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Simple and Suite

Wedding Invitations That Wow

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY SALVATORE CINCOTTA PHOTOGRAPHY
STATIONERY BY INVITATIONS BY DESIGN

POCKET FOLDER



ENVELOPE WITH LINER



INVITATION



OUTER ENVELOPE

THE Basics

DETAILS CARD

Include your accommodation information, wedding website, and additional guest information. Split into multiple cards, if needed.

ENVELOPE

Use an outer and inner envelope to identify the invited guests. Weigh your assembled suite at the post office before adding the proper postage.

ENVELOPE LINER

Adds color and finesse to the inside of the envelope.

INVITATION

Indicates the who, what, when, and where of your big day.

POCKET FOLDER

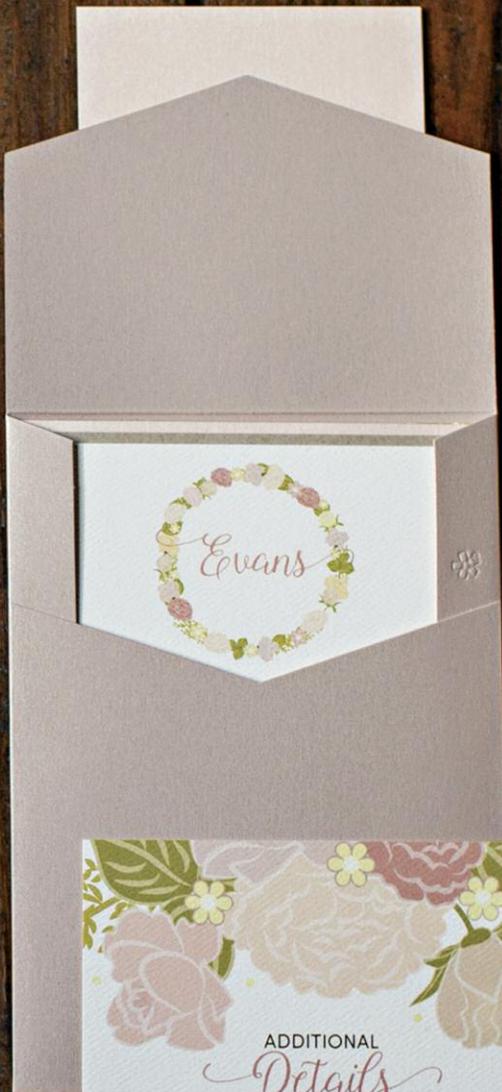
Keeps all items together and tidy. Another option is a belly band.

REPLY CARD

Gives guests a way to RSVP to your event. Also can be used to gather dinner selections and number of guests attending from each household.

REPLY ENVELOPE

Include postage for guests and host's address for ease of return.



REPLY CARD



REPLY ENVELOPE



DETAILS CARD



There is a difference between the little fill-in-the-blank invitations you used for your birthday party as a kid and the sophisticated – sometimes complicated – stationery sets that are appropriate for a modern wedding. But the truth is without an invitation, there is no wedding. So it's pretty imperative to get this right.

Let's break down this all-important piece of the matrimonial puzzle to ensure you're on the right track with your stationery suite.

What's the Big Deal?

The moment your save-the-dates arrive in the mail, your guests are already forming ideas about your wedding in their heads. A sophisticated, flourishing script? They're thinking formal. A classic, antique

font? They're thinking vintage-chic. These subtle clues give guests just enough detail to make some assumptions about how to prepare for your big day but leave them guessing when it comes to the bigger picture.

Enter phase two of the stationery suite: the invitation. By the time the invitation comes, guests are dying for more information about what kind of fabulous day you're planning. "Your invitations are your chance to really grab your guests' attention," explains Jessi Cabanin, owner and lead designer of **Just Invite Me**. "They emphasize the theme, the formality, and really set the tone of your wedding day." The design, font, content, and overall feel of the invitation give guests all they need to know about the wedding. It has the who, when, where, and what the heck do I wear.

"It shouldn't be the last thing you think about," says Kasey Larson, president of **DBY invitations**. "And the day after your wedding, it is one of the only tangible items of proof that the event happened. Until you get your photos back, all you have left is the well-loved wedding dress and your copy of the invitation. It's always the first thing guests see and the last element from the big day you have in hand."

Is Custom King?

Why go custom? "It's the experience," says Molly Axe, owner, artist, and designer of **Maxe Designs**. "Some couples have ideas but don't know what they want. Working with a stationer who specializes in custom design provides guidance."

"We understand budgets are a top concern," says Cabanin. "Working with a

smaller business will allow you to have more personal contact with the actual stationer.” That means more customization when it comes to what’s included in your package as well as the design.

“The cost difference is not really significant, but with a custom order, you will always get exactly what you want,” explains Larson. “A professional will also give you lots of guidance on etiquette and wording, and will help you every step along the way.”

Budget Breakdown

Which leads us to our next concern – the budget. Budget is a huge priority for most couples. How much should you spend? How much do various printing options cost? Is it worth going custom?

Because of the importance of the stationery, Larson recommends spending “an appropriate amount proportionate to your entire wedding.” Meaning, if you’re operating on a sky-is-the-limit budget for the event, opting for cheap invitations is not a great idea. “The style and quality does have an impact on how your family dresses, which can be important, especially in a venue where there are rules, such as a country club” she says. A DIY invitation does not prepare guests for the formality of a black-tie affair.

To all the tight budgeters out there, don’t worry. There are some truly creative ways to make a gorgeous stationery suite without breaking the bank. Consider what’s most important to you about the stationery and spend your money there.

If you love gold foil or embossed text, go for it! But consider only using that special option for your invitation rather than the

THE *Extras*

STICKER



MENU



FAVOR TAGS



FAVOR TAG

Use to denote favors in a coordinating style.

GUEST DOOR HANGER

Add to your welcome bag to identify your guests' suite as part of the event.

MENU

Entice guests with the evening's dining selections. It's a helpful detail for guests with dietary restrictions.

SOCIAL DETAILS

Include signage with custom wedding hashtags.

STICKER

Personalized way to seal the envelope or folder.

THANK YOU

Place in each welcome bag, thanking your guests for attending.

WELL WISHES

Leave a charming memento for guests to fill out for the couple as a keepsake.



GUEST DOOR HANGER



THANK YOU

SOCIAL DETAILS



THANK YOU



WELL WISHES

whole set. A stationer can help you create additional elements that still coordinate without spending the extra cash to have every item handpainted or letterpressed. The set will look gorgeous and complete, and the invitation will really stand out. Plus, your pocket book will love it.

Say you're all about opulence. Go to town on the invitation, but opt for a simple, white envelope. It cuts costs and really surprises your guests when they crack that baby open. And when designing, make sure to mind the extras. Every pocket, flap, and ribbon will add to the overall total. Don't forget to account for postage in your budget, and remember that irregularly shaped envelopes, like squares, can cost more to mail.

A Numbers Game

One huge way to ensure you stay within budget is to make sure you order the right amount of stationery. Many couples think if you're inviting 150 guests, you need 150 invitations. Wrong. The fact is, most of those invitations are going to families, couples, and singles with a plus one, so it's the number of households that will be most important.

Ordering an invitation for each guest can be a costly mistake, so calculate carefully using Larson's strategy. "The most accurate way is to create a master guest list and count the number of addresses you need to mail to – don't forget to include yourselves," she explains. "If that is too daunting, you can estimate your number needed

by taking the total guest count, dividing by two (one invite per couple) and then add ten more invitations to that total."

It's true, you definitely don't want to forget to order a few extra invitations. "Always add at least five or ten extras in case of post office loss and to save as souvenirs," says Larson. You never know when someone might pop up. Oh, you didn't invite your mom's best friend's childhood nanny? Good thing you've got a spare invitation.

Today, it's rare to find a couple who has a complete list of contact information and addresses for their entire family and friends. While there are certainly some adorable options for those cute, pocket-size address books, they're just not very common these



Dancing the Night Away

EMILY ANDERSON AND
ROBERT NIERZWICKI

On vacation to Washington Island in Door County, Wisconsin, where Emily had vacationed as a child, Robert proposed. They had “spent the day biking around the island” and enjoyed a picnic on a cliff overlooking the water. Robert asked Emily to marry him just after the sun had set.

The ceremony was held at St. John Neumann in St. Charles. “I’m glad we made the decision to have our ceremony in a church. I knew this was an important part of marriage to Robert and his family,” says Emily. “Robert is Catholic and although I was baptized, I was not raised with religion in my life. Our priest was very open and welcomed me.”

Guests wandered through Hotel Baker’s beautiful rose garden with cocktails, then retired to the historic Rainbow Room for dinner. A lovely blend of burgundy and deep purple dahlias were accented by pink and ivory roses. The rich floral designs and gold candelabras created the perfect ambiance.

To ensure the day was beautiful, loving, and fun, the couple set the tone through music and dance. “Having such a historic venue made us want to bring the vibe back a few years,” explains Emily. “We chose to do this with the music we played.” Emily and Robert made their debut on the dance floor with their first dance to a choreographed Fox Trot, and golden oldies kept the dance floor packed through the evening. The newlyweds were thrilled that their “plans came together to create this beautiful experience for our family and friends!”

WRITTEN BY *EMILY VANDEVENDER*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *MICHAEL NOVO PHOTOGRAPHY*



Real Wedding Vendors

CEREMONY: St. John Neumann Catholic Church • OFFICIANT: Fr. David Peck

RECEPTION: Hotel Baker • WEDDING CONSULTANT: You Name It Events

PHOTOGRAPHY: Michael Novo Photography • VIDEOGRAPHY: RED Weddings

BRIDE'S GOWN: Tickled Pink Bridal Boutique • BRIDESMAIDS' DRESSES: House of Brides

HAIR: Haylie Pop • MAKEUP: Nicole Parejko • **STATIONERY: Invitations by Design**

FORMALWEAR: Trunk Club | Men's Wearhouse • CATERING: Hotel Baker

SWEETS: Oak Mill Bakery • FLORAL: Town & Country Gardens

ENTERTAINMENT: Music by Design • TRANSPORTATION: Spare Wheels Transportation

