

PICKETT'S PRESS: MAKING THE PERSONAL A PRIORITY

BY DANIEL CAPPELLO

PERSONALIZED STATIONERY is making a comeback. Perhaps it never truly went away, but in today's world—with instantaneous communication (in every form possible) and monolithic, somewhat ubiquitous fashion—it's becoming increasingly difficult to stand out against an ever-growing, ever-opinionated crowd. All of which might explain why something so time-honored and cherished as bespoke stationery—and the letters, notes, and occasions that are celebrated with it—is so popular. The time, care, and consideration that goes into creating these sheets of engraved or letterpressed stationery—the bona fide messengers of life's moments—are a reflection of the sender's personality and style.

Kate Pickett, the founder and owner of Pickett's Press, has been designing her family's Christmas cards since she could first hold a pen, and has been writing letters since she could first sign her name. Today, her firm offers truly bespoke stationery and gifts in all forms and shapes, from social stationery and business cards to wedding invitations, baby announcements, and monogrammed gifts for the home. (Pickett, an avid drawer, specializes in offering custom-drawn motifs for her clients, from insignias, shields, and family crests to renderings of homes, places, or symbols of personal significance.) Here, we sit down with Pickett to discuss what's happening in the world of customized correspondence and monogrammed living.



*This page: Pickett's Press founder Kate Pickett.
Opposite page: Bespoke peony letterpress-printed stationery in dusty pink on ivory paper with dusty pink tissue liners.*

DANIEL CAPPELLO: What is the state of stationery?

KATE PICKETT: Personal stationery is making a comeback with both women and men, as tradition and taste and style are taking on increasing importance for my generation, and for our children (thank goodness!). My daughter and sons all have their own personal stationery, and so do many of their friends. I am thrilled to see this trend, as appreciation for note writing bodes well for the continuation of good manners.

DC: What does stationery say about someone?

KP: A note card reflects so much about a person. Certain fonts are mature or traditional, some are young and whimsical, and others can be modern or more serious. Combining fonts with unexpected colors or envelope liners can give a second facet to the notecard's personality. For instance, we might use a sans-serif modern font in a very traditional color and paper type; or, like my own personal stationery, a very heavy font like Chevalier in an unexpected color—hot pink—with lime green liners. For certain occasions, though, I also have a more traditional set of cards on powder blue paper, with a navy monogram and ivory hand-painted borders and French vanilla tissue liners. Combining different elements is so much fun and really is a window into the personality of the person writing the note.

DC: Is electronic ease supplanting physical forms of communication—or emboldening them?

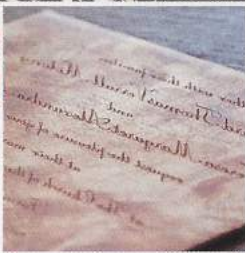
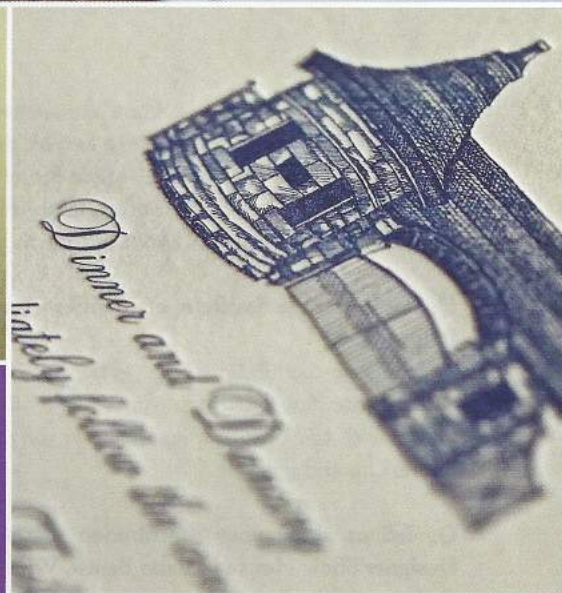
KP: We absolutely need personal note cards, stationery, calling cards, and business cards. In the digital age, a note becomes more relevant, not less. We are inundated with emails, texts, Instagram, and Facebook. The recipient of a handwritten note on bespoke stationery feels a connection with someone when holding and reading words—and that is impossible to replicate digitally or online. The fact that it's rare makes it special, and thus increases its value. I see bespoke stationery becoming a luxury—a reflection of personal taste and style that we cannot fully achieve digitally or project as accurately online.

DC: What's your favorite part of the process?

KP: I began this business because I loved the design process, and that is what continues to excite me every day. I never know what may unfold on any given day. For instance, one day we may have a wedding appointment, a walk-in client for personal stationery, an online order for a baby shower, and a request for a custom drawing of a friend's home for a hostess gift. I love meeting with clients, and being able to translate their taste and style into a piece of personal paper that exactly captures who they are or what they want to represent. ♦

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Clockwise from top left: Custom save-the-date in silver on midnight blue paper; a copper die for engraving; bespoke stationery with custom pagoda illustration; wedding menu with custom illustration of the gate at Williams College; custom vellum overlay for a Palm Beach wedding; copper engraving die; bespoke pocket wedding invitation; custom Adirondack chair illustration for a Nantucket wedding; the engraving presses; copper plate for engraved wedding text; custom wedding invitation with mandarin red brocade. Opposite page: Custom save-the-date card with orchid illustration in pansy ink.

