



Bridal fashions: As you like it

WHEN IT comes to bridal fashions, the word is options.

A bride can choose a ball gown, a country dress, a sheath or a tailored suit, say designers and editors who work in the bridal field. There are no rules, only guidelines.

She can look demure, like Cinderella at the ball or — in a departure from tradition — alluring in a strapless or off-the-shoulder dress with a low-cut neckline. Dresses with jackets and

detachable trains also make it easier to go from religious service to post-ceremony party with maximum comfort.

Holly McMunn of Bridal Originals says there are more choices in fabrics, style and color for brides than at any other time in the recent past. She sees several strong directions.

"One type of bride wants a simple dress in a classic silhouette, a princess, empire or sheath style. Another type chooses an elaborate dress," she says.

THERE IS also a demand for the fashion statement dress — particularly by older brides who may be remarrying — that reflects silhouettes currently in style, she says. While white and ivory remain the colors chosen by the overwhelming number of brides, soft tinges of color are becoming more popular, agree Modern Bride and Bride's magazine fashion editors.

One new finge is ice-blue on satin dresses, which imparts a silvery sheen to white.

Still popular are color-themed weddings, in which a particular color scheme is carried through in flowers and decorations, wedding party attire, table linen, plates, even party favors.

SOME FAVORED schemes include black and white, and white and a deep tone such as hot pink, coral or strong turquoise. For spring and summer, pastels such as mint and lemon yellow are popular.

Cindy Rose, fashion director for Vogue-Butterick Patterns, says the latest styles are available in sew-it-yourself patterns. Some examples

include dresses with bows at the shoulder or waist, ruffles, leg-o-mutton sleeves and even modified bustles.

According to Rose, "Bridal dresses are frankly not as innocent as they used to be — with bustles and low necklines, they do call attention to a woman's figure. Many brides want to look like a sexy woman so the dresses they select have more style."

An advantage to having a home-sewn dress is the opportunity to customize it with, for example, a detachable train, snap-off sleeves or a coat, jacket or bolero.

IN KEEPING WITH the variety of bridal dresses, accessories are similarly wide-ranging, according to fashion reports by Bride's and Modern Bride.

Modern Bride notes the popularity of hats, sprays of flowers for the hair and bows worn at the back of the head. Bride's says jewelry for the bride has become more dramatic than it used to be. Seen on more brides are drop earrings, charm bracelets and antique pins and earrings.



Bridal consultants say when it comes to wedding fashions the key word is options — in fabrics, style and color.

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