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The Monogram Theme Wedding

By Blake Kritzberg

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Monograms are a huge trend in weddings, to the point where they feature strongly in some, and in others, provide the actual theme. And what's not to like about monograms? They're elegant, understated, versatile, and a dramatic visual reminder of your new life together.

Ways to include monograms

You'll find them popping up in more and more places throughout the reception, and sometimes even prior to it. Here are some ways that brides include monograms:

- embossed, stamped or printed bridal stationary
- custom postage stamps (see www.funstamps.com)
- stationary seals or stickers

- painted aisle runners
- printed bridal bouquet ribbons
- bridal underwear or garter
- bridal handkerchief
- accent to bridal train, veil or gown
- ring bearer's pillow

- stamped or printed out-of-town bags
- bridesmaids' totes

- guestbook
- engraved guestbook pen
- tablecloths
- chair covers
- place cards and menus
- cocktail napkins
- coasters

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- centerpieces
- engraved cake server set
- cake embellishment
- wood, wire, metal, chocolate or acrylic monogram cake topper
- monogram wreaths of silk or real flowers
- fabric wall or door banners
- champagne flutes
- bottled water labels
- "tears of joy" packs
- monogrammed wedding favors: cookies, ornaments, shot glasses, votive candles, chocolates, petit fours, notepads, favor boxes
- dance floor "gobo" projections

How do I get a monogram?

You make it! Many brides find they can "roll their own" using a readily-available software program such as Microsoft Word or PowerPoint. If you're a graphic designer or have access to high-end tools, you'd probably prefer Adobe Illustrator, but Word or PowerPoint are also fine. If you've played around but don't like the results, call on an arty friend.

To design your monogram in Microsoft Word:

Choose Insert → Textbox. Type and format the letter the way you like it. Do this three times. Now click on all textboxes and choose Format → Textbox. Choose Color: No Fill (so you can overlap letters) and Line: No Line. Select all letters, right click, and choose Group to lock in the arrangement. You can now copy your image into Microsoft Paint and save in several formats, such as JPEG.

To design your monogram in PowerPoint:

You'll want to use "Word Art" to create your letters. Click on the blue tilted "A" on the bottom toolbar for each letter. Format them to your liking. When you're done designing, select all the letters, right-click, and choose Grouping → Group. Now you can click on your image and right-click for Save as Image. PowerPoint lets you save directly in formats like JPEG, PNG and TIFF.

Some more design tips:

The bride's initial goes first in a monogram. When the bride takes the groom's last name, the order is: bride's first initial, shared last initial (usually larger), groom's first initial.

If the bride keeps her own last name, one option is four-initial monogram (bride's first, bride's last, groom's last, groom's first). Or just join the couple's first names with an ampersand (Jenny & Mike).

Some etiquette tips:

It's somewhat frowned upon to use your couples monogram before you're actually married. So, your reception's clearly a green light, but you might want to skip using it on your invites. The ceremony itself is sort of a Ms. Manners gray area. Some brides uphold the spirit (if not the letter) of the "law" by including the monogram in a not-so-public ceremonial spot, such as a garter, or inside the dress.

Of course, these being modern times, some brides just include the monogram wherever and whenever

they want!

Great places to get the fancy fonts brides crave, for free:

www.dafont.com/en/

www.chank.com/freefonts.php

www.abstractfonts.com/fonts/

instant.coffeecup.com/content/fonts/

www.1001freefonts.com

An easy project: the DIY monogrammed aisle runner

It's not hard to create your own monogrammed aisle runner, and it makes a big splash. If you have a sewing machine, you can buy and hem the fabric for next to nothing. Now you just need some fabric paint in black or your wedding colors, a pencil, an exacto knife and some cardstock. You also need to decide where you want to place the monogram. Some aisle runners feature a monogram at the bottom, where the procession begins; the top, where the couple stands; and in the middle.

Print out your monogram and blow it up to your desired size on a copying machine. (If your aisle fabric

is on the sheer side, you can now trace your monogram directly onto the fabric with pencil. Fill in with fabric paint, and you're done.) Otherwise, tape the enlarged monogram onto the cardstock and cut out the shape with an exacto knife. Trace inside your new template lightly with pencil. Fill in with fabric paint. Follow the same procedure to make your own monogrammed table runners or even chair covers.

The dance floor monogram

A dramatic and memorable way to include your monogram is to project it onto the dance floor during the reception. As fun as this is, though, it's not cheap and sometimes not easy. To project a monogram, you need to buy a custom metal plate, called a "gobo." Custom gobo manufacturers are easily found online. The gobo itself usually costs over \$100, but once made, you then need specific lights equipped with a pattern holder to use the gobo. It's possible that your venue, or your DJ, will be able to provide these lights or help you locate a place from which to rent them.

A final tip

Now that you have some ideas for incorporating monograms in your wedding, remember the essence of elegance is restraint. It's easy to overdo monograms, so mix them up contrasting touches, such as soft and romantic floral arrangements, to warm up the monogram's cool and classic feel.

About the Author Blake Kritzberg is editor at "FavorIdeas.com." Stop by for a huge selection of wedding favors, Bridezilla's weekly adventures, and free resources for brides: save-the-date eCards, screensaver, wallpaper and web site templates.<http://www.favorideas.com>

Every Bride Must Have It

By George Meszaros

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Wedding favors are quickly becoming a trendy essential of the wedding celebration. Wedding favors are small gifts that are given to each guest at the wedding reception. It says, "thank you" for coming to our wedding and celebrating this most special day with us.

Wedding favors are becoming an important part of the wedding planning process. Before you make or purchase your wedding favors you have to determine the following:

1. How many people are invited to the wedding?

You need to know how many people are attending the wedding to determine the number of wedding favors needed. Wedding favors are usually bought after the RSVPs to make sure there are enough favors for each guest. Therefore, the favors are usually bought one month or closer to the actual wedding day.

2. What is your budget per guest?

You have to determine the budget for your wedding favors. You can buy some very nice wedding favors for about \$2–\$3. If you are crafty you can make your own favors, but most people leave it to the professionals and buy their favors.

3. What is your theme?

Your theme or wedding location or the time of the year can determine your wedding favors. For example, a beach wedding calls for a beach theme wedding favor such as a dolphin wine stopper, a seashell candle, or a beach chair candle or cardholder.

Just like the bridal gown, wedding favors are a part of the bride's to do list. The decision on what favors to give to the guest should be made by the bride and groom. You can purchase inexpensive but useful wedding favors that will end up in someone's home not in trash can of your reception venue. An elegant wine stopper, a pretty candle, a shiny bottle opener, a personalized chocolate bar all have the power say to your guest "thank you" with style and elegance.

George Meszaros with



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