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# VARIETY

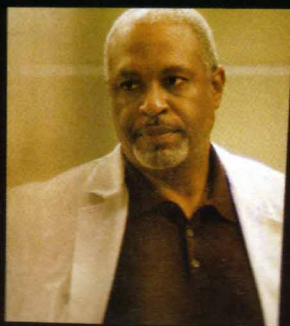
FRIDAY  
JULY 28, 2006

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# GREY'S ANATOMY





...just allowing...  
 ty," says producer Darren Star, a client  
 of "event branding" firm Creative Intelligence.

Now celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Creative claims it invented the modern-day, over-the-top invite. Founder Marc Friedland certainly got the jump; as a child, he would write letters on air sickness bags "just to see what would go through the mail." His first invitation, however, was 5,000 hand-painted black-and-white pieces for the launch of MOCA

samples, all to satisfy a client list that includes Oprah Winfrey, John Travolta and Steve Wynn.

"It's not about opening an envelope and — sand gets on the floor, glitter falls on the dog," Friedland says. "It's about creating the party experience in the invite."

That can include the invitation's journey from host to guest. One Creative client found the U.S. Postal Service too mundane for his daughter's princess-

ty," says Soolip rep Kelly Sweetey.

These niceties can drive the price of a single invitation to \$1,000 or more. Of course, price is no object for some clients; Winfrey's three-part invite for her Legends party included Swarovski-encrusted books and custom-wrapped framed photos from the event.

However, when a Bat Mitzvah invitation is covered in pink fur or a disco party invitation arrives in the form of a gold (and functional) 8-track tape, it's easy to

vites may be prafancy. In a town party and its resic last-minute offers well-designed inv valuable emissar much on the in they've got to be into the evening.

"People forget to be inviting," says people's names sh

PLAY

# Having it made

If presentation is what demands an R.S.V.P., these inventive invites are the cream of the crop

By CARLY MILNE



## COLORADO WEDDING

75 cashmere-wrap envelopes; redbliss.com

The custom-made wrap included snowflake brooches and an inside pocket to hold the reply card. Paper was 100% cotton mold-made Italian card stock.

**Cost** \$129 per invite, not including mailing.

**Feedback** "They had so many phone calls for RSVPs that their phones were overruin," says RedBliss owner Christine Traulich. "Even men who would typically not even care would call to say how amazing and original the invite was."



## 944'S BIRTHDAY BASH

2,000 zippered coconuts; callard.com/in house

Doherty estimates that it took 20 hours to hand stamp the coconuts with the 944 brand, with another 30 hours devoted to inserting raffia paper and the 10 coaster-sized teasers that outlined a Vegas weekend of fireworks, performances by a half-dozen bands and the Imax 3D premiere of "Superman Returns."

**Cost** \$20 each, including mailing

**Feedback** "It was the highest return of RSVPs from any party we've ever thrown," Doherty says. He estimates attendance between 9,000 and 11,000.



## AUTUMN WEDDING

Six "card café" invitations; soolip.com  
 Custom-made Parisian wrapped box, set with deckled edges and matching envelope wrapped 5 x 5 x 2 1/4 box.

**Cost** \$60 per invitation. Faux suede luggage identification or message is an additional postage postcard set, \$16.

**Feedback** Invitation is currently in transit.



## PAUL ALLEN'S TRAVEL ADVENTURES

creativeintelligence.com

**How many** 450

**Labor notes** Leather-bound suitcase with a book about Alaska and the upper Northwest

**Cost** Not disclosed

**Feedback** Allen has also ordered invitations for adventures in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, (antique chest that contains fishnet, jewels and a pop-up scavenger hunt map) Russia/St. Petersburg (satin-lined cherry wood box containing a custom-made, mock-Faberge egg) and Venice (handmade masks for a Venetian ball inside a velvet-covered box)

## A BRIDGE TO NOW/OPRAH'S LEGENDS BALL

Invite for 300 guests and 70 honorees; creativeintelligence.com

The Legends book sleeve demanded more crystals. Also called into service: 780 square yards of iridescent cognac taupe suede, 325 yards of iridescent cognac taupe suede, dozen printing/production processes.

**Cost** Not disclosed

**Feedback** Compliments from the White House according to Friedland, "Oprah loved this so much, she wanted to rub it all over her b

