



Different OPTIONS: Lord West's collection of women's formal wear includes "Debut" (left), a double-breasted design with satin shawl lapels; "Influence" (center), a double-breasted jacket with satin peak collar; and "Panache" (right), a three-quarter length jacket with satin shawl lapels.

Tuxedo junction: Black tie for women takes new turn

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

So you're planning your wedding and want a different look for your bridesmaids.

You've got a date for the prom and you need something that suits your personality without blowing your budget.

You've been invited to a "black tie" affair and lack the black tie.

Steve Petix Formal Wear may have the solution for women looking for a stylish alternative to party dresses. It's called OPTIONS, a line of women's formal wear that features tuxedo-style

jackets, long and short skirts, and slacks.

"What really excites me is the potential that these outfits have," said Rich Orlandi of Steve Petix Formal Wear in Plymouth. "There are so many combinations you can come up with and the outcome is very feminine."

According to Orlandi, Steve Petix — also with stores in Livonia, Beverly Hills and Troy — is the first formal-wear company in Michigan to carry OPTIONS, made by Lord West. The tuxes (without shoes) rent for \$80 and sell for \$500-600.

Made of 100-percent tropical worsted wool, the tuxedo jackets come in four styles. "Debut" is a soft-tailored, double-breasted jacket with satin shawl collar, and "Influence" is double-breasted with satin peak lapels.

If those aren't to your liking, there's "Panache," a ¾-length jacket with satin shawl collar or "Destiny," a double-breasted tailcoat with satin peak lapels. They all come with faceted jet buttons.

Complementing the jackets are two styles of skirts — tea-length (32 inches) with a thigh-high slit, and above-the-knee length

(21 inches); the traditional ankle-length trousers; and a shorts style, all fully lined and featuring a satin side braid.

The accessory choices include a number of ballers in a variety of colors and full back vests in paisley brocades and gold or silver metallic.

Currently, OPTIONS covers the size 2-20 range, but "hopefully up the road we'll be able to accommodate smaller child sizes," Orlandi said. The jackets and pants come with telescoping sleeves and legs so they can be altered.

"Women have come in once in

a while to ask for tuxedos, but the problem is that men's tuxedos just don't fit properly; OPTIONS is made to fit women," Orlandi said.

"Now they will be able to enjoy that convenience and have the opportunity to choose from a variety of fashionable and flattering styles to exercise their formal options."

"Brides also should be able to work out their color theme and tie it in with the options we have available."

Steve Petix — the largest wholesaler of formal wear in Michigan doing business, with 160 stores across the state —

started looking into women's formal wear some six years ago, according to Orlandi. It's been in the men's formal-wear business for 61 years.

Orlandi believes Steve Petix is on the cutting edge with its women's formal wear and has put together "an excellent grouping."

Steve Petix stores are at 27656 Grand River, Livonia; 340 S. Main St., Plymouth; 31455 Southfield Road, Beverly Hills, and 6100 Rochester Road, Troy. For more information, call (810) 474-1190 (Livonia), (313) 459-6372 (Plymouth), (810) 645-5560 (Beverly Hills), or (810) 740-9291.

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