

ANNOUNCING THE BIG DAY INVITATIONS»

by RENNIE ACKERMAN



Custom thank-you notes from Inviting Arts in Berkeley Heights.



the art of the **thank you**

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YOU'VE RETURNED FROM YOUR HONEYMOON, your gown is tucked away, and your wedding “to do” list is finally finished, right? Not so fast. One detail remains: the notorious thank yous. With just a

little bit of effort, you can craft memorable, heartfelt thank-you notes even if you're not quite the natural wordsmith.

While the rule of thumb is to have all of the thank yous done and in the mail six weeks after the wedding, taking

the time to make them personal and memorable would be more worthwhile, even if it takes a bit of extra effort. If ever in doubt, imagine yourself on the receiving end—you've undoubtedly received a poorly written thoughtless note or two in your day, right? Alternatively, haven't you also gotten a touchingly sincere note for something you've given or done for someone? You know, the one that practically brings a tear to your eye. Your job is to make each and every guest feel that special. After all, these are the folks who supported you throughout your romance and engagement, and splurged on something new to wear to your wedding, and went shopping for probably an hour or two to find you the perfect gift.

BRIDAL NOTEBOOK

THE ESSENTIAL TOOLS

While traditional, it is not essential that your thank-you notes match your invitations. Many brides are opting for modern correspondence cards or foldover notes (your choice) with bright embellishments or borders. This is a chance to let loose and show some creativity. If budget permits, add a personalization.

- Letterpress has become the buzz for traditionalists and individualists. "Merci," at top, is available in custom colors from Parcel Paper Goods in Montclair, 973-744-7700; shopparcel.com.
- Stylized florals are modern and fresh; add the color of your flowers for a coordinated touch. Fronds Detail, at middle, by Vera Wang Fine Papers, from Paperfolio in Summit, 908-277-0459.
- Simple and elegant never goes out of style. These oyster white personalized notes, at right, by Vera Wang Fine Papers, are from the Papery of Shrewsbury at the Grove, 732-741-0414; thepaperystores.com.—R.A.



The truth is, it's not hard. You don't need to be an English major to express your sincere gratitude in a lovely heart-felt note. We've put together a few basic pointers to guide you with extremely important process:

Repetition Works! Once you've got the basic formula down, repeat it. Remember, your guests are quite unlikely to "compare notes," so the same basic format can be used again and again. Here's a deconstructed template:

Dear Aunt Carol and Uncle Bill,
(Informal is OK unless it was a formal affair. In either case, you might want to use the more formal "Mr. and Mrs. William Harris" on the envelopes.)

Thank you for the lovely platter! (Come right out with an enthusiastic thank you.)

Tim and I plan on using it for special occasions... (This gets your husband in on it and puts the item to good use.)

...like dinner parties, birthdays, and take-out pizza night. (A small dose of humor shows that you really like the platter.)

We were so thrilled that you were able to join us for our wedding; it meant the world not only to me but to our parents as well to have you share our special day. We are truly thankful to have an aunt and uncle like you!

(Acknowledge your guests' time and participation. Remember, "presence" beats "presents.")

A Gift Of Money Use the same formula as above, but add something specific (and meaningful) about how the money might be used:

Thank you for the generous wedding gift. Tim and I are putting it toward a new refrigerator. That way we can think of you every time we grab a snack!

If They Weren't At the Wedding (and Were Invited) *Thank you for the gorgeous Tiffany vase...how did you know*

our favorite things come in those blue boxes! This vase gives Tim the perfect excuse to bring me flowers every Friday!

We were sorry you weren't able to join us for our special day, but we would love to celebrate with you when we see you next.

If They Weren't At The Wedding (and Weren't Invited)

Thank you for the stunning picture frame. We had been searching for the perfect accent for our living room, and we both agree—this is it! We look forward to seeing you both very soon. In fact, it seems like just yesterday that we all had brunch in the City. I think we're long overdue for another visit! Thank you again for the lovely and most thoughtful gift.

You want to acknowledge their friendship as well as their gesture of sending you a gift. No need to apologize or explain about not inviting them; focus on your gratitude.

Paper Only Please...and Handwritten

It's an unpopular answer to a popular question, but the answer is a firm *no*. It is not acceptable to email, text, twitter, or send thanks via any other manner of communication. While we're at, texting is also off limits. Remember that your guests went out of their way to choose a gift and attend your wedding. A hand-written note is truly the time-tested gesture of graciousness.

For the latest trends in invitations, go to newjerseybride.com.



INVITATIONS AND ACCESSORIES

Calligraphy by Jennifer

973-868-2363
calligbyjen@optonline.net
Offering a variety of distinctive, hand-inscribed styles, Jennifer's calligraphy enhances envelopes and place cards with elegance and sophistication.

Greenbean Designs

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973-948-8353
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Owners Kristen and Michael Green started