

# Finding the right gown doesn't have to be an overwhelming experience

**Continued from pg. 1**  
 bride-to-be. The boutique you choose to shop in should be an atmosphere where you feel welcome and at home, places where you are at ease to express your feelings about what you like and dislike in a particular style or gown. The staff must be knowledgeable about each and every designer featured at their boutique along with details, like fabrics, colours and most importantly sizing. Elizabeth's has worked hard to create this kind of environment for all of their clients... brides, bridesmaids and mothers of the bride and groom.

We all know that reality-style wedding shows have made a huge impact on the bridal industry. We watch as brides laugh and cry—trying to make a decision while under tremendous pressure from sales staff, family and friends to say “yes to the dress”. The reality of it is that these shopping experiences are far from typical; the enormous salons with a staff of 30 experienced associates is far from reality in Canada and could not be very personal. 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. When

planning, remember the additional costs associated with the purchase of a bridal gown will include tailoring and adjustments, undergarments, shoes and accessories including jewelry, headpieces and veils. The tailoring is one of the most important expenses, something you don't want to skimp on—tailoring is necessary on most garments to achieve the finest fit.

It can all sound so overwhelming but finding your perfect gown is really quite simple. Starting with an inspiration or a vision is always a good beginning. Next, find your salon and consultant and book a one-hour appointment. 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 great way to share that vision. 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. This kind of experience doesn't always come for 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 for them while others become frustrated if their ideas don't come together as expected. Often, the biggest mistake is visiting too many stores and trying on too many gowns with too many opinions—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 that you may have overlooked. Follow your heart and remember your opinion is the **ONLY** opinion.

This year promises to bring another exciting bridal season with designers paying special attention to detail, design elements and structure. The look is regal and all things “princess” are hot. Extra full ball gowns with fitted bodices and layered tulle skirts. Lace, lace and more lace! The pickup skirt is making a comeback this season on a more fitted bodice. Sculpted bodices feature hand pleating with corset-style backs that provide support and structure. Dramatic drop waists and modified mermaid-style gowns continue to have a place on the runway with crystal accents and touches of lace to soften the



Heather Burke of Elizabeth's Fashions primps one of the many dresses available at the store's 77 Main St. S. location in Georgetown. Not only are there outstanding choices of dresses for brides, bridesmaids and mothers of the bride, but staff members can share a wealth of experience to make their wedding day perfect. *Photo by Ted Brown*

architectural style and add just a touch of tradition...feminine gowns with a touch of traditional styling and bold details. Strapless gowns remain 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

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