

# How The Royal Wedding Influenced The Latest Bridal Trends

(ARA) - Although the latest Brides American Wedding Study shows the average cost of a wedding in 2010 was \$26,501, a decrease of 5 percent from 2009, weddings continue to be big business. But many couples are opting to cut the guest list instead of big ticket items like wedding gowns.

In fact, the average wedding gown cost \$1,289 in 2010, a 20 percent increase over 2009, according to the study. This is no surprise to the millions who were glued to their television sets this past April during the most talked about wedding since the 1981 royal wedding of Lady Diana to Prince Charles. Many brides are now emulating the elegant lace gown worn by Catherine Middleton, now the Duchess of Cambridge.

In addition to beautiful lace, the newest trends in wedding gowns include color, soft sleeves, short hemlines and eco-friendly materials.

Whether it is Chantilly, Alencon, duchesse, guipure, or ribbon, lace has become one of the hottest trends this year. "Designers at all price points have debuted collections featuring full frothy skirts, wildflowers and lace used in both traditional and modern ways," says Kate Campbell, department chair of Fashion & Retail Management at The Art Institute of Tampa, a branch of Miami International University of Art & Design. "This particular trend parallels

the more feminine, elegant trends we see in fashion everywhere - including more fitted and ladylike styles reminiscent of Grace Kelly and Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy."

While not for everyone, the use of color in wedding gowns has been growing in popularity. Rich and vibrant, or more subdued, color in bridal wear is everywhere. Some brides choose soft pastel colors, such as blush, rose or skin-tone. Others opt to wear vibrant hues of lavender, green and deep pink. Less bold brides are more likely to use hints of accent color on sashes, bows, embroidery, hems, necklines or beading. "The bride who chooses to add color to her dress is fashion forward and confident - it's not for the faint of heart," says Amber Chatelain, lead faculty for the Fashion & Retail Management program at The Art Institute of Tennessee - Nashville, a branch of The Art Institute of Atlanta.

Another interesting new trend in bridal wear is short gowns, especially for brides choosing destination and beach weddings. While they may be short in length, these dresses are not short on style. Some offer sophisticated laces, chic feathers or multilayered organza mini-skirts.

Soft sleeves are enjoying a comeback. Designers have debuted soft, romantic sleeves, including traditional cap sleeves in florals and tulle, modern sil-



houettes using vintage elements, sequin fringe and flutter sleeves, and romantic off-the-shoulder versions. "The softness and elegance of the sleeves in bridal wear mirrors today's general fashion trends, where designers are highlighting the elegance and beauty of the female form in very soft ways," says Charlene Parsons, who heads the fashion programs at Miami International University of Art & Design.

Eco-friendly options have also increased in popularity. "There are now numerous eco-friendly designers whose sole business is to create wedding dress-

es made with earth-friendly fabrics and materials, using techniques that are in harmony with the earth," says Crystal Shamblee, department chair of Fashion Design for The Art Institute of Philadelphia. Secondhand and vintage wedding dresses are another eco-friendly choice.

Whatever fashion trends a bride chooses, one that will never go out of style is a gown that fits well, is figure flattering and makes the bride feel like she's the most beautiful woman in the world on her big day.

## Tips For Trying On Wedding Gowns

Many brides-to-be look forward to the day when they visit a bridal salon and are able to try on gowns for the first time. There are certain tips that can make the day go much more smoothly and potentially reduce the amount of time it may take to find the perfect gown.

\* Wear a supportive, well constructed strapless bra or corset in your correct size. If you will be wearing a petticoat, also have the right size available.

\* Go without face makeup when trying on gowns so they remain clean.

\* Try to wear your hair similar to the style you have in mind for your wedding.

\* Note that the size of the wedding gown you will wear is typically one to two sizes larger than your day-to-day clothes. Proper measurements can be matched to designers' size charts.

\* It's best to limit the number of people with whom you shop to 1 or 2 trusted friends or family members. An entourage can be confusing.

\* It's always better to order a slightly larger gown and leave room for alterations if you are between sizes.

## Children In A Wedding Means No Kidding Around

A wedding is a joyous event that couples want to share with as many people as possible. Couples commonly ask family and friends to take part in the ceremony as ushers, bridesmaids or readers. Before enlisting the help of a child to fill such roles, couples should carefully consider whether a youngster is capable of participating in the wedding ceremony or if he or she may not be up to the task.

Millions of people tuned into the British Royal wedding in April. Among the participants were six young children. The Hon. Margarita Armstrong-Jones, Miss Eliza Lopes, Miss Grace van Cutsem, Lady Louise Windsor, Master Tom Pettifer, and Master William Lowther-Pinkerton were bridesmaids and pages in attendance. The children were as young as three years old and as old as 10. Although the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were confident enough in the kids' maturity to include them, reportedly some measures were taken to keep the tots in line. For instance, Prince Henry reportedly delighted little Eliza Lopes with a pink "wiggly worm" so she wouldn't be fright-

ened by the crowds. Said wiggly worm actually made it into the official group bridal photo, being clutched by Miss Lopes.

Couples worrying about all the little details of their own weddings may not want to fret about kiddie meltdowns or the bloopers that can occur when kids act like kids. Each child's personal maturity level should be considered before enlisting their help. There are some other strategies to use as well.

\* Young children serving as flower girls or ring bearers should be able to walk down the aisle without coaxing. If they cannot handle this task, then they should not be asked to take part in the wedding.

\* Should children prove competent to walk down the aisle unattended, couples can have them then make their way to the seats next to their parents, rather than awkwardly standing with the rest of the bridal party for the ceremony.

\* An minimum age requirement for wedding participants might be a good idea. A child age 5 or up may be able to appreciate the importance of the event.

\* Consult with the pastor or

officiant of the ceremony. The ceremony location may have rules governing children in the ceremony.

\* All people who have participated in the ceremony will be invited to the reception. If couples decide to have a kids-free party, then reconsider children in the ceremony.

\* Think about another role for a young child that will not disrupt the proceedings. Perhaps he or she can help hand out birdseed or small bottles of bubbles to use when the couple has finished their vows. Or give children disposable cameras and allow them to capture a kids'-eye view of the wedding.

Couples who choose to have children participate in the ceremony have to realize that there is the potential for slip-ups. Keeping an open mind and some patience can make for some memorable moments and a little humor as well.

## Floral Terms To Know Before Visiting Florist

Before discussing table settings for their weddings, many couples find it helpful to brush up on some floral terminology before visiting florists.

It can make you appear more knowledgeable and prepared if you understand what will be discussed and are able to choose what you want. It also helps to ensure your money is being spent in the best way possible.

Here are some common and some lesser known florist terms that can be advantageous to know.

\* **Biedermeier:** A nosegay arranged tightly with concentric circles of differently colored flowers. The flowers are wired into a holder with only one type of flower in each ring.

\* **Bouquet:** A dense bunch of blooms that are kept together in a bouquet holder, wired or tied with ribbon.

\* **Crescent:** One full flower and a flowering stem wired together to form a slender handle that is held in one hand.

\* **Garden:** A centerpiece featuring wildflowers.

\* **Nosegay:** Small, round bouquets composed of densely packed round flowers and fill.

\* **Oasis:** Specialized foam that is used in bouquet holders and centerpieces to retain water and keep blooms fresh.

\* **Pomander:** A flower-covered ball that is suspended from

a ribbon. It is often carried by child attendants.

\* **Posies:** Smaller than nosegays but similar in design.

\* **Presentation:** A bunch of long-stemmed flowers cradled in the bride's arms. It's sometimes known as a pageant bouquet.

\* **Topiary:** Flowers trimmed into geometric shapes.

\* **Tossing:** A smaller copy of the bride's bouquet to use in the bouquet toss.

\* **Tussy mussy:** A small, metallic holder to carry a posy.

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