

# Consider body type in dress quest

By Colleen Kenney  
Staff Reporter

More than 2,425,000 women will be married this year, but many of them will have to walk down the aisle in a wedding dress that is not the one of their dreams. It may be white, but the style is unflattering or the size is wrong.

Holly McMunn of Bridal Originals, a St. Louis company, said the scenario is familiar: A bride waits too long before buying her dress, so she has to settle for an off-the-rack gown, or one that she didn't really care for, but could have delivered on short notice.

A wedding gown should be bought at least three months before the wedding, McMunn said. Ordering takes six to eight weeks and alterations can take anywhere from one day to a month, she said.

Also, competition before the spring/summer wedding season is "tremendous," McMunn said, so a bride should book a fitting appointment at least eight months before her wedding.

"It's really a lengthy process," she said. "It is much different than going out to buy a coat, even a mink coat, because this is a once in a life time purchase."

While shopping for the "perfect" dress, a bride should consider several factors: her body type, the season, and time of the wedding.

McMunn said there is no exact formula for deciding what styles will look nice on certain body types. But generally, thinner, small-boned women can wear more tightly fitting, drop waists, which full-figured women should avoid. Bustles usually make a large bottom appear even larger. Both flat- and large-chested women should try not to call attention to such features with low cut gowns.

The wedding season affects the fabrics that are best suited for the gown, McMunn said. Lighter fabrics and shorter sleeves can be worn in the spring and summer months but would be inappropriate at a winter wedding, where long sleeves, a high collar, heavy lace and heavy fabric are more suitable.

In a formal wedding, which usually takes place at night, McMunn said the gown should have a longer train and should be elaborate, with more beading, embroidery and lace.

For an informal wedding, a shorter train and even a tea-length dress or a "sheath look" are appropriate, as are many of the standard styles.

Sales of ivory-colored dresses have increased 20 percent in the last two years, McMunn said.

"There's a romance to ivory — there's a champagne, romantic feeling to ivory and brides like it because it's different," she said.

Also ivory looks good on any skin tone, she said.

Just as important as finding the right gown is finding a headpiece that complements the bride's face and gown.

McMunn said the perfect dress usually costs from \$400 to \$4,000. A 1985 nation-wide survey found that the average price of a wedding dress was \$519.

But the best advice for a bride, McMunn said, is to allow enough time for shopping around.

"A bride wants to look elegant on her wedding day," McMunn said. "She wants everyone to know that she's in love, and love itself implies radiance. So the gown she chooses should give her that feeling."

McMunn said this year's top bridal fashions include ruffles, on-or-off-the-shoulder styling, ivory gowns, sheath looks that are often worn with detachable trains, back bustles with bows, drop-waists and shorter tea-lengths for informal or second weddings.

Here are several important factors to consider when looking for that perfect dress.

- Get an idea of what you might like by reading bridal magazines. Or visit a bridal fair to see what is fashionable.

- Shopping should be done well in advance. Allow a minimum of three months to order the gown, and remember that alterations can take at least two weeks.

- Be sure to try on many different gowns. You may find that a style you ordinarily wouldn't have considered is flattering once you have it on.

- Keep in mind the season and time of day of your wedding. Satin is proper in almost any season, but remember that it could be uncomfortably hot in the summer. For warm weather, tulle, lace, organdy, chiffon, cotton, charmeuse and synthetics are appropriate. In winter, brocade, velvet or heavily embroidered lace gowns are alternatives.

- Try on headpieces at the same time you are choosing a gown. Headpieces must complement your face, hair and style of the dress.

- Take into account the formality of your wedding. Books offer charts that show which designs are appropriate for formal, semi-formal and informal weddings.



Kim Nabity/Daily Nebraskan

Miami Vice is nice, but . . .

## Classic black razor sharp

By Gene Gentrup  
Senior Editor

Not even the Miami Vice craze can change the rich tradition of the "black classic" tuxedo.

At weddings the black classic is unmatched in popularity according to local sales clerks and is the choice of every six out of 10 grooms, Ben Simon's sales clerk Norm Massey says.

Ben Simon's offers tuxedo collections from Pierre Cardin, Dynasty, Lord West, After Six and the Miami Vice look, which is part of the After Six collection.

Massey said all four collections rent for about \$30-\$40 per rented tuxedo. Retail tuxedos are also available for \$250-\$285 and used tuxedos go for about \$125. Dynasty and After Six are the more expensive brands because of their finer quality, he said.

Rich Horner, assistant manager at Holway Rent-a-Tux said the store's tuxedos rent for \$38-\$50 and shoes range from \$4-\$10. Wedding parties can get special tuxedo rates at \$28. For a party of five or more, the groom's

tuxedo is free. Ben Simon's offers a free tuxedo for parties of seven or more.

For indecisive customers, magazines are available at most stores to help in tuxedo selection. Choice of shirt, collar, cummerbund, tail or regular suit is part of the selection process, but shoes, if desired, cost an additional \$6 and come in colors to match.

Shoes are the only extra expense at Ben Simon's.

Massey said there are many combinations to choose from and that most customers are requesting wing collar shirts, bow ties and cummerbunds. Tails are almost standard for grooms. Ruffled shirts, ascots and vests are out, Massey says, but are available.

Horner said customers are going for the more conservative look. Ruffles, which were popular in the 60s and 70s are out and the more conservative look, like the "black classic," is in.

At Holway patterns for cummerbunds and bow ties include 30-40 shades of solids and paisleys, stripes, metallic, dots, silk and plaids.

Massey said the groom rarely comes alone to choose the tuxedo. The soon-

to-be Mrs. is along and the two usually choose without the advice of the store clerk.

"They usually know what they want but look for the right color combination," Massey said. "The prices are the most important to them."

The chosen style is then booked usually three to six months in advance and the groomsmen are asked to come in at least two days before the wedding to allow time for necessary alterations or to deal with any other problems. Tuxedos should be ordered no less than three weeks before the wedding, to avoid problems.

"Problems are usually with those from out-of-town. They have someone measure them and those measurements are sometimes wrong," Massey said.

If necessary, store managers at Ben Simon's deliver tuxedos to the wedding ceremony in emergencies. Massey said a groomsmen will sometimes have returned the tuxedo to be altered but will leave a bow tie or cummerbund at the store. Massey said other emergencies include torn and dirty clothing.



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