



BRIDAL SHOPPING HANDBOOK



*Quick Tips to Help You Find The Wedding
Dress of Your Dreams*

Bridal Shopping Handbook

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First Edition

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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
Chapter 2: 3 Must Know Tips to Find Your Dream Dress.....	5
Chapter 3: Choosing the Right Dress for Your Body Shape	8
Chapter 4: Get a Tiny Waist Look in Your Wedding Dress	14
Chapter 5: Different Bridal Fabrics.....	18
Chapter 6: Bridal Inspiration from Past Estilo Moda Brides	21
Chapter 7: Wedding Dress Shopping	43
Chapter 8: Conclusion	46

Chapter 1

Introduction

Meet Eliza, who got married a few years ago and still wishes every day that she had worn a different wedding dress something different for her wedding. Unfortunately, she's about 3 years too late now. She still hopes her husband would be open to a marriage blessing and then she can finally wear her dream dress. Long before Steven proposed to Eliza, she knew what her dream wedding dress would look like. She was sure it would be perfect for her and she knew what every last detail would be. She wanted to look like a modern day princess.

The bodice would have been reminiscent of Grace Kelly's wedding dress bodice: lightly beaded lace, high neck but with cap sleeves rather than long sleeves. The skirt would have been a duchess satin fitted mermaid skirt, ruched from the hips to just before the knees and then full flared and pleated from the knees to the hem. The dress would have been completed with pearly buttons at the back to cover the zip and a fully pleated, lightly beaded train.

Eliza ended up wearing an all over lace, off shoulder A-line dress with a puddle train. The dress was *OK* and perhaps, someone else's dream dress but it was not hers. She settled for this dress because she could not find her dream dress anywhere and the bespoke bridal shops she visited were too expensive.

Today, she looks at her wedding pictures with regret because she did not have her high neck lacy bodice and full mermaid skirt; two things she had wanted on her dress since she was 5. Your story does not have to be the same.

Ever wondered if the wedding dress you have chosen to wear is your exact perfect dream wedding dress. It is one of the hardest decisions to make and if not made carefully, could spell disaster and regrets. If you have not bought your wedding dress already, here are some top tips and advice to give you some help and inspiration when choosing your wedding dress.

Chapter 2

3 Must Know Tips to Find Your Dream Dress

Here are some tips to help you avoid choosing the wrong wedding dress and having those dreaded regrets some brides have today.

1. Your dream dress should be the one you dreamt about (or as close to it as can be achieved)... and I do mean day dream here and not a full on spiritual experience.

When that proposal comes, every girl becomes a fashion designer and visualises the exact dress she would love to wear and even though many people have said that what you initially picture in your head is not what you may wear or should wear, I believe that whatever it is you end up wearing should reflect what your vision was in the first place. Your instinct for what suits you and what you would feel comfortable and beautiful in should never be ignored.

Word of Caution

Be realistic about what can and should be created for you. I cannot promise you that this bridal ensemble worn by Beyoncé Knowles for one of her many fantastic stage performances would be loved by all your guests or even by your groom. However, if this is your dream look, then either go for it (if you are brave enough) or wear a dress that incorporates some of the detail and not others.

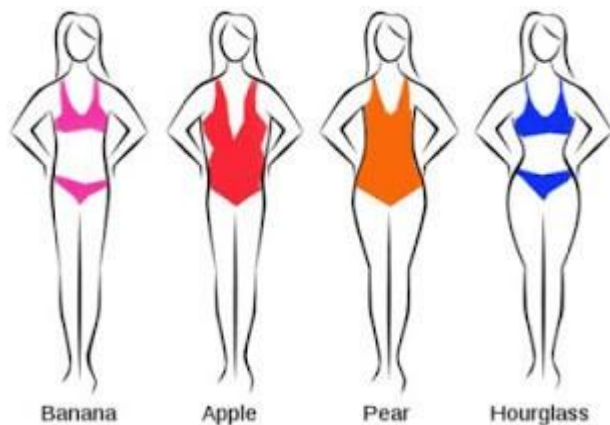


Words of Advice

Sketch your dream dress. Not everyone is a Monet or Van Gogh but it always helps to have a visual (no matter how crude) of what you envision your dress to be

Visit some wedding shops to try on various styles that match your vision and others that don't. This will help you narrow down what works and you may even find yourself redesigning your dream dress after you may have tried on some dresses you thought you would suit but didn't.

2. Your dream dress should suit your body shape



Determine what your body shape is and look for dresses that suit. Look out for our blog post on the different wedding dress shapes and what body shapes look good in them.

No girl should show off parts of her body that she is not entirely happy with so your dream dress should cover any lumps, bumps or skin problems that have made you self-conscious in the past. The rule of thumb is to go for a dress that elongates you elegantly, enhances the best parts of your body and forgives the parts you wish to hide.

Word of Caution

Do not feel pressured into wearing the latest trend especially if it does not suit your body shape or skin tone. This would only spell heartbreak and pain.

Words of Advice

A good designer would be able to incorporate features of the most recent trends into your dress without compromising on the fit. For example, if you really want to wear a mermaid style but have some midriff bumps you would like to hide, you can incorporate side sweeping ruching or pleats which are winners for hiding bulk while minimising the waistline.

3. Your Dream Dress should be accessible and affordable

A dream dress would only ever remain a dream if you cannot afford it. Remember that it's a wedding dress and important as it is, it is not a matter of life and death so allow common sense to prevail within reason.

You have to do your homework and research extensively to find your dream wedding dress at a budget that makes it accessible to you and at an affordable rate. These days many girls buy dresses that they can ill afford and sometimes on credit. Then they suffer for it long after the wedding has come and gone. Others do the extreme opposite and buy their dress for ridiculously low amounts from overseas and get stung very badly either by not getting a dress at all or getting a dress that's not fit to wear.

If you are unable to find a dress in the shops that ticks all the boxes for you, then a good option that has become the choice option for many brides who have decided not to settle is to have a bespoke dress created by a designer to whom you have easy access and can work closely with throughout the entire process.

Brides who come to us to have their dresses designed and created especially for them, have described the experience as simply delightful and the fact that they can achieve any design they desire and at a reasonable price excites them incredibly. The common feedback is that they are deeply satisfied that the choice of what they'll be wearing was entirely theirs and not a decision borne of circumstance.

Word of Caution

Expensive or cheap, 65% of the newly wed ladies we questioned advised that the dress they chose was not their exact dream dress and ended up being a financial burden or a waste of money. Double jeopardy is what I call this.

Words of Advice

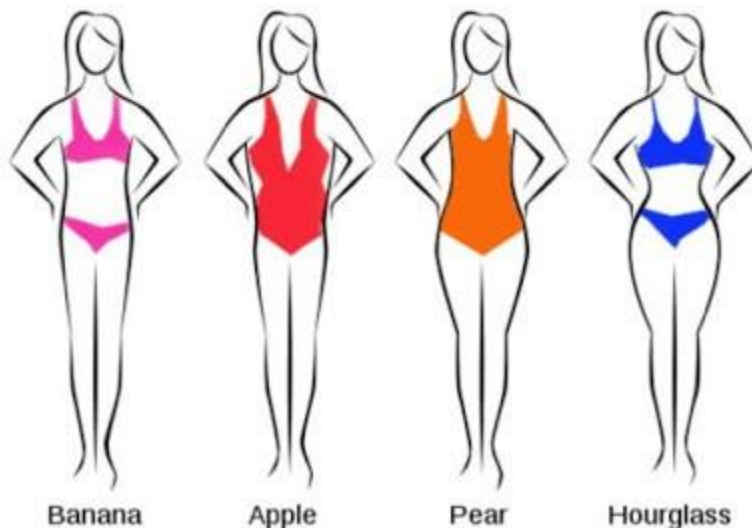
You can get your own dream dress at a reasonable budget and we believe that you should. Don't ever settle for less. No matter how small the detail you will like to have or like to change, I say, 'go for it'. It's your wedding you should have your day your way, dress and all.

Chapter 3

Choosing the Right Wedding Dress for your Body Shape

Most women have issues with one or two things about their bodies and while I am a strong believer of embracing your body; no matter what and loving yourself, I also believe that no girl should show off parts of her body that she is not entirely happy with so your dream wedding dress should cover any lumps, bumps or skin problems that have made you self-conscious in the past. The rule of thumb is to go for a dress that elongates you elegantly, enhances the best parts of your body and forgives any shortcomings. These articles should help you in determining what wedding dress styles go with your shape; hence, saving you a tonne of misery from trying on unflattering dresses.

1. Different Body Shapes



2. Wedding Dress Silhouettes

There are very many different wedding dress silhouettes which is created by a combination of the skirt and bodice and it is important that you know which of these bodice and skirt shapes would suit your figure. Consider the following popular shapes.

2.1. Popular Wedding Dress Skirt Shapes



A-Line

Characterised by a gentle and gradual flare from the waist to the hemline

Suits Who

All body shapes



Ball Gown

Characterised by a very full skirt. Another variation of the ball gown is gathered at the waist.

Suits Who

All body shapes (too full/wide skirts not great for petite brides)



Sheath

Characterised by a close fitting straight skirt, flaring out very gently right at the bottom.

Suits Who

Banana, Hourglass (but looks best on very slim body shapes)



Empire Waist

Characterised by a longer skirt that starts from underneath the bust to the hemline

Suits Who

Apple (also perfect for pregnant brides or midriff body sins)



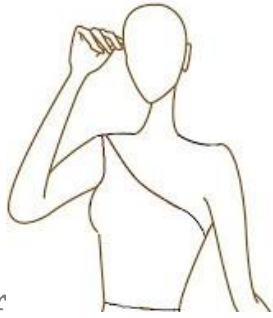
Mermaid/ Trumpet/ Fishtail

Different variations of the same silhouette characterised by a body hugging skirt flaring from the thighs or knees, gradually wider until the hemline

Suits Who

Mermaid, Hourglass (not great for far too disproportional bust and waist measurements)

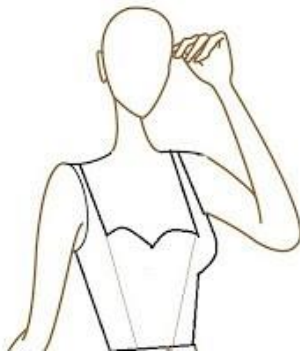
2.2. Popular Wedding Dress Bodice Shapes



One Shoulder

Suits Who

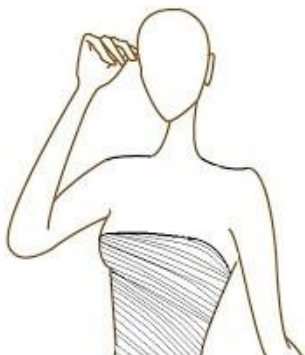
Hour Glass, Pear, Banana (If you are mindful of your arms, then this may not be the bodice shape for you. It is also not great for covering those fleshy armpit bits we all hate)



Sleeveless

Suits Who

Pear, Hourglass, Banana (The same rules apply here with regards to arms. Sleeveless wedding dresses are built to show off toned arms that you are proud to display so if you are arm conscious then steer clear. Or look for an accessory such as a bolero, shrug or wrap that can disguise the parts you want to hide beautifully)



Base Strapless

Suits Who

Pear, Banana, Hourglass (If you've got a sizable bust and would still like to wear a strapless dress, then a base strapless might work well to hold your glorious chest adequately. There are many variations

and interpretations of the base strapless neckline by designers all over the world so don't consider it a boring option

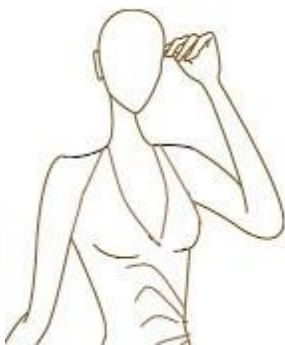


Bateau

This is a wide neckline wedding dress that runs horizontally, front and back, almost to the shoulder points, across the collarbone

Suits Who

Pear, Hourglass, Banana (This style of bodice is amazing for girls with a larger bust but not great for girls with a small bust as it makes the chest area look smaller)



Plunging V-Neckline

Suits Who

All Shapes but must not be too deep for large busts to prevent unsightly cleavage spillage or cleavage kissing neck 😊



Sweetheart Strapless

Suits Who

Hourglass, Pear, Banana (If you have a very large bust, then this may not be the style for you as it has been known to cause the worst cases of disastrous cleavage spillage and your wedding day is not the day to expose the twins to all and sundry. You want a more demure and tasteful look for such a special day to be remembered forever)



Sleeves

Suits Who

All shapes and sizes especially girls like me who are not the biggest fans of their arms



Halter

Suits Who

All Shapes but if you have what is sometimes referred to as swimmers arms, then a halter neck wedding dress may make your shoulders look even wider. Also, if you have a boyish sort of apple figure, then you may wish to go for an off shoulder style instead.

Now while I haven't been able to go over every single wedding dress style, design or shape, I feel that there's enough here to set you on your way.

Chapter 4

Get a Tiny Waist Look in Your Wedding Dress

One of my goals as a bridal wear designer is to celebrate a woman's figure. Enhance her best parts and hide the bits she is not so sure about as best as I can. I always advise my brides that being a size 6 or a size 26 does not matter much. Every woman will look beautiful in the right outfit and having a tiny waist is one trick that can help to achieve the right results

At Estilo Moda Bridal, we love to emphasize a bride's waist line and we take pride in cleverly creating designs and wedding dress features that make your waist look tiny without trussing you up in a get up that would make you wonder if you could last the day. This trend started because we have been asked by so many brides of various sizes over the years to make sure that their wedding dresses make their waist look super tiny. So how do we do this and how can you ensure that your wedding dress minimizes your waistline and enhances your bust and hips. Here are a few tips to get you on your way...

1. Go for a full skirted wedding dress.

This would give more volume to the lower part of your body and give the illusion that your waist is smaller. If you are big busted, go for a bodice that has a higher neckline or sleeves so that your upper body is not shortened.



2. *Add a dark coloured sash or dark coloured embellishment around your waist area. This would draw the eye inward and create the illusion that your waist is smaller than it really is.*



3. *Go for a corseted bodice with laces as the back closure. This is a very effective way of creating that perfect hourglass figure in your wedding dress. Now the trick here is to ensure that when your laces are fastened, you pull in the area of the waist quite tightly but not so tight that you're unable to breath, eat or even move.*



4. *Go for a bodice that stops at the narrowest part of your waist.* This may sometimes mean going for a wedding dress that has a higher waist line as some women have shorter torsos. A beautiful empire waist wedding dress with a skirt that has a soft drop and drapes would complement your waist line and cover any bulges along your mid region effectively.



5. *Enhance your bust line.* This does not have to involve surgery :). In fact, we have been known to add extra cups into dresses and build an extra padded bust area to the bodice of a girl who is not as endowed as she would like to be and the results have been fabulous. This would in turn make your waist area look smaller especially if you combine this detail with some of the other ones mentioned previously in other points.



I believe the girl makes the dress and not the other way around. I can also prove that you can and will look beautiful if you dress suitably for your body shape. Your size does not matter at all when it comes to creating a gorgeous looking figure for you in your wedding dress.

Chapter 5

Different Bridal Fabrics

I have listed some of the bridal fabrics which we use most frequently in our designs and our collections. We create bespoke apparel; and so we will use whatever fabric a bride wants whether or not we have it in our collection. Any fabric can be sourced. also make use of are the following. Each of these fabrics come in different weights and have different contents to give them their unique characters. Lace fabrics come in a very wide variety of styles and patterns. It is important to know the fabrics that you like or don't like so that you don't end up with a dress that will annoy you for the whole of your wedding day. Ask your bridal consultant to talk you through different fabrics, their features and price points as this will matter very much.

LACE



SATIN



CHIFFON



TULLE



MIKADO



ORGANZA



Chapter 6

Bridal Inspiration from Past Estilo Moda

Brides

See if you can get some inspiration from past Estilo Moda Brides for your wedding dress. Some of these brides may have similar body shape to yours or the same taste as you. This should give you some inspiration for what to wear and also for styles that should suit you.

































liquidblack
photography













Chapter 7

Wedding Dress Shopping

Here are some questions brides frequently Ask us before visiting our shop and the answers we have provided to guide them along the process. This may also be applicable to other similar bridal shops and bespoke bridal wear designers.

What should I bring to my design consultation?

Come with an open mind and lots of information such as sketches, pictures and even website links to give us a good idea of what you want in your dress and accessories. Expect to be educated in a fun manner and do expect to be pampered. You are, after all, the bride!

Should I go for your affordable luxury bespoke wedding dress option?

This is entirely your choice. We have a range of dresses from our collection and other one off pieces that you can select but from our experience, most brides know exactly what they want. We are able to design a dress for you from scratch or customise our design to suit your specific requirements for your wedding dress. We are also able to combine the features of a huge number of wedding dresses to create your one unique wedding dress.

Can I try on samples in the shop?

Yes. We have many samples and we highly recommend that you try on as many as possible to find out what styles, fabrics and so on suit your shape and style.

Will any other brides be attended to during my appointment?

We respect your privacy and we will dedicate our full attention to you and anyone who accompanies you for the full duration of your appointment; however, occasionally, we may have other clients in the shop at the same time as you. This would not affect our dedication and commitment to you and your entourage while you are in the shop.

How long will my appointment last?

Appointments usually last between 1 to 2 hours but can be extended if there is no one else booked after you.

How many people can I bring with me on my appointment?

The production time is between 16 to 20 weeks but we accept emergency orders for an extra charge.

How much do your dresses cost?

For wedding dresses, our prices start from £400. We; however, have many sample sales wedding dresses that sell from £100 upwards.

How much would my wedding dress alterations will cost?

Alterations are free on bespoke wedding dresses provided that your measurement remains the same as it was when we took them initially. For ready to wear bridal wear and other dresses, alterations start from £20.

What is the payment procedure?

Do bring your shoes or a pair of a similar heel height as what you will be wearing on your wedding day to your initial consultation and subsequently for all fittings. You can also bring your jewellery, hair piece, veil etc to enable us match the whole look and ensure that the wedding dress you choose works well with your wedding shoes and accessories. We accept credit cards, debit cards and bank transfers.

How many fittings will I need?

As many fittings as is necessary to achieve the perfect fit but typically, you will only need 2 more visits after your initial consultation appointment.

What underwear should I wear for fittings?

We recommend that you wear a well-fitting strapless bra in either white or ivory. If you have the underwear that you wish to wear on your wedding day or something similar, then this will be even better for us to see how well it will work with your dress. Further recommendations would be made during your wedding dress fitting.

What accessories should I bring with me?

Do bring your shoes or a pair of a similar heel height as what you will be wearing on your wedding day to your initial consultation and subsequently for all fittings. You can also bring your jewellery, hair piece, veil etc to enable us match the whole look and ensure that your wedding dress works well with your wedding shoes and other accessories.

How long will it take for my dress to be ready for collection?

We recommend that you order your dress 6 to 9 months before the wedding to ensure a seamless process for all parties. We have; however, created wedding dresses in as little as 4 weeks so if you have left it late, call us anyway to find out if we are able to help you.

Do you store wedding dresses?

You can ask us to store your wedding dress if you are not ready to pick it up after your final fitting.

What happens if I do not pick up my dress?

Any dresses that are not fully paid for and picked up or agreed to be stored 4 weeks after we advise that it should be collected will be sold and the proceeds will be given to a charity of our choice.

If I am getting married abroad, what do you recommend for transporting my wedding dress to the wedding destination?

The best way to get your dress to your wedding destination to prevent damage or loss is to carry it with you onto the plane in your hand luggage. You can pack your dress in a bag or box to take with you onto the plane. Some of the airlines enforce special hand luggage rules so it is advisable that you ask the airline what size of bag or box will be acceptable. Estilo Moda Bridal will provide you with a special wedding dress garments bag which some of the airlines are happy to help you hang for the duration of the flight. Ensure to find out if they would be happy to do this for you. If you would be using a box, we recommend that you pack your wedding dress in acid-free tissue paper and use a case or box that is hard-sided. When you get to your wedding destination, find a good dry cleaner or laundry company that will press or steam it at the other end. Most hotels will be able to direct you towards one. Find out before you set out, if such a service would be available. If not, buy a small hand held steamer that you can take with you to remove any creases yourself. There are various companies selling wedding dress travel boxes that cost from £29 on this website, www.emptybox.co.uk, or try www.dressinabox.co.uk, which lists its boxes by airline (do double check before you travel though, as baggage rules frequently change). If you are worried about squeezing it into a hand luggage bag, you could get the dress couriered to your destination with a company like DHL or Fedex. If you go down this road, make sure the packaging is sturdy, waterproof, and marked fragile. Be sure to ship the dress well in advance and make sure a friend or hotel concierge is briefed to receive it at the other end.

Estilo Moda Bridal provides this information as recommendation only and will accept no responsibility for any disappointment, loss or damage during and after your wedding dress shopping experience

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Your wedding will surely be one of the most important days of your life and your wedding dress plays a big part of that wonderful day. This day is the one day when you have the absolute right to be the centre of attention and you should bask in this attention and enjoy it to the hilt. Wearing the perfect wedding dress for you, would enhance your confidence and help you to enjoy yourself without worrying about how you look. Hopefully, these key tips would help you in your search to finding ‘the one’ wedding dress that you can look back on for years to come with happiness and satisfaction.

Come and see us and try on lots of wedding dresses as well as find out about fabrics, silhouettes, trims, embellishments and loads more that make your wedding dress everything that you dream of and get lots of inspiration for the dress you pick for your big day.

Call us on 01908925152 or email info@estilomoda.co.uk to ask us any questions you have about wedding dresses.



www.estilomoda.co.uk



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