

# hand

says. "But depending on the complexity of the design, the number of fittings, the difficulty of handling the fabric, and whether the lace needs to be beaded, it could cost \$150 to \$500."

"But even if you're in the upper range for both fabrics and dressmaking and you spend \$1,000 on your dress, you're going to have good stuff," she adds. "You're talking about a dress you couldn't touch for under \$3,000. And it's going to fit you."

ACCORDING TO Haberman, sewing a wedding dress is not as complicated as you might think.

"The techniques involved are very basic," she says. "It's not like tailoring, where you have to be able to roll collars or make welt pockets. It's all straight seams. And making veils or headpieces is really easy — I tell people their little brother could make it with one hand."



JOHN DISCHER/staff photographer

Haberman's manager Patty Aumann (left) helps bride-to-be Molly McMillan of West Bloomfield choose bridal veils. Watching is Molly's mother, Mary Jo McMillan.

For those with less talented little brothers, Haberman's offers a seminar every February on how to make your own wedding gown. It features recent customers modelling their own gowns, and includes tips on how to work with difficult, expensive fabrics.

Haberman says that although interest in sewing dropped dramatically 10 or 15 years ago when many women began working outside the home, a small but rising number have taken up sewing again. She has customers coming in on the recently completed I-696 freeway from as far away as Ann Arbor, St. Clair Shores and Flint to take some of the

many classes offered at the store and to buy materials.

"It's a demand for quality and for self-expression," she says of the increase in sewing. "You know how when people cook nowadays it's gourmet cooking? Well, home sewing is gourmet sewing. People are taking some of their limited and precious free time and doing something creative with it. They feel good and the end product is wonderful."

HABERMAN SAYS HER shop is benefiting not only by the renewed interest in sewing, but also by the return to more traditional weddings as well.

"Interest in wedding dresses slacked off greatly in the '60s and early '70s," she says. "People were getting married in fields of daisies in their blue jeans. And that was fine, it suited the times. But now people seem to be returning to traditional values and traditional weddings."

That doesn't mean that they're wearing the same dresses people wore in the '50s, though.

"It's a combination of traditional values and '90s choices," Haberman says with a smile. "Forty years ago, you wouldn't have gotten married in a pink beaded gown, or had your bridesmaids wear black."

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— Toby Haberman

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