

GETTING MARRIED?
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Wedding fashions . . .

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And now for the gorier details of wedding wardrobes . . .

Tuxedos usually are rented for 24 hours, or for the weekend if the wedding occurs on Saturday. Average prices range from \$28 to \$42. Rentals usually include shoes. Orders should be placed 10 weeks in advance and final fittings are done two to four days beforehand.

"Most mothers leave their dresses 'til the last minute and are more interested in practicality," Simon said. If mothers wish to include their orders with the bridesmaids' orders, this should be done about eight weeks early. Bridesmaids' dresses usually fall within the \$60-to-\$130 price range.

If they wish to forgo a train and lace trimming, brides simply may choose a white or ivory bridesmaid's dress, Rowson said. The most common price range for bridal gowns is \$200 to \$450, although Sassi's does offer designer gowns priced at more than \$1,000. The most expensive gowns at Ben Simon's and J'Marie's are \$500 and \$800 respectively.

Prices vary

Rowson said the type of lace used, the amount of beadwork and the quality and amount of fabric vary greatly, causing prices to vary. For instance, Alencon lace, which includes elaborate cording, is more expensive than traditional Chantilly lace.

The same criteria apply to veils and hats. These accessories average \$30 to \$100. The rule of thumb is to order a wedding gown and veil at least three months in advance.

If necessary, bridal shops will alter gowns for a fee. "For about \$25 you can get a hem and one other adjustment," Rowson said.

Margaret Simon noted that miraculous late orders occasionally have been arranged. She often has to "just get on the phone" to try to obtain a dress within a few weeks or days. Another possibility for spur-of-the-moment brides is buying dresses from sale racks or simply from a shop's stock of "demonstrators." Finding the correct sizes, however, is far from guaranteed.

Fitting session important

Sandy Rowson stressed that brides must wear the shoes and undergarments they intend to wear at the wedding when fitting dresses for alterations — or disasters are likely.

All the shops mentioned offer several shoe styles, of which low-heeled pumps and ballerina slippers are most popular.

Shops also press and carefully wrap

dresses and veils before sending them home with customers. Reference files are kept on each customer's colors, sizes and other pertinent information.

After reading *Modern Bride* from cover to cover (and of course, the Daily Nebraskan wedding supplement), absorbing Emily Post's etiquette and listening to countless tales of wedding bliss and slapstick disasters, how can a couple create a wedding that reflects their own personalities and tastes?

Don't give in too much

"A lot of people try to put pressures on you, but you try not to give in too much," said future bride Donna Vampola of Lincoln. She decided to change her plans completely after attending her cousin's wedding in which the colors and styles of the bridesmaids' dresses were identical to her choices.

Michelle Abell of Roca is opting for the most comfortable gowns and shoes she can find since they'll be worn all day and all night at her wedding and post-nuptial dinner and dance.

Enterprising (and patient) brides may want to make (or ask their mothers, aunts or uncles to make) their own garments. Borrowed dresses, veils or even jewelry belonging to family members is another way of celebrating the timeless aspects of matrimony. Some couples include clothing or traditions celebrating their ethnic heritage in their ceremonies.

Tradition vs. modernity

"Here in the Midwest," Jacobs said, "we can ignore traditional conventions and not worry about social criticism."

Some couples, wanting their friends and relatives to be as comfortable as possible, tell their attendants to wear whatever they want to. At the other end of the possibilities scale is a totally thematic wedding. When asked about antique wedding gowns, Karen Jordan of Fringe and Tassle, 27th and Vine streets, said, "We have trouble keeping wedding dresses which are in good shape." But, she noted, last summer a couple came in to rent 1920s-style costumes for their entire wedding party and guests.

Weddings are, to a great extent, made up of visual symbols — flowers, rings, candles, rice. The clothing a couple chooses also becomes symbolic of certain values. Don't let your children thumb through the old wedding album with cries of "Gross, Dad!" or "I'm sure, Ma, what is that thing on your head, a sombrero or what!"

Mazel tov, E pluribus unum and good luck!

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