



Wedding Gown Trends

BY LINDA ESTERSON

From A-line to fit-and-flare, the bride makes the rules.

A week after Patti Jefferson ordered her wedding dress last January, she realized she had made a mistake.

She needed to find a dress to coordinate with her mother's veil, which she wanted desperately to wear at her own wedding after her grandmother had saved it for 33 years. It was a cathedral length, Alencon lace, formal, dramatic veil and it did not go well with her first dress. She needed a dress that was "not busy or more modern."

Betsy Robinson, owner of Betsy Robinson's Bridal Collections, invited her to return to the Pikesville shop to talk and try on more dresses.

When Ms. Jefferson returned to the store, she walked right into a trunk show for designer Ramona Keveza. She saw a new dress that employed nearly the identical lace as her mother's veil. With a scalloped edge, the dress looked like it was made along with the veil. A "fit-and-flare" style, the strapless dress is fitted to the thigh, then flares out with a modest train. The blush color pales below the ivory lace and the 10 layers of tulle which expand the flare even further.

Ms. Jefferson hadn't looked at any dresses with lace the first time around, but this time she tried on the dress and loved it. Just a few months and four fittings later, she became emotionally attached. Today, she calls her

Patti Jefferson in her Ramona Keveza gown

mother regularly to "schedule visits with it."

"I'm a little bummed that I can't wear it again," says the 31-year-old attorney.

Her sentiments are echoed by many brides, who choose strapless dresses and ball gowns often, according to Mrs. Robinson. Big, full ball gowns are making a comeback in popularity, as is ornate lace all over the dress.

"The silhouette ball gown was on the sidelines the last few years and has re-emerged," Mrs. Robinson says. "It's a very grand look."

Prior to Lady Diana, the bridal gown was more informal, but her wedding to Prince Charles in 1981 featured a big gown with large puffed sleeves and a 50-foot train. That brought back the formal, detailed fairy tale-type gown, Mrs. Robinson explains.

Just as popular are the A-line fit-and-flare dress like the one Ms. Jefferson wore and dresses made from materials that provide texture. Organza and silk shantung or tulle, with detailing like lace flowers or feathered flowers, can be used to enhance the gown and provide a three-dimensional texture.

One new gown featured at Betsy Robinson's is a taffeta ball gown with one-inch strips gathered and molded in circles forming flowers all over the skirt. Without beading or glitz, the gown provides a beautiful elegance of its own with the texture providing an impression of large cabbage roses.



PHOTO: FREED PHOTOGRAPHY

^ Lindsay Kursman with her A-line gown



Patti Jefferson dances at her wedding.

PHOTO: ARTFUL WEDDINGS BY SACHS PHOTOGRAPHY

Other dresses employ pleated ruffles to fill rows and rows and add texture to the dress.

Today's dresses are more decorative, Robinson says, and use fabrics in "interesting ways." Silk flowers on dresses, cut out leaves and scattered pleats and ruffles made out of material provide additional texture.

"It should be a 'wow' dress," says Mrs. Robinson. "The bride is basically the entertainment for the day."

"If you're doing a stage production, you don't put people up there in plain brown dresses with no makeup. You have costumes and used more makeup. You have to pick it up a notch."

Lindsay Kursman did just that when she selected a strapless A-line dress with a sweetheart neck for her Sept. 25, 2010 wedding. Originally desiring a mermaid, fit-and-flare style dress, she realized they looked different on her body than in photographs.

She loved the A-line styles and that they accented her waist. After trying on couture, upscale dresses,

she preferred more of a simple yet elegant look with an ivory lace dress. She traded belts, using one from a different dress to add sparkle and draw the eye in before the chiffon flare-out bottom.

Finding a classic look was important to Ms. Kursman.

"I looked at my mom's pictures and my cousin's pictures from 10 years ago and they were outdated because they picked something trendy," she explains. "I wanted to be able to show my kids in 10 years and not look silly in the dress. I wanted something that would still be current."

She also chose an understated dress because her venue, the Tremont Grand, was so elegant.

Mrs. Robinson says there are no rules when it comes to weddings. It's the bride's day and she can select her dress for whatever reason she wants.

"It's not ever typical — what she wears is because she's not getting married every day," Mrs. Robinson says. □

Linda Esterson is a local freelance writer.

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