

queen for a day

SOMETHING BORROWED BRIDAL BOUTIQUE
RENTS GORGEOUS GOWNS *by Vanessa Salvia*

If you can't imagine spending \$2,000 or more on a dress you'll only wear once, the thought of buying a traditional head-to-toe wedding ensemble probably fills you with a special kind of horror. For years men have routinely rented their wedding attire, and now a new boutique in Eugene is letting women have their turn.

Carol Holm and Anita Sanders opened Something Borrowed Bridal Boutique in June of 2007. Their collection of more than 75 pristine bridal dresses, in styles ranging from simple sheaths to ornate beaded ball gowns, fills the spacious front room of Holm's Eugene home. While gown rental is common in other countries and even in other states, Oregon bridal shops avoid it. Judy Van Valkenberg, owner of Oregon Wedding Showcase, refused to admit Something Borrowed into her wedding show, citing her policy of exhibiting only new dresses. "She's not going to change her mind ... at least until she finds that more people are interested," says Holms. "It's quite an industry, but it's unfortunate because there's room for all of us," adds Sanders. It's accepted and even expected that men will rent their tuxes, but there's serious money at stake when bridal gowns cost thousands of dollars. Holly Serano, customer service representative for David's Bridal in Eugene, said they do receive calls about women seeking to rent, but she didn't seem concerned about the competition. "Some girls will always want to own their gown. They want the dress of their dreams," Serano says. "We're not too worried about it. There's always been competition."

Few brides knew about Something Borrowed when the pair first opened up shop, but after some word-of-mouth advertising, they're flocking to the service. About half of the brides-to-be who make appointments end up renting a gown. Holm and Sanders were previously in business together for 22 years making toys, and after selling that business in 2005 they began looking for other entrepreneurial opportunities. When their original idea of renting prom dresses proved impractical, Holm's daughter seeded them with their first wedding gown. "She wore it and was done with it," Holm says. Since then, Holm and Sanders have purchased dresses from Craigslist and accepted gowns given to them by friends. It seems fewer women are saving their wedding dresses these days. "This generation of young women doesn't want to hold onto their dresses. They just see them as



ANITA SANDERS AND CAROL HOLM

closet filler," Sanders says. "They know their daughters won't want to wear it any more than our daughters wanted ours. So we're buying all the dresses they bought, and we can use them again."

Until now, women bought expensive dresses at bridal stores because they had no options. Renting allows brides to acquire their entire wedding ensemble for about \$200, and that's appealing to a lot of brides who either can't afford thousands of dollars for a dress or choose not to spend that much. And buying a gown also usually involves an alteration fee of about \$200. "It's just ridiculous," Sanders says. "You could have a couch or a really nice trip somewhere instead." The dresses from Something Borrowed originally cost anywhere from \$700 to \$2,500 and rent for an off-season rate of \$120.

The women also offer rental veils, undergarments, shoes, shawls, bustiers, spans (control top girdles), stoles, a few tiaras, earrings and 20 petticoats in various sizes and degrees of poofiness. Holm and Sanders fuss over the brides as long as it takes at each appointment, zipping and buttoning and sorting through the voluminous dresses. If a dress is too long, they will offer the bride taller shoes and a bigger petticoat. Too short, and the brides get flatter shoes and a less full petticoat. "There are alterations we can make without sewing," Holm says.

"Our brides are thrilled to find this service, and then they're thrilled to come in and find gorgeous dresses," Sanders says. "They're not settling."

Something Borrowed Bridal Boutique is located at 1754 River Point Loop. 344-5557; www.somethingborrowedbridalgowns.com

TUX LOVE

Men don't dream their whole lives about the perfect tux for their fairy tale wedding day, and if most grooms ever had to wear an itchy, uncomfortable penguin suit ever again it would be too soon. It makes sense that an industry allowing men to rent and return their wedding attire exists. But there are a lot of stylish guys out there, and there's the idea that if you're going to spend the money renting a tux, why not buy a nice old vintage one for almost the same price? Problem is, at least around here, a vintage tux or even a quality vintage suit can be tough to come by. Local vintage stores do carry tuxes for sale, but according to Nobody's Baby manager Morgan Monroe, when a nice vintage tux comes in it flies out the door almost as soon as it hits the rack. "We have a close-knit small group of vintage collectors here, and we do have dealers who come from California," Monroe says, "but mostly it's guys calling looking for a suit for an occasion and they want vintage," usually for a wedding, a cocktail party or parents' wedding anniversary. Buying a quality vintage tux might set you back \$100 or more if you can find one, but Nobody's Baby keeps the Zoot suits and other prime vintage stuff for costume rentals. They don't rent wedding attire per se and they don't have wedding gowns, but rental tuxes can be had for \$50. — *Vanessa Salvia*

Nobody's Baby is located at 365 E. 13th Ave. 343-6842; www.nobodysbaby.com

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