

Dress the entire wedding party in style

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Getting married but don't know what to wear?

Appropriate clothes for the wedding party change with the seasons and the fashions. While colors and styles change slightly each year, some similarities remain constant year after year.

"I can't predict what a bride will want," said Romelia Rothrock, owner of Romelia's Bridal and Formal. "One thing every bride wants is to look beautiful."

Traditionally, if a young bride is marrying for the first time, she is likely to choose a long white or off-white bridal gown. However, a fashionable new color this year is a soft shade of pink called rum pink, said Ingrid Liveratos of Carolina Bridal and Formal.

For the older bride, over 40, Emily Post's *Complete Book of Wedding Etiquette* said she can wear a long dress, but a pale pastel shade may be more becoming than white.

"Most mature brides do not wear a veil, and divorcees or widows being married for the second time definitely should not wear a veil," said Post. "Whether a first-time bride chooses a long veil or a train depends on the formality of the ceremony

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and the taste of the bride."

For the bridesmaids, Susan Johnson at Carolina Bridal and Formal said the popular colors this year include pastels like coral, peach, light blue and yellow for spring and summer weddings. Liveratos and Rothrock said they are seeing quite a few navy and royal blue dresses also.

"I also have five or six all-white or ivory weddings this year," said Liveratos. "The best thing to do is to take one style from the bride's gown and transfer it into the bridesmaids dresses. This coordinates the whole wedding party."

Taylor said bridesmaids dresses are very coordinated with the wedding gown and are featuring a tailored look that goes back to the 1950s and 60s.

In the area of fabric, R.S.V.P. manager Jackie Taylor said women want silk now rather than satin, but now they also want Italian satin. December and January brides usually want silk, but now "nobody wants silk, they all want satin for spring, summer and fall," said Rothrock. "Women want natural colors and fab-



Robin Thompkins models a wedding dress from R.S.V.P.



Jeff and Scott Melton try on matching tuxedos from B.C. Moore's.

rics."

It's obvious that each wedding is unique in color, style and fabric. Tradition used to run the show, but now every bride wants to personalize her wedding with her own unique touches, say the experts.

What about styles?

"The Queen Anne neckline is still in fashion," said Johnson. "Bows are still popular."

The empire waistline is very much in style, which features a fitted bodice and a flowing gown with no defined waistline. Taylor added that brides are also going with the princess waistline.

For the groom, Johnson said "they are going more with the tails than the suitcoats," but the groomsmen are still sticking with the suitcoats.

All the bridal shops agreed wedding dresses start around \$300 and go up to around \$1,000, while bridesmaids dresses begin at \$80 and go up to about \$250. Shop around for a good deal if the budget is tight.

For the men in the wedding, tuxedo rental fees range from \$49 to \$100. Most bridal stores also offer the convenience of ordering the tuxedos at the same location. Many shops own their own tuxedos, but it is always a good idea to be sure the shop can provide all the tuxedos needed for the wedding party when making the order.

B.C. Moore's is the one place in Raeford that rents tuxedos. The tuxedos are ordered through Mitchell's Formal Wear in Charlotte. Dennis Polson of B.C. Moore's said they can get any size and style of tuxedo in a matter of days.

At Moore's, they measure the man for his size in the store and send off for the right style and size. After the tuxedo is shipped to the store, the man comes in to try on the suit for fit. Polson said he's always found his customers to be satisfied with his service.

"What makes Moore's so successful is its good customer service; the ultimate goal," said Polson.

Each of the other bridal shops discussed earlier have special features the bride may use. Unique to Adam's Formal Wear is the fact that they rent bridal gowns and bridesmaids dresses. Johnson said "a bride can wear a \$1,000 gown for \$200." R.S.V.P. also rents, but just bridesmaids dresses.

Carolina Bridal is unique in the fact that they can send a bridal gown off to be Heirloomed for \$116. This type of preserving for a gown guarantees no yellowing for 100 years.

At Romelia's shop, Romelia offers to direct the wedding if the bride purchased her dress from the store. This extra service at no charge can really help reduce the bridal budget.