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What's Your Wedding Program Style?

By:

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So here is where you define your style for your wedding programs. Check off the styles that call out to you right now, and be prepared to love elements in *several* different categories. Graphic designers say they are pulling different elements from a range of styles to custom-create programs that capture a multi-faceted couple's wishes. You have that freedom as well, so don't limit yourself to just one section here:

Traditional

Formal

_____ A crisp white or ecru dual-fold program in a square, rectangular or elongated rectangular shape, with black lettering and print in italics.

_____ The cover features your names and wedding date on the front cover, perhaps with a title of ‘Our Wedding,’ perhaps with a traditional bridal graphic or your monogram.

_____ The wording inside follows the traditional model:

* On the left-hand side, the Who’s Who listing: parents, bridal party, officiant, musicians, readers, and other players in the wedding ceremony

*On the right-hand side, the complete, step-by-step elements of the wedding ceremony, from processional music (with composer name) and the musician’s name, the readings, vows, exchanging of rings, and all other elements as you have planned for your ceremony

* On the back cover, a note from the two of you thanking your guests for attending and your parents for a lifetime of support, plus your at-home address and e-mail

_____ There are usually no adornments to the traditional wedding program. It’s designed to match the formality and style of the invitation, and it connotes ‘elegance’ and ‘simplicity.’

Traditional, Modern:

_____ The wedding program is printed on colored card stock, with colored fonts, with a more modern graphic on the front.

_____ Gone are the traditional, bridal pictures of rings, doves, and wedding bells, replaced by a photo of the two of you, or your monogram or logo

_____ Your names are shown in a gorgeous font on the top and bottom corners of the program cover.

_____ The design colormatches the décor and color theme of your celebration

_____ The wording inside usually follows the traditional ‘lineup,’ but is printed in colored font – one style of font is usually key – and may be oversized for guests’ easy reading.

_____ While this type of invitation may be dual-fold like a greeting card, it’s also coming in tri-fold or booklet form.

_____ Booklet form allows you to have smaller pages to contain the traditional wording script, or you might design additional pages with separate messages for your parents and for your guests.

_____ Booklet pages allow you to print your wedding vows (since guests might not be able to hear them so clearly at the ceremony site.)

_____ Booklet pages allow you to include descriptive explanations of any cultural or religious rituals in your ceremony

_____ Secure modern booklet pages at the top corner with hole punch and ribbon tie or charm-tied ribbon.

_____ Attached booklet pages do double-duty as a fan on hot days. Modern formal programs might be adorned with a ribbon tie at the top of a single-panel program, or a ribbon tie for a booklet that’s been constructed out of six to eight *separate* card stock pages hole-punched at the top left-hand corner. These flip-books, then, become a unique design and guests can spread out the pages to make a fan for hot weather days.

Trendy:

_____ Wedding programs are printed on heavier card stock

_____ Trendy programs are adorned such as with a jeweled tassel

_____ Oversized and artistic fonts (such as an enlarged first letter of a word, or of your names.)

_____ Trendy colors are bright reds, bright oranges, turquoises for a beach wedding, elegant chocolate brown print on cream-colored or pink pages. It's all about color on two levels – the foundation pages and the print.

_____ For graphics, use dramatic monograms or logos rather than photos.

_____ With your wording, add personal messages, quotes from the famous and from your relatives (such as Dad's advice on a happy marriage), even humor and your conversational style.

_____ Vow wording is usually included along with descriptions of ceremony elements

_____ A message from the two of you is usually more celebratory than solemn, such as a back cover that says "Now...let's party!" or "Let the champagne corks fly!"

Green/Organic:

_____ Wedding programs may be printed on organic or beautiful recycled paper, even papers from exotic lands where artisans hand-make papers to support their communities. It's a global/social responsibility thing, where couples who have every advantage in life use their weddings as a way to support Third World societies.

_____ Colors are blush and natural, such as a light sage green, buttercup yellow, the purples of lavender and lilacs, and graphics feature willow trees, tulips, waterfalls, sturdy evergreens, bright Gerbera daisies, garden or ocean vistas, forest and mountain scenes, sunsets.

_____ You can use the traditional program wording format, or custom-write your wording to reflect the beauty of the site you've selected.

_____ Choose from single panel (which most do, to cut down on paper usage) to dual- or tri-fold, or booklet form.

_____ Consider program card stock cut into the rounded shape of a large stone, or of a leaf or flower.

Cultural:

_____ For a deeply cultural ceremony, or the cultural first-ceremony to come before the western second ceremony – as some cultures do – use the colors of the heritage, such as reds and golds for an Asian ceremony.

_____ You might print the left-hand side of your program in English and the right-hand page in the language of your background so that all of your guests can follow along

_____ Or design two separate programs in each language. _____ Include explanations of cultural rituals, of course, and even definitions of some words that will be used in the ceremony.

Destination:

_____ Your program can be printed on an actual fan for those hot tropical days and nights

_____ Or design any panel style of program in island colors, such as a aquamarine blue print on a lighter blue card stock, or Bird of Paradise yellows, reds and oranges. Citrus colors also work, like lemon, lime, orange and ruby red grapefruit. Or, match your program to the color of the sunset with majestic purples and blues and pinks and golds.

_____ Your wording may include some of the traditional formal content, such as the steps of the ceremony and the names of your bridal party and parents, but it may also include local sayings and romantic quotes, even quotes from *you*.