

Dressed...

Not Stressed!

Finding the right dress - By Maggie Carless



Maggie Carless has definitely proved that dynamite comes in small packages – she has so much energy that she appears ready to explode with suggestions on how to wave her magic wand and conjure up your dream wedding dress. Maggi owns and runs Dona Fina Bridal Studio in Hyde Park, Johannesburg. She is available by appointment only.

With the choices available to today's bride, you could begin to feel overwhelmed and confused when facing the most important wardrobe choice of your life. Maybe eloping is an attractive option after all, – no wait, don't go there

Finding a suitable gown need not be a difficult task. With a little thought and planning, you can retain the fun and excitement throughout the process and allow it to culminate into the Cinderella fantasy you've always had in your mind – or if you're a modern chick,

the big "reveal" after the Extreme Makeover.

Before sprinting to the nearest bridal shop, flagged Bridal magazine in hand, it's a good idea to set out clearly in your mind your definition of the perfect wedding dress. To do this you have to consider the following very important factors:

1. Your Body Shape

Of the many brides of all shapes and sizes visiting dressmakers on a daily basis, you'll be hard-pressed to meet one that is totally in love with her body. Let's face facts; most of us are not models, yet it's precisely their body shapes that the bridal magazines use in all their advertising. Consider this carefully before setting your heart on a style that may not suit you. While it's important not to allow your insecurities to dictate or restrict your choices, it's equally vital that you should feel particularly beautiful and confident on your special day.

The various bridal publications on the market explain the ways that different styles accentuate different aspects of the body and suit specific body shapes (in need refer to Oakfield's 2006 Bridal Guide). Your designer or bridal consultant should also be in a position to offer expert advice on the subject. Let her (or him for that matter) know what aspects of your body you are most happy with. This will allow her to show you styles that accentuate your best features and are forgiving in those areas that you're not entirely comfortable with.

Bridal wear fits differently from the clothes you wear on a daily basis. Don't assume you know what will suit you until you have tried on a number of styles. After all, isn't playing dress-up part of the fun?

2. Personality

Are you a traditional romantic, or a sexy diva? Wedding dress styles have

evolved over the last decade and the rules have changed, allowing for a multitude of options. Your wedding day is all about you and it only makes sense that your choice of dress should allow the personality that your fiancé and family love, to come through. (You don't want a case of "here comes the dress") Don't be afraid to experiment with fabrics, styles and colours – the latter can result in a more modern and lively effect. It is very likely that you will find more than one gown that looks great on you and it's therefore important to consider which one most reflects "you."

Do remember to take care to ensure that your dress fits the wedding and the location from a practical point of view. Whilst a beautiful dress looks good no matter what the environment, there is something to be said about Cinderella showing up at a beach bash, or Courtney Love showing up for a ball.

3. Your Budget

It's always a good idea to set a realistic figure before the search for your gown begins. There is no way of copying a beautiful expensive gown cheaply without losing its magic, so it's best to try on gowns you can afford. Rest assured, there are many stunning gowns available at very reasonable prices and you shouldn't feel shy to communicate your price upfront to your consultant / designer in order to get the most out of your appointment.

Once you have considered the above factors, choosing your special gown should be easy!

Now you just have to find dresses to suit your three bridesmaidsOi!

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