

# roll the presses

Look closely and you'll see the look and feel of stationery varies greatly; it's all in the printing technique used. Toss up the effect against the cost and deadline to arrive at the one that's just right.

## 1. } ENGRAVING

There are four main techniques for printing wedding stationery, each with unique qualities and nuances that impart different characteristics. Choose stationery printed in a style to perfectly complement the tone of the wedding.

Engraving, also called die-stamping or intaglio, is the most traditional form of printing wedding stationery. There was a time when this was the only acceptable printing technique and anything less would have been frowned upon.

EMILY POST, America's doyenne of etiquette wrote in her book *ETIQUETTE* (1922), "*The invitation to the ceremony is engraved on the front sheet of white note-paper. No variation is permissible in the form of a wedding invitation. Whether fifty guests are to be invited or five thousand...the engraving and the wording...are precisely the same.*"

AVON GRAPHICS, specialist printers in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane explain that the image to be printed is engraved into a copper or steel plate which is then inked and cleaned leaving ink within the engraving. Great skill and experience are required if the image is engraved by hand, but the result is one-of-a-kind, without equal in terms of the quality of the effect.

The engraved plate is then pressed onto the paper resulting in a dense, opaque, matt image that is sharp and detailed. The finished invitation will have a raised effect that is easily felt. Smooth papers achieve the best result in this Rolls Royce technique.

### FEATURES

A TRADITIONAL EFFECT, CLASSIC, TIMELESS, HEIRLOOM OR KEEPSAKE MATERIAL

METALLIC INKS CAN BE USED TO GREAT EFFECT

OPAQUE, WHITE INK ON COLOURED PAPERS ACHIEVES A VERY EFFECTIVE RESULT

THE MOST DETAILED AND INTRICATE DESIGNS CAN BE ACHIEVED, PERFECT FOR FAMILY CRESTS OR MOTIFS

ABSOLUTELY EXQUISITE AND UNIQUE

### THINGS TO CONSIDER

REQUIRES SKILLED, EXPERIENCED OPERATORS TO ACHIEVE BEST RESULTS IN THIS VERY SPECIALISED FIELD, THEREFORE EXPENSIVE

THE MORE COLOURS THAT ARE USED THE HIGHER THE COST

LONGER TURNAROUND TIME

## 2.}

**LETTERPRESS**

Letterpress printing is a centuries-old craft which these days is having a resurgence thanks to some passionate designers and dedicated craftsmen.

Historically type was hand-set using either lead or wood characters and occasionally illustrations were hand engraved. With the advent of more modern technology a raised or relief printing plate can be made using artwork created on a computer allowing designers more flexibility with typefaces and graphics.

The letterpress printing process involves the surface of a raised plate being rolled with ink and then impressed deep into the paper, leaving a distinct de-bossed or 'pressed in' effect. Each individual colour requires a separate printing plate. One colour is printed at a time.

Generally each sheet of paper is manually hand fed into the press. Yes, one sheet at a time. Inks can be mixed to match specific colours or even favourite fabric swatches.

SAMANTHA FRAY from CHAPEL PRESS in Melbourne says "*To bring out the best attributes of letterpress, you must have a skilled printer with an eye for detail and a designer that understands the capabilities of letterpress.*"

When used correctly, letterpress printing creates a lush 3-dimensional impression which is like no other printing method and it is not until you have viewed a printed piece first hand that you can truly appreciate its tactile quality.

**FEATURES**

LETTERPRESS IS BEAUTIFUL, ELEGANT, UNIQUE AND TIMELESS.

IF YOU WANT TO EXCITE AND INSPIRE YOUR GUESTS, LETTERPRESS IS THE GO.

THESE PRINTED PIECES ARE WORKS OF ART.

FINE DETAIL WITH BOTH TEXT AND GRAPHICS WORKS BEAUTIFULLY.

THE BEST RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED USING 100% COTTON PAPERS WHICH ARE THICK AND SOFT GIVING A REAL PILLOW-LIKE IMPRESSION, REALLY TACTILE AND BEAUTIFUL.

**THINGS TO CONSIDER**

IT'S A VERY LABOUR INTENSIVE PROCESS WHICH MAY RESULT IN A HIGHER COST WHEN COMPARED TO QUICKER PRINTING METHODS. MAKE SURE YOU ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME, USUALLY 6-8 WEEKS.

PRINTING MULTIPLE COLOURS WITH TIGHT REGISTRATION CAN BE CHALLENGING, BUT CERTAINLY ACHIEVABLE BY A SKILLED PRINTER.

MULTIPLE COLOURS, ALTHOUGH VERY EFFECTIVE WILL ADD TO THE OVERALL COST AND LARGE AREAS OF SOLID IMAGE OR HEAVY PATTERNS ARE BEST AVOIDED TO ENSURE GREAT RESULTS.

## STATIONERY

## 3.}

**OFFSET PRINTING**

Offset printing is the most common form of printing, most magazines, brochures or business cards have most likely been offset printed.

It's a historic technique, an indirect printing process developed in the 1400s whereby ink is transferred to the paper by a blanket that carries an impression from the printing plate, rather than directly from the plate itself.

**FEATURES**

IT'S THE MOST POPULAR FORM OF PRINTING SO THERE ARE MANY SUPPLIERS  
A WIDE VARIETY OF PAPER CHOICES AND WEIGHTS ARE SUITABLE  
ACCURATE COLOUR REPRODUCTION IS POSSIBLE USING THE PANTONE COLOUR SYSTEM  
FINE DETAIL AND HIGH QUALITY IMPRESSION ARE ACHIEVABLE  
CLEAR OR COLOURED VARNISHES CAN BE USED TO ACHIEVE STRIKING EFFECTS  
GOOD, CONSISTENT IMAGE REPRODUCTION  
CAN BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH PRINT FINISHING TECHNIQUES LIKE  
EMBOSSING, PERFORATING AND FOIL STAMPING TO ACHIEVE INTERESTING RESULTS  
PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES CAN BE PRINTED IN BLACK & WHITE OR FULL COLOUR

**THINGS TO CONSIDER**

THE MORE COLOURS PRINTED THE MORE COSTLY  
SMALL QUANTITIES ARE NOT ECONOMICAL AS THE MAJORITY OF THE COSTS  
ASSOCIATED WITH OFFSET PRINTING ARE IN THE SET-UP OF THE PRESS  
FOR COST EFFECTIVENESS, ALL ITEMS IN THE STATIONERY SUITE ARE BEST PRINTED  
TOGETHER, AT THE SAME TIME.

## 4.}

**DIGITAL PRINTING**

Digital printing technology has recently made great inroads, allowing us to print directly from a file created from computer. The ink sits on the paper's surface rather than being absorbed into the paper, the image is comparable to a good quality colour photocopy. It's fast and it's very economical.

STEVE LEWIS from DIGITAL PRINT AUSTRALIA in Adelaide says "*I want it now' is a very achievable option, and quality, in many cases, now equals or betters previous methods of production. For the majority of printing work produced, digital printing would appear to have few, if any limitations.*"

**FEATURES**

IT'S COST EFFECTIVE FOR VERY SMALL QUANTITIES, PRINT JUST AS MANY  
AS ARE NEEDED SO IT'S THE MOST ECONOMICAL PRINTING TECHNIQUE  
PERSONALISATION IS POSSIBLE, LIKE THE MAIL MERGE OF GUEST'S NAMES,  
TRADITIONALLY THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY HAND, BUT A LOT  
OF PEOPLE ARE OPTING FOR TECHNOLOGY  
TURNAROUND IS VERY QUICK  
REPRODUCTION OF PHOTOGRAPH-STYLE IMAGES IS POSSIBLE  
GOOD DETAIL (BUT NOT AS GOOD AS ENGRAVING OR OFFSET)  
A GOOD OPTION FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE A PASSION FOR STATIONERY  
BUT WANT SOMETHING THAT LOOKS PROFESSIONAL.

**THINGS TO CONSIDER**

PAPER CHOICE IS LIMITED TO SMOOTH STOCKS SO THE RESULT IS NOT AS TACTILE  
FINE DETAIL AND ACCURATE COLOUR REPRODUCTION ARE NOT AS ACHIEVABLE  
AS WITH OFFSET

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

For cost effectiveness, consider mixing the printing techniques in the stationery suite. Team digitally printed items such as the menu and placecards that are thrown away at the end of the wedding with an offset, letterpressed or engraved invitation that guests are more likely to keep forever. If working with a designer, check on their preferred printing method and ask to see samples and comparative quotes of the different printing styles.