stationeryworks

HOME OF
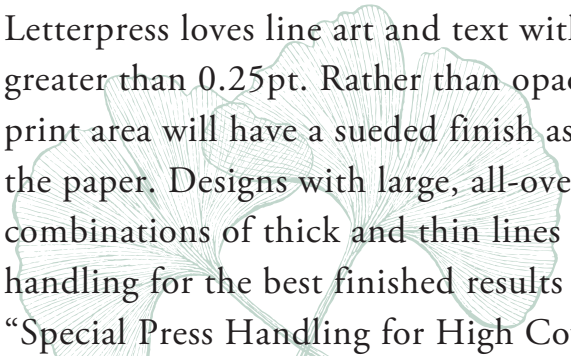CHECKERBOARD | DESIGNERS' FINE PRESS | LALLIE

Letterpress Printing

INSIDE:

the method: letterpress

Letterpress, the very first print method, originated in the 15th century. It began with movable engraved wood blocks that were inked and hand-pressed onto paper to create a print.

Today, this artisan print method remains largely the same. Since the invention of flat digital printing, a deep impression into a lofty paper has become a coveted letterpress characteristic. Now, this impression is typically created using plates in place of engraved wood blocks. Although presses have been adapted with safety mechanisms, there is still nothing computerized about this print method! Skilled operators diligently tend to the presses–applying one ink color at a time, aligning the plate, feeding the paper, gauging the pressure and making adjustments for consistency throughout each and every print job. The result is a beautiful design exquisitely pressed into a canvas: a printed work of art!
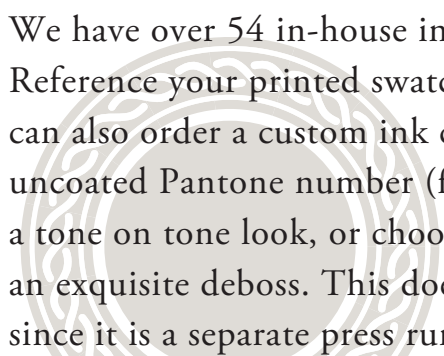
the art

Letterpress loves line art and text with line thicknesses greater than 0.25pt. Rather than opaque coverage, a solid print area will have a sueded finish as the ink absorbs into the paper. Designs with large, all-over coverage or combinations of thick and thin lines may need special handling for the best finished results (fee applies; see "Special Press Handling for High Coverage").

Letterpress can be mixed with other print methods like foil, thermography, flat and full color digital printing.

the colors

We have over 54 in-house ink colors to choose from! Reference your printed swatch decks for options. You can also order a custom ink color by referencing a solid uncoated Pantone number (fee applies), use Whisper for a tone on tone look, or choose Inkless letterpress to create an exquisite deboss. This does count as an "ink color" since it is a separate press run, but is well worth it!

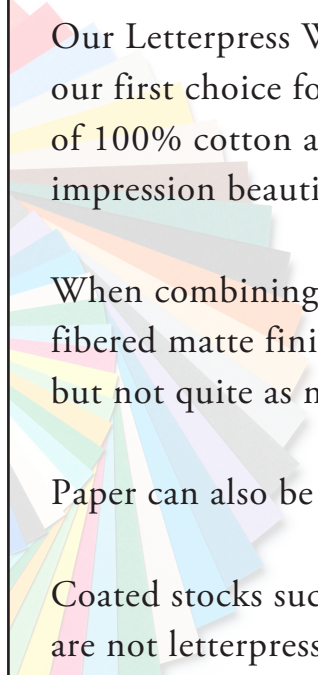Unlike other print methods, metallic letterpress inks will lose their shimmer when pressed.

opacity

Letterpress inks are pressed into paper and dry through absorption, making them semi-translucent. The final color is affected by the color of the paper the ink is printed upon.

INK	*slate blue ink*
+ PAPER	*slate blue ink*
FINAL COLOR	*slate blue ink*

Keep in mind that light inks won't letterpress well on dark papers. And, when 2 ink colors overprint one another, they make a 3rd color!

the papers

Our Letterpress White, Pearl and Cream canvases are our first choice for letterpress designs! They are made of 100% cotton and their lush, loose fibers accept impression beautifully.

When combining print methods, we recommend tighter fibered matte finish cover stocks which accept impression, but not quite as much as letterpress stocks.

Paper can also be supplied. Contact us for details.

Coated stocks such as metallics and translucent vellum are not letterpress friendly.

THE INKS

Letterpress inks are pressed into a canvas and dry through absorption, making them both irresistable to the touch and semi-translucent on the canvas. Because of these unique effects of letterpress, we recommend referencing our ink swatch decks for the best finished color assessment.

There is a swatch deck on White, Pearl and Cream. The printed medallion incorporates finer lines as well as a larger area of solid coverage. The medallion serves as an additional example of solid coverage nuances we refer to as sueding and ghosting (see below).
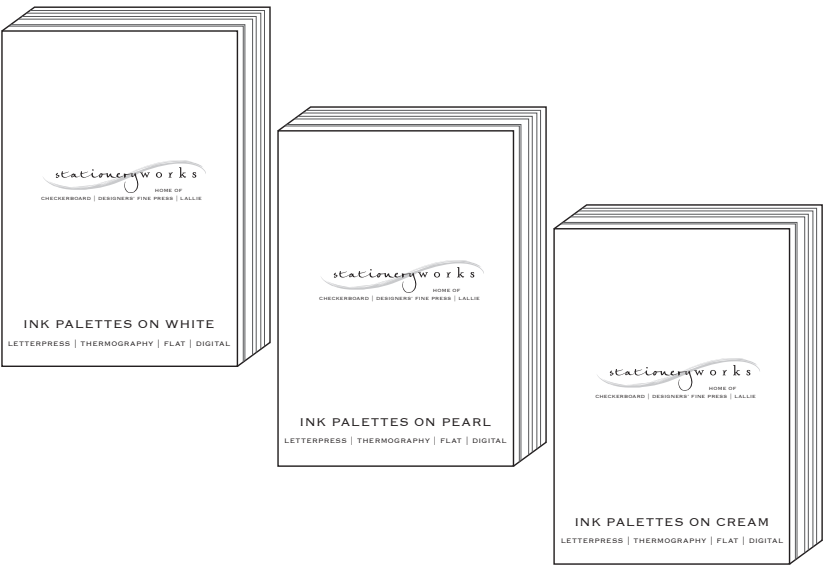
SUEDING

While areas of solid ink or color floods do not create a noticeable impression, they do have a lovely, unique "sueded" finish. Sueded means the ink will not be full coverage, paper fibers will show through, and ink color will vary in the printed area. Think of letterpress like a rubber stamp with a fixed amount of pressure and ink. When the pressure and ink are applied to a smaller area, a deeper impression and consistent ink coverage are achieved. On a bigger print area, the impression is less, more paper fibers show through and there is greater variance in ink coverage. Although there will be some variation from card to card, those that love letterpress love its quirky nature and unique printing effects not achieved by other processes. Each card is uniquely its own, and not a copy of any other - truly artisan creations!
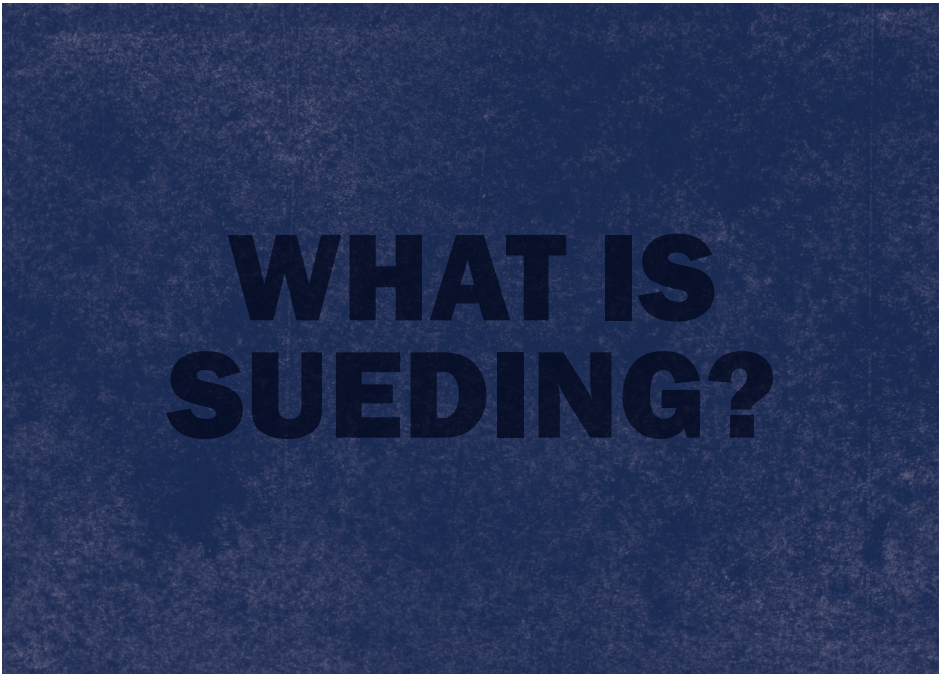
GHOSTING

Ghosting is an aspect of letterpress where an image is transferred from one part of a printed piece to another. It occurs primarily in larger areas of solid ink and is attributed to the press roller diameter. Depending on the artwork, ghosting is often desirable, adding additional texture or depth (shading on leaves in a tree for example). It is one of the artisan effects that makes each printed letterpress cards unique, not "cookie cutter." If ghosting appears where it is not as desirable (like a large name or monogram), there are special printing techniques which can help minimize the effect. These techniques introduce additional cost, but may be well worth it to achieve the best possible printed result. We will discuss these options with you to assure the best letterpress results for your suite.

letterpress

Made of 100% recycled cotton, its loose fibers accept letterpress impression beautifully

COLORS: Letterpress White, Letterpress Pearl, Letterpress Cream
WEIGHTS: 300gsm (1-ply), 600gsm (2-ply), 900gsm (3-ply), or any other variety of lush weights!

Works well with pure letterpress printing.

white cover

A smooth stock with a slightly textured surface

COLORS: White, Pearl, Cream
WEIGHTS: 130# (1-ply), 260# (2-ply), 390# (3-ply), or any other variety of lush weights!

Works well in combination with thermography, foil stamping, flat and full color digital printing

matte colored cover

Smooth, matte finish colored stocks are typically 100#. Keep in mind colored stocks will affect the final letterpress ink color (final color = paper + ink)

COLORS: A wide assortment; see paper swatch deck
WEIGHTS: 1-ply, 2-ply, 3-ply, or any other variety!

Works well in combination with thermography, foil stamping, flat and full color digital printing

metallic cover

The coating on metallic cardstock (like Stardream) makes it not letterpress friendly

specialty papers

WOOD VENEER is not recommended for letterpress printing

VELLUM OR TISSUES are thinner stocks that will not withstand the rigors of letterpress

HEAVILY TEXTURED STOCKS are most successful in letterpress, but texture can interfere with ink consistency

supplied papers

Clients can supply custom stock

Supplied stock takes extra handling and care on our side, therefore discounts are not applied to supplied stock

Please contact us before purchasing your supplied stock so we can confirm its printability and suggested supplied size and quantity

thin lines

Letterpress loves designs incorporating fine line art.

MINIMUM LINE WEIGHT: 0.25pt

Line weights below 0.25pt are prone to break, shift, or disappear when printed.

IMPRESSION: deep impression

solid areas

Larger areas of solid ink or floods of color will have a sueded finish, created when the ink absorbs into the paper to dry and the paper fibers show through.

IMPRESSION: little impression depending on the area of the solid

While letterpress solids will never have fully opaque coverage, there are special press handling techniques that can enable more coverage when desired (fee applies).

mix of thin lines & solids

A mix of thin and thick lines in the same color can add a degree of challenge to print. If printed together, the amount of ink on the press is limited to what the thin lines will allow, introducing more sueding in solid areas.

For best print results, we recommend splitting the color with thin and thick lines into 2 plates, optimizing each area on press for the best print quality (fee applies).

high coverage

Custom designs that incorporate large areas of ink coverage (large solids, floods of color, all-over patterns) are considered high coverage.

IMPRESSION: decreases as the print area increases

Special press handling can be an option to minimize color variation and ghosting or increase coverage and impression (fee applies).

overlapping colors

Letterpress ink colors can overlap one another. Because letterpress inks are semi-translucent, overlapping ink colors are additive, creating a 3rd color.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER PRINT METHODS?
CAN OVERLAP: digital, flat*, foil stamping*
CANNOT OVERLAP: thermography

* Foil stamping over letterpress may result in special press handling (fee applies); Letterpress over flat printing can have an uneven finish due to the wax in the ink.

print area & registration

MAXIMUM PRINT AREA: 8.5" x 11.5"

Specialty, large format printing press options may be available for sizes up to 12.5" x 18.5" (fee applies).

SIDES: single layer cards have Letterpress on 1 side

REGISTRATION: we recommend color registration be at least $1/16$" apart

FRAMES: we recommend they be at least ¼" - ⅜" away from the cut edges of the card
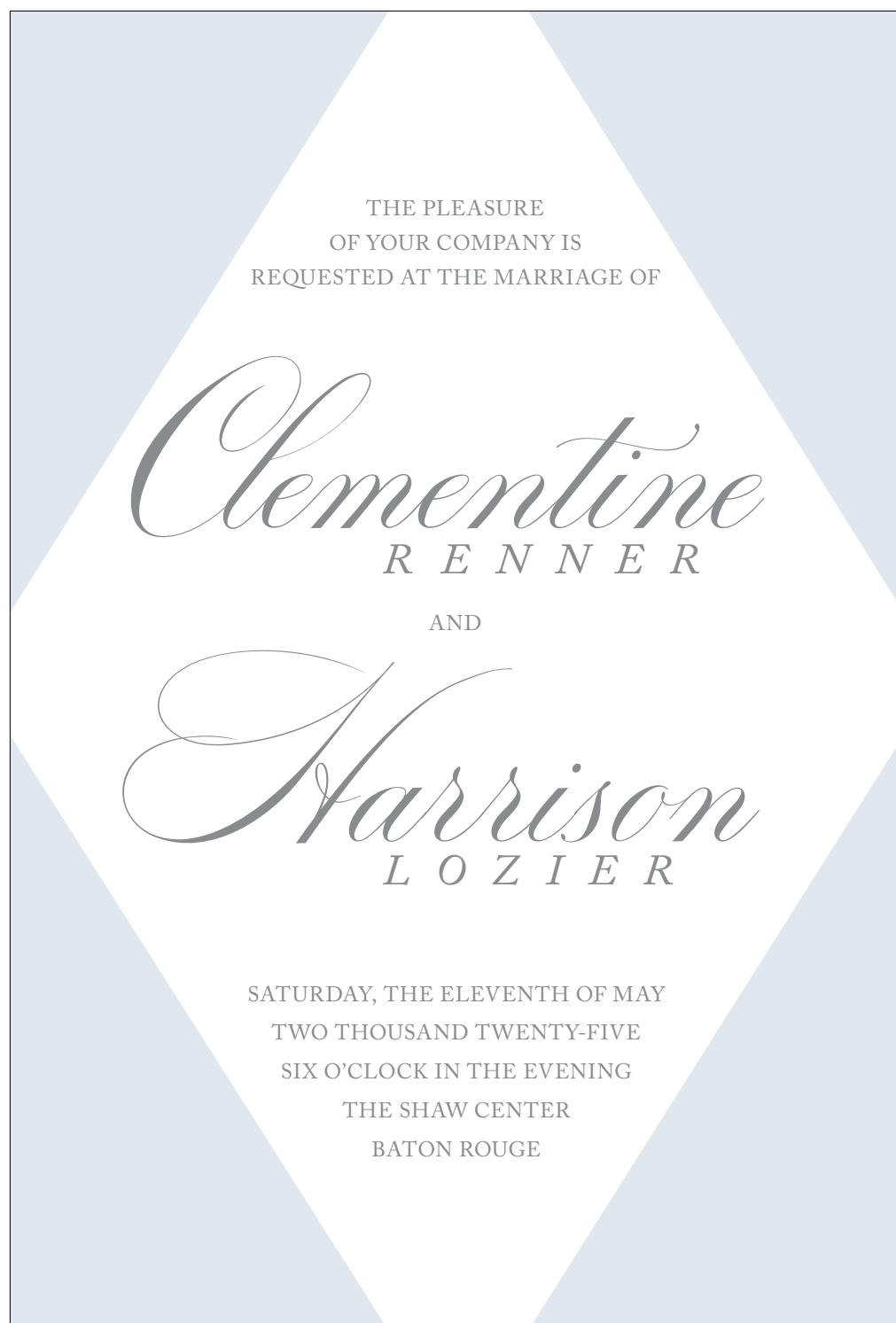
special handling

We embrace clients who want to to create a suite that is uniquely their own using our designs and libraries of fonts, motifs, patterns, etc. Since every print method has its nuances and effects, we will share our experience and knowledge on any special handling that is recommended to assure the best print results.

high coverage

If your custom design incorporates large areas of ink coverage such as large solids, color floods or all-over patterns, you will likely hear us refer to the design as being high coverage. High coverage designs can add a degree of challenge to print because of the handmade, artisan nature of this computer-free printing process. Think of letterpress like a rubber stamp with a fixed amount of pressure and ink. When the pressure and ink are applied to a smaller area, a deeper impression is achieved along with consistent ink coverage. The bigger the print area, the lesser the impression and greater variance in ink coverage.

What does this mean? High coverage designs will have a less tactile impression and the color may look darker or lighter in some areas. Larger areas of solids will be sueded with the possibility of ghosting. While we cannot change the amount of pressure to create a greater impression, there are special printing techniques which can help minimize color variations and ghosting. These techniques will introduce additional cost, but may be well worth it to achieve the best possible print. We will discuss these options with you to assure the best letterpress results for your suite.

For the sample shown, we would use a technique called skip feeding. Skip feeding involves double inking the rollers in between the printing of each card. It takes more than twice as long to print this way and requires two pressmen which is why it's a bit more expensive. The investment is well worth it when we see the results, more consistent and even color coverage.

THE PLEASURE
OF YOUR COMPANY IS
REQUESTED AT THE MARRIAGE OF

Clementine
RENNER

AND

Harrison
LOZIER

SATURDAY, THE ELEVENTH OF MAY
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE
SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING
THE SHAW CENTER
BATON ROUGE

mix of thin lines & solids

A mix of thin and thick lines in the same color can add a degree of challenge to print. If printed together, the amount of ink on the press is limited to what the thin lines will allow, introducing more sueding in solid areas.

For best print results, we recommend splitting the ink color with thin and thick lines into 2 plates. By splitting the plate, the press operator can run each pass catered to its specific needs and optimize the overall printed product.

The design shown is an example of one that we would recommend for split plates. The first plate prints the wreath artwork; the operator would apply a more signficant amount of ink to assure coverage. The second plate prints the finer lines of the copy (both block and script) where a lighter application of ink assures the type will maintain its delicate line weights. A split plate card is priced as a 2 color letterpress invitation because the ink was applied in 2 separate passes.

Tiffany Hayes

AND

Edward Stevenson

REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY
AT THEIR WEDDING CELEBRATION
SATURDAY, OCTOBER TWENTIETH
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE
AT SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

Jardin de Buis
POTTERSVILLE, NEW JERSEY