

Birmingham bridal salon jilts area brides-to-be

By HELEN NIEMIEC
STAFF WRITER

Brides nervously awaiting the big day got more aggravation than they bargained for if they ordered their gowns from Birmingham's Boulevard Bridal Salon.

With rumors that the store is planning to file bankruptcy, anxious brides are finding that no one answers the phone and people are admitted into the Hunter Boulevard store only if there is a dress inside for them to pick up.

No official comment could be received from Boulevard Bridal, since no one is answering phones. In previous interviews, owner Gary Gottschling said that the salon is not going out of business.

Four lawsuits from bridal dress manufacturers against Boulevard Bridal are asking for payment for dresses previously delivered, totaling \$19,900. The suits were filed in Oakland County Circuit Court.

Gottschling, in previous interviews, also said that no bride has been without a dress on the day of her wedding.

Two other Birmingham bridal salons, Today's Bride and Sue Gordon, are separate corporations owned either by Gottschling or his wife.

(Boulevard Bridal) locked me out. People spend a lot of money and time planning a wedding but the owner doesn't seem to care."

What Kominars did was call the manufacturer directly and explain the situation. That company found her dress and said it could ship it directly to her. The delivery date is today.

She isn't clear about the fate of her \$1,800 deposit.

Kominars ordered her gown nine months ago. Manufacturers generally require no more than six months to guarantee delivery.

A Bloomfield Hills woman, who requested her name not be published, is gearing up for her daughter's Sept. 12 wedding. She had ordered her daughter's gown and five bridesmaids gowns back in May. All female members of the wedding party live out of state, she explained.

She went to the salon on Saturday to check the progress but left without an answer after a two hour wait. She too is arranging shipment directly through the manufacturer.

Having order numbers simplifies calls to manufacturers but the Bloomfield Hills woman said the sales people in the salon refuse to give out those numbers.

one who thinks they may have ordered a Brunnell gown should call the company at 212-921-4713.

"I've never been more popular," the spokesman said, explaining that he has received a good number of calls. "We are actually waiting to see what Boulevard Bridal will do. But we don't want to see these women not get their dresses if they ordered them from us."

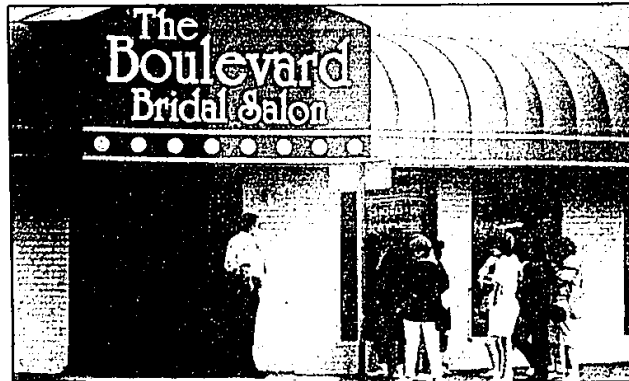
Business rap

The Birmingham-Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce can offer little else but consolation to the people who call the office about Boulevard Bridal complaints.

"They're not a paid member of the chamber," explained Lori Eick, executive director. "There are a lot of late customers. They're upset because they can't get any straight answers."

There isn't much the Birmingham police can do, unless the crowds get violent, he added.

"It's a civil matter," Dimmock said. "The owner and the customers have to work out their problems."



Bridal path: Groups of women waiting for delivery of their bridal gowns stand outside Boulevard Bridal in Birmingham as a security guard readies to unlock the door.

Delivery dates broken

Two women who'll be part of September wedding parties say they miss having the time cushion. Dresses ordered in January to ensure an adequate time, still have not arrived for a Sept. 19 wedding. The dress was promised by Aug. 4.

Sara Kominars of Bloomfield Township has four weeks until her wedding and the gown she ordered from Boulevard Bridal still is not in her hands, though she received several pick-up dates. The latest broken-promise delivery date was Saturday.

"I found an alternative," Kominars said. "But I was mad that

Stories abound

Kominars also waited in one of the crowds outside the salon on Saturday.

"I didn't realize how many were affected until I got to that parking lot," she said. "There are a lot of stories to hear."

One New York manufacturer is trying to help out women who may have ordered gowns made by his company, Brunnell Fashions.

Brunnell needs "as much information as possible," such as size, color, style and, if possible, order number. If the manufacturer can track down the order, the dress will be shipped out the next day. Any-

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