

BRIDAL

Here comes the Bride

Vintage and country-chic dresses will have you turning heads while walking down the aisle

By ABBY RHOAD for Smart

While wedding-dress trends have evolved with the times, experts agree that glamour is still fashionable.

The lacy, feminine and romantic dresses reminiscent of what our mothers and grandmothers might have worn are back in style, according to Jon Smith, co-owner of Renaissance Bridals, 315 E. Market St., York. The old-school lace dresses of yesteryear are now getting a modern twist, he said.

"Lace is returning very strong again. Girls are liking that heirloom or vintage kind of vibe, but it can't look old," Smith said. "It needs to look modern and updated, but lace is very strong and, of course, romantic."

With the large variety of types of laces, brides that might be afraid they will look outdated could end up loving a very feminine, timeless-looking dress, Smith said.

"People say, 'I don't want to look like a tablecloth; I don't want to look like a doily,'" said Vicki Strong, of KrysLyns Bridal Boutique, 286 W. Market St., York. "But they're really elegant looking, and it's just amazing how pretty they are."

Modern cuts and silhouettes, personalization, beading and jewels all take a dress from looking like it came from the 1940s to one that was inspired by the 1940s.

Strong said brides are using capped sleeves and illusions — see-through fabric with beadwork covering bride's arms, backs or chests — to update the former high collars and sleeves from lace dresses of the past.

"Now we have people that are actually doing more of a sleeve and more of an illusion, like a lace cover-up with an illusion, without being particularly exposed," Strong said. "The difference now is they're just so updated and so much more comfortable and so much more elegant, I think."



A splash of color

Removable pieces covering the arms or shoulders that are worn for the ceremony almost transform a dress when taken off for the reception, Smith said. Brides are also using beaded sashes and fun, colorful shoes to give a dress personality.

Adding a beaded or colored sash is also a way to transition a dress from the formal ceremony to the reception, Smith said.

"They haven't changed the dress, but they changed any given jewelry and that sash, so it now reflects that it's party time as opposed to the seriousness of the ceremony," Smith said.

Colors other than white also update the traditional wedding gown.

While white was everywhere 30 years ago, it has faded among bridal styles, Strong said. "Now, rarely anybody buys white. It's just amazing how it's so different."

The Knot and BridalGuide.com said blush, light blue and bold red are all popular color options right now. If a bride still likes the idea of staying somewhat traditional, The Knot suggests a champagne or gold-toned dress with colorful accessories.

Classic styles

As the demographic age of brides increases, women are more set in their style when shopping for dresses, Smith said. This translates to more classic looks, rather than what's trendy at the moment.

More dramatic than an A-line, but slimmer than a ballgown, a style that has been picking up in popularity is the "fit and flare," Smith said. Similar to a mermaid gown, which flares out at the knee, or a trumpet gown, which flares starting mid-thigh, the fit and flare does exactly what it says: The bodice is fitted snugly, and the skirt flares out right past the hips.

A fit and flare can add feminine curves to a straight figure, but the fit can also emphasize larger waists or hips.

To achieve a good hourglass effect, consider adding a sash or belt to the waistline.

While wedding gown trends tend to come and go, this season offers more classic looks with a focus on vintage-inspired styles and romantic, feminine beauty.

"I think times have returned back to girls wanting to be old-school pretty or old-school glamour look," Smith said. "I don't see trends, per se, that I think you'll look at in a couple years and say 'oh that was just a once-and-done kind of fashion.' In my 22 years of doing this, I think this is the prettiest, most beautiful time in bridal."

Lace is the go-to material for wedding dresses this season, according to Jon Smith, co-owner of Renaissance Bridals, and is shown off in this Enzoani lace fit and flare gown.

Photo courtesy of Renaissance Bridals

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