

TWO MAIN STYLES FOR BRIDAL SILHOUETTES

There are two main styles of gowns which have maintained a hold on brides' imaginations in recent years---the strapless bodice with a full ball gown skirt, and an ultra slim mermaid style silhouette. Both remain popular, but modern brides are also looking for something different.

Flowing fabrics such as chiffon and organza are being fashioned into goddess type gowns which feature an Empire bodice, often with layers of fabric falling into a column or A-line skirt. This style works especially well on a well-rounded woman, since it skims the body beautifully.

Colors and dramatic beading are other popular features of trendy gowns. Waistlines, hemlines, and necklines are being adorned with vivid colors such as red, black or royal blue, or with jeweled beading in shades of silver and gold which are much heavier than the delicate beading usually featured on wedding dresses. The overall color of gowns ranges from the ever-popular pure white, to shades of ivory, champagne, and even taupe.

The strapless bodice is so ubiquitous that a bride who really wants to look different need only add spaghetti straps for a new look, or go all the way and look for something with long or short sleeves. A compromise is to wear a jacket for the ceremony, which can be cast aside for dancing at the reception. Choices include a short bolero style, or something longer than can be cinched at the waist with a jeweled brooch or a flower.



The tailored look has never really gone away, but more brides are opting for a preppy look, choosing dresses in a fabric such as silk-cotton or faille, with pin-tucked bodices or no ornamentation at all, save for maybe a perky bow at the front or back waistline.

Princessy types are still gaga over pickup skirts, which feature three or more layers of fabric in a poufy effect, almost always with a strapless bodice.

The anti-princessy types often tend toward a super slinky slip dress which is fashioned more like lingerie. Figure Alert: You have to be amazingly slim to make the slip silhouette work.

Brides hoping to accentuate or camouflage various features have many choices. A Basque waistline narrows your midsection, while an A-line skirt compliments any figure and hides a multitude of problem areas. If your bosom is modest, you can risk a deep V-neckline or a shirred bodice, while the standard strapless bodice works well for a woman who is more well-endowed, as does a halter top.

Remember that the timing of your wedding has a great deal to do with your choices, although the popular silhouettes are worn at any time of the year. The fabrics will change, however, with warm weather weddings calling for lighter fabrics such as chiffon or georgette, while satins and velvets work well in cold weather.

The style of your wedding has a great deal to do with the choice of dresses.

If you are having a beach wedding, a simpler, slip-style dress works well, while a huge wedding in a fancy reception hall allows you to indulge your Cinderella dreams of a ball gown skirt. Remember, too, if the wedding ceremony and/or reception are to take place outdoors, a long train will inevitably pick up grass strains.

Please take into consideration the site of the ceremony. Some churches and synagogues have strict rules about attire, including bare shoulders, or exposed arms and legs. Be certain to check on the guidelines with your clergyman.

Finally, if price is a consideration, stay within your budget. You can find off-the-rack selections these days at a wide variety of stores, and your local bridal salon owner will be happy to show you samples within your price range. Remember that you must add a veil or headpiece, shoes, and undergarments before you are finished!