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Choosing Your Wedding Dress

Choosing your wedding dress may be a day just as important as the day you wear it down the aisle. Trying on all those beautiful satin skirts, crystal embellished bodices and sweetheart necklines can be a girl's dream and the most enjoyable part of the planning process. But if you go into an appointment unprepared or overwhelmed, it could be a nightmare.



Dress shopping can be an emotional, stressful and exhausting experience for the bride. Many women look for days, weeks, even months before they find "the one," some find it hard to commit and some just settle out of sake of saving time and money. I have some tips to help keep your cool while trying some of the most beautiful gowns.

Set a budget before you start looking. Get an idea of what you want to spend and what you *can* spend without breaking the bank. Don't set yourself up for heartbreak when you find your dress and its just not in your budget. Be realistic and respectful of the budget and the person purchasing.

As wonderful as it would be to bring your entire wedding party along for the dress ride, it is impossible to get things done when

too many hands are in the pot. Ask those who are most important to you, such as your mother, the groom's mother, your maid of honor, a sibling and/or a friend. As a bride, surround yourself with positive people who are coming along for you, not those who want to play dress up. Everyone has an opinion and they will be stated about the dresses you try on. Obviously, you trust these girls enough to be a part of your wedding, so let them take a part in helping you decide on the most important article of clothing you may ever wear.

Take photos from magazines or online to show the consultant. If they don't have exactly what you want, they can probably come pretty close in a different designer. Be upfront at the beginning of the trip and state if you have a certain style, certain fabrics, cuts, colors, detail, bust line and so on you prefer. This will also narrow down the field of finding the one and the appointment time.

Don't refuse to try on a different style than you envisioned. Sometimes the best find is something we wouldn't normally choose for ourselves. The consultant's job is to find a dress that works best for your body type in fit, color, texture and personal style. A few minutes with a professional consultant will have you looking your best on your day!

Keep in mind the time of year and theme of your wedding. It's a little hard to pull off bright pinks and lime green tea-length dresses in the middle of winter. And it wouldn't make sense for a bride to wear a long sleeved dress in the middle of July. Think about your overall vision for your



wedding. How formal is the venue? What color pallet did you have in mind for the wedding party? What type of entertainment do you plan on having, comfort and flexibility? What is the style of accessories (veil, jewelry, shoes) and how did you plan to wear your hair? What is the style of your wedding, contemporary, traditional, romantic? By asking yourself these questions, you can narrow down the picks for a dress that will coordinate with the overall theme and style of your ceremony and festivities.

If you shop outside your home city, be prepared to travel a few times for fittings. Once the dress is taken out of those doors, it becomes your responsibility. So if something goes wrong during the fitting of the dress, you are responsible for the replacement.



Give yourself time. The last thing you want is to be rushed into making a decision about your dress, so always ask the boutique how long it would take to order. A standard for ordering and shipping a wedding dress takes about 5-7 months and then up to another month for alterations, but can vary with

designers. And don't be discouraged to take a few trips to shop. It's unusual that you will find the best dress at the first shop on the first day. So take your timeline into consideration when looking.

Have someone take photos of the dresses you try on. If you are unsure of a particular cut or shape, you can see how it photographs.

Remember, everyone is there for you. Have fun! Treat your party with love, respect and patience and you should have a wonderful experience.



Dress designers:

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| Adele | Faviana |
| Alfred Angelo | Jim Hielm |
| Allure Brides | Kleinfeld |
| Allure Couture | Maggie Sottero |
| Bliss | Mia Solano |
| Caroline Herrera | Mori Lee |
| Casablanca | Nicole Miller |
| Christina Wu | Oscar de la Renta |
| Classics by Eden | Priscilla of Boston |
| David Tutera | Valentino |
| Ella Bridals | Vera Wang |