

# destination weddings & honeymoons

winter 2006

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# aisle file



1. "Montawk" by Paper Fetish Design Studio, 2. "Belize" by Bliss Ink, 3. "Pink Whimsy" by Palé Blue Hanky Press, approximately \$100, 4. "Peonies" by A Papier, approximately \$100, 5. "Starfish" by Alia Designs, 6. "Exotic" by Bliss Ink, 7. "Expressions of Love" by Encore Studios, approximately \$100, 8. "Orchid" by Alia Designs, approximately \$100



# inside invites

make a great first impression — and get your guests to say yes

by melissa lamkin

Invitations not only announce your plans to marry, but also give your guests a hint as to what's in store and create excitement for the big day. As destination weddings become more popular, invitation etiquette is changing. We talked with industry pros to see what's new — and to learn their top tips for how to make your invites stand out from the crowd.

## The Experts

Puneet Messler, cofounder and creative director for Alia Designs. Corina Van Sluytman, owner and creative director for Bella Invites. Melissa Powlas, Hallmark creative expert.

**Q** What are some of the latest trends in regards to destination wedding invitations?

**A** Your destination wedding is an expression of your personal style, and your invitations should reflect that. Nowadays couples are trading traditional papers for rich fabrics like suede, silk or linen. They're also creating fabulous presentations in fabric boxes with favors and embellishments

that represent their locale. For instance, for a moonlight ceremony on a beach, we recently adorned a midnight blue silk box invitation with a sapphire rhinestone-studded brooch; in another case, we placed confetti "snow" inside a sheer ivory pouch for a winter wedding. — Messler

A big trend is incorporating images and motifs that represent the destination. When we worked with a couple who were marrying in a castle in Scotland, we used a photo of the castle as the background. — Van Sluytman

**Q** What can you expect to spend on invitations? Where do couples tend to splurge, and where can they save?

**A** We generally work with high-end weddings, so our range is anywhere from \$35 to \$135 per invitation depending on the materials and style. Since destination weddings tend to be more intimate affairs, fewer invitation ensembles are needed, and couples are willing to spend a little more for a memorable keepsake. — Messler

Costs vary depending on the couple's invitation budget. Some couples are spending a lot of money to fly their guests to the location, so they opt for the more moderately priced invitations to balance things out (we have ones that start at \$6 each). Other couples are looking for something unique

and customized, and will splurge for personalization. — Van Sluytman

The average cost varies greatly depending on the guest list. When the guest list is smaller — often the case with destination weddings — there is an opportunity to splurge on the invitations. Because couples planning destination weddings often provide their guests with additional items such as travel info and weekend itineraries, they should consider all the printed elements they will need when planning their budget for wedding correspondence. — Powlas

**Q** How does invitation etiquette for a destination wedding differ from traditional events?

**A** With the popularity of destination weddings in recent years, a whole new set of etiquette has emerged. You definitely need to send save-the-date cards and actual invitations out to guests with plenty of time for them to make travel plans. I recommend that save-the-date cards be sent at least six months and invitations at least four months before the event. If the wedding is in a popular



location or if rooms have not been blocked out for guests, you should send them even sooner. — **Messler**

**Q** What are the guidelines for travel info — should it be included with the invitation, or sent separately?

**A** The most important thing on the invite is the ceremony information. All additional details, such as travel and hotel suggestions, the program of events and activities, can appear on enclosures that graphically match the ceremony invite, creating a cohesive look to the ensemble. Some couples choose to send the additional information with the save-the-date cards, while others prefer to include the materials in the wedding invitation ensemble. — **Messler**

I recommend sending all the information in one invitation so your guests know details about the travel aspects when making their initial decision to attend. It's nice to include

a card that outlines the interesting things to do in the area, such as local golf courses, tours or day trips, and perhaps a map so guests can familiarize themselves with the destination. Later, you can send specific itineraries to confirmed guests, or add itineraries to the welcome packages in their rooms. — **Van Sluytman**

Generally guests are responsible for arranging their own accommodations and flights. Research hotel, flight and destination information and do what you can to find affordable and convenient options for every guest. Some couples choose to send out a newsletter with all the information for travel and hotels, as well as recreational activities that may be available. — **Powlas**

**Q** Many couples establish wedding websites. Is this an effective way to promote your event?

**A** Sending out large wedding brochures can become cumbersome.

Personal websites are an easy way to post event info, and they can be a valuable online portal for guests who wish to make travel arrangements, reserve rooms, sign up for activities, even RSVP with meal choices. Guests can also be kept up-to-date on changes to the itinerary, and exchange messages with each other and the bride and groom. — **Messler**

A lot of these websites are free or are available for a small fee. This is an excellent way to quickly revise event information without having to phone or e-mail changes to all of your guests. Another benefit is that many sites can be used for at least a year, so you may also use the site to share photos and memories with guests after the event. — **Van Sluytman**

Establishing a website can be very helpful, but in my opinion, websites should only be considered a supplement to printed information. Remember, not all of your guests may have easy access to the Internet. — **Powlas**

FOR MORE INFO, SEE THE 411 ON PAGE 127.

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