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# PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Elegant invitations set the tone for a wedding, from formal to fun and plenty in between

By Christa L. Vagnozzi



THE SURPRISE AND EXCITEMENT OF your engagement has toned down just a bit. You've booked the sites for the ceremony and reception. You've chosen the perfect wedding gown and bridesmaid dresses. It is now six months before the Big Day, and the time has

come to select your one-and-only wedding invitation. Although you won't be putting these all-important correspondences in the mail for another four or five months, it's never too early to start looking for an invitation that will set the tone of your wedding. "The more time couples have, the less harried they'll be," says Bill Fitzpatrick, owner and principal designer of Cyrano Designs in West Chester.

And with the abundance of eclectic styles, shapes and textures, in addition to the traditional engraved black script on heavy ecru card stock, the sky is the limit.

### Saving the Date

EVEN BEFORE THE INK HAS DRIED ON THE INVITATIONS, couples are announcing the logistics of their Big Day

Photographs by Michael Weiss  
Styling by Sara Lynn Tarataglia



### PICTURE THIS

Imagery, monograms and motifs spark anticipation for those who receive them. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: a tripled accordion save-the-date card, Arak Kanofsky Studios, Roseto; a monogrammed invitation, Crane & Co., King of Prussia; a bridal-shower invitation with a wedding-shoe motif by Inviting Company, The Papery, Philadelphia; a blue trifold invitation with a green gerbera daisy and ribbon, Cyrano Designs, West Chester; an invitation with a starfish motif, Two Paper Dolls, Wayne; and a gatefold invitation with an antique map, Arak Kanofsky Studios. Accessories include silver scissors with a grapevine motif, \$60. Details, Philadelphia. Turn to page 200 for additional shopping information.

up to a year in advance, especially for holiday and destination weddings where hotel accommodations and flight information may be required for guests.

Whether the design of these save-the-date cards are coordinated with the forthcoming invites or stand alone as whimsical entreaties is completely up to you.

Earlier this year, Fitzpatrick created a comic-book version of a save-the-date with Lichtensteinesque illustrations of a couple embracing, people whispering and then someone circling their calendar.

"I've also started including little stickers with the couple's name and motif in the save-the-date cards so that guests can peel them off and mark their calendars," he says.

### Making the Most of Color

Whether you choose a bold magenta gerbera daisy as your wedding motif, a hand-painted saturated sepia tone or a timeless creamy ivory or pearl white, color is one aspect of your invitation worth special attention.

### A Signature Look

The key to having a one-of-a-kind wedding invitation is to incorporate a signature look using design elements

that reflect the location of the wedding or the couple's personalities.

A romantic photo of an engaged couple planning to wed in Rehoboth, Delaware, was the focal point of a recent invitation designed by Fitzpatrick. "They wanted to use a picture, so I told them to have one taken of themselves sitting on the beach looking toward the ocean, but have it taken from behind," he says. "It was a little more stylistic." On the invitation, the photograph was placed underneath a vellum overlay. "Using pictures does require a certain amount of cooperation on the couple's part," says Fitzpatrick.

### A Multi Cultural Affair

Brides and groom are looking for ways to blend their ethnic backgrounds, without losing their own identities. "It's neat when you can give each family equal weight," says Fitzpatrick. "And then there is the practical matter of dealing with the family members who do not speak English."

To accommodate the multicultural couple, Fitzpatrick suggests a version of each language in the design. "It's done in an artistic way for functional reasons, but also to blend the families," he says.

### Paper Trail

In addition to colors, motifs and printing, the actual paper used in the wedding invitation is now playing a starring role, especially when different textures are layered upon one another.

Vellum certainly is a mainstay in the industry, especially for overlays involving motifs and photographs. The type of vellum generally used in invitations has a smooth finish, and commonly is referred to as translucent paper. The heavier the vellum stock, the more opaque it will be. Fitzpatrick incorporates many vellum overlays into his designs to create dimension. "I usually attach the vellum at the top so that you can lift it up and see what is peeking through beneath," he says.

### Sending It With Style

How to package your wedding invitation all depends on the experience you want to create for your guests.

Following function and form, Fitzpatrick's invitations almost look like miniature portfolios. "They are very presentational," he says. When you open one of his designs, there is an intentional place for all the necessities, from the reception card to the hotel accommodations and directions. "Everything has its own special place

in the packet." Sometimes it is all tied together with ribbon or a band decorated with a motif.

Once everything is put together, it is time to deliver your invitations to the postman. But, before they are signed, sealed and delivered to your guests, there is the matter of the double envelope.

According to tradition, when mail carriers would deliver wedding invitations on horseback, the outside envelopes would get filthy with dirt and dust. For a clean presentation, the mail carrier would pull the invitation out of the dirty envelope just before it was hand-delivered. Hence the need for an additional envelope with only the guest's name penned on the front.

Today, it is less expensive and more environmentally friendly to have just one outside envelope. But, in the end, like all other aspects of your invitation, and your entire wedding, the choice is completely up to you. **EW**