

# Alluring Invites

The first hint your guests receive about your wedding, your invitations should reflect your style and complement your fashion choices. Regardless of what kind of wedding you're having, here are tips to make sure your invites fit the feel of your big day.

## A FORMAL AFFAIR

Personalize each guest's name on the invitation. Instead of saying, "We request the honor of your presence," have it state, "We request the honor of Mr. and Mrs. John Smith." Hire a hand calligrapher to create individual invitations, or select an invitation brand like Encore Studios (pictured above) that can personalize each name on the invitation as they are printed. You also can adorn your invitation with a rhinestone, Swarovski crystal or other rich-looking appliqué.

Think outside the envelope, and send invitations in gift boxes. When you use a gift box, enclose it in an outer box so the invitation arrives pristine and undamaged. You also can include a personalized USB device that is programmed to open your wedding Web site.

If you do not want any gifts, send an enclosure that asks guests to send a donation to a worthwhile charity.

## GREEN WEDDING

You can go to extremes to have a greener wedding, but one easy step to take is to invite fewer people to the wedding. This will cut back on the number of invitations, reduce gas consumption spent traveling to and from the wedding, and produce less waste. However, there are ways to have a greener wedding yet still invite all the people with whom you want to share the day.

The best way to be aware of paper usage is to conserve rather than eliminate. Send one invitation to a household, instead of sending a separate invitation to each grown child. Eliminate the extra paper used for a reception card by including it as a footnote on the bottom of the invitation. Offer an electronic or voice mail response rather than sending out a response card. Use 100-percent cotton paper, which is "treeless paper." Encore Studios has many options in its *The Classic Collection*.

## DESTINATION WEDDING

Don't compromise on elegance simply because many destination weddings are informal. Add a tasteful motif to your invitation. Pick something that shows your style, whether it is a seashell, a palm tree or something reflective of the destination. You easily can research and find clip art that will be tasteful and appropriate. Also accentuate that motif by having it printed in an ink color that contrasts with the color of the invitation text.

When planning your invitation list, have two separate lists. Send invitations to friends and family you want to invite—the people you'd like to have spend the weekend with you on the most important day of your life. Send an announcement of the wedding either after the day is over or one that announces when the day will be to those people on the second list. These are people who you would invite if you were having a local wedding, but who you don't see as part of your intimate, destination wedding weekend.

Because travel arrangements need to be made in advance, send a Save the Date card once you are firm on the date, time and location of the wedding. The intricate details can be shared in the invitation, which also should be sent out far earlier than an invitation to a local wedding.

Along with the invitation, response set and reservation options for accommodations, make sure to include an itinerary of all activities that will take place during the weekend, both before and after the wedding.

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