

style

No. 2
Cover your invite in vintage scrollwork. Vintage bookplate invitation, grapevinepaperie.com



21 stationery ideas

From save-the-dates to invitations, here's what's hot on paper.
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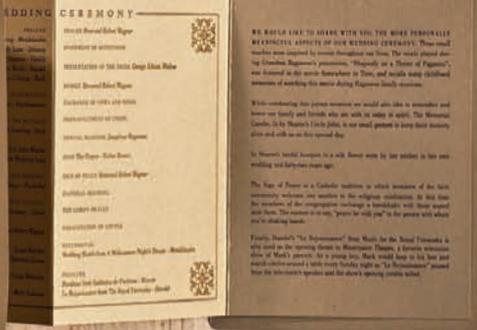


No. 5
Give your monogram a makeover. Envelope and reply card with letterpress monogram, elizabethandhomer.com

No. 8
Go for bold splashes of color. Table number, saimasaysdesign.com



No. 11
Downsize your ceremony programs. Gold accordion-folded programs, saimasaysdesign.com



No. 16
Don't forget about the back. Double-sided invite suite with flowering branch silhouette, elizabethandhomer.com



When it comes to your wedding, you want to stamp your own personal style on every aspect. In the business world, they call this "branding." In the wedding world, the branding begins and ends with your stationery. Use your stationery to pull together the entire look of your wedding day. Just select a color, monogram, and font; then run with them. Here we offer 21 hot ideas to help you create a stationery suite that's just as unique as the two of you are. >>

1 Gold Is the New Black

Gold has made a comeback in fashion and accessories. This luxe color is now popping up in wedding stationery too. Lisa Hoffman, owner of Ceci New York, a custom stationery boutique, has created invites using gold papers, gold engraving, and gold-lined envelopes.

BRANDING 101 To take full advantage of this metal, wear gold heels, use gold utensils, and dip some cocktail glasses in gold-dusted sugar.

2 Vintage Flair

Many couples want a vintage look. Karen Bartolomei, owner of Grapevine in Boston, designs vintage-style invitations inspired by Parisian soap label art, Givenchy couture, and swirl or damask patterns.

BRANDING 101 Give your cake baker a copy of your invitation and then ask them to decorate the cake using a similar design.

3 Eco-Friendly Elements

Eco-friendly stationery doesn't mean you need to sacrifice style. If you like the look of letterpress, 100 percent cotton paper—the choice of most stationers, including Saima Khan, creator of Saima Says Design in Washington, DC—works beautifully. Other green options: recycled or seed-embedded paper, wood veneers, and soy-based ink.

BRANDING 101 An excellent option is to pick a caterer who uses locally grown or organic ingredients to create their menus.

4 Postcard Save-the-Dates

Khan creates save-the-dates fashioned after classic posters in the form of postcards. Not only does this make for easy mailing, but it can also be a wonderful way to set the tone for a destination wedding. Maren Ogden, owner of the letterpress stationer Elizabeth and Homer in Utah, likes the laid-back vibe of the postcard look for something fun and different. She then adds letterpress to the back for a more formal touch.

BRANDING 101 Name all your reception tables after places you've been together using a postcard from each of the destinations.

5 Modern Monograms

Monograms are getting a makeover. Khan sees them becoming more thematic, with stylistic elements like elaborate ampersands. Rather than a simple font, consider using intertwined initials for an updated look.

BRANDING 101 Don't overdo it; limit yourself to two or three places.

6 Escort Card Cocktails

For a small wedding, Hoffman loves escort cards hanging off of a cocktail's swizzle stick. Have waiters stationed with trays at the entrance so guests can pick up their drink and discover their seat at the same time.

BRANDING 101 Keep the vibe intimate. Instead of the standard chicken or beef, allow guests to take their pick off an à la carte menu. >>



calligraphy 101

How to achieve this ultraformal technique

WHAT IT COSTS

Artists that handcraft each address can charge anywhere from \$2 to \$10 per envelope. For an entire invitation (inner and outer envelopes, plus return address on response cards), the price jumps significantly.

SELECTING A SCRIPT

The range of styles may seem overwhelming at first; your final choice should look great and reflect the day's tone.

FINDING YOUR CALLIGRAPHER

Your printer can often refer calligraphers, and portfolios of calligraphers' work are usually found on the Internet. You can also ask friends for recommendations.

DECIDING FACTORS

Before you sign, confirm fees, ask about minimum orders, get a list of any references, and inquire

about their backgrounds. Quality comes with experience, so be wary of someone who's a novice.

AVOIDING ERRORS

Once you've made your final decision, you'll be asked to give your calligrapher a typed address list (handwritten lists may cause errors). Check your list twice and make sure someone else familiar with the names takes a look as well. When ordering your invitations, get some extra envelopes just in case there's a slip-up. It's recommended to order 25 percent extra.

FINISHING TOUCHES

When you receive the finished product from your calligrapher, check (and double-check) each invitation and envelope.

address please

A crash course in addressing envelopes

The Inner Envelope

Address in a more informal fashion—usually only title abbreviations and last name. List all invitees at the address, including kids (e.g., Mr. and Mrs. Estonia & Farrah).

The Outer Envelope

Write recipients' full names, official titles, first names, and so on; no cutting corners with Dr., NY, or St. For example:

SINGLE RECIPIENT

If they plan to bring a date you know, get the person's address and send a separate invite.

*Ms. Abigail Ansch
44 Acorn Drive
Houston, Texas 1111*

MARRIED COUPLE, TRADITIONAL

*Mr. and Mrs. Harold Paris
92 Pacific Avenue
New York, New York 12121*

MARRIED COUPLE, MODERN

*Harold and Emma Paris
92 Pacific Avenue
New York, New York 12121*

MARRIED, DIFFERENT LAST NAMES, OR UNMARRIED COUPLE, LIVING TOGETHER

List alphabetically, on own lines if unmarried.

*Connie Chideya @ Doctor Darren Duncan
18 Blueberry Road
Boston, Massachusetts 30303*

INVITED WITH KIDS

Kids under 18 need not be on the outer envelope, but those 18 and over appear on their parents' or preferably get their own.

*Mr. and Mrs. Ebert Estonia @ Farrah Estonia
195 Oak Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 51515*

7 Gray Is the New Brown

One color trend that we love: steel gray. This ultracool color can be used in a modern way by teaming it with robin's egg blue or raspberry pink. The look is softer than chocolate brown, but it's more than stylish enough to carry through a contemporary wedding style.

BRANDING 101 Dress your maids in steel gray with a robin's egg blue sash. Add gray to the flowers with dusty miller or silver brunia.

8 Classic Patterns, Unexpected Colors

Modern couples put a new spin on the traditional invite by using bright, bold colors. For a formal wedding, an invitation featuring a damask or brocade-inspired print could appear in fuchsia, light blue, or black.

BRANDING 101 Consider dressing your bridesmaids in different yet coordinating colors and patterns for a look that is mixed-and-matched.

9 Easy RSVPs

To save paper and make it easier on guests, stationers attach stamped response cards with perforated edges to the invite so you can detach and mail the card. The smallest details really can make the biggest impact.

BRANDING 101 The perforated reply cards are only the beginning. Don't forget to create a wedding website where your guests can get regular updates on all the wedding details—yet another cool wow factor.

10 Custom-Made Stamps

Hoffman designs postage stamps to match your invitation design using a pattern, monogram, or motif. These custom stamps add a unique touch and eliminate excess stamps since you can customize the amount.

BRANDING 101 Take a cue from your stamps; pull your monogram or motif into the designs for cocktail napkins, favor tags, and place cards.

11 Downsized Programs

For a wedding keepsake, Kahn recommends that her clients do a smaller program and explore different yet stylish ways to fold them so that departing guests won't simply leave them behind. A four-by-six-inch accordion fold can easily fit inside a purse or pocket.

BRANDING 101 Bring the look of folds into other parts of your reception by way of napkins, table numbers, and textured cake designs.

12 Couture Envelopes

The look of your invitation doesn't stop with the reply card; you should pay close attention to the envelopes too. It makes sense because the envelope is a guest's first glimpse at your invitation's style. Beautiful liners in coordinating colors and patterns make this otherwise ordinary packaging necessity a cool keepsake in its own right.

BRANDING 101 Envelopes are just the beginning. It really is all about the details. (See our "12 Wedding Details Not to Miss.") >>

13 Material World

For additional richness, designers use high-end fabrics like silks, velvet, and ribbon. Hoffman designed a luxe invite with a purple velvet wrap, while Kahn favors double-faced satin or organza ribbons.

BRANDING 101 If you like ribbons, you can incorporate them into your escort card display by utilizing complementary colors and patterns. Also have your florist use them as a wrap for boutonnières.

14 Signature Silhouettes

Whether it's birds perched on flowering branches or a woody scene of towering birch trees, silhouettes are quickly becoming an invite classic. These shadowy designs will provide a whimsical yet refined and sophisticated touch to all of your wedding stationery.

BRANDING 101 Use a signature silhouette in unexpected places, like a Tord Boontje curtain to separate the cocktail hour and reception.

15 Boxed-up Invites

For a grand presentation, consider packaging your invitations in custom-made boxes. Approximately \$1.80 to mail, Khan's boxes can be silk-covered or made with elegant yet thick paper, while Hoffman prefers to have hers wrapped up in some high-quality ribbon.

BRANDING 101 Why stop with the invite? Use coordinating boxes for packaging favors, slices of wedding cake, and attendant gifts.

16 Double-Sided Invites

The back of a piece of paper can make a bigger impression than the front. From invitations to menu cards, two-sided stationery pieces wow guests. Ogden favors a simple design on the front, and then she laminates the back with a coordinating pattern or solid-colored paper.

BRANDING 101 Consider choosing some linens that match your paper's pattern, such as toile if you're having a country-chic affair.

17 Getting Personal

For small guest lists, some of Hoffman's clients will actually sign each of their invitations and hand-deliver them to each guest. While this can be quite time-consuming, it can also be a memorable, personal touch.

BRANDING 101 Ask your cake baker to decorate your cake with scripted words taken from a line of your favorite poem or your wedding vows.

18 Relaxed Wording

As more and more couples host their own weddings, invitation wording is changing to keep up with the trend. Formal wording, beginning with the parents' names, is no longer a necessity. Instead, the invite should reflect the nature of the event. For a destination wedding that is hosted by the couple, the invite might say, "Join us in paradise as we say our vows" or "We invite you to join us in a celebration of love."



the season's hottest trend Gold scrollwork and fonts up the formality of an ice blue invitation.

BRANDING 101 Create a relaxed vibe at the reception with a family-style dinner. Have a photo booth on hand so guests can take silly pictures.

19 Beyond Paper

Wedding invitations can be printed on almost anything. Hoffman often works with Plexiglas and custom-molds stones for a three-dimensional save-the-date. Other options: wood veneer, glass, even chocolate.

BRANDING 101 If you choose something other than paper, such as wood, you can also use it as a foundation for your centerpieces.

20 Many a Motif

Rather than having just one motif (think flip-flops for a beach wedding), Hoffman sometimes will design two or three icons to unify all the pieces. For example, call out each of your events (like the welcome party and the reception) with its own motif on the RSVP card. Ogden also likes using a small starfish on the save-the-date followed by a conch shell on the invite to create a striking mix-and-match look.

BRANDING 101 You can incorporate three-dimensional versions of your motif in your décor, such as adding shell accents to your bouquet.

21 Destination Wedding Sets

With destination weddings on the rise, the demand for all-inclusive stationery has greatly increased. Rather than having multiple invites for each event, Hoffman can design a three-panel RSVP instead. She is also the creator of the popular airline ticket-inspired invitation, which is a perfect method for ensuring that all of your guests will be properly excited about their upcoming travel plans.

BRANDING 101 Have your invitation design hand-sewn or printed onto the welcome bags and favors (like wine or water bottles) for your guests.



See hundreds of stationery photos at theknot.com/invitations