



How to Make Your Guest Book Really Special

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Guest books are really popular at weddings, anniversaries and birthdays, and with a little bit of pre-planning you can create a really lasting memory which you will re-visit time and again.

A wedding guest book is traditionally passed around your guests at your wedding reception, celebration meal or party and they all sign their names and include a short message. You then have a wonderful keepsake of all the people who were there on your special day. The key to this is to make sure that the Best Man or one of your Ushers takes charge and passes the guest book around, makes sure that it keeps circulating and that all the guests have seen it.

There are many ways you can make the book that little bit different. The book itself can be handmade, covered or bought. There are a whole host of designs on the market with pretty prints, hand embellished and simple leather bound styles all popular.

Getting The Best Result From Your Guest Book

If you ensure that there is someone you trust on the day, not to ask just to sign the Wedding guest book, but to make a contribution to your wedding day by writing their feelings about you and this special day, you will be delighted with the result. This way, people will think before they write, and they will say something warm and loving, and you will capture that wonderful feeling forever.

Guest books come in lots of shapes and sizes and in various constructions. You want yours to look just perfect and this is easily the most important feature of any signing book, but there are a few other features its worth looking for depending on how you plan to use it. So here are our tips:

- 1) Decide whether you will simply ask guests to write in your guest book or whether you want to add the odd piece of memorabilia (like an order of service) or the odd poignant photograph. If you want to add a few bits and pieces you may be better off with the type of construction that is usually reserved for albums - in other words there is some flexibility in the construction to add these items without making it impossible to close the book properly. Many albums are perfect as signing books too if you'd like more of a hybrid. If you just want guests to write messages then the construction isn't so important
- 2) Protect the cover. However beautiful the cover may look when you get it, it's worth checking that it can be wiped and marks can easily be removed, otherwise you need to consider covering it with cellophane or something similar for your special day. If you get all your guests to write in it they will all be handling it, and however much you ask people to take care of it, someone will either have grubby hands or they will drop something on it! So take care of it.
- 3) Check the quality of the paper inside the guest book. You need to avoid paper that is too absorbent - there are books around with what looks like lovely paper inside but



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some papers can "bleed". This means that wet ink spreads slightly when it touches the paper and causes the writing to look indistinct and messy.

4) Make sure that you supply a good quality pen. The last thing you want in your guest book is ink stains and marks, so avoid a fountain pen as very few people now know how to use one, and avoid cheap ballpoint pens as they can often get a build up of ink on the nib which then comes off as a small blob. If that smears you'll never get it off. A good quality roller ball pen with a medium nib is probably the best, but make sure you try it out a fair bit before you let it be used.

5) Too many memory books at weddings and other events are placed on a table and the hosts announce that it is available for all guests to write in. If this is all you do you will probably be lucky to get the signatures and messages of a quarter of your guests. The only way to be sure of getting most people to write a message is to appoint one person (one of the ushers is a good choice) to go around to every guest and make sure that everyone makes a contribution.

6) Get your appointed usher to do the job early in the proceedings!! After people have had a few glasses of wine or beer you may not be so pleased with what gets written! Your appointed usher will probably do a better job himself early on.

7) Whatever your choice and whatever way you ensure the final result we are sure that you'll be delighted with our selection and may we wish you a lovely day and a wonderful memory.

Alternatives To A Guest or Signing Book

You may decide not to use a book but to create cards or flags for the guests to complete. Cards can be added to a book later and flags in the shape of hearts, butterflies or something else personal to you can be pre-punched and ribbon added. They can then be tied to a long stretch of ribbon for a great decoration at your wedding which all the guests will enjoy reading. Later these can all be inserted into a guest book.

You could make favours for each place setting which include a personal message for each guest – perhaps a photograph of the bride and groom with some words next to it. This can be placed in an envelope along with an additional card requesting that the guest writes a message to you and returns the envelope to a central posting box.

Another idea is to make absolutely sure that all guests have been photographed individually or in families and then this is added to each guest book message. This can be easily achieved by asking Bridesmaids and ushers to bring along their digital cameras. When asking guests to complete the guest book, use a double page reserving one side for the photograph and one side for the guest message.