

Short sleeves, loose financing color modern weddings

By Donna Sisson
Staff Reporter

Here comes the bride, but she's not necessarily all dressed in white anymore. Many of today's brides aren't wearing the traditional wedding white or following traditional wedding rules.

The traditional wedding dress is ivory or white colored with either a high neck or a Queen Anne neckline, long sleeves and a cathedral train more than 3 feet long, said Karen Johnson, assistant manager of Sassi's, 2530 O St.

One of the newer, "non-traditional" styles is the tea-length dress, which comes down to about mid-calf, Johnson said. When a bride does wear a train, it often is semi-cathedral (2 to 3 feet) or chapel (under 2 1/2 feet) length, she said.

Wedding dresses now come in a variety of colors — anything from dark red to royal blue. Johnson said one wedding she is working on has a black bridal dress with a fuchsia colored cummerbund.

Today's bridal dresses also have short sleeves, and some are sleeveless, Johnson said.

Some brides are even wearing short-sleeved dresses in winter and satin in summer which, in a strict fashion sense, is not proper, Johnson said. It's like the old rule about not wearing white shoes after Labor Day, she said.

The traditional wedding party has four to six attendants. Today, the average still is about four, Johnson said.

At one time, the wedding party all dressed alike so people couldn't distinguish the bride or groom from her or his attendants. This was so an old beau who might try to disrupt the wedding could not tell who the bride or groom were while the wedding party moved in a crowd from place to place, Johnson said.

Johnson said headpieces also are changing. Brides are wearing a variety of headpieces, including hats and bridal combs with flowers and netting sewed on, instead of the traditional veil.

Honeymooners . . .

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She said a deposit of \$100 — \$300, depending on travel price, is required for AAA Travel, and the final payment is due 45 days before departure.

Prices and places of cruises vary, according to what customers request, Waugh said. She recently booked a cruise reservation for \$10,000 per person.

"But, there's a price for everyone," Waugh said. "It all depends on the cruise company."

In the 1960s, everyone got married in a field, garden or on a mountain top . . .

Contact Travel, 4719 Prescott Ave., specializes in honeymoon travel and bridal shows. Travel agent Donna Rudolph said that "go now, pay later," vacations are very affordable to honeymooners through credit cards.

"If you're only going around once (in marriage) you may as well do it while you can," Rudolph said. "You can't recreate that if you miss it."

One special offered by Contact Travel is four nights in New Orleans, La, for \$315 per couple. The offer does not include air fare, but does include a carriage ride around Jackson Square. The couple would stay in an elegant hotel in the French Quarter and be served a champagne breakfast and brunch, Rudolph said.

A trip for two to Tan-tar-a, Ozarks, for \$615 per

Today's brides are wearing a lot of netting, or illusion on their headpieces, but they seldom cover their faces with a blusher as they walk down the aisle, Johnson said.

Weddings once were very formal, but things are more casual today.

Many of the changes in wedding traditions arose from the 1960s when "things went totally down the tubes" and people didn't even send invitations, said Diane Mulligan, co-owner of Special Moments, 4009 O St.

In the 1960s, everyone got married in a field, garden or on a mountain top, Mulligan said. Couples today aren't writing their own vows or doing as many unusual things, Mulligan said.

Brides of the 1970s and 1980s are returning to traditional ideas, but with a more casual look, Mulligan said.

People no longer are following wedding etiquette on invitations, which once had to be white or ivory with black ink, Mulligan said.

About 99 percent of marrying couples are buying colored invitations, Mulligan said. Special Moments has 18 books of different invitations.

Sassi's once made invitations for a herbal wedding — the programs listed the meaning of each herb the bride carried in her bouquet, Johnson said.

The traditional wedding bouquet was all white, but today many brides carry a colored bouquet, Mulligan said.

Also, most brides don't throw their original bouquet as they once did, but will buy a separate bouquet to throw, Johnson said.

Financing a wedding also has become more liberated, with no strict rules for who pays for what.

Traditionally, the bride's parents would pay for flowers, the wedding and reception costs, while the groom's parents might pay for a rehearsal dinner, Mulligan said. These days, costs usually are shared. Couples might pay for their own wedding, some brides buy their own dresses and sometimes, both parents might pick up a certain percentage of the costs, she said.

couple includes six days lodging, champagne and recreation facilities.

In April, during the off-season, a trip to Paris costs \$738 per person, and a trip to London \$599 per person.

One of the least expensive trips, including air fare, is to Orlando, Fla, at \$349 per person, Rudolph said. This price includes four days and three nights lodging and a rental car.

Contact Travel is open seven days a week and offers audio visuals of destinations, Rudolph said.

Julie Neyens, travel agent of Via Van Bloom, 2143 "O" St. says that honeymooners rarely go to Niagara Falls anymore.

"More people are finding cruises affordable," she said.

Cruises to the Mexican Riviera, the Caribbean and the Bahamas, and trips to Hawaii are the most popular honeymoon spots, Neyens said.

A four night cruise to the Bahamas is \$675 per person and includes the deluxe room, Neyens said.

The "Romantic Waikiki Splendor" trip includes 7 nights, eight days in Waikiki. A lei greeting, round trip transportation to the hotel and airport, American breakfast delivered to the honeymooners' room the first two mornings and a cocktail show in Waikiki are provided. The couple can have their free souvenir photo taken also, Neyens said. The price for the package is \$315 per person, airfare not included. A round trip flight is approximately \$578, Neyens said.

All prices are subject to change due to tax, rate increase, and season.



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