

Weddings are the ultimate reality show

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staff, family and friends. The reality of it is that these shopping experiences are far from typical; in fact the average bride has a budget of \$1-2,000 for their bridal gown, much lower than the \$10-20,000 shown on some of these programs. Costs associated with the purchase of a bridal gown will include tailoring and adjustments, undergarments, shoes and accessories including jewelry, headpieces and veils, all considered extra expenses. This past November Elizabeth's was thrilled to host the production team of *Four Weddings Canada* to film a segment on the whirlwind experience of trying on bridal gowns which should air this March or April.

Finding your perfect gown is really quite simple. If you have some ideas of what you picture as your perfect gown share it with the staff at the shop. Images or magazine clippings that most appeal to you can be a good start. Flipping through the gowns on their hangers won't help you find that gown; the experts know their inventory best and can assist you in finding what you are looking for. Their experience comes free so take advantage of it!

Don't be too discouraged if your style ideas don't come to fruition—most of us don't look like the models in the magazines. Some brides will find their style sense works perfectly for them while others will become frustrated if their ideas don't come together as expected. The biggest mistake is going to too many stores

and trying on too many gowns—it simply leads to confusion. Keep an open mind, allow the sales staff to steer you into a different direction; the experienced eye can often suggest something different for you that you may have overlooked. When you have found YOUR dress you will know, you will see your image in the mirror and it won't matter what anyone else thinks—this is it!

This year promises to bring another exciting bridal season with designers paying special attention to detail, design elements and structure. Sculpted bodices feature hand pleating, ruching and gathering on corset-style backs that provide support and structure. Dramatic drop waists and modified mermaid-style gowns ruled the runway this season. Crystal accents and touches of lace soften these contemporary designs by adding just a touch of tradition, feminine gowns with a touch of traditional styling and bold details. Strapless gowns are the style of choice—these gowns offer superior fit and flexibility and while we have been seeing this trend for several seasons the fit continues to reign. Brides looking for something more modest have more choices today with gowns featuring lace straps and halter-style necklines. Following the influences of the Royal Wedding gown and the *Twilight* bridal gown, designers at Alfred Angelo have offered a selection of gowns with 3/4 or full sleeves as an option.

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