

## Color Coordination

Bold hues and destination-inspired palettes paint a picture-perfect event. By Kim Carmel

Whether you were the kid who enjoyed drawing with crayons—or the one who ate them—choosing your wedding colors should be a fun experience. A unified color scheme creates ambience for your guests and tells them a little something about you two. Are you elegant and refined? Perhaps a cool, traditional palette is most appropriate. Effervescent and boisterous? Warmer, bolder shades will express your energy. Read on for more tips on setting the scene with color.

### The Primer

In addition to the white or ivory of the bride's dress, most contemporary weddings incorporate two additional colors—one dominant hue and one accent color. For the dominant, think of a color that both of you like. Colors you typically wear or have in your home. Do you tend to surround yourselves in blue? If so, what shade? Powder blue? Navy? Turquoise?

Once you've chosen your dominant color, look to the color wheel for your accent. The ones on the opposite side of the wheel tend to work well together, such as blue and orange, red/pink and green or yellow and purple. In order to avoid a color scheme reminiscent of holidays or your favorite football team, stay away from the purest forms of these colors. For instance, royal blue and orange may feel too childlike or informal, but bright orange with powder blue accents feels celebratory and sophisticated.

If, in your case, opposites don't attract, find colors neighboring your dominant hue. Green lies between blue and yellow on the color wheel, so either of these shades would pair well with green. Or, as bridal expert Carol Lassiter of [Beautiful Details Bridal Consulting](#) proposes, design a scheme based on varying shades of your one favorite color. "Monochromatic weddings can be extremely beautiful, especially if you add different textures and fabrics." Lassiter suggests outfitting bridesmaids in two or three varying shades of purple, for example, to keep things visually interesting. "This way your guests don't see blocks of color, but softer, more dimensional shades of your favorite colors."

Don't forget about neutrals: black, gray, brown, beige, ivory, white and metallics. Neutrals complement almost any other color, provided you can differentiate between cool and warm (for example, sunny yellow works beautifully with warm gold or beige, but is harder to match with cool silver or blueish gray). For a crisp, clean look, you can even build a color scheme entirely from neutrals.

If you're stumped for ideas, take a look outside. Mother Nature is the ultimate color coordinator. Tying the knot by the sea? Consider building your palette from the colors of the sand, surf or local flora and fauna. Marrying in a grassy park? Develop a color scheme using all greens, or the opposite—fuschias, reds and pinks. Also, find out if your ceremony or reception area has any dominant colors that you could build from, and consider the time of your event. "An evening beach wedding could play off the natural spectrum of the sunset—turquoise, pinks and oranges," says Lassiter "Or, a daytime ceremony might inspire a couple to go with more neutral colors, such as sand and blush with pops of coral."

### Setting the Mood

Colors project different moods (blue tends to be peaceful, yellow is cheerful, red can be seductive), so think about the vibe you want for your big day. As Lea Armstrong of [Wedding Paper Divas](#) emphasizes, your color choices and invitation design communicate the tone of your event to guests even before they arrive for the actual event. A neutral or black-and-white invite relays a traditional, formal tone. A rich, vibrant color scheme expresses a more light-hearted, non-traditional affair. For something in between, use white or ivory as your main color, adding one or two subtle accent colors.

### Working with Color

Now that you've picked your palette, let the creativity begin. Most couples maintain a backdrop of white or ivory, incorporating their wedding colors into invitations, flowers and linens. Many of today's brides and grooms are finding new ways to add even more color to their big event.