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Winter Weddings of 09

Snowflakes and pinecones are tried-and-true winter wedding motifs, but don't feel bound to these seasonal standbys. Reds and greens certainly reflect the season, but overdo this color combo, and your wedding may seem more holiday-oriented than you intended.

What's Hot Now

Consider a less-is-more approach to your color palette: Silver and white with crystal accents can add some serious glamour to your winter wedding. For your ceremony, try a white velvet aisle runner trimmed with white satin ribbon, or decorate the altar with a crystal curtain backdrop adorned with hanging strands of elegant white phalaenopsis orchids. If you're exchanging vows outdoors, get your guests in on creating the ambience by giving out clear umbrellas to friends and family members as they arrive.

Holly motifs spell out the season pretty clearly, but they might not dazzle your guests.

Color Pallet

Don't feel bound to the wintery whites, reds and greens that usually surround the holiday season. Why not use bold bright colors to create warmth with mango oranges, key-lime greens or pineapple yellows? Create a fun, unexpected and creative setting for your guests. But don't be afraid of adding color.

White on White: The key to using a white-on-white color



scheme is layering. To create rich, luxurious texture, start with a crisp white tablecloth and top it with a sheer, white satin striped overlay. For your place settings, think mixed-and-matched patterns of white china rimmed in platinum, with platinum flatware and silver reception chairs. Surprisingly, for centerpieces you'll find an array of

gorgeous white flowers available in winter: orchids, calla lilies, roses, tulips, cosmos and amaryllis – just to name a few. We love the idea of using tall glass cylinders in various heights and filling each one with a different bloom. Use three or four per table for a finished look.

Moss Green and Chocolate Brown: For a rustic look, create a



table setting that will make your guests want to curl up in a cozy, wool sweater in front of a crackling fireplace. Start by draping your tables with moss-green linens, topped with copper chargers and ivory plates. Coordinating ivory cotton napkins can be wrapped with wooden rings, and for seating, set up deep brown bamboo folding

chairs. If you're getting married in a lofty barnlike space, consider topping every other table with a tall branch arrangement to add height to your tables. Alternating tables can be set with low, woody containers filled with a mix of greens, ivory, and buttery yellow blooms like roses, ranunculuses and narcissus, interspersed with mini pinecones and spruce. Attach guests' place cards to pinecones and set them in the middle of each place setting.

Red, Cream, and Gold: Begin with gold brocade linens and top with beaded gold chargers. Pull in the red with floral elements,

such as sleek red tulips laid atop folded napkins at each place setting. You can also add coordinating floral treatments to the back of each chair. For a glamorous look, keep your centerpieces monochromatic and use all-red amaryllis, anemones, roses, and tulips. Decadent gourmet chocolates are a nice touch, and you can have them hand-painted or silk-screened with your wedding day motif.



Reds and Royal Purple: Invoke a setting from a bygone era with this dramatic color combo. The key here is to add flourishes. Choose beaded table linens with coordinating lavish plates, colored glassware, and napkin rings with intricate scrollwork. Think tall -- as in gilded candelabras overflowing with lush fuchsia blooms and strung with hanging votives. Also, don't be afraid to add a feather or two to give your table a whimsical feel. Dress up every other chair with an embroidered silk scarf in your signature colors. Not only will the scarf add to the decor, but it'll also serve as a stylish keepsake for female guests.



The Décor

The décor for a winter wedding can be as minimal and monochromatic as desired for a more clean line, winter look. But it can also be as lavishing and colorful as well. Depending on the venue, light the aisle with candles, place white crystal branches tied in a coordinating ribbon at every other row, or swag crystal and satin from pew to pew. Use natural branches and ice to amaze. Winter doesn't have to be all about the white snow and the shivers. So don't be afraid to bring the color.

The Mood

Since the days are short and the nights are long, create the correct atmosphere at the reception with warmth. Whether it be candlelit dinners, a crackling fire as the focal point on the dance floor, lit centerpieces, or up beam spotlights set around the walls. Warm your guests up by designating a sitting area around a fireplace with hot cocoa, teas or a cigar bar available.



The Invitations

Since winter weddings are usually held indoors (it's an ideal time for ballroom receptions), they often call for a more formal invitation. A black-tie event is nicely conveyed by heavy cardstock and a navy blue, chocolate-brown, or even eggplant font with hand calligraphy.

For a fresh way to achieve a formal tone for your winter wedding, use thick, frosted Plexiglass invitations in white scripted ink. Send the sturdy invites out to all your guests tucked into silver envelope liners. Get real creative and send your invite on an ornament. Your guests will have a new treasure for their tree and a memory to never forget.



The Menu

The menu choices for a winter inspired wedding meal are endless! Go all out with winter and have the traditional cured ham or pick what your families traditional meal would be. For your cocktail hour, have waiters pass trays of delectable bites, such as spoonfuls of breadcrumb-coated mac and cheese; demi forks of spaghetti and meatballs or shot glasses of hot soup, such as tomato bisque garnished with grilled triangular cheese bites.

The Main Course: Especially appropriate for wintertime, couples are wanting more gourmet and classic, something you would find in a four-star eatery. Come entree time, classic filet mignon continues to be a favorite, but in place of roasted spuds on the side, you might have a hearty bowl of favorite soups and salads. Veggie meals are taking center stage and should be considered for your vegetarian guests. Ask your caterer about pasta and their meet-free dishes.

For drinks, offer hot chocolates, egg nog, warm apple cider. Serve up *white* hot chocolate in small espresso cups and eggnog in small punch glasses for your guests as they arrive. At the bar, offer saketinis (Japanese rice wine and sweet-flavored vodka) in glasses rimmed with sugar crystals.

As a sweet send off, how about an all white candy spread, with M&M's, white chocolates and mints. More than ever, desserts are being served to the guest after the meal. To really warm up, individual pecan pies, a variety of warm roasted nuts, hot chocolate mix, egg nog, spiced drinks, chocolate covered cranberries, peppermint candies, apple pies, a variety of homemade cookies like gingerbread, chocolate chip and sugar.



Escort Cards

Miniature sleighs and holly motifs stamped onto your escort cards would spell out the season pretty clearly, but they might not dazzle your guests. Leave everyone awestruck as they retrieve their escort cards by making the entire table sparkle. Have the cards hand-calligraphed in silver ink and attach them to individual crystals or pinecones with a ribbon. Hang each from an oversized crystal candelabra centerpiece for a new take on the popular escort card tree.

Be Gracious to Your Guests

Some think that a winter wedding is simple and boring because of the unpredictable weather. Not true. Play on the cold air with packets of hot cocoas and teas for each guest, an old fashioned candy stick in your colors, homemade cookies in a themed gift bag, snow globes with the couples picture in the middle, ornaments or a candle as a favor to take home. Try a small live evergreen seedling wrapped in a decorative box. A small token will be greatly appreciated.

