

Brides choosing more traditional gowns

United Press International
NEW YORK — Today's typical bride is a traditionalist, dipping into the nostalgia of the 1950s and earlier and away from the barefoot in the park era of the '60s and '70s.

The casual look of wedding attire has disappeared as completely as the flower children and love beads.

Elegance and age-old ritual are the rule, say fashion authorities. But the 1980s bride isn't so

steeped in tradition that her wedding is similar to her mother's or grandmothers'.

She selects what she wants from tradition and combines it with contemporary adaptations.

Her wedding gown alone can cost as much as \$25,000, although not many brides can afford that amount. Barbara Tober, editor in chief of Bride's magazine, estimates today's typical bride spends \$400 to \$500.

Priscilla of Boston, a famous bridal manufacturing and retail firm, puts the average at \$550 to \$600. At this house, which has made bridal attire for many of the headline brides such as Tricia Nixon, a one-of-a-kind, custom gown can run from \$16,000 to \$25,000.

"It's all that labor, all that hand work," said Priscilla Kidder, who heads the firm.

For Pat Kerr, of Memphis, it's all that hand work plus the antique fabrics she uses that send her prices soaring.

Kerr, a collector of antique textiles, also has a collection of laces to boggle the mind.

Gowns by Kerr, a former Miss Universe-Tennessee from Savannah, Tenn., are featured in the top stores around the country. Bergdorf Goodman recently gave its Fifth Avenue window display over entirely to her creations.

"I never expected the bridal market to become what it is," she said. "But there is that kind of customer who will spend \$12,000 or \$15,000 for her special dress."

"Regardless of cost, brides want to go the traditional route, but they also want to be contemporary," Tober said.

"The silhouette is slender.

Today's market responds to the fitness mood of the country. Ten years ago, the most popular sizes were 12s and 14s. Now they are 8s and 10s. The girls certainly are not shorter. They're just leaner. Everyone seems to be into some phase of body care."

"The smaller sizes don't surprise me at all," said Cele Lalli, editor-in-chief of Modern Bride magazine. "Think of all that dieting, exercise, the accent on fitness."

Except for renewed interest in traditions, there seems to be no major event shaping the bridal gown fashions. Gone, or refined, is the effect of that 26-foot train on the wedding dress of Diana, now Princess of Wales, when she married Prince Charles.

Somehow every bride in a long dress also wants a train, said style sources. But if she's wearing the newly popular length called the "tea," from tea gown, and coming almost to the ankles, the train gets replaced by a more elaborate veil.

"Everything is very romantic," said Carol Loudon, head buyer at Saks Fifth Avenue stores for 12 years. "We do see a lot of shoulders bared that once upon a time might have made a bride blush, but there usually is some net to fill in."

For spring and summer weddings, most brides favor white over ivory, said Tober.

Fabrics, however, are seasonless. Once upon a time, satins were for winter weddings, organzas for the summer. Today, satins are popular the year around, because new fabric developments have made them and many other silks lighter in weight.

Also gone is the prejudice against white for a second wedding. Long ago, white was looked upon as the symbol of the bride's purity. White always was a color of celebration. Today's bride takes the celebration attitude.

"This is a woman who can afford to be a woman," Mrs. Tober said. "She's loved as a woman. One woman told me, 'I want him to be proud of me all my life.'"

For a while, especially for outdoor weddings, lacy, airy garden hats were the rule. That trend, too, is reversed.

"We're back to veils, flowers and caps for the head," said Mrs. Tober. "Hats all too frequently hid the bride's face, anyway. Brides are electing coronets, circlets of flowers, half hats, tiaras, and toques that are small and close fitting, but without brim. The Juliet cap goes on and on. This a small cap, ornately trimmed with pearls and jewels and also hugging the crown of the head."

One note on the flower girls. Their numbers are fewer, say wedding experts, simply because today's bride, being older than a generation ago, has older friends as attendants.

It's a matter of taste for the mothers of the bride and bridegroom.

Many elect a long, beautiful evening dress.



One of the wedding dresses shown at a recent wedding fashion show in Bryan/College Station. Photo by Bill Hughes

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Dots, red in for men

By **MIKE DAVIS**
Reporter

A bold red dinner jacket, black trousers and a white wing-tipped pleated shirt with black cummerbund are the attire of the modern groom.

If your most formal attire is jeans and cowboy boots, or if you're model-material for Gentlemen's Quarterly magazine, or if you're somewhere in between, red is the color, dinner jacket is the style and designer is the cut for the 1984 groom.

"Red is where it's at," says Joni Grogin, director of marketing for Al's Formal Wear and Bride-n-Formal in Houston.

Dinner jackets with a round-

ed shawl lapel or the traditional notch lapel may be the trend, but Grogin says older styles also are popular.

"Double-breasted is really coming back," she says.

The double-breasted tuxedo is worn buttoned with one side of the jacket far overlapping the other. Wing-tipped shirts with matching tie and handkerchief combinations are popular options.

Many brides want a color-coordinated wedding, Grogin says, so wedding clothiers have made many color combinations available.

"Colored cummerbund sets — that's a real big thing," Grogin

says. "The red tie and cummerbund set is probably the best of any of them."

Style is as important to men as looks. For them, the

pastel or polka-dotted cummerbund sets are something to be avoided.

"They have new ones of black with white dots, burgundy with white dots, polka dots," she says. "That is all really upcoming coming."

"It's like taking your black xedo and dressing it with just a little color."

"It's still conservative. haven't gone back to red colors in tuxedos. They need to pick up the colors they can match their dress."

While hints of color may emerge the groom's attire, black tails still are in style, silver and gray still linger, being the colors of 1983.

Grogin says the modern groom should only wear traditional black or white tuxedos with matching patent leather shoes.

Other accessories available include:

- ascots, which Grogin says are still appropriate for evening and daytime weddings.
- top hat and canes, which Grogin says are more popular for proms, but add a touch of elegance to any wedding.
- gloves, which should always be worn at the traditional time or evening wedding.

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