



Falling for traditional style

Retro, romantic wedding wear returns for fall and winter

By Larissa Lytwyn | Photos by Suzanne Kawola

He treats you like a princess; what better excuse to feel like one than on your wedding day? Appropriately, the princess-style gown is making a major comeback this fall. “We’re seeing a lot of big ballgown skirts,” says Louise McManus, consultant and jewelry designer at Lily Saratoga in Saratoga. “There’s a lot of layers — ruffles and organza with tulle.”

Although strapless styles continue to dominate, McManus is seeing more sweetheart necklines and capped sleeves. Overall, she says, “There is a trend toward a more traditional look.” The princess style can work for a variety



↑ **DRESSES AND ACCESSORIES** at Lily Saratoga in Saratoga Springs include (top left to right): Augusta Jones “Jessie” beaded lace trumpet gown with scalloped sweetheart neckline; Justin Alexander, taffeta one shoulder bodice with dramatic bow detail, natural waist with rhinestone belt, tulle ball gown; Hair accessories by Louise M. Jewelry, Sara Gabriel and Brideshead Revisited.

◀ **ENZOANI BROWN SASH:** Brides can choose sashes in rich shades of brown or midnight black layered with organza. Photo courtesy Ferri Formals.

of body types, especially if you want to emphasize a small waist or minimize a pear-shaped build.

Want another way to highlight the bodice of your dress? Sashes, particularly beaded or jeweled ones, are becoming popular, says Marylu Aragosa of Ferri Formals and Bridals in Albany. "I'm seeing a lot of jeweled organza and tulle fabric layered together." Styles and color vary, from clear crystal and classic white pearl to matching ivory or contrasting shades of brown or black. Bold accent colors have been consistently fashionable in recent years, complementing the shades of bridal bouquets and bridesmaids' gowns.

Shorter dresses are still the top pick for bridesmaids year round, says Aragosa, making it easier for women to kick up their heels at the reception. For fall, burgundy is a perennial favorite. Pewter and graphite tones are popular for winter. Oscar season-inspired dark green is a stylish option, as are royal hues of blue and plum.

Speaking of royal, trendsetters will likely have followed every detail of Kate Middleton's nuptials to Prince William, no matter what the season.

"Whatever she wears will be copied almost the instant she walks down the aisle," laughs Rosanne Plouman of Futia's Formal Wear and Custom Tailors in Albany.

Although some brides prefer not to wear a veil, McManus says, more brides are opting to wear the vintage-style birdcage veil. The French netting cups the back of the head and can be accessorized with silk flowers or jewels. McManus says it's a unique departure from more contemporary fingertip or elbow-length designs. Despite throwbacks to the traditional, however, floor-length cathedral veils are still largely relegated to the past, along with sweeping trains and elbow-length gloves.

McManus says it comes down to practicality and the variability of more modern times. Today's venues include more than churches; some couples choose to marry at the same location as the reception. "Barn venues are very popular in the fall," says McManus. "And you can still make everything, including the dresses, as formal as you want." McManus is also seeing more fascinators, an opulent headdress-style piece popularized by Sarah Jessica Parker's character, Carrie, during the first *Sex and the City* film.

Wraps, fitted jackets and furs are all popular for keeping warm, both in matching or contrasting shades. Wraps



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and jackets are often embellished with delicate flower designs and gems. Futia's Formal Wear only offers faux fur wraps; real and faux fur is available for purchase at Lily Saratoga. Rental real and faux fur are offered at Ferri Formals for budget-conscious brides.

Although some brides choose closed-toe pumps for cooler months, the most popular are peep-toe year-round. Plouman says she's also seen a trend toward higher heels, even in cold weather and the dangers of slick, leaf-covered steps or icy walks. "It doesn't matter," she says. Although dresses are trending toward the conventional, she adds, adding personal spunk to accessories and shoes are a way for a bride show her personality. Adds Aragosa, "Brides aren't dyeing their shoes to match as frequently as they

used to. There's more an idea of being practical, of bridesmaids, for example, wearing the shoes to other events. It's also about conveying individual taste and personality."

While grooms wear is also becoming more formal, it's also adding a quirky taste of Bond, James Bond. The character's signature bowtie is coming back, says Tony Choppa of Choppa and Son Formal Wear in Albany. "You can't go wrong with James Bond!" he says. "And you can't go wrong with the little man on the cake! Bowties are definitely becoming more popular." Although black bowties are the most common selection, Choppa



has also seen red, cream and gray colors — whatever coordinates best with the bridal party, he says.

Nino Futia of Futia's Formal Wear agrees bowties are making a comeback. Chocolate-colored tuxes

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• **SIMPLE SILHOUETTES** satin faced shantung bridesmaid dress in emerald, found at Lily Saratoga in Saratoga Springs.

• **TUXES AND TIES** at Futia's Formal Wear in Albany.



are also a favorite, he says. "Brown colors are always big for fall." Vests and ties — often striped— are also enduring, he adds, while the classic cummerbund is more often reserved for proms. Cuff links are also not as popular, because Futia says, "They can easily get lost."

As for shoes, Choppa says, "it's always gotta be patent leather, black, brown or whichever color. You always go with patent leather for a tux." The same goes for suspenders: "They're a must for any good fit."

For shirts, "The lay-down collar is more commonly favored over pleated versions," says Choppa. Aragosa has even seen a trend toward diamond-encrusted shirts. Tone-on-tone fabrics popular in women's wedding wear, she adds, has trickled down to the men. For

ties, she says, "You're seeing wool on top of satin, for example."

Whichever styles you choose for the big day, local experts agree, keep an open mind. "I've seen brides find dream dresses they never thought they'd try on because they only had one style in mind at first," says Aragosa. Agrees Plouman, "Get the dress that best flatters your shape and go from there." ■



To get tips on how to say 'I do' to your wedding dress, go to www.timesunion.com/vow.

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Lily Saratoga

6 Franklin Square, Saratoga Springs
www.lilysaratoga.com
518.587.5017

Futia's Formal Wear

251 Central Ave. (moving to 1289 Central Ave. in mid-July 2011), Albany
www.futias-formalwear.com
518.436.7177

Ferri Formals and Bridals

1608 Union Street, Schenectady
www.ferriformals.com
518.374.3464