

Kitsch to Couture

It's your wedding. Wear what you want.

By Jacquelyn Lewis

Selecting attire to wear for the “big day” can be a complicated process. Maybe you have had your ideal wedding gown in mind since you were a small child. Or maybe you panic at the mere thought of white; maybe you don't want to wear a dress at all. But whoever you are, there's no denying that the foray into matrimonial fashion can be a daunting endeavor. Whether you plan to wear jeans or satin, deciding which ensemble best expresses your personality and the theme of the wedding as a whole can be nerve-racking. However, it's important to remember that this day is *yours*, and what you wear is entirely up to you. A meaningful wedding doesn't always have to be about bridesmaids and bouquets... unless you want it to be. There's an entire world of choices at your fingertips — from traditional to avant garde.

Local bridal shop owner Connie Ourada says the bride should start thinking about her wedding outfit as soon as she gets engaged, and she should make her final selection about six months before the event (to allow time for fittings, alterations and additional planning). Ourada adds that browsing catalogues and magazines and surfing the web are good ways to begin exploring all the options. Then, she says, go shopping.

The most obvious way to start shopping is to peruse nearby bridal shops and boutiques, especially if you're searching for a more formal or traditional gown. Every bridal store is different. Some sell off the rack, others order from try-on samples.

Certain shops will offer a relaxed atmosphere, while others focus on a high-pressure sales environment. Some will require appointments; others accept walk-ins. It's a good idea to call the store ahead of time so you'll know what to expect.

‘The occasion makes it a wedding dress; it doesn't have to be white.’

— Eugene designer,
Bess Nobel

Once you begin shopping, Ourada says the key is being open-minded. “Looking for a dress should be a fun experience,” she says. “Try on a hundred dresses. The most important thing is to be open to trying on different styles.”

But what if your idea of “different” extends beyond what these bridal shops can offer? Even if your idea of the perfect wedding outfit is something completely different, you still have plenty of options. Thrift stores, antique stores and fashion boutiques are just a few ideas. Alterna-wedding web sites like modgirl.com can also help you plan the clothing for a distinctive soirée. “You could have mom walk you down the aisle or your best friend hold your bouquet at the altar — if you have an altar and a bouquet to be held,” modgirl suggests. “You could wear a

fuchsia dress, a black dress, a crocheted dress — or pants. Don't stop being you just because everyone's looking.”

Finally, Ourada says, “For those who want something really different, a lot of times their best bet is to have something designed for them.”

Eugene designer Bess Nobel says having a wedding ensemble designed for you is often the best choice. Nobel creates her outfits (mostly couture gowns) from sketches, ideas and photographs brought in by her customers, as well as her own imagination. She has made everything from pant suits to dresses based on historical themes, and she says custom design is a great choice for the bride who wants to stay away from the “cookie-cutter” wedding. “Usually, she wants a very sophisticated look,” Nobel says. “She wants to make a statement with her wedding gown.”

Nobel also stresses that white is appropriate for any bride — first wedding or fifth. However, she adds that you shouldn't be afraid to play with color and theme. “The occasion makes it a wedding dress,” she says. “It doesn't have to be white.”

From western weddings to Grateful Dead themes to historical gowns she has designed it all. She says experimentation with fabric is also a great way to set your outfit apart, listing tie-dye, hand-painted silk and fairy wings as some examples. Once, she made a bright red dress and matching red veil for a customer.

No matter what you choose for your wedding, both Nobel and Ourada agree that the most important detail should be *you*. Your outfit should be a gift to yourself and a reflection of who you are.

“It's like a surprise, so that when (the bride) walks down the aisle, people will gasp,” Nobel says. “She wants to be really special and this is the way to do it.” ■



Design illustrations by Bess Nobel

On a tight budget and still want a wedding dress? Your wedding attire can still be priceless. Ourada says bridesmaids' dresses are a great alternative to more expensive wedding gowns, and most can be ordered in a variety of colors and white. You might also want to search the bridal shop sale racks, consignment shops and thrift stores. Be creative!

Meena
IMPORTS

The
Unity
Candle
Holder

The Perfect Wedding Gift.

5th St. Market • 2nd Floor
687-0099

SHIBOSKI
FINE JEWELRY DESIGN

ALISON SHIBOSKI
CUSTOM WORK

343-4972

SHOWING AT:
NEW TW!ST

**CATERING
FOR YOUR
SPECIAL
EVENTS!**

**IN-HOME
CHEF SERVICE**

**RED
AGAVE**

453 WILLAMETTE ST.
541-683-2206

CRAVINGS

**WEDDING
SPECIALISTS**

- ◆ Grand Receptions
- ◆ Rehearsal Dinners
- ◆ Lavish Buffets or Sit Down Dinners
- ◆ Bridesmaids' Luncheons
- ◆ Bridal Showers
- ◆ Attention to Detail
- ◆ Full Service Catering

343-7933 • 1530 Willamette
www.cravingsfinefoods.com