

Catharine Kendall Emerald

Bridal gowns and accessories took center stage at the Lane County Fairgrounds Jan. 22 and 23. Experts on hand agree that the 'Martha Stewart' style is very popular these days, simple and very elegant.

## Wedding trends changing, moving toward simplicity

■ The traditional ceremony has been modified slightly throughout the decades, making way for 2000

By Yael Menahem  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Simplicity is what engaged couples are searching for in today's busy world.

The task of finding the perfect dress, flower arrangements, a wedding theme, the cake and, not to mention, the right bride or groom, can be tedious.

Yet simplicity is key, maintains Seph Reese, producer of the Emerald City Bridal Show 2000, which took place Jan. 22 and 23 at the Lane County Fairgrounds.

Reese has been producing bridal shows for 15 years, and he's seen wedding themes change, technology improve and couples elope or try to find alternatives to a traditional wedding. Yet he finds that couples are by and large still taking that customary walk down the aisle.

"Nationwide, there's a return to the traditional wedding where the bride has the white gown, the groom is in the tuxedo," Reese says. "They have anywhere from two to six attendants, and dad goes out and spends \$50,000 on the wedding."

Bridal gowns have also changed over the years.

Toni Davis, who has worked at Bridal Etc. in Corvallis for 10 years, says a bride now has a greater chance of finding a dress that stands out on the big day. Many of the gowns looked alike and the selection was sparse a decade ago, but today's bride can find a gown that doesn't look like every other.

"It's a lot easier for a bride to find a gown

that will fit her personality," Davis says.

Brides who opt for a traditional ceremony but desire a simpler gown, sometimes choose an ivory-colored bridesmaid dress that doesn't have a 10-foot long train behind it but at the same time still garners "oohs and ahhs," Davis says.

Luckily for bridesmaids, their once notoriously tacky dresses have also received a face-lift.

"They are a lot more wearable after the fact now, which is nice, [so] you can get a little more value out of the money you spent," Davis says.

Floral arrangements have also gone through some changes.

"It used to be acceptable to go in Mom's garden and cut some flowers, but now brides are expected to see more sophisticated bouquets," Reese remarks.

Sandy Whinmer, owner of Oakway Flowers and Gifts in Eugene, is aware of the changing trends in floral arrangements over the past 30 years.

"The Martha Stewart style is very popular; it's simple and very elegant," Whinmer says.

Finally, what would a wedding bash be with hungry guests? The Oregon Electric Station in downtown Eugene has catered weddings for the past eight years, says employee Theresa Pawson, and a major trend has been serving less alcohol at the reception. She says people are more aware and want to prevent the dangers of drinking and driving after the celebrations.

Whatever form your dream wedding takes, all of the experts say there are plenty of styles and selections out there to fit your personal needs.

caterers fill their schedules fast. Reception sites and churches also get booked months in advance for the summertime weekends.

This year is unusually busy because many couples want to marry in 2000, Delperdang says. Kathee Lavine, owner of Holy Cow catering services, also reports an increase in business.

"We have more on the calendar now than we usually do in March," she says.

To minimize the stress of preparation, couples should begin clipping and saving photos they find in bridal magazines early, says Joy Tsunka, a floral designer for Chase Flowers. This way they will be able to show examples when they meet with professionals.

The Web site also recommends that couples allow plenty of time to order invitations and mail them in a timely fashion. A few weeks prior to the big day, couples should confirm reservations and finalize details.

Lavine says if couples plan early, they will be able to feel more relaxed as the big day approaches.

"Six months is probably a good time line to get all your ducks in a row and be comfortable," she says.

## Planning

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"Getting organized early helps to ensure things will go smoothly," she says.

According to the Web site [www.wedding411.com](http://www.wedding411.com), an early decision a couple makes is what kind of wedding they want. Will it be formal or informal? Religious or civil? If a couple wants a religious ceremony, they need to know the requirements of a wedding in their faith.

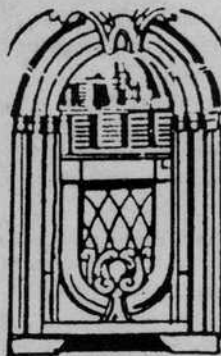
Once the couple decides what kind of wedding they want and how much they will spend, the next step is to figure out elements such as working out a schedule for ceremony rehearsals and reserving a honeymoon suite, says Tracy Delperdang, a coordinator for the wedding shop Reed and Cross.

"A big thing is choosing the colors which will then determine flowers, bridesmaid dresses and the like," she says.

Experts advise couples to start planning far in advance. Most couples in Eugene desire a summer wedding, Ferguson says, but photographers, bands for the reception and

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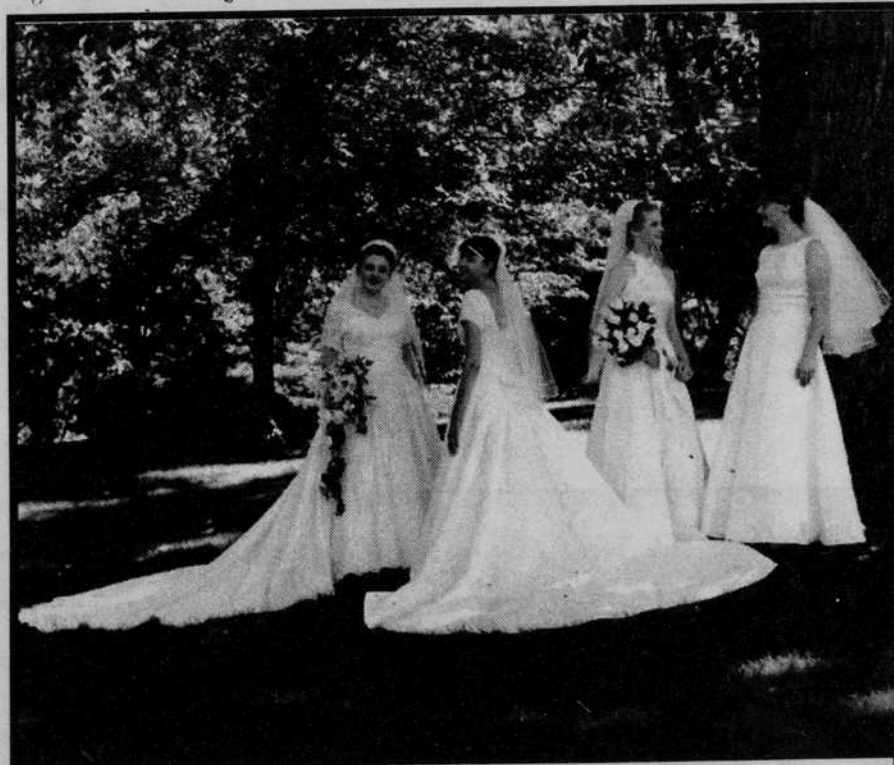
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