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## THE SPARKLING WATERS OF LAKE SUPERIOR. THE BREATHTAKING APOSTLE ISLANDS. A STYLISH COUPLE SURROUNDED BY FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

What more could the elegant July 22, 2006 wedding of Jacqueline Wright and Steven Libert need but an equally captivating invitation?

"I wanted every aspect of the wedding to be different, classy, formal and extremely special—just like us," Wright says, and that included wedding stationery.

Jan Corradini, owner of Sarah B. Fine Stationery in Madison, agrees. "An invitation should be a reflection of you, your style, your taste," she says. It is guests' first sense of who you are as a couple, she adds, and sets expectations for the event to come.

## Saving the Date With Style

Wright and Libert's destination wedding on Madeline Island required complex logistics, from ferries and shuttle buses to a Friday golf scramble and accommodations for 180 guests. Because the island's population swells in summer, guests' early reservations were a must. Wright worked with Paper Piper Designs creative consultant Missy Ballweg of Madison to craft a save-the-date ensemble using papers in Wright's favorite pale yellow, a pale blue reminiscent of Lake Superior and shimmering ivory. Tiffany-blue ink and a conch shell motif added elegant touches. Secured by an ivory ribbon, layered cards for directions, activities and accommodations helped guests plan their stay.

The couple's matching trifold invitation featured a chic crystal on its triangular flap and a bottom pocket for event details and response postcards. For some guests, "just about every wedding is an out-of-town wedding," Corradini says, so send save-the-date announcements six months to one year prior, especially if travel, summer vacation or winter holidays are calendar considerations. The invitation should be mailed six to 10 weeks before the wedding.

## Consultant Connection

Tracy Marks-Geib and Greg Geib knew they wanted a simple, modern design for their Oct. 14, 2006 wedding in Madison. "But we didn't

know how to articulate the vision," Marks-Geib explains. After searching mass-market sample books for days, the frustrated couple turned to Kathy Marcelle, owner of Sugar Pear Design in Madison.

Marks-Geib and Geib completed a phone interview and questionnaire, then met with Marcelle to answer more questions and choose their favorite colors and textures from hundreds of paper samples. "I want to bring out their personality into the invitation," Marcelle says, who initially designed three different mock-ups based on their input.

"She got to know us," Marks-Geib says. "She took the qualities we were describing and paired them with paper choices we liked." The ivory creation wrapped in brown satin ribbon is classic design at its best. The chocolate-brown ink and metallic bronze border reflect the season. A pocket holds reception and response cards and envelope.

"We're very happy," Marks-Geib says, who has received "a ton of good feedback" from the couple's 185 guests.

Sugar Pear Design's Marcelle combined black linen, a pale blue similar to the color of the attendants' dresses, and patterned Japanese papers in a unique horizontal design, enclosed by a paper band. Fun and refreshing, the invitation emphasized the modern architecture of Madison's Overture Center, the couple's reception site.

Just don't get caught up trying to match colors perfectly to wedding details, consultants say. Go for an overall feeling and you'll come away with a look uniquely yours.

## Beauty on Any Budget

Custom and semi-custom invitations, ranging from \$1 to \$50 each, are attainable on any budget. "There are a lot of beautiful items in all price ranges," Corradini says. Marcelle agrees. Her clients fell in love with an exquisite but costly Italian paper, so she used it as a decorative element instead of for the card itself. The effect was rich and elegant at a fraction of the cost.

Printing also can affect cost. Engraving, the most traditional and expensive method, creates raised lettering and slight indentations on the invitation's back by pressing the paper into a carved, inked copper plate. Letterpress printing employs moveable type to create a distinct look, often on thicker, softer, handmade paper. Thermography is an affordable alternative for raised print.

Consultants can perform invitation assembly, addressing and mailing, or couples can take on these steps to lower costs. Ordering all your

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—Jan Corradini, Sarah B. Fine Stationery

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## Discerning Design

Simple details such as Wright's crystal and Marks' ribbon set a tone and add personality to your invitation ensemble. So can color. Celery-green paper accented by a crisp white border and copper ink graced one of Corradini's recent creations. Another bride chose thick white paper with a celery border, plum ink and a palm tree for her destination wedding.

Kristen Panther and Brian Porter chose a somewhat irreverent, very hip color combination for their July 29, 2006 wedding: black and blue.

stationery needs—invitations, thank-you notes, menus, place cards, ceremony programs—at once saves money, too, as extra paper can be shared among elements. Experts suggest ordering an extra 10 to 25 percent, as printing small quantities to cover added guests is expensive.

And, don't overlook postage. Response postcards save postage costs, whereas square invitations and heavy, layered pieces cost more.

With much to consider in little time, Corradini offers couples a sage reminder: "Have fun with it." \*