

Tips for creating letter-perfect invitations

BY L.E. KLEIN
Copley News Service

The heavy paper, raised ink and elegant type all signal that this piece of mail is something special — a wedding invitation. Modern brides still rely on tradition to design their invitations, experts say, but are adding personal touches with colored inks, ribbons and tinted papers.

"People have been going back to very conservative styles, but they still want to express themselves," said Micah Chase, president of Checkerboard Ltd., a custom stationery maker in West

Boylston, Mass.

Self-expression for an engaged couple can take the form of subtle touches like ink in teals, browns and other muted colors, or calligraphy in unusual styles. Invitations printed in a vertical, "tall" style come in envelopes with long pointed flaps. Details are printed on paper delicately embossed with floral or botanical patterns.

"It has this traditional theme with a modern interpretation," Chase said. "It's modern but it still has the feel of Old World craftsmanship."

With invitations, as with weddings, couples want to blend the traditional and the individual, Chase said. "They want to pay homage to this institution, but brides say, 'I want mine to be different, as we are.'"

Some new offerings in invitations: Paper with leaves stamped in gold, invitations with delicate parchment jackets and cards embellished with ribbon and watercolor images. Embossed cards feature intricate Victorian motifs or a simple interwoven pattern as a border.

Before designing your invitations, think about the mood of your wedding. Is it formal or casual? Traditional or quirky? Big-budget or on a shoestring? Your invitation should reflect what guests can expect on the big day.

Some style options popular with modern couples:

■ **Paper:** Handmade papers have joined traditional vellum as an option for couples seeking a more distinctive look.

■ **Type style:** Classic typefaces with lots of flourishes remain popular, along with flowery scripts. Just make sure that your typefaces mesh with each other and reflect the tone of your wedding.

■ **Ink:** Quality stationers like Checkerboard offer up to

25 colors of ink for invitations, but subtle is best, Chase advises. Bright colors were popular several years ago but have faded with the more traditional mood of the country.

■ **Envelopes:** Heavy paper, longer cuts and pointed flaps add to the impact of your invitation.

■ **Effects:** If you like the engraved look but are on a tight budget, consider thermography for an engraved effect.

■ **Extras:** Ribbons, cutouts and unusually shaped cards are other options for more adventurous couples.

Innovations in technology have also given couples more flexibility in designs and deadlines. Online stationery sites can deliver printed invitations in as little as three days, and allow you to design every facet of the finished product.

Checkerboard works with einvite.com on higher-quality invitations, which can even be printed out at home on special printer paper.

"We've seen a tremendous increase in sales of the home product," said Chase. "(Couples) do love the convenience."

After deciding on the look of your invitation, pay close attention to the contents.

Some important invitation tips:



■ **Basics:** Every invitation should include basic information including the wedding hosts; names of bride and groom; day of the week, date, time and address of the ceremony and/or reception; and RSVP information. It also helps to include maps to events for out-of-town guests.

■ **Double-check:** Make sure you are certain of the date, time, and place of your wedding. Corrections can be costly and confusing to guests. Also make sure to get a look at a "proof" of your invitation from the stationers before the print run.

■ **Wording:** With modern "blended" families, wording can be tricky. Consult with family members on what they prefer on invitations.

■ **Take your time:** Set aside at least a month to hand-write addresses and prepare invitations for mailing. Make sure that return postage is sufficient.

■ **Order extras:** Buy 20 or 30 extra invitations in case of mistakes in addressing or last-minute additions to the guest list.

■ **Test run:** Mail yourself an invitation first — you'll catch any problems with size, postage and addressing.

■ **Mail call:** Send out invitations six weeks before the wedding, eight weeks for long-distance guests or if your wedding is planned for a holiday.

Find Special Gifts for Your Bridal Party!

-  Hollywood Fashion Tape to keep her gown in place
-  Jewelry to compliment their dresses
-  Greeting Cards that "Say it just right!"



Lima Bean

222 St. Joseph Ave.
Suttons Bay
231-271-5462

Open Mon.-Sat. 10-5:30
Sun. 12-4

1/14-733610-BR

Aruba • Barbados • St Thomas
Cozumel • San Juan • St. Maarten • Barbados
Aruba • Costa Maya • Cozumel



Ft. Lauderdale • Princess Cay • Grand Caymen

Call for
**Honeymoon Packages
& Cruises**

(231) 947-8045
or
(800) 442-1742
940 US 31 North



br/14,733668

For the Look of Elegance...



Eve of Elegance Bridal

2260 U.S. 31 North • Petoskey
(231) 348-8628 • Toll Free 877-277-2015
e-mail: evbridal@bignetnorth.net www.eveofelegance.com
"Best selection and variety in the area"

1/14,733876-BR