



FIRST

# Impressions

COUNT

*A wedding invitation does more than offer information about the date and location of a wedding. It should evoke the mood and theme of the biggest day of your life, writes Sharon Green.*

**T**hink about your wedding stationery like a first impression. When your guests open the envelope holding an invitation to one of the most important days of your life, they will immediately be given a sense of your celebration. With this in mind, approach choosing your stationery suite in the same way you approached selecting the outfit you wore to meet your in-laws for the first time: carefully, but with personality shining through. After all, you only get one chance to make a first impression!

## WHERE TO START

Use the design of your invitations to reflect the overall style of your wedding. "The look of the invitation is most important and we advise people to go for an overall theme instead of matching certain elements like an exact colour," says stationer Sotiria Spirovski, from Chicreative.

It's important to adopt a theme across your stationery suite (save-the-date cards, invitations, menus, place cards, thank-you notes, etc.), to ensure your theme is communicated consistently from the first moment until the end of your event. Think of your stationery suite as the ribbon that ties the day together.

If you're struggling to come up with ideas, Sotiria suggests gathering samples of images, motifs and designs from magazines. And remember, any design, colour or motif that appeals to you initially can be further developed in the creative process.

For something decorative, consider using embellishments that echo aspects of your wedding. You might choose to create a motif based on a pattern of lace from your gown, or a piece of ribbon from the bridesmaids' dresses. A subtle watermark could be inspired by the flowers in your bouquet, or you may simply choose to reflect the colour theme of your wedding across the suite.

A dramatic way to make your mark on your stationery is to design a personalised stamp or monogram made up of your initials. Alternatively you could use a photograph or a shared hobby to set the theme.

"We had a couple who chose to have a destination wedding and their invitations were designed as a boarding pass with a barcode to emphasise their travel theme," Sotiria says.

## THE WRITE WORDS

In the same way the style of your stationery represents your theme, the way you word your invitations will give your guests an indication of the formality of your wedding. But whether you opt for casual or traditional wording, make sure you get it right. Firstly, it's important to acknowledge who is hosting the event – the couple or the couple's parents – and to include essential information about the event.

This information generally includes: the names of the guests receiving the invite, the couple's names, the wedding date, ceremony time, venue details, and reception time and venue details (if these differ from the ceremony), plus the RSVP details.

There are plenty of fonts to choose from but the basic choice you will have to make will be between serif and sans serif fonts.

Serif or cursive fonts based on calligraphy are generally used for more traditional ceremonies and reflect a romantic and intimate mood, while sans serif fonts are more contemporary.

"At the moment typewriter text is popular for couples who want something quirky and crafty," says Emily Anderson from Emmy Rose Exquisite Invitations.

"For a more relaxed and less formal style, opt for a natural handwritten font that still appears neat but moves away from a typical text look."

## PAPER CHASE

Quality paper is essential for wedding stationery, but try thinking beyond ivory or white stock. The Style Co. offer a range of alternative options including laser-cut designs, or leather bound and wooden invitations with engraved wording. The Style Co. designer Marie Cruz says it's worth tying in a key element of your wedding through the invitation. "For example, wooden invitations are great for creating a rustic feel and the timber complements an outdoor wedding, plus it's more of a keepsake and not something that people would want to throw away," she says.

## A SUITE OF IDEAS

When it comes to presenting the on-the-day elements of your stationery – place cards, settings, menus, bomboniere – the options are endless. You could present your wedding menu and table numbers on an easel, or name each table after places you have visited and include a story of each destination on a card.

And finally, don't forget thank-you cards! These are an important part of the process, allowing you to formally acknowledge and thank your guests.

To make your thank-you cards really special, try including a sentimental or personalised note to let guests know how you are enjoying married life.

"A short two to three lines stating how you're going, an anecdote from the wedding day or letting friends and family know how your honeymoon went is always well-received. "People want to know what's been happening since the wedding and always love a special story," says Emily. ◊



## WHEN TO SEND...

### Save the date cards and invitations:

*Sotiria Spirovski of Chicreative advises sending out a 'save-the-date' card six months prior to the ceremony if you are planning to hold your wedding during peak season (September–March) or if a lot of the guests will be travelling from interstate and overseas. "Make sure you send out your invitations including an RSVP card two months prior to the wedding date," she said.*

### Thank-you cards:

*"Waiting too long to receive a thank-you card is the worst form of etiquette," says Emily Anderson from Emmy Rose Exquisite Invitations. Send out thank-you notes no later than eight weeks after your wedding day.*

Sending out thank-you cards after the wedding celebration is a chance to formally acknowledge and thank your guests.



TOP: EMMY ROSE. BOTTOM: THE STYLE CO.