



**Invitation Etiquette** // When planning a wedding, there are many details and fine points that must be observed. One of the first necessities is invitations — and lots of them. While they may seem like a lot of drudgery, it all occurs over the span of a year, so relax — you will have plenty of time.

Here's a guide to help you plan when to send out the invites for many functions.

**1 SAVE THE DATE:** The first invitation to send out is a save the date card. This card is a way to formally announce when you plan to get married so that you can ensure that your loved ones will be able attend. This must be sent out at least six months before the wedding, though a year before the big day is not out of question. Remember, the more advance warning, the less of a chance invitees will have conflicting plans.

**2 REHEARSAL DINNER, WEDDING, AND RECEPTION:** The second wave of cards to be sent out are the wedding, reception, and rehearsal dinner invitations. All should be sent out at least three months in advance of the wedding. Do not forget that if you sent somebody a save the date card then they should also get a formal wedding invitation.

**3 BRIDAL SHOWER:** Invitations can also be sent out for the bridal shower. The shower, customarily held about two months previous to the wedding, is a wonderful way for the to-be-married couple to gather essential resources for their new life together. Invitations for the shower should be sent out about a month earlier than the actual event.

**4 BACHELOR/BACHELORETTE PARTIES:** If you are planning on having bachelor and bachelorette parties, get ready for a little extra work because these often require invitations as well. The parties are usually held around a month before the wedding and invitations should be sent out a month prior to the bash.

**5 THANK YOU'S:** One of the most important parts of invitation etiquette — and most dreaded — is the thank you notes. These hand-written and personalized cards should be sent out no later than two weeks after the bridal shower, and again, no later than two weeks after the wedding. — *Kyle Gllovak*

Breanne "thank you" card by Rifle Paper Co., [www.riflepaperco.com](http://www.riflepaperco.com)

## PILLOW TALK

\* Looking for a way to turn photos from weddings or other events into a permanent keepsake? Check out SmArt Leather Designs, a Bloomfield Hills-based company that's on the cutting edge of custom digital artistry.

New printing technology allows you to transfer a treasured image onto high-quality leather, which is then made into a custom pillow. According to SmArt Leather's Kathy Campbell, the patented process means images won't fade, scratch off, or wear off over time.

The pillows start at around \$150. They can be viewed and ordered at [bighugllc.com](http://bighugllc.com) under the "leather photo pillows" tab.

**'ONE-STOP' FAIRY TALES:** Kings Court Castle in Historic Olde World Canterbury Village has a complete wedding package — a chapel, a ballroom, and banquet halls.

The chapel, which opened in March 2010, features an original Tiffany Wisteria window — one of only four ever made. One of the other four sold for \$1 million.

The castle also features the One Stop Shop Wedding Network. The network vows to "make planning your special day effortless." By coordinating every facet of your wedding — from music to photography — in one place, the network can simplify planning your big day.

2325 Joslyn Rd., Lake Orion; 248-391-1900, [kingscourtcastle.com](http://kingscourtcastle.com)

## TREND WATCH: A TOKEN OF HER LOVE?

When a man proposes to the woman of his dreams, he traditionally presents her with an engagement ring. The symbol of love also sends a message to others that "she's taken."

Now, whether it's because of a growing number of women deciding to be the one to propose, the rise of same-sex marriages, or just an outgrowth of gender equality, there's been a surge of "mengagements."

This begs the question of what to give him if he accepts. The obvious answer is a



men's engagement ring.

Since it is a relatively new phenomenon, don't expect to find a host of ready-made men's engagement rings. But many local jewelers specialize in custom-made engagement rings, and would be more than happy to make one for the man of your dreams.