



ECHOING THE RECENT RETURN to romance and tradition, this exquisite gown designed by Michele Piccione for Alfred Angelo boasts billowing bishop sleeves, gracefully swirling skirt. A confection of Venise lace, embroidered medallions, embroidery, chiffon and knit chiffon, it has an elegant semi-cathedral train, and is available in either white over ivory or all white.

'I do' is the beginning of a lifetime commitment

"I do"—two words which, as frequently as they are repeated, signify at the same time, a beginning and an end. In front of the couple being married, a wedded life looms not unnaturally large.

For, implicit in the two simple words both have repeated, is a world of commitments, decisions and promises—two lives have joined, a truly momentous occasion.

And, behind the newlyweds, lie not only the path of their courtship and their own formative years and experiences, but aggregated centuries of traditions and customs, years fraught with hope and thought for the future that have led to the moment of joining—for every couple the world over who meet, fall in love, and marry.

Falling in love seems such a simple thing—we have developed a picture of it, thanks to an endless sequence of books, movies and songs, in which all of the complications have been romanticized out.

The actuality, as young people meeting with it for the first time discover over and over again as one generation succeeds the next, is far richer and far more complicated, liberally endowed with all the ambiguities in which life delights.

Interestingly enough, all the people who have painted love in such vivid and simple colors, do not attempt to "fool" their public on the subject of weddings.

With all the planning that goes into them, all the celebration they occasion and all the people they involve, it is to be expected that they should be as convoluted and complicated as life itself.

Customs observed

Right off the bat, centuries of tradition present themselves for reckoning. Customs—from carrying the bride over the threshold of her new home to the throwing of rice at the newly married pair—must be observed, as age-old Superstition rears its head.

And, indeed, these customs give a tone to the wedding, a sense of continuity that young and old alike find satisfying.

Many of the complications arise during the planning stage, which often lasts several months.

The trick, and it is a trick, is to arrive at a game plan for The Wedding which takes into account the likes, dislikes, whims and prejudices of everyone involved, not only bride and groom but their immediate families, as well.

Questions and answers

First, decisions must be made as to where and when the wedding will be held; how large the guest list will be and who will be invited; whether it is to be an afternoon or an evening event, and how formal it will be; what colors the bridal party will wear.

As the big day approaches, other questions arise: from who will sit with whom to what tunes the organist will play during the processional.

It is a tribute to the strong bonds of love which unite the various individuals involved, that ultimately all is accomplished in a spirit of good will and harmony.

The wedding itself is as joyous as it is solemn, an event truly befitting the months of planning and concern. As well it should be, since it contains within itself the twin virtues of reverence for the past and hope for the future. It is, truly, a celebration of life.

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