

# The First Impression



## What Wedding Invitations Say About Your Personal Style

Brides have always desired a beautiful wedding, but these days they also insist that celebrations be unique, creative and a reflection of personal style. From the moment the date is set and save-the-date cards are sent, to the mailing of the last thank-you note, paper quality, design and presentation do more than announce and document an event; they play an important role in defining a wedding's style and personality.

### Where creative weddings begin

From formal to casual and from classic to creative, weddings are as unique as each couple being married. Today, 200,000 weddings each year, or nearly one in every ten, are "destination weddings" held on a beach, in a fanciful garden, or even on board a ship. The range of events, from traditional fairy-tale weddings to the more informal and personal ceremonies and parties, has created the need for a greater selection of designs to express the style of the event to family and guests.

Both traditional stationers such as Crane & Co., Inc. and niche retailers such as Jim Parry Designs of Catasauqua and Heirloom Invitations of New Britain, PA have recognized the desire couples have to begin setting the tone of their wedding with their invitation.

Crane & Co., Inc., founded in 1801 and still owned and managed by the Crane family, has for many generations set the standard for wedding invitations and stationery. Their traditional white and ecru cotton papers, with fine, engraved text, have heralded the joyous unions of millions of happy couples.

Today, in response to the increasing demand for more casual and personal presentation, Crane's now offers, through its New Traditions Weddings album, a festive new selection of invitation designs. A new fashion-forward direction for wedding invitations, the New Traditions album includes eye-catching paper colors, vellum and shimmering inner envelopes and linings, new lettering styles, layouts, formats, motifs, monograms and frames. And to further broaden printing and design options for brides, Crane's is now offering the Old-World elegance of letterpress in addition to engraving and thermography.



"Weddings are one of the most joyous of life's events," said Lansing E. Crane, chairman and CEO of the family business. "Each couple has their own unique style—one that will be reflected first in their wedding invitation, through their ceremony and then throughout their lives together. We're



**Custom invitations like this clever dinner party request can be adapted for bridal showers, engagement parties, or your post-wedding soirees; by Inkredible Invitations, Allentown, 610.398.8599**

always honored when couples select Crane invitations, and we're very pleased to offer these exciting new designs for their consideration." Crane consultants are available online to discuss your particular needs.

### Patterns on paper

Heirloom Invitations invites the consumer to "step outside the catalog" when invitation shopping. "The entire style and tone of an event or wedding starts with the invitations," says Kimberly Kardos-Bensing of Heirloom. "My invitations truly reflect the personality of the event, and convey what is meaningful to the hosts."

Kardos-Bensing's work garnered her a Silver Addy Award in 2003 for invitations she created for the opening of Blue Restaurant in Bethlehem.

"What ever the budget is, [brides] want something unique, something that reflects their personality and something that is going to excite their guests and make them want to attend their wedding. I totally agree ... that the first impression of a wedding is the invitation. It should reflect what the wedding is all about, whether through color, theme or style," says Jim Parry, of Jim Parry Designs, Catasauqua.

Parry says traditional brides are asking for elegant styles and contemporary brides are asking for bold designs using bold colors like orange, red and black. As far as trends go, everything old is new again.

"Retro design is making a strong come back. You are noticing it in the food and beverage industry with the popular drinks such as martinis, grasshoppers, side cars, etc. You're seeing it in decorating industry with bold geometric patterns in bold colors. You're seeing it in the invitation industry with bold patterns on papers," says Parry.

Once the style has been chosen, brides need to keep two things in mind: quality and consistency. The best paper and design reflect how much a couple cares for their guests and the importance of their commitment to each other. A coordinated presentation for invitations, reception and reply cards, thank-you notes and envelopes creates a harmony in concert with the occasion.

With such appealing "new traditions" in fine paper now available for couples, choosing the perfect wedding statement should be an enjoyable experience and create a lasting impression for cherished family and friends.

Crane's Stationery is available locally at The Moravian Bookshop, Bethlehem or by visiting [www.crane.com](http://www.crane.com). Contact Jim Parry at [jimparrydesigns@aol.com](mailto:jimparrydesigns@aol.com), or call 610.264.8002. For more information on Heirloom visit [www.heirloom-occasions.com](http://www.heirloom-occasions.com). Heirloom is located at 9 East Butler Avenue in New Britain, PA 215.230.8223.

**This invitation ensemble began with a romantic engagement announcement and included coordinated thank-you cards; by Heirloom of New Britain, PA**

