

ASK AN EXPERT!

By Sheri Daniels
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(Sheri Daniels and Dale Schank are a mother/daughter team who run Head To Toe, a popular bridal salon in Dunmore. Mrs. Daniels gives an overview of the bridal gown retail business for readers of NEPA Wedding Day magazine.)

THE PERFECT DRESS:

The way we begin is by asking each prospective bride questions about what she has in mind. Really listening is the key to helping a bride find her perfect dress. She may have a picture in her mind of what she thinks she will look like on her special day, but her conversation may reveal hidden clues about what she really wants. I'd say about 75 percent of our clients do not buy the gown they thought would be their dream dress.

WHAT BRIDES WANT:

When brides come to our salon, they expect friendly, professional service. They are looking for adequate selection time—no rushing, please. They also seek pampering and a fair price. Clients know that they will not get a cookie cutter look from us. Our choices are as varied as the personalities of the people we service.

NO SURPRISES:

Brides often have unrealistic expectations because they are not well informed or because others have over-promised what can be done. Our best tools in the salon are honesty and full disclosure. This no-surprises mindset eliminates many problems and keeps customers satisfied throughout the process.

LOOKING FABULOUS:

With all the changes that occur in the fashion world, the bride still wants to capture the attention of all who see her. She wants to hear ooh's and ahh's when she comes down that aisle. She wants to hear whispers of how beautiful she looks. To achieve that, a gown must compliment a bride's coloring, fit her figure impeccably, make a statement about who she is, and be comfortable enough to handle the rigors of that busy, wonderful day.

FULFILLING A FANTASY:

It is true that a wedding gown purchase is the single most important dress purchase a girl will make, so it must fulfill the fantasy and romance of her wedding day. We try to help brides realize this fantasy by keeping the

experience as stress free as possible. We offer a large and varied selection of gowns to choose from, knowledgeable sales consultants, and detailed handling of all the paperwork. We keep a log of all conversations and telephone calls.

STAYING CURRENT:

Staying current with fashion trends requires attending the major markets, participating in advisory capacities to the manufacturers, subscribing to bridal periodicals, and listening to the requests of clients. We carry many bridal collections in our store, but they have performance criteria in which each line is evaluated each season. If the product does not pass the test, it must go!

TABOOS ARE NEW TRADITIONS:

We see change as being the future of the industry. Our business is in a constant state of flux, with a trend towards non-traditional. Our brides march to the beat of their own drum. They figure they want their day to be their way! If there is a common thread, it is that each bride wants something different. Former rules no longer apply, and a more creative and innovative bride has emerged. The taboos of yesterday have become the common practice of today. This is probably why destination weddings have become so popular. They are a breakaway from the traditional church wedding.