

Let's Get *M*arried

2002

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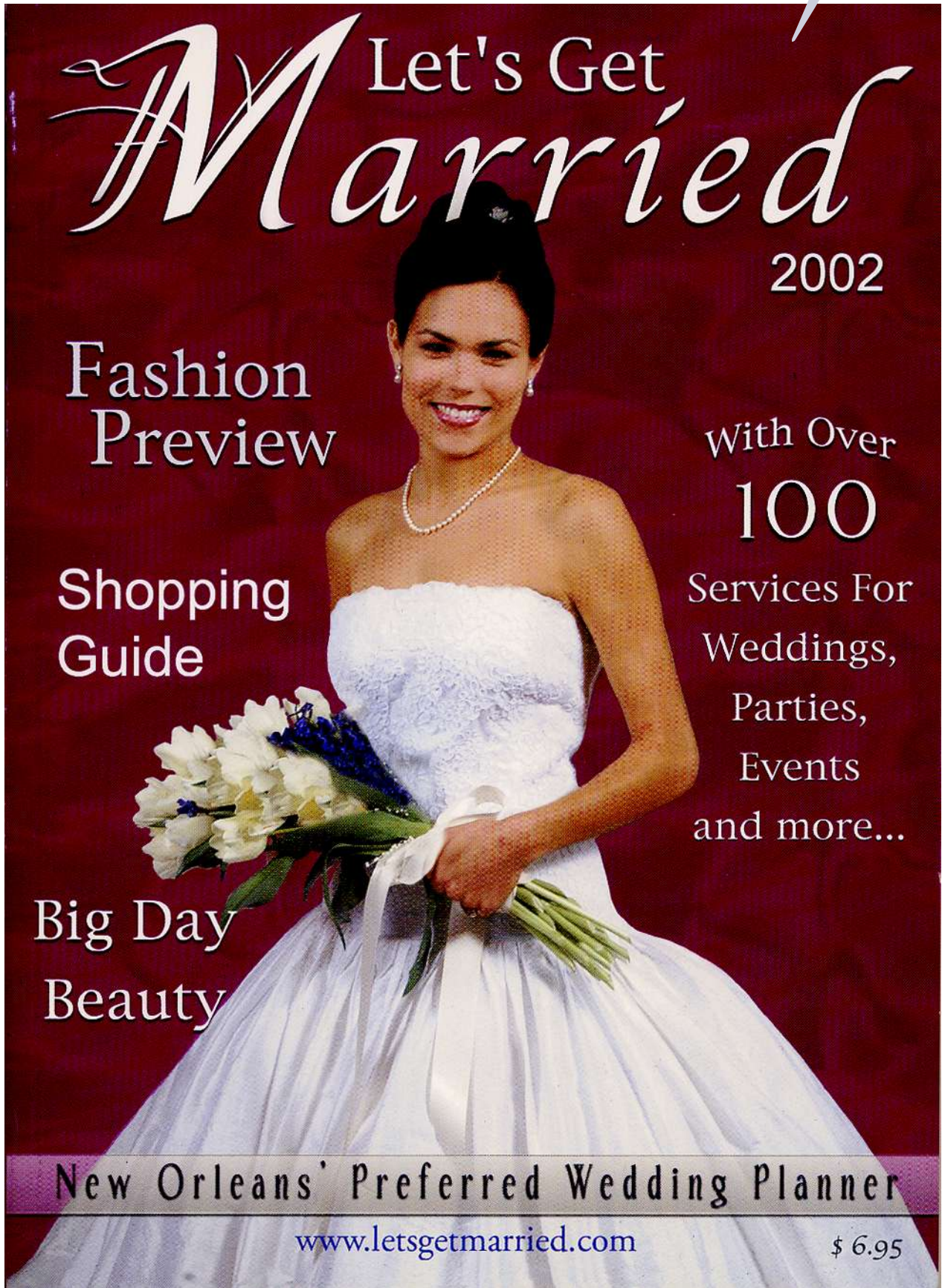
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Inviting Invitations

A wedding invitation is often the first occasion that announces the official notification of the blessed event.

So how does the bride want to present herself to family, family friends and her intended's friends? Does she want a formal, engraved traditional Crane's ecru heavy stock with script in black ink, or a colored card stock paper with a funky emblem and colored ink, topped with a vellum overlay and sent with an envelope fastened with a wax seal?

While in your mother's day, practically everyone had the same invitation, brides and grooms can get creative.



Some brides like to make their invitations really stand out by adding all sorts of extra elements, such as the elements mentioned above.

Now the question about reply cards comes up. These are essential if the reception is a sit-down affair, especially if you don't want Aunt Rita sitting at a table by herself. Alas, reply cards can cost as much, and even more, in some cases, than the wedding invitation. For a buffet or cocktail type of reception, reply cards are not needed, but are useful for getting a head count of how many people will be there. And remember most caterers count heads, and depending on the contract, the bride could be paying a lot of money for no-shows.

Making it to the church on time is a must, so if the wedding is mainly local, brides can send out invitations four weeks in advance, while a wedding with a lot of out-of-town guests needs to have its invitations mailed about six to eight weeks ahead of time. However, if the bride sends out a letter (with wedding information) to out-of-town guests a few months earlier, she can wait until four weeks to mail the invitations. And her guests will appreciate the advance letter because "many people like to plan their vacations around the wedding and can use their frequent flyer miles," says Martha.

So what options are there?

First of all, paper. While most New Orleans brides still go for Crane's ecru heavy stock, according to Alexa Pulitzer, more out-of-town brides like the beautiful shades, including blues, greens and pinks, of the Claudia Calhoun line of papers.

And by using colored paper, a bride can get creative with ink. Black, of course, is the classic, but everything from gray to blue to green will accent an invitation. "Even white," says Alexa.

How about printing? There's engraved (most expensive), flat printing (least expensive), thermography (sometimes thought as "faux engraving") or letterpress, which is similar to engraving.

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