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Articles

The Un-Bride's Guide to Finding a Cool Wedding Dress **Or at Least One That Doesn't Make You Look Like a Parade Float**

by Tara M. Bloom

Planning a wedding means choreographing an elaborate interpretation of your family's romantic fantasies, especially if they're the ones paying for the affair. And very often, their fantasies have little or nothing to do with your own. After nearly two years of reading bridal magazines and wedding planning books, and talking about weddings with everyone from my hairstylist to my next door neighbors, I am convinced that the wedding dress is the central piece on which these fantasies are hung. The first question out of everyone's mouths is always, "What's your dress like?" The very first thing that most brides-to-be do after getting engaged is to pick out their dress.

If it were up to everyone else, you'd wear a billowing cloud of satin and emerge from under a veil like a blushing maiden. The fantasy standard of bridal beauty calls for diminutive ruffles and bows, elaborate beading and incapacitating trains. Searching for your dream wedding dress can be nothing short of torture if you balk at being typecast in this naive role.

My standard of beauty hangs on the hope that I am loved for who I am in all my complex and intense glory, that my full-figured shape and corresponding full-figured attitude are what my husband-to-be desires and cherishes in me. With confidence, strength and mature beauty, I want to play the part of me on my wedding day, not that of an innocent maiden or a seducing princess.

Unfortunately, this attitude clashes with even the latest styles and couture designs of contemporary gowns. Of the approximately 3,000 dresses that I searched through over the Internet, in magazines, and at the nine bridal shops I visited, there was something demeaning about them all. Ultimately, after 18 months spent looking in places with names like TrPs Fabu, I found my dream dress - a Marilyn Monroe-like dancing number - in a consignment store.

Following are some ideas for avoiding the pitfalls of conventional wisdom that sassy women need to know.

Betty's Tips for Finding a Cool Wedding Dress:

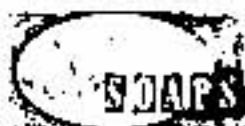
Be in the Mood

Don't go looking for your dress when you are premenstrual, hung over, or stressed out about a major project at work. Being bloated, irritable, or preoccupied makes it darn near impossible to like any article of clothing that involves more than one person helping you put it on. Wait until a better day when you are more likely to appreciate how beautiful you really are.

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