impossible to obtain. For pay-as-you-go users, don't just pick deals with cheap or free handsets. Call charges may be higher, so focus on the tariff.'

