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in hand*

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ON BEING A ROYAL
COMMENTATOR

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Our world-famous tea length dresses are, of course, our focus - it's why our brides will travel the world in search of one of our cute and girly designs. Again, we have introduced new proportions that hark back to a gentler time of glamour and femininity. We have also added new colours to our bridal spectrum

As always, all our dresses can be ordered in any length and virtually any style. What is calf length can be tea and what is tea length can be long so any bride can be in a unique dress.

Dreamy elegance at its best... with a little bit of Mooshki Attitude.



HOUSE OF MOOSHKI

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ISRAELI DESIGNERS, P22

Top designers based in Israel whose collections could transform your store

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2019 Collection

nicole

MILANO

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Ed's Letter

Meghan's choice of dress has been the focus of every wedding conversation before, during and after the big day and, knowing that would be the case, we opted to talk to designer Caroline Castiglano, TV's first choice as Royal Wedding commentator, about her role in the proceedings rather than

her expectations of designer, silhouette, fabric. (Flick to page 38 to read more.)

It's good to have the freedom to approach things from a different angle, and that's what Wedding Trader is all about. We are not a glossy, coffee table flick-through title – we are clearly focused on news stories that the market has shown an interest in, and on gathering the advice and opinions that readers say they want. We've compacted that into an easy-read format – small and perfectly formed to deliver the goods. It is so great to hear your feedback, because that's what shapes our style and content going forward. So keep up with the emails, the images, your questions, and your wish list – we'll do the rest to bring you the best.

**EDITOR
SUSI ROGOL-GOODKIND**

TEAM TALK



Tom Harrod *Production Editor*
"Last issue we looked at South African designers, this month, Israeli... It's a wonderful way to discover gems." (p22)



Andy Allen *Art Director*
"Boutique owners talking about how to deal with brides wanting discounts in YPOS made for fascinating reading." (p54)



Nardene Smith *Advertising Sales Consultant*
"I'm already excited about Harrogate! A chance to get a peek at what to expect come September was great!" (p50)



Laura Lismore *Fashion Sales Executive*
"Hearing about how Emmy London approach building a luxury brand was my favourite read this month." (p36)



Cover image: Mikaella

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WEDDING Trader

Wedding Trader magazine is distributed to hundreds of the best bridal retailers all over the UK. Designed and created by the makers of Love Our Wedding magazine and findyourdreamdress.co.uk, Wedding Trader is a new trade string to the otherwise consumer bow of Meant To Be Media Ltd.

MEANT TO BE MEDIA

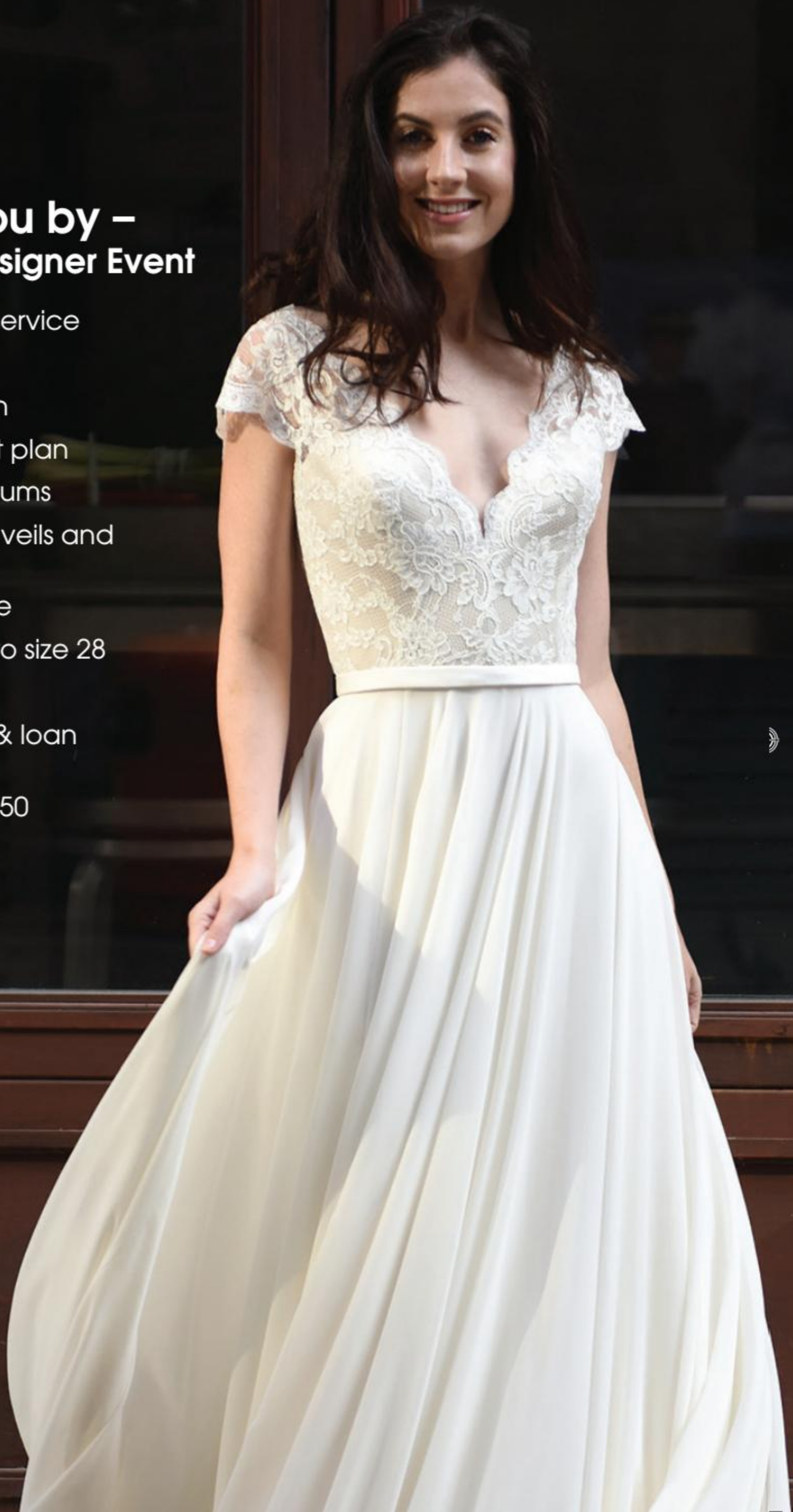
Wedding Trader is published by:
Meant To Be Media Ltd,
68a Oldham Road, Manchester
M4 5EE. Tel: 0161 236 6712
weddingtradermag.com
meanttobemedia.com

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LOTS TO LOVE

The latest and coolest collection by Augusta Jones is brilliantly balanced, showing off the designer's tailoring and pattern skills in gowns that owe as much to architecture influences as to creative innovation. There are streamlined beauties with eye-catching detail (we adore the origami-style bows positioned to highlight a gorgeous back) as well as lightweight, barely there gowns beautifully trimmed with ethereal chiffons and floaty organzas. And there are, of course, those superb laces that sculpt the body – perfect for the bride who wants glamour and elegance on her big day.

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TALKING POINT

The latest news in bridal: right here, right now!

FASHION IN HARROGATE

A brand new event, and one that promises to be a cracker, is Harrogate Fashion Week, 29-30 July. Around 80 labels – including occasion and eveningwear, accessories and seriously stylish daywear – will unveil their new collections, so expect to find perfect guestwear and MOB outfits. Head over to harrogatefashionweek.com to register for free for a fast-track entry to the show, where you'll get the chance to see the likes of Ella Boo, Izabella, Smashed Lemon,

House of Mooshki, Gabriella Sanchez, Suzy D, James Lakeland, Gill Harvey, and Rino & Pelle. Sarah Moody, Director of Harrogate Fashion Week said: "I am so delighted such prestigious and successful brands are joining us at Harrogate Fashion Week this July. The early dateline of 29- 30 July, our beautiful spa town of Harrogate and our commitment to ensuring the right exhibitor mix are proving to be a winning formula for the trade."





Worth Knowing... Wedding crèches – the £4m industry you’ve never heard of

The UK’s largest online networking site for parents and childcare providers has revealed that, over the past two years, there has been a 168 per cent increase in demand for wedding crèche services. The site’s has also found that in the past year, people in the UK have spent more than £4 million on wedding nanny services. According to Childcare.co.uk, parents spend around £335 on crèche services for their wedding day – with providers working upwards of 11 hours per wedding.

The service – where you can search for and connect with babysitters, childminders, nannies, and more – has been welcomed by couples who want their nieces/nephews/godchildren) to attend their wedding, but still want their parents to have a good time. Richard Conway, co-founder of the facility, said: “It’s amazing how quickly this service has become almost a norm for millennial weddings, but I can see why it’s so popular – no one wants a toddler screaming through the service! Weddings are such beautiful events, and we’re glad that people are finding ways through the site to make sure no one misses out.” With this in mind, we would suggest that now may be the perfect time for retailers to look at what is available in wedding wear for babies and kiddies – there are some great brands out there, from the traditional to the trendy. Start with Little Eglantine, Sweetie Pie, Little Giants, Sevva, Little Bevan, and the adorable Wild & Gorgeous.

STRONG, STRIKING AND CATWALK SHARP The Wedding Gallery’s groomsware style guide for 2018

Dominic Trooper, Men’s Fashion Stylist at The Wedding Gallery, the upscale wedding department store in the heart of London, shares his groomsware insights and highlights key trends to ensure fashionistas feel inspired, informed and catwalk sharp to step down the aisle.

The three-piece suit is definitely back in favour and styles are sharper than ever. An impeccably tailored and flawlessly fitted design will work perfectly for a super-sleek ceremony showpiece. As formalities end and the party really starts, the jacket can be removed and shirt sleeves pushed up for a cool, confident and more relaxed look. Bold and bright are buzzwords for the modern man. For the groom who wants to let the threads do the talking, vibrant suits in bright hues such as purple, burgundy or ink blue are massively on-trend.

Casely-Hayford tailoring is a great option for this look that diverts from the traditional greys and blues of a groom’s attire. And it is all about slim fit from top to bottom. Straight or tapered trouser legs are an absolute must, but the look has to be replicated from the waist up, too. A slim jacket that emphasises the chest and shoulders will deliver a masculine, athletic silhouette right the way through. Brands carried at The Wedding Gallery include Casely-Hayford, Emma Willis, George Cleverley, Gieves & Hawkes, Pantherella, Sauvage, S.J. Soane, Thom Sweeney, and Turnbull & Asser.



Very Meghan

Gowns with the royal approach have been shown everywhere, but this one, by Andrea Hawkes, has captured the look perfectly. Like all of Andrea's pieces, it is in pure silk, and it's made right in the heart of London.

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studio@andrehawkes.co.uk

andrehawkes.co.uk





WHEN FAKE IS COOL

Plastic is a thing of the past when it comes to flowers, as Bloomsart discovered when they saw the latest faux flowers from the Far East. They look convincing, even from close-up, and are a budget-friendly way to decorate any space. And, unlike fresh flowers, these blooms do not wilt or fade, and are not affected by the seasons. Bloomsart has created amazing displays for companies like the hip Boulangerie Café, and the artisan chocolate company Saint Aymes, as well as providing

for big names such as Bulgari, Burberry and the Buddha-Bar. High-end fake flowers can be used on their own, or with fresh flowers or foliage for an interesting, modern look. If they gather a little dust, just use a hairdryer to get rid of it. Flower walls have been trending for a while, and translate brilliantly to a shop environment where creative styling makes all the difference. It is worth contacting Bloomsart to see what they can offer.

+44 (0)20 3371 8113 | info@bloomsart.co.uk | bloomsart.co.uk



LUXE BRIDE AND LOVE MY DRESS HAVE TIED THE KNOT

Go visit lovemydress.net/blog/2018/05/love-my-dress-luxe-bride-partnership.html and see what founder Annabel Beeforth is so excited about. This coming together of two mega-cool operations could be that shot in the arm the industry needs... And it's something that brides themselves will react to.

FOOTLOOSE

Talented shoe designer Freya Rose predicted in an interview with CNN that the now-Duchess of Sussex would wear an ivory silk satin heel with pointed toe. Since that wedding day, Freya Rose's sought-after designs – the classic Charlie and Chelsea featuring a mother-of-pearl heel – have

sold out, with orders on the waiting list. "Classic point court shoes in sumptuous ivory satin with a sophisticated silhouette and timeless elegance will be the most popular style going forward!" says Freya.

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info@freyarose.com
freyarose.com





IT GOES TO YOUR HEAD

Founded earlier this year by designer Denise Marsh, Hat Couture is a small business with big ideas, gaining a huge following in a matter of mere months. Most hats donated to charity shops end up in landfill, adding to the millions of tons of discarded textiles that currently plague our planet. Hat Couture scours local thrift stores to rescue designer millinery and fabric in good condition, making a sizeable donation to charity, while providing items too good for landfill with a new lease of life. After removing all trimmings and cleaning, the hat base is reshaped and put into stock to await the creation of a new design to match that special outfit or become a statement piece for an international fashionista. Most of the fabrics and trimmings used are also upcycled from vintage fabric collections found via the internet or the designer's own inherited treasure trove of laces, silks, buttons, flowers and beads. When dispatched to a new home, each design is carefully wrapped in (recycled) tissue paper before being placed into signature black and white candy stripe box (again, recycled), tied with a sumptuous satin bow (recycled from heritage stock). Got a discerning MOB keen to shop? Contact Denise and see what she can produce for you. **+44 (0)7804 434930**

WHY GO FOR SIMPLE?

Olvi's, one of Amsterdam's great fashion exports, has its own ideas on regal dressing. Designer Olga Yermoloff never fails to thrill and this amazing signature French stretch lace number has it all – body-skimming shape, plunging back, scallop edges, beadwork and a sprinkling of floral motifs that pile on detail and definition. **+31 2356 29210 | info@olvis-lace.com | olvis-lace.com**





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Blue
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In my opinion

We wedding gown retailers have something to offer that sets us apart from the big businesses that can't deliver personal and personalised customer service. But that doesn't make our lives any easier, says Laura Daly



Navigating the heightened and often treacherous waters of customer demands can be exhausting work, there's no secret there. It's got me thinking about just how much things have changed over the past few years. Expectations continue to rise and the stress under which the bride finds herself increases commensurately.

The way I see it, excellent customer service is only excellent if the customer perceives it to be so. When the customer is hell-bent on giving themselves a bad time, or has complained about everything from day one, it can be so difficult to change their point of view. Either you stand your ground and fight them, or you give in and play their game. These days, whatever happens, you may need to put your ego to one side in order to retain your sanity and ensure your customer's ultimate satisfaction.

Seventeen years ago, customers were, for the main part – and by today's standards – low-maintenance. If we had to inform them that something wasn't possible, they took it on the chin and moved on. The next few years brought in girls who just couldn't hear the word 'No' and, if you dared to say that something wasn't possible, all hell broke loose. Feet would stamp and tears would follow. I'd occasionally succumb to self-

medicating after a frustrating day at the shop when it seemed that the only solution was Pinot Grigio, straight from the bottle!

From the foot-stamper, we moved onto the bride who said, with a smile, "I know you said it's not possible but that doesn't apply to me". Then there was a pause... And you were expected to agree to bend your policies and guidelines, just for her. The mother of the bride was usually there too, with her fingers crossed behind her back willing you to agree to everything,

Good customer service comes from giving the customer what she wants, before she even knows what she wants, herself

because, if not, she was in for an ear-bashing in the car on the way home.

The newest customer trend seems to be those who simply don't hear a word you say, and don't acknowledge your expertise or experience at all. You can email them, give them written contracts, explain things face-to-face; but it's all just wasted time and breath. It's their way, all the way, and there's little you can do other than just go with it. Not even a vintage merlot is going to numb the pain of this one, I fear.

Don't get me wrong, I genuinely

love our brides. I totally understand the pressure these girls are under to be perfect in every way for their weddings. Doomed from the minute they pick up a magazine or type 'Weddings' into Pinterest, they are bombarded with images of bridal perfection. Their anxiety can all too easily colour their dealings with the one wedding business that will truly want the best for them – the retailer of their gown – and this is where we can still make our mark.

As small business owners, we're in the perfect position to understand our customers, to help manage their expectations and to ultimately tame even the bridezillarest of bridezillas. I've always firmly believed that good customer service comes primarily from giving the customer what she wants, before she even knows herself.

If ever there was a time to re-appraise our approach to customers, it's now. If we get it right, we're one step further to future-proofing our businesses for the post-Brexit retail roads that lie ahead. Big impersonal superstores and outlets cannot do this – but we can.

Reading all those little signs that tell us, (before the bride even realises it) that she likes or dislikes something, that she is happy or unhappy with you – or with herself, or with her mother, or with the entire world – is what sets us apart. It's what will keep us sane.



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ISRAELI DESIGNERS

Israeli bridalwear designers have been on the map for many years now, but the respect with which they have been held has moved from admiration to adoration. They are the new big time, applauded the world over

They wowed audiences in New York last autumn. They picked up a mountain of column inches in the world's press, and their style – glamorous, gorgeous, individual and extreme – is what brides want and what retailers are looking to buy into. And it is not just a couple of names that stand out from the crowd – it is one after the other that collects a standing ovation for their brave and innovative design that dares to bare and piles on the detail.

We take a look at a handful of the big names based in Israel that are worth investigating if you have a discerning audience ready to spend big to get noticed...

MIRA ZWILLIGNER

Tel Aviv-based Mira Zwilligner is a luxury evening and bridalwear fashion house, established in 1991, and led now by Mira and Lihi Zwillinger, the mother-daughter design team behind the couture atelier. High attention to detail is an integral part of the brand personality, with each custom made-to-measure gown being brought to life in a meticulous and thoroughly detailed process, which includes handmade embroideries, beading and detailed embellishments. Each gown, it is said, "tells a story of a timeless fairytale, with modern-day chic, leaving behind an aura of dazzle, sophistication, and sensuality. Every gown is regarded as a work of art, with no two alike." The 2019 Queens of Ice collection is nothing short of majestic: strapless sweetheart modified ballgowns with lamé web lace, 3D floral appliquéd bodices and matching beaded capelets, and little strapless dresses in tulle over sparkle mesh with shimmering mirror paillettes. Prices start at £5,200. mirazwillinger.com





LIZ MARTINEZ

Liz Martinez, at 28, is a young, Israeli bridal gown designer, who evolved from sewing her own designs in her small bedroom at her mother's apartment outside Tel Aviv to becoming one of the hottest properties on the international bridal fashion scene. Her youthful passion and creative spirit, along with her sense for elegance and glamour, are the leitmotif in all her collections. The use of unexpected materials, unconventional cuts, strict attention to details and her ability to flow with current trends have placed her as one of the most significant, fresh, and innovative designers to come out of Israel. "In my collections," she says, "I tend to play with layers of tulle and nude 'illusion' as well as hand embroidered and beaded solstice. I find that the edginess of metallic silver beads or stones coupled with the effects of layers of silk tulle can create an entire new form of expression that even surprise me when I look at the final result." Current, Liz Martinez is available in retailers in Europe, the USA and the Far East – stockists include one London store and one in Northern Ireland. Retail prices start at \$5,500 USD. lizmartinez.co.il



ALON LIVNÉ

Since the age of 17, Alon Livné has worked in premiere luxury European houses to become one of Israel's most prestigious fashion designers, having trained at Alexander McQueen in London and Roberto Cavalli in Florence. He presents his collections regularly at MBFW New York, and his bridal line Alon Livné White is regarded as an outstanding trend-setter in the field, with a signature that spells luxury and design innovation. The 2019 collection, set to retail from \$2,700, shows some remarkable combinations of smoothness and texture. Chic in every sense. livne-white.com



RIKI DALAL

With 100 retailers worldwide, including 14 in the UK and flagship stores in London and Ashdod in Israel, Riki Dalal is a big name with a reputation for delivering the best. The slogan 'designing dresses, creating dreams' could not be more appropriate to this accomplished house, where one-of-a-kind fabrics, inspirational colour mixes and details that verge on exotic become an integral part of the cool, contemporary look that brides everywhere are loving. There are two key labels in this prized portfolio, Noya Forever and Glamour Collection. The first retails from £2,100 to £2,400; the second – the couture range – from £3,600 to £7,100. rikidalal.co.uk



LIHI HOD

After graduating from Shenkar, the leading fashion design school in Israel, Lihi Hod moved to Paris to work at Dior alongside fashion designer John Galliano. After involvement with a number of leading fashion brands, she returned to Israel and established her own signature studio in 2010, specialising in designing wedding dresses. The 2016 winner of the Best Wedding Dress Designer in Israel award by At magazine, Lihi Hod is a leading figure in the Israeli bridal gown scene. Her design philosophy is to create a rich, visual products, full of details and nuances, reflecting quality and prestige. Lihi combines timeless elegance inspired by the past, anticipation of the future and the nonchalant attitude of the present. The new season's fabrics include crepe, silk, French laces and beaded fabrics. UK retail prices start at £5,000. lihod.com

BERTA

Berta is the label, founded in Israel in 2004 by designer Berta Balilti who moved the brand onto the international stage in 2013. The handwriting here is avant-garde, always testing the barriers and boundaries of the modern world of fashion design, and is famous for its second-skin tight fit, flattering silhouettes and use of the finest and most intricate fabrications that often incorporate vintage materials and retro detail. There are 30 gowns in the latest collection, inspired by "floral and botanical diversity". With 100 retailers world-wide, including The Wedding Club (London and Birmingham), and the likes of Saks Fifth Avenue in New York, this is a label that is proving to be irresistible to bridal fashion aficionados everywhere. Muse by Berta retails from around \$5,500 USD, while the Berta collection starts at \$8,000 USD. berta.com

Other BIG names you should know about

Inbal Dror, the celebs' favourite (the fan list includes Beyoncé and Naomi Watts) always surprises and delights with both her evening wear and bridal designs, the latter featuring delicate embroidery and corsets, feminine silhouettes that flatter every curve and a fantastical emphasis on the unexpected. inbaldror.com

Galia Lahav, known for her extravagant and intricate design approach, favours illusion backs, cascading silk tulle skirts

and Italian ivory lace for the new season. There are some 40 stockists across the world. Working alongside the supremo is hugely-talented designer Sharon Sever. galialahav.com

Solo Merav's bridal gowns are in demand from South Korea to California, Australia to Paris. Most of Solo's designs incorporate body shapewear. Finest highest-quality tulle, chiffon, and lace create luxury, but affordable gowns. solomerav.com

Lee Petra Grebenau unveiled her 2018 collection, "Symphony in White", at New York Bridal Week. The handmade collection of 14 dresses features a variety of options, including removable sleeves, skirts and bodices – making the shift from the wedding ceremony to the party festivities effortless. The brand is well-known for its couture craftsmanship, hand-stitched embroideries and flawless tailoring. Don't miss out. leegrebenau.com

Looking for stockists at this exciting time

Sale price range £349- £899

For more information contact:

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Supplier Speak

Being able to pick up stock at short notice means that you can satisfy the bride with – dare we say it – ‘no time to plan ahead’. She will not only love you for it; she’ll sing your praises on social media, too. We checked around to see who has what, and who can come fast to the rescue

Jeanette Stevens

Enzoani

The number of brides who are looking to find their dream dress with a very short lead time has been increasing over the years. We have always carried additional stock for quick delivery (referred to as ‘free stock’).

To identify which styles we should carry as free stock, on a monthly basis we analyse not only the most popular designs, but the favourite colourways and sizes. Using this data we order additional stock (over and above customers’ orders) every two weeks so there is a regular ‘top up delivery’ of best-sellers in a variety of sizes and colours arriving at head office.

With over 1,600 new bridal gowns in our free stock programme covering all our divisions and price points, plus hundreds of accessories, veils, jackets, belts and so on, there is a significant selection.

A free stock report is generated every week to our retailers and available to download. It is not just a list of dresses (that could be a nightmare if you are looking for a specific silhouette), we also include an image of the dress and all available sizes and colourways. There are also links to the dress on our website, where you can see not only our look book images, but also all the social images and ‘real brides’ wearing this dress.

This is a great tool to use out of office hours and in late-night or weekend appointments. Our free stock is usually shipped out within 24 hours or order.

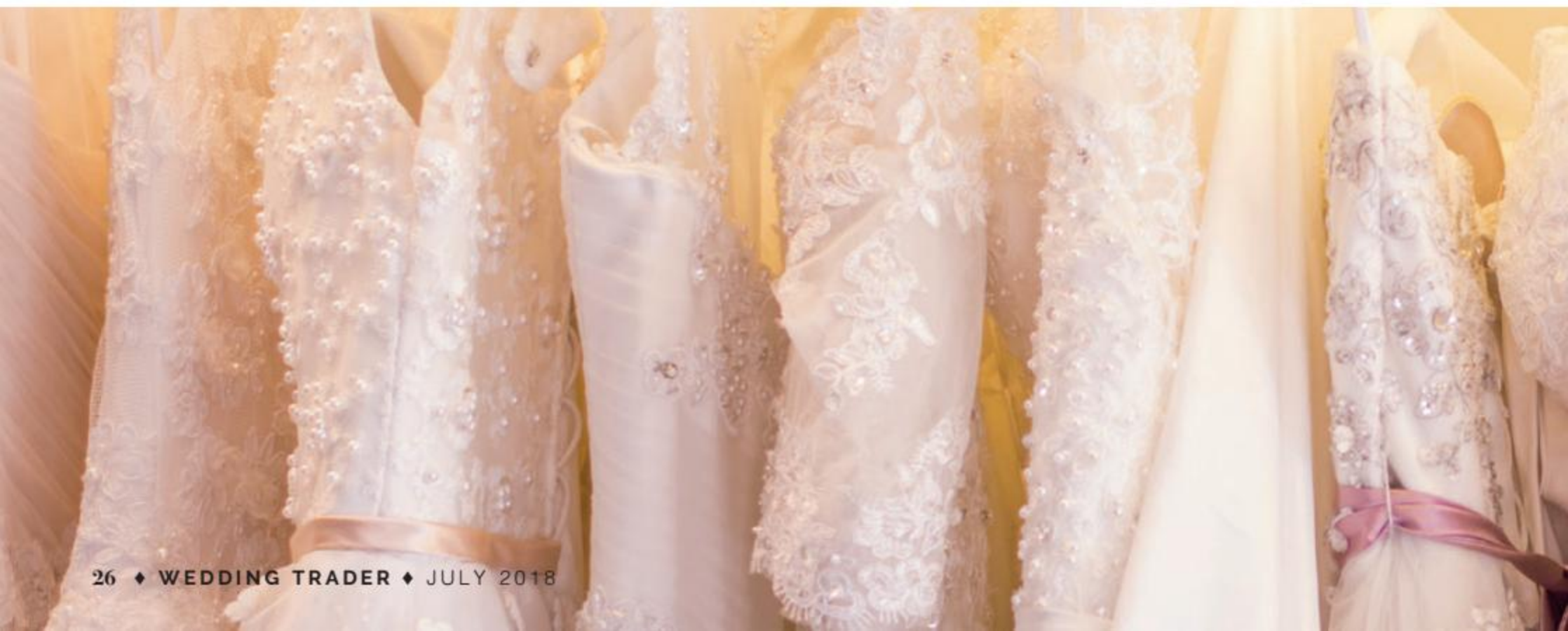
Vivien Felstein

Veromia

At Veromia we carry stock of some of our best-selling dresses. It’s best to call us to find out what stock we have to ensure the dress is in stock, since the stock situation changes daily.

We can provide an up-to-date stock list whenever required of our bridal, bridesmaid and occasionwear.

Because our factory make the majority of our dresses, it’s always best to ask – we aim to never say no to our customers! We will always try



our best to help our shops make that all-important sale.

Neil Flatley

Linzi Jay

Available from stock are Linzi Jay accessories, as well as (to existing stockists) selected styles and sizes from both the Amanda Wyatt and Charlotte Balbier bridal collections.

Every Friday a spare stock report is sent out by email, and from here retailers can check what is available (they must have applied for a login and opt in to receive this mailing).

Linzi Jay also has live stock levels and prices on the website and through the retailer section on the app, which can be downloaded to their smart phone (stockists need to have registered and be logged in to access this information).

James Waddington

Romantica

Stock in bridal has always been a difficult service to offer. However, times are changing, and with that we need to find a solution. Gone are the days of all brides giving us at least six months' notice to craft their dress to order – many of our partner boutiques have told me of brides leaving it till the week of the wedding before choosing a gown to wear!

As a result, over the past 18 months we have increased our stock-holding to around 1,000 pieces and we are excited to be able to launch our new

online stock system over the forthcoming months.

This system will allow our boutiques to view all of our stock, filter it by size, colour and design and then reserve or place an order on specific gowns. Even with such a large stock holding, I must stress we will certainly not always have the right style in a specific size or colour.

We have increased our stock holding to around 1,000 pieces and will be launching our new online stock system shortly

What we will have, however, is a range of gowns available that lets you provide a brand-new gown to any bride in a shape or style similar to the one she wants (if a scenario arises where you are not able to help her from the gowns you have in store).

The introduction of this service is a direct response to customer feedback on the challenges facing retailers today and we are looking forward to developing the service further over the coming year. Please also bear in mind that we can provide a full stock list on demand in the meantime; the office team are always available to help with any specific enquiries while we are working on getting the new system live.

Bernard McKenna

Special Day

We carry stock of all of our top dresses in each collection in the portfolio, across the popular sizes.

Each month we do a stock take, and store the results as a PDF on our system. It goes out to all our sales people, and to stockists who request the information. Orders of stock dresses are dispatched immediately and are usually in store two days later.

Richard Lill

Ladybird

Ladybird has a two-pronged approach to ensure that our retailers can fulfil short lead times and last-minute brides' orders.

The first is to check if we can supply from our stock – we hold up to 500 gowns at the ready at any one time and our stockists can access this information three different ways:

1. They have access 24/7 on our retailer portal. Once they book a dress and check the box labelled 'as soon as possible', it will bring up the very best delivery date. If that dress is in stock, it will quote five days.
2. They can email us for updated information.
3. They can phone.

Our second approach comes into play if we do not have stock of that particular style. If a stockist contacts us by email or phone with their request, we then look at *all* options including swapping gowns and



recalling gowns if necessary. During this process we will discuss with the stockists if a size (one up or down) or colour switch is possible, then the team can get on with finding their requested dress. Provided the dress is not white or at the very upper end of our size range (UK 6-UK 34) we have a 95% success rate. That said, we now have a policy to hold more stock up to a UK 28 where possible.

In addition to the above, we also have a section of best-selling gowns that are available on a standard eight-week delivery; due to the popularity of these styles, we invariably have a the flexibility to swap things around to offer a stock delivery.

The excellent news is that we have already committed to hold stock of a group of gowns that feature in our 2019 collection.

As a result, this means that our retailers who attended our 2019 collection launch in Holland in April, will receive these styles in May. This will allow them to place repeats as and when they are needed, and they will receive them with on a one-week delivery promise. At Ladybird we are committed to try everything to make it happen.

James McKenna

Rachel Allan

At Rachel Allan we are proud of our current stock programme and are confident we can fulfil our retailers needs. Across Mary's Bridal and Lo'Adoro, and all our coloured goods (including Rachel Allan Prom, Mary's Bridesmaids and flowergirls, and Quinceanera) we hold over 2,000 pieces ready to ship immediately. We have three distribution centres – in Chicago and Houston in the US, and, in Ripon, here in the UK.

If the stock is sent from the States, then our delivery time is five to ten working days; if it is despatched from our UK Head Office, delivery can be the very next day. There are no additional charges for stock delivery.

All our stock enquiries are handled through the UK office, where reports are generated at the end of every day so they are they are accurate.



STOCK NUMBERS

From left, clockwise: Veromia; Amanda Wyatt, Special Day, Blue by Enzoani





T
TRÈS
CHIC
BRIDAL WEAR

With six spectacular collections, we bring *affordable luxury for every bride*. Discover our collections at the UK Bridal Exhibitions.

HARROGATE
BRIDAL SHOW
9TH - 11TH SEPTEMBER

STAND M20/M21

THE BRIDAL
ROADSHOW BRISTOL
19TH & 20TH AUGUST

STAND 31

For further information please contact our authorized distributor: Krystal Bridal Agency,
Michelle Blackburn | EMAIL sales@krystalagency.com PHONE +44 (0) 7935 156 275

TRESCHICBRIDALWEAR.COM

THE WEDDING TRADER GUIDE TO *Blush Dresses*

Bridal is definitely in the pink right now, from the palest of barely there pinks to the occasional daring bright. The blush effect works brilliantly with layering so there's just a hint of subtle colour that comes into its own with movement or shimmers under light, or shows the detailing of a fine, all-over lace. Appliqués and beadwork also pick up the pink theme



ART COUTURE

Style: 625
Fabrics: Mikado bodice, tulle skirt
Sizes: US -30
RRP: £1,350
T: +44 (0)8707 707670
E: info@eternitybridal.co.uk
W: eternitybridal.co.uk



CATHERINE PARRY

Style: Lucia
Fabrics: Cotton tulle and lace
Sizes: UK 4-36
RRP: £1,500
T: +44 (0)1443 222600
E: info@globalbridalbrands.com
W: catherineparrybridal.com



LO' ADORO

Style: M664
Fabrics: Tulle and satin
Sizes: UK 2-30 (No surcharge for plus size)
RRP: £1,767
T: +44 (0)1765 570040
E: jamesmckenna@rachelallan.com
W: rachelallan.com



JUSTIN ALEXANDER

Style: 8953
Fabrics: Lace, English net, satin, tulle
Sizes: US 2-32
RRP: £1,865
T: +44 (0)1908 615599
E: info-uk@justinalalexander.com
W: justinalalexanderbridal.com



KENNETH WINSTON

Style: 1694
Fabrics: Embroidered lace, cotton lace and English net
Sizes: US 4-30
RRP: £1,645
T: +44 (0)1765 530282
E: contact@privatelabelbyg.com
W: privatelabelbyg.co.uk



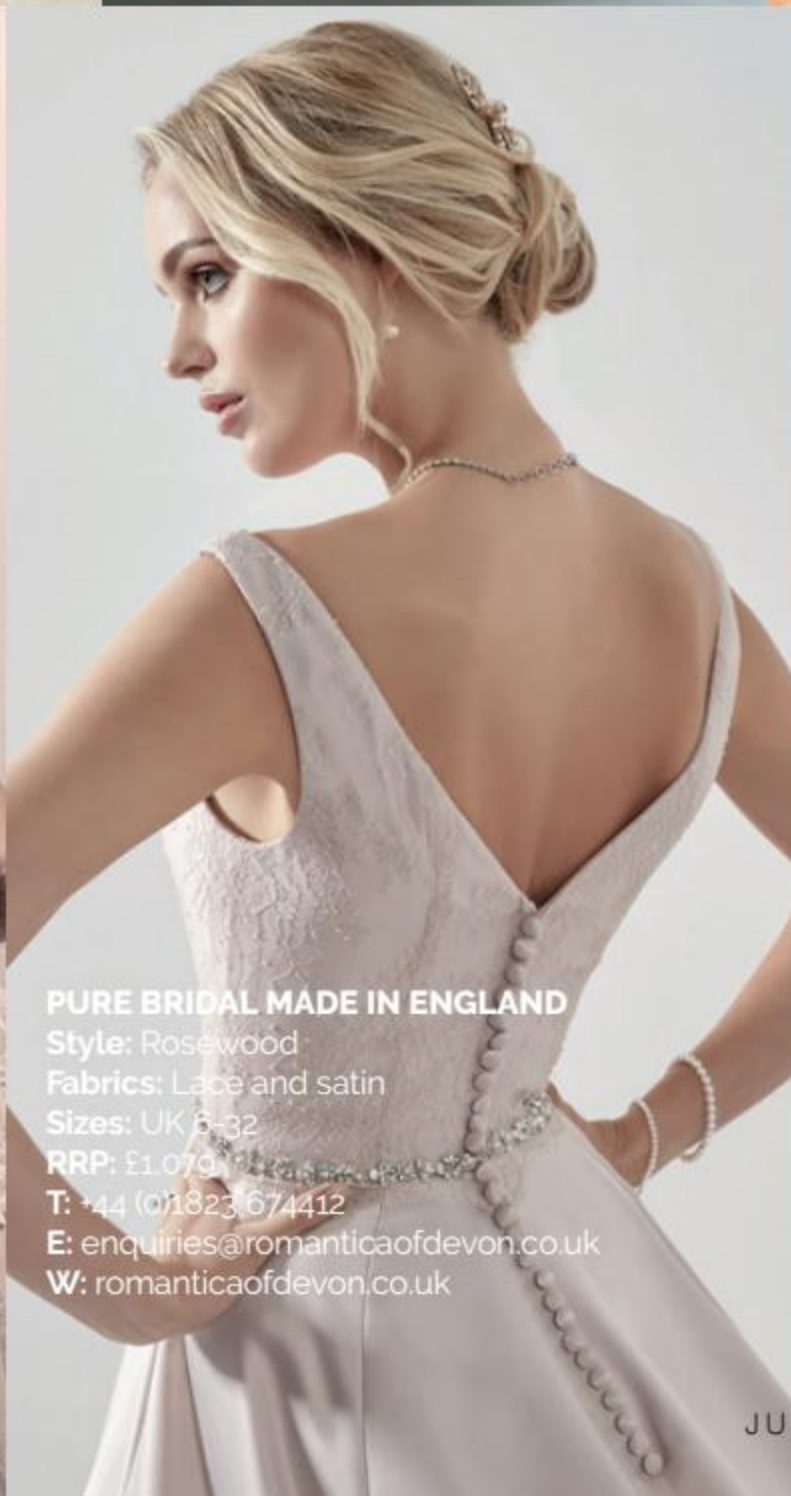
LADYBIRD

Style: 418014
Fabrics: Tulle and lace over satin
Sizes: UK 6-32
RRP: £1,020
T: +44 (0)1423 876380
E: richard.lill@lionheartportfolio.com
W: ladybird.nl



ETERNITY BRIDE

Style: D5314
Fabrics: Stretch jersey with lace
Sizes: US 0-30
RRP: £900
T: +44 (0)8707 707670
E: info@eternitybridal.co.uk
W: eternitybridal.co.uk



PURE BRIDAL MADE IN ENGLAND

Style: Rosewood
Fabrics: Lace and satin
Sizes: UK 6-32
RRP: £1,070
T: +44 (0)1823 674412
E: enquiries@romanticaofdevon.co.uk
W: romanticaofdevon.co.uk



DANDO LONDON

Style: Wimbledon
Fabrics: Lace and tulle
Sizes: US 2-18
RRP: £1,695
T: +44 (0)1420 23490
E: sales@dandolondon.com
W: dandolondonbridals.com



ALLURE ROMANCE

Style: 3154
Fabrics: Lace with English net
Sizes: US 0-32
RRP: £985
T: +44 (0)1707 643633
E: uksales@allurebridals.com
W: allurebridals.com



MARTIN THORNBURG FOR MON CHERI

Style: 218207
Fabrics: Embroidered lace and tulle
Sizes: US 0-32
RRP: POA
T: +44 (0)1954 232102
E: weddings@mon-cheri.co.uk
W: mon-cheri.co.uk



MORI LEE

Style: Massima 5573
Fabrics: Tulle with lace appliques
Sizes: UK 2-30
RRP: £1,095
T: +44 (0)1636 700889
E: info@morilee.eu
W: morilee.co.uk



RONALD JOYCE

Style: Hazel
Fabrics: Satin with lace appliques
Sizes: UK 6-30
RRP: £1,645
T: +44 (0)1636 593483
E: equiries@ronaldjoyce.com
W: ronaldjoyce.com



LE PAPILLON BY MODECA

Style: Elena
Fabrics: Lace and over lace
Sizes: EU 34-58
RRP: £2,000
T: +31 854 899270
E: info@modeca.com
W: modeca.com



SINCERITY

Style: 34031
Fabrics: Jersey, English net, tulle
Sizes: US 0-20
RRP: £900
T: +44 (0)1908 615599
E: info-uk@justinalexander.com
W: justinalexanderbridal.com



SOPHIA TOLLI

Style: Y11880
Fabrics: Misty tulle
Sizes: US 0-28
RRP: POA
T: +44 (0)1954 232102
E: sales@sophiatolli.co.uk
W: sophiatolli.co.uk



TRES CHIC

Style: Pure Collection 8268
Fabrics: Lace and taffeta
Sizes: UK 8-34
RRP: £1,300-£1,500
T: +44 (0)7935 156375
E: sales@krystalagency.com
W: treschicbridalwear.com



WHITE BY VK

Style: 1725
Fabrics: Tulle and lace
Sizes: UK 6-38
RRP: £749
T: +44 (0)1424 439165
E: sales@victoriakaygowns.co.uk
W: victoriakaygowns.co.uk



SPECIAL DAY

Style: C17116 – Claddagh Collection
Fabrics: Lace and tulle, detachable train
Sizes: UK 6-36
RRP: between £800-£1,500
T: +353 1 8665882
E: info@specialdaybridal-ireland.com
W: specialdaybridal-ireland.com

WILDERLY

Bride





Setting the record straight

Rumours can wreak havoc if not stopped dead and countered with the truth. We need to be open with each other, says Vivien Felstein of Veromia, and share misinformation so that individuals and businesses can protect themselves

We're building up to an exciting period at Veromia as we prepare for the launch of our latest collections across all our labels – some of which have been going for more than 18 years. We are proud of our track record of longevity within the industry and the strong reputation we have built up over that period.

That said, it appears our fortunes are in stark contrast to others in the field who have been forced to close. We all know that gossip exists on retailer forums centred on which company might be next to fall.

Retailer forums are a fantastic means to exchange knowledge and assist one another. It's a shame, however, that they have also been used at times as a platform for some members to start rumours about the future of certain bridal manufacturers, who do not have the ability to respond. This is particularly pertinent when the suggestions being made are unfounded and can

have a knock-on effect to the business in question. No doubt manufacturers would love the opportunity to put the record straight if they were given the opportunity to do so.

We are fortunate that Veromia is an organisation that continues to thrive. Our occasionwear ranges have enjoyed huge growth, while the rest of our brands continue to hold their own.

Aside from strong business performance, we also have the backing of a global conglomerate, which means we are always working on solid foundations. Our extensive range of labels are produced in our a large, modern, air-conditioned factory in the Far East, which has been producing bridal, bridesmaids and occasionwear dresses for over 25 years. It makes thousands of dresses for a host of US and European brands, but solely for Veromia in the UK.

The owner of the factory, Johnson Chong, also owns Veromia, meaning we enjoy favourable pricing on everything that is produced. This also means that there is a vested interest

in ensuring our quality and delivery is the best it can be and, should there be any issues, they can be resolved immediately. We feel this gives us an advantage over many of our competitors. We also pride ourselves on our level of customer care – without our customers, what have we got?

The majority of our staff have been with the company for many years, and that runs all the way to the top – with myself, CEO, having been with Veromia from its inception 19 years ago.

There is no doubt that the plethora of companies from Europe and the United States entering the local market has made for stiffer competition in the bridal industry. However, we are confident that our passion for all things bridal and occasionwear, plus our track record of innovating – our award-winning Sonsie brand was the first-ever range designed specifically for plus size brides – will safeguard our name in this industry for years to come.

veromia.co.uk
0208 502 2257



Building a luxury brand



Emmy Scarterfield, Creative Director of shoe house Emmy London, believes that luxury is not just in the quality of the finished product, but also in the service that delivers it to the discerning customer

What are the key ingredients that go into building a luxury brand?

I think what makes a successful luxury brand is consistency. Ensure you have a consistent ethos to everything you produce, from products, literature, business cards, to packaging. What has worked well for us is attention to detail, which is present throughout our entire brand, service and experience.

When you started out in business 14 years ago, did you know you always wanted to create a luxury shoe brand?

I always knew I wanted to design shoes – they are my real passion, my true love, and designing them is what makes me tick. I feel very blessed to have always known what I wanted to do. Ultimately, my mission was more about 'how', not 'what.' I come from a family of luxury retail, on my mother's side we are descendants of Charles Digby Harrod (Founded of Harrods) and my father came from a family of tailors so I guess it was no surprise that I wanted to pursue my own collection under my own luxury label.

How do you stay one step ahead of the competition?

I'm very disciplined. I don't let myself look behind or sideways looking at what other brands are doing. My





philosophy has always been to hold my head high and lead the way. This is often easier said than done, admittedly! However, I truly believe that spending energy and time worrying about the competition is a huge distraction, and it can have a negative impact on me as a designer, as well as the rest of our team.

How do you communicate with your luxury market?

Everything we do is very personal. I think the nature of luxury is defined by offering a personal service from how we communicate with our clients – often a handwritten note – creating bespoke, one-off pieces for them, to delivering their super special shoes all wrapped beautifully like a gift.

What are your top tips for retailers looking to grow their presence within the luxury bridal market?

Stay true to what you are good at. Also, focus your collection - less is more. Allocate equal importance to product, service and packaging, so as you ensure the whole experience is luxury from start to finish. Finally, be confident and consistent in your aesthetic and ethos.

Which style of shoe is paired best with certain dresses?

Our shoe styles are super-versatile and intended to go well with lots of different bridal looks. We love it when brides choose a shorter dress – the shoes become so

much more of a feature! A more simple style can often lend itself to embellished dresses, and on the flip-side a real show-stopping shoe style can really look amazing with a subtle, paired down, particularly elegant dress.

Following the Royal Wedding, do you think Meghan's choice will create a demand for a particular style shoe?

I think Meghan's look suited her down to a tee. She looked so natural, so confident, and undeniably beautiful. I think this is such a positive message to brides for them to really embrace their personal style and go with what they love. Therefore I think this approach will influence brides, rather than her look in a literal way.

Inspired by Emmy's love of the English country meadow, beautiful wild grasses and florals, her latest collection is both timeless and feminine. Celebrating the beauty of English summertime, Meadow Dreaming features signature elaborate trims using delicate stitching, flat sequins and ornate glass beadwork alongside gold embroidery upon sumptuous blush suede. The collection sees the introduction of new seasonal tones for day-to-evening looks paired with show-stealing statement embellishment.

emmylondon.com



ROYAL TALK

Rather than add to the zillions of comments about Meghan's gown choice, we asked royal commentator Caroline Castigliano about her experiences in front of the camera covering two of the biggest of all Big Days, starting with Kate and Will...

Your name and collections have carved their own niche in the marketplace over the years. When the engagement of Kate and William was announced, you were also thrown into the spotlight. But who approached whom?

When Kate and William got engaged, I was invited by Sky to go on the Kay

Burley lunchtime show to discuss fashion and tattoos – it was all very light-hearted, but I was told beforehand that "she needs to like you!". As luck had it, she did, and closer to the Kate and William's big day, Kay filmed a segment at my store talking about weddings, bridal fashion, what Kate might wear, and also the guests. I was dressing friends of the couple and Kay wanted an insight into what Royal protocol was and what to expect.

Where did the coverage go?

Was your involvement worldwide?

During this time, word got around and I was contacted by TV stations across the globe. I agreed to appear with Phillip Scofield on the show he was comparing on the day of the wedding and I also commentated for Sky, as well as the BBC, BBC World, CBS, ABC and many others.

Were you given guidelines to adhere to when covering that particular Royal Wedding? Did you have to research past weddings, and, if so, how did you set about it?

Yes, I did do my research on previous Royal Weddings because it was vital that I come across as knowledgeable! I really like to know what I am talking about and it was important for me to fully understand the subject in depth, so research is always essential. It is also rewarding when you have the answers for scenarios that could arise.

Did you write your own script, then? Were you nervous?

I don't get nervous in front of a camera. I started my career as an actress, so cameras are not a concern. I never have a script of any sort – I like my presentations to be very spontaneous – ad-lib might seem scary, but it always works for me.



Did you find your own business changed radically after all the big event? Was there an instant demand for Kate-alike gowns?

I don't think Kate's bridal gown impacted sales or that brides started asking for similar gowns – lace was already fashionable and Kate's dress was very traditional. That said, we may have sold a few more gowns with long lace sleeves after the wedding!

Did you have any advanced idea of who Kate had chosen as her designer? Or a sneak preview of what the dress looked like?

No, none at all.

So when *did* you know?

I was sitting in a green room with Ben de Lisi with cameras on us, waiting for a reaction as soon as Kate came out of the Goring Hotel. Quite literally as soon as she came out we were told that the designer of the gown was Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen. It all happened so fast – we were given details by the second and had to make our comments right there and then.

This time round, with Meghan and Harry, how much notice did you get before the television companies were booking you for your time?

I was contacted by everyone this time, right from the day they announced their engagement.

On the Saturday, were you surprised by her choice – not so much of

designer, but of the underplayed style of dress? And again, how soon before she stepped out of the car was it confirmed to you who the designer was?

It was crazy. I was with David Emmanuel and we saw Meghan in the car with her mother. We could see the neckline, but that was it. The announcement came from Buckingham Palace – Clare Waight Keller For Givenchy. Again, it all happened so quickly, in a matter of seconds, so you have to be there with an immediate reaction, a description, an opinion.

How do the Royals manage to keep things secret?

They are simply used to it. Also, they really don't want all the media writing about these things before big events.

If you had dressed Meghan, what would you have chosen for her?

Meghan likes simple. She always said that the gown the late Carolyn Bissett Kennedy wore when she married was her favourite.

What is the most difficult or challenging part of the role you have come across as the Royal Wedding commentator? It seems to go without saying that this is a part you will continue to play for many years to come...

I really don't find it difficult – I enjoy it. You meet lots of different people and the actual day is so exciting. I hope I still continue to get asked.

Do you think Princess Eugenie's wedding to James Brooksbank later this year will hit the world headlines? What do you think she will wear (or look best in)?

I don't think Eugenie's wedding will be covered by the press in the way Harry and Meghan's has been – after all, Harry is a favourite of the British and American people and Meghan is an American divorcée and mixed race. Their marriage signifies huge changes coming into the Royal family and it was bound to be big news on a major scale. I think Eugenie is beautiful and would look stunning in an understated gown – quite classic with a touch of romance. It's important that her gown is not busy and cluttered (no detailed or busy lace); it needs to be clean strong lines. I'm already sure of it – she will look beautiful!

Of the big weddings in the past few years – and not just in the UK – which have been your favourite when it comes to the bride's choice of dress, and why?

Princess Margaret – I thought she looked amazing. Her style was traditional and iconic. Her silk organza dress was designed by royal couturier Norman Hartnell. My other choice would be Carolyn Bissett Kennedy, dressed with effortless chic by Narciso Rodriguez. Her simple slip dress was utterly glamorous.

Do you have a favourite Royal Wedding frock? Let us know your choice by emailing susi@meanttobemedia.com.

FASCINATION FACTOR



When two of the industry's most admired names

in luxury hair accessories come together to form a new label, you know it is going to be a relationship with more than a bit a sparkle

The duo Polly and Bella are in actual fact Kirsteen Connell and Polly Edwards. But how did these two talented ladies come together to form a fantastic range of luxury hair accessories?

After returning as a mature student to train in Jewellery Design at Cardonald College, Kirsteen had big plans. The journey had allowed her to meet some amazing designers, but many didn't have business backgrounds – meaning they could design great jewellery, but they could not cost and sell effectively. When it came to launching her bridal platform, Kirsteen knew she needed to look for people that were doing things in the industry that stood out, things that were setting trends, not following them. And that was when she met Polly.

Polly had trained as a fashion designer and soon became interested in millinery. She found her niche in sculpting and working with her hands, and her headdresses were born soon after. Kirsteen too had been making bespoke accessories for the dancing

and costume industry before training as a jewellery designer, but she also had the all-important business and marketing background know-how. Their paths crossed as Polly became one of Kirsteen's suppliers and things quickly began to progress from there.

Many business partnerships flourish when both parties share the same vision. "I very much admired Polly's designs," Kirsteen said, of those initial conversations. "They were bold and leaped out at you from among the industry. Polly has a wonderfully creative mind and we knew that we wanted to bring the high fashion and bridal industry more into sync."

Polly insists that the talent and respect goes both ways. "Kirsteen is the visionary. I design in and around her vision, which I thoroughly enjoy."

The motto behind their shared vision is a simple yet effective one: to innovate, not recreate. Their aim is to create pieces that ooze quality and perfection, beautiful products that are fashion-forward.

It's one thing to say it, but it's another thing to deliver. Happily, Polly & Bella's collection has a personality that sings. Strong design sits behind the signature of the duo – it's graphic, with a wonderful big streak of deco added.

The ladies knew though that talent alone would not be enough: they needed to have a defined customer type with whom they were designing these pieces for. "Our clients are self-assured," they told us. "They know

exactly who they are and their own style – both for special occasions and for a one-off fashion statement."

This all came to be in January 2017, so a lot has had to happen over the past eighteen months, including showing off their collection.

"We've been busy creating our first two signature collections," Kirsteen said.

"It's really important for us to have a solid brand base and look before we show. We want – and need – people to know what Polly & Bella is, and who it will appeal to."

Their Farrah Design seems to be proving hugely popular as a forerunner. "It ticks the vintage glamour box, but it also has a fabulous contemporary twist," Polly says. "It's bold yet beautiful; it's tasteful and elegant. It's so flexible – able to work with rich silk dresses to boho looks with black biker jackets."

Promoting the collection

The pair have been fortunate with regards to promoting the label, with it growing in an organic manner – thanks to the collaborations they have worked on. Kirsteen adds: "Since we launched, we have also been very busy creating designs for several prime-time TV shows. This has been quite time-consuming, but it's fabulous to be part of things like this!" As a result, they have seen their social media (in particular the visual Instagram) gain strength every day.

The power of television can be a game-changer. Some of Kirsteen's contacts from prior job roles helped them out with regards to this. But it was as their pieces grew to great success that caught the TV shows' attention, rather than wooing old colleagues. Kirsteen recalls her time working for the BBC.

"Yes, I with the hair and makeup department on the *Strictly* tour and the television show for several years," she said. "As the success of our pieces grew we were invited to design for several other shows and tours. We do



HAIR NECESSITIES

Kirsteen and Polly's range of hair accessories are quite the show-stoppers



seem to have quite a following in the dancing industry, which is delightful since it's one of my passions."

As you can imagine, with a background in *Strictly Come Dancing*, their favourite choice of materials were always going to be glittery and glamorous. "Swarovski, Swarovski, Swarovski!" Polly answered, when asked what her favourite three materials were. Kirsteen has a similar view on the matter.

"Agreed, we do love Swarovski. We are lucky to be made aware of new pieces and colours as they arrive and so we are always right on-trend."

With regards to colour, they started off with a lot of green. When asked if

With the rise in the trend of water flowers and foliage in bouquets, we wanted to accent this in our accessories

this was a signature, Kirsteen explains all. "We started with green," she says, "purely because in bridal we like to emphasise a bride's entire look, and with the rise in the trend of water flowers and foliage in bouquets, we wanted to accent this in the accessories. We think it's very organic and beautiful in all hair shades. We have been working with ultra-violet

and denim blue also, but in terms of bridal we make all our coloured pieces in crystal as well. This means that brides have an option to see how they look in both colour and clear crystal."

So how does their design process work? "We design the collections together," Kirsteen says. "We come together to research and put mood boards together, and then we let Polly's creative juices flow, where she refines them into the statement pieces we add to the collection. After that, all manufacturing is done by hand in the UK." And talking of the UK, they plan to retail Polly & Bella in the UK first, before venturing abroad.

It's perhaps a tad too early for them to appoint exclusive retailer partners as of writing. "We do have some brands and boutiques in mind, however," Kirsteen says, "when we are ready to show."

What kind of criteria, then, does a retailer have to meet before becoming a Polly & Bella stockist? "Due to our high price point they would primarily have to sell to like-minded clients," Kirsteen explains. "Our brand is suited to high fashion contemporary labels. If they stocked the designers we have in mind when we create, then they would certainly tick our box. We design with the whole look mind."

It's tempting to race ahead with bold plans for the future, but Polly and Kirsteen are pacing themselves.

"We don't have any plans to bring in



a sub-brand [with a lower price level] just yet," Kirsteen says. "We are still establishing Polly & Bella itself, first. Our whole brand image is based on excellence in design and materials and it's hard to replicate that in a lesser manner to capture a bigger audience without compromising your brand integrity. It is, however, our intention to become a fashion brand in high-end stores under the P&B label. Seeing as most of our enquiries are coming from fashion stylists at the moment, this is definitely on our growing 'To-Do' list..."

RRP range £250-£1050

+44 (0)7515 549061

bella@pollyandbella.co.uk

pollyandbella.co.uk



If I was a retailer...

Brandon Bernstein of fantastic Canadian company Paloma Blanca jumps into the hot seat and gives us his insight on what he'd focus on if he had a bridalwear shop

Shop décor – what leads the way?

How often should changes be made? We firmly believe less is more! Selecting the perfect wedding gown can be a very overwhelming experience and we find that a clean environment with space to breathe is the way to go. Changes should be made to accommodate the latest fashion trends, of course, and it is always a good idea to put posters and gowns in the entrance of the store to capture the attention of brides.

Good lighting and large changing rooms can make a drastic improvement on a bride's experience, helping her gain confidence

Changing rooms – what shows off a dress best?

Good lighting and large changing rooms can drastically improve a bride's overall experience. You want your bride to feel confident about the purchase she is about to make. Avoiding stressful situations is a plus.

Communications – how can you best reach the target audience?

Social media and digital marketing



GLOBAL BRAND

Paloma Blanca gowns are found in over 200 major cities around the world

have exploded in the bridal world. Bride-to-bes are now attached to their phones and use the online realm as a gateway for educating themselves on the latest bridal trends

Social media – making it work for you

Communication is everything! Make your message clear and easy to digest. Try to build a community around your product to help your audience understand your message.

Online presence – maximizing your website value

It's very important to know where your traffic is coming from (whether it be from referrals, emails or other avenues). Understanding your users is the key to making strong descriptions on how to proceed with marketing.

Also make sure the designers you carry in-store are properly represented somewhere on your site, so brides know what to expect.

Display – using windows as a form of advertising

Display advertising is especially useful in the fashion world because people tend to gravitate towards visual impulses. A bride can only try on so many dresses in a day – both physically and mentally – so it's important to stand apart from the rest



PRETTY PALOMA

A wonderful cocktail of elegant gowns, classic sophistication and high fashion couture



ON-TREND

The Mikaella Collection offers something for the younger bride with a 'modern spirit'

by putting out strong content. You need to coax them in, in the first place!

Buying tips – at shows especially

At consumer bridal shows, be they major exhibitions or small local events, it is important that you represent the collections you carry. Nothing is more disappointing for a bride than traveling to a store to find out they only carry

one to three pieces from the designer that originally peaked their interest in visiting your store.

We are expecting a flood of views – those shared from other retailers and those opposing from suppliers. Email us on susi@meanttobedia.com; if you'd prefer to be 'anonymous' in print, we'll respect that.

GETTING TO KNOW *Vikki McCarthy-Wright*



Her two-year-old son named the company, her background is in the money market, and her success in bridal has been magical. Now Vikki has broadened House of Mooshki's scope to include a surprisingly different occasionwear collection that promises to make its own, highly-individual mark. Brave? If she played it safe, she'd still be in banking today!

Did you grow up in the bridal business?

No, I have a weird and wonderful working past. I spent 14 years as a Wren in the Royal Navy before leaving when my son was four. I then somehow ended up working as a Local Business Manager for Barclays Bank and then as a business advisor for Business Link. House of Mooshki had already begun part time and, once redundancy hit in 2011, my now-husband said: "If you can do this in your spare time... What can you do full time? This should be your job."

So hardcore business to frothy dresses?

I try to put all of the experience from the banking and business advisory world to good use. Nothing teaches you to think on your feet like working through a few international incidents! The banking and business roles were invaluable. I've always loved fashion, so the switch from finance to frocks wasn't a difficult one.

How did you get started – what was the kick-off point?

It was in late 2009. We developed a very small collection of five dresses. We didn't like one of our early efforts – it had a full circle ballgown skirt, so we cut it off and made our very first tea-length with the internal bodice work that we feel is critical to give that '50s hourglass shape. We sell the style – Olivia – to this day. We were always inspired by old-school Dior and Balenciaga so it was a natural thing for us to specialise in the vintage.

Why the name, Mooshki – where does it come from?

The name was a lying-in-the-bath-with-a-gin-and-tonic

moment. Mooshki, was a word my two-year old son used when trying to say 'excuse me.' So, in reality, we are the House of Excuse Me's.

And then came Grace Phillips – how did that come about?

Olivia had always been the main designer for Mooshki, but as we had grown so much, I also had Grace and Phil on the team. Forming Grace Philips allowed them to stretch their design wings and show that we can do more than vintage.

How many retailers is Mooshki with, here and abroad?

I think we are at around 30 retailers across the world, from Japan to Italy and Austria to Denmark. We go to New York twice a year to custom design – seeing 40 brides in a week who fly in from every corner of the US is amazing.

Where are your absolute best markets, and why?

For Grace Philips it's Italy – they love the sleek contemporary lines of the label there. For House of Mooshki, the UK is still our biggest market. Our design team is so broad now; Olivia the quirky; Phil the Hollywood glamour; Grace the fashion-forward; and I dress the lumps and bumps of brides. Bringing all those elements together in a dress can be both exhausting and exhilarating.

And now you've moved into occasionwear?

Yes! I can barely believe it's happened – and so quickly too, thanks to my best friend Ian Stuart who has plagued me for a year to get it done. We've always had requests from Mooshki mums who wanted a dress and some even



bought our wedding dresses and wore them to their daughter's wedding.

We have some 35-40 pieces ranging from plain and sleek with modern touches, to statement gowns for any formal occasion. I love wearing capes because I feel they cover a multitude of sins. Our reversible capes make that big difference – an outfit can be worn six ways just by changing the coat around and tying the belt differently. Our plain gowns come in 58 colours and there are plenty of customisations. There is something to please everyone in the SS19 'La Dolce Vita' collection... Sharp tailored lines with really modern touches.

What is the RRP range?

£700-£1,300.

Who is buying it?

We took the occasionwear for its first outing to Barcelona Bridal Week. The bridal collections from both labels were there and it was a good chance to gauge reactions, specifically the reversible capes. First on the stand, within minutes of the doors opening, was Catherines of Partick who is known for some of the best occasionwear. From then on in we were mobbed by the Italians who really picked up on our Jackie O and Sophia Loren vibe.

Are they the same customers who are buying Mooshki and Grace Phillips?

Some are, but it seems to be more individual occasionwear boutiques visiting us looking for something new.

Who is your typical target customer?

Our kind of customer is someone who isn't afraid to walk in a room and turn heads.

What support are you giving the new label, and what support for your stockists?

We have thought long and hard about what we give the stockists. Payment plans have been formulated to help people through, and we are one of the few companies who are FCA-authorized to offer finance to help spread costs. Good exclusivity areas are available. For me, it's about being in the right store rather than having multiple shops in a given area.

Where will you be showing your collections in future?

For the occasionwear we will be showing at the new Harrogate Fashion Week in July, although some stores have ordered via trunk shows. The bridalwear collections were released at White Gallery and Barcelona Bridal Week. House of Mooshki will be at the Harrogate Bridal Show in September.

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Jet-setters?

Leigh-Anne Murray of Avorio Bridal in Fochabers, Moray, Scotland has been doing the buying rounds for months this year. She asks if the reality of being an independent bridal retailer lives up to the fantasy

London, Barcelona, Birmingham, Manchester... The list of exhibitions, road shows, bridal events, and exclusive launches is endless. With four trips taken by May alone and not a real holiday in sight, yet another bride remarks: "Wow, away again! I wish I had your job!"

Our social media boasts of all these fabulous trips and glamorous events (which they are) to our online audience, and we engage our brides as we gush about another amazing fashion show, VIP treatment and the endless glasses of Champagne. But, when the iPad dims, when the likers have moved on and the post becomes old news, is it time to look at the impact these ever increasing buying trips have on our business?

The Bridal Buying Season. Remember the phrase? It referred to two brief periods on the British bridal calendar; get your purses ready and your budgets in order. It's either March or September and it's buying time! UK retailers, myself included, would flock to BBEH, clutching invitations from preferred suppliers and new collections, highly anticipating the catwalk shows and excited for the networking opportunities and social events ahead. Hello Harrogate, here we come and we mean business!

You simply couldn't miss it! The top names in bridal would be there and, despite landing in two busy months, you knew that this time away from your business was important. Dates and venues were known, advance bookings made, staffing organised early, and the yearly planner updated.

Now hit fast forward. Like all industries, bridal has evolved and I've certainly seen many changes over the past 14 years, but what effect has the loss of the 'buying season' had on the independent bridal retailer?

Do we appreciate that suppliers don't want to appear mainstream, now preferring exclusive launches? Have minimum quantities dipped as our expenses have risen? Then there's the numerous days that you are out of the shop; extra travel costs, the extra nights' accommodation and, if you value your staff, it's now a trip for four or more. And what about the extra staff cover required at home? Oh, and don't forget in your 'down' time away to update your social media, tag, share and blog! (It's hard to be witty in the small hours, isn't it?)

And that's all before I even consider, the extra childcare, the kennels (will the dog remember me?), if I can I make the early flight, catch the late train, and hope that a herd of cows don't get stuck on the line so I have to take the bus home for the last two hours...

Sound familiar? Be it planes, trains or automobiles (I shudder at my carbon footprint) we're on them more often than not. Why do we do this?

It's simple. We care about our businesses and we want the best for our brides. We know quality buying comes from seeing the products. We love meeting our valued suppliers, catching up with friends and sharing ideas. Ultimately, we know these trips are crucial for making sure your business stays relevant and on trend.

Brides now visit steadily all year round, where once they clamoured for appointments in the month the new collections arrived. Buying trends have spread across the calendar, cash flow runs smoother and there's more time to turn over stock on your rails. Constantly working with new dresses keeps your enthusiasm fresh, and our online presence welcomes a much wider audience.

As the world of bridal gets tougher, with internet sales, high street chains and new shops popping up, only the savvy will survive. Be positive, be professional, be passionate and keep that case packed for the next jet-setting trip. And don't forget to grab the Guccis darling, after all it makes for a great photo!

Got advice to share with fellow retailers? Email susi@meanttobemedia.com.

HARROGATE COMING AROUND AGAIN!

September for many in bridal is Harrogate month, when the longest-standing show on the circuit takes over the town. Three days, 180 exhibitors, lavish catwalk shows and the Bridal Buyer Awards are on the agenda. We took a sneak peek at who is planning what...



TOP TOLLI

Every spring feels like a new beginning, and with this in mind the 2019 collection from Sophia Tolli is one of her most diverse yet. Incorporating luxurious curve-hugging stretch crepe and soft tulle fabrications with contemporary lace and delicate beading, each gown has been handcrafted to flatter every taste and body shape. Also, breaking news: this time the line up will include five Sophia Tolli Première pieces – a curated selection of richly embellished gowns for brides looking for that extra little touch of opulence.



True Bride is setting the stage at Harrogate with its 'Gatsby Glam' looks that feature intricately hand-beaded bridal gowns, as well as bridesmaids that, this time around, mirror key details of the main collection. Expect to see romantic waterfall sleeve details, plunging backs and some of the best colour palettes around.

VINTAGE VISIONS

More than a nod to the best of vintage, LouLou promises to once again recreate the fabulous '50s with beautiful skirts, wide belts, pale colours and retro-style beadwork. From the same house and designers, Christine and Jane, comes the Louise Bentley label. This is the go-to place for elegant, contemporary dresses, slickly cut and with intricate but discreet embellishments.



WOW-FACTOR

Ivory & Co's Into The Limelight collection is all about getting noticed. It's wonderfully romantic, influenced in no small way by the style icons of the golden age of Hollywood (where screen goddesses positively sparkled), but with soft and flowing silks adding a sophisticated, contemporary twist. Check out the boho capes and jewel encrusted accents.



Rich fabrics

Texture is a key feature in many of the 2019 collections, best in the newest breed of luxury fabrics that include detailed brocades, wonderfully different laces, and self-patterned jacquards.

At Allure, the focus is on a certain richness in the chosen fabrics, so shimmering satins and detailed cotton laces with real personality star throughout the ranges in this great-looking portfolio. We've been told to expect a little of the unexpected from Allure Bridals for the new season, and it is a cert that this will include some amazing beadworked detailing.

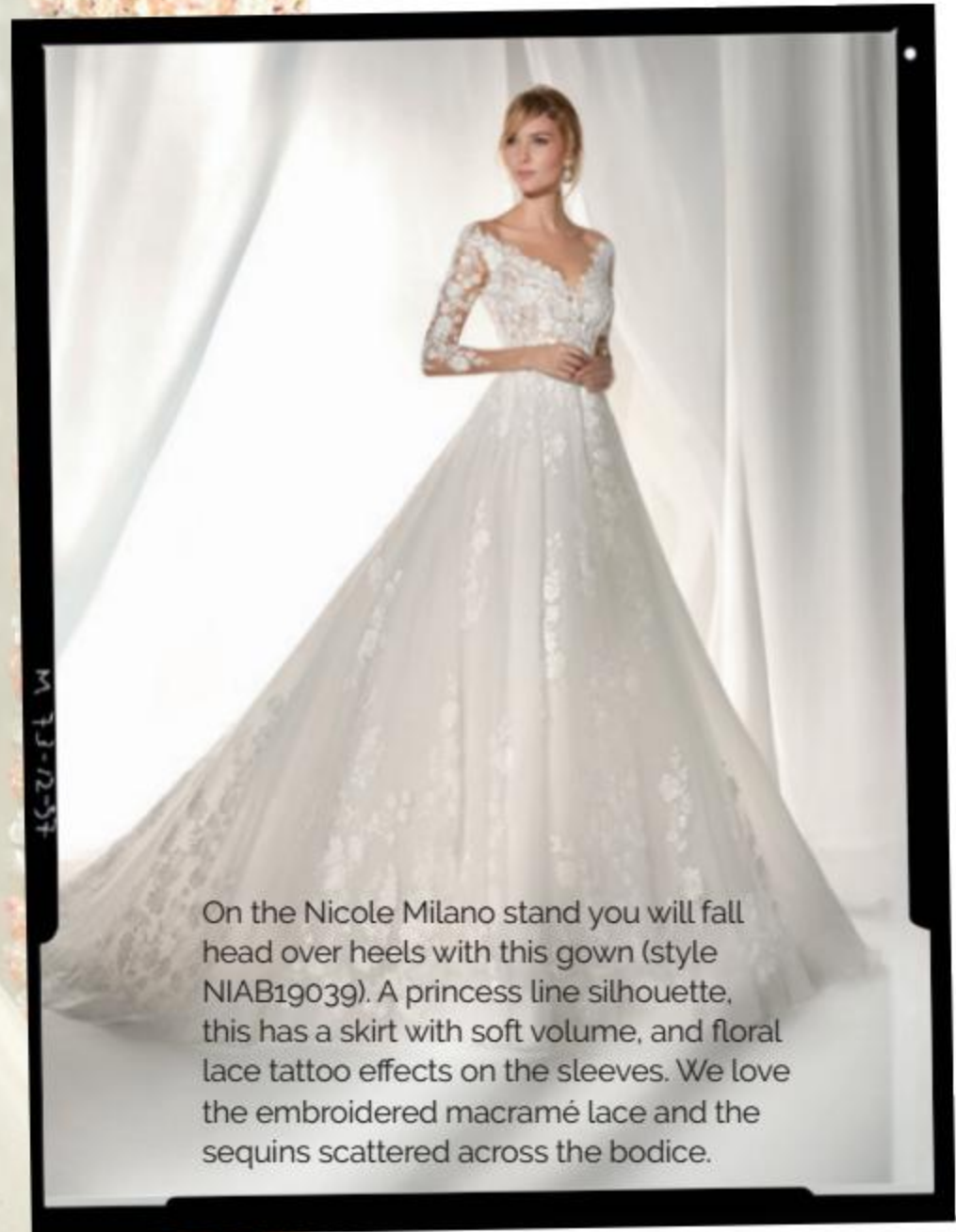
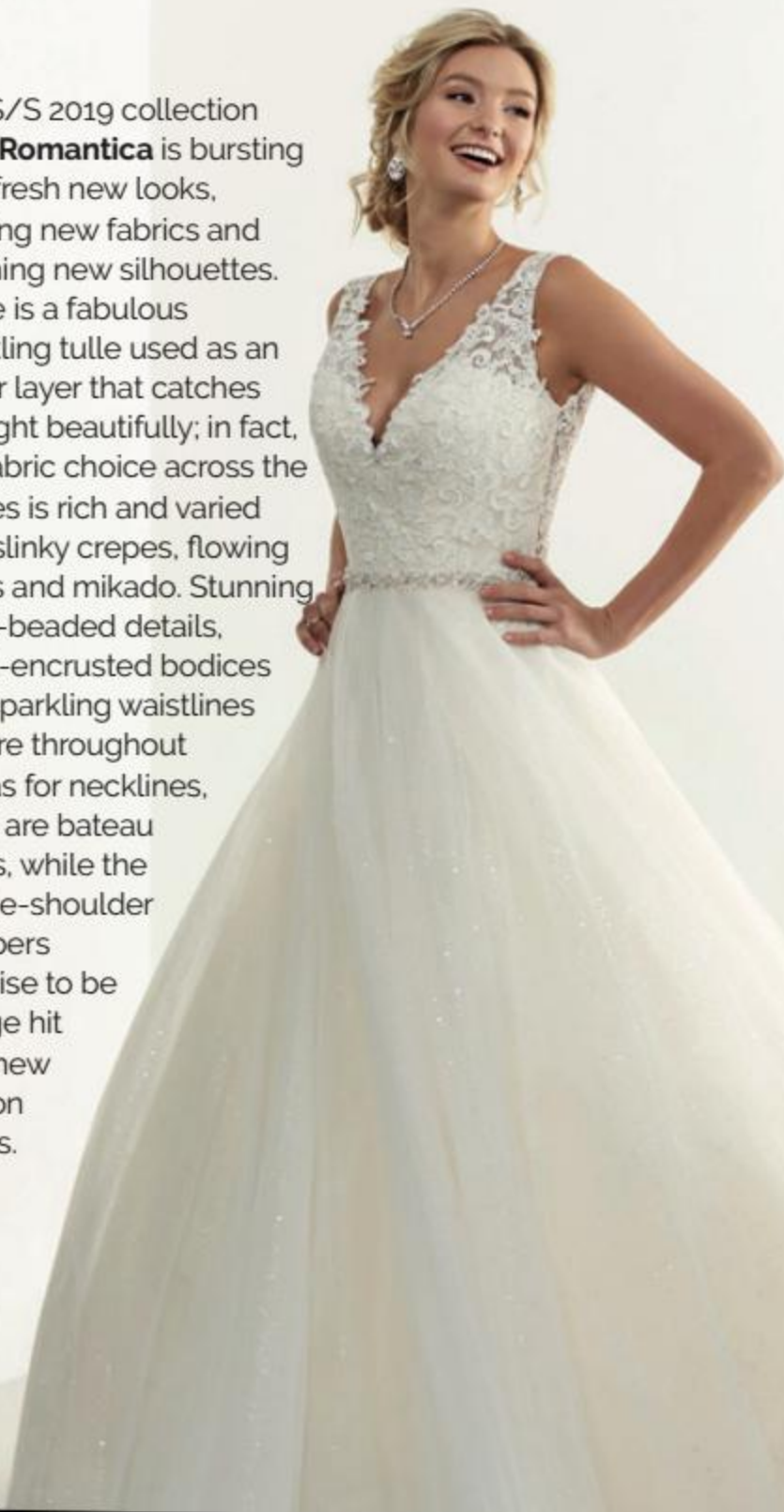


Exciting new collections from Justin Alexander

Ramping up the classic, refined, and timeless feel that it is known for, Justin Alexander is introducing art deco beadwork on elegant silhouettes, Jazz age styles as a sensual nod to the 20s and 30s, and chic 'preppy' gowns that echo the best of '50s design. If you want edgy, this is it! Justin Alexander Signature has been inspired by the juxtaposition of modernity and opulence – expect clean lines with unexpected asymmetrical draping and subtle transparent details that are cool and minimalistic.



The S/S 2019 collection from **Romantica** is bursting with fresh new looks, exciting new fabrics and stunning new silhouettes. There is a fabulous sparkling tulle used as an under layer that catches the light beautifully; in fact, the fabric choice across the ranges is rich and varied with slinky crepes, flowing satins and mikado. Stunning hand-beaded details, jewel-encrusted bodices and sparkling waistlines feature throughout and as for necklines, there are bateau styles, while the off-the-shoulder numbers promise to be a huge hit with new season brides.



On the Nicole Milano stand you will fall head over heels with this gown (style NIAB19039). A princess line silhouette, this has a skirt with soft volume, and floral lace tattoo effects on the sleeves. We love the embroidered macramé lace and the sequins scattered across the bodice.



Boho lovers will be enchanted by the new **Lillian West** collection. Inspired by the carefree spirit of Ibiza, the newest gowns are laid-back, lightweight for breezy spring and summer days and balmy celestial nights. And then there's Sincerity, with princess touches and a gentle twist: romantic off-the-shoulder necklines, beautiful hand-placed lace details, soft ruffles, and delicate floral embroidery. Hitting headlines will be interesting cutouts and new ways to use illusion, including floating cups.



See-through fashion

Taking inspiration from the catwalk, Rainbow Club has introduced three styles that feature transparent PVC cut-out detailing. Choose from a low-heeled court, sassy high-heeled peep toe and a modern block heel.



IVORY & CO.

YPOS

YOUR PROBLEMS OUR SOLUTIONS

You sent us another interesting 'problem' this month – how do you deal with a bride suggesting that the offer of a discount will help you get her business? We got views from three retailers: how do they respond to requests?

As you all know, brides are always asking for – and expecting – discounts. I'm never sure how best to handle the question, and my staff aren't, either. Is there a percentage discount we retailers should all agree to, for example? After all, in this climate, no one wants to lose a potential sale. And, if you offer an accessory instead of a discount, what value should it have? I heard recently about one shop who gave a bride a free hand, and the girl picked up a Swarovski headdress that was worth hundreds of pounds, claiming it as her 'discount'...



Rebecca Doyle
Isabella Grace
Royal Tonbridge Wells

"Don't do it! Discounting dresses does one thing to your business – it directly attacks your bottom line. Think about it like this: you sell a £1,500 dress that cost you £500+VAT to buy from your supplier. Of the £1,500 price tag, £300 goes straight to the Government as VAT.

Then, taking off the £500 cost of the dress, you are left with £700. Off of this come all of your overheads – your rent, rates, lighting, power, wages, advertising, banking charges, marketing fees... The list goes on. Our overheads per full bridal appointment work out as approximately £225. This leaves us with £475. That's less than a third of the sale price of the gown. Not a

lot, is it? Considering all of our hard work we put in to getting that sale?

Let's look at the same example with a £200 discount given off the dress. The £1,500 price tag now becomes £1,300. Of that, £260 goes on VAT and after the cost of the dress you are left with £315, just over a fifth of the original £1,500 price tag on the dress. That's alarming.

Both examples assume that the bride only comes in for *one* appointment, which, in this day and age, is unheard of. Once you take off another half of the cost of one appointment you're left with even less (£362.20 on a £1,500 dress with no discount given, and £202.50 on second example, the the discounted dress). Then, if the bride comes in for more than two appointments, you are running at a loss on the discounted dress. And then you have corporation tax that will come off of anything that's left!

If you're going to offer any incentive to the bride,

offer a small amount off accessories or a free veil that only costs you £30 to buy in. The bride will still think she is getting a great deal and you can clinch that sale. Alternatively think of ways to add value to the sale, in-house alterations, styling appointments, or a goodie bag that doesn't cost more than a few pounds to put together.

I strongly recommend you work out the cost of a full bridal appointment in your store. Then you can work out what you are worth and you'll realise what you can and can't afford to discount."



Helen Lord

*Lulu Browns
Bridal Boutique
Walley, Lancs*

"We stopped offering discounts just over three years ago and I can honestly say we have never felt the need to go back on this approach.

It makes our staff feel confident when confronted

with the question of a discount, to be able to simply say "Sorry, we don't offer any discounts on full price gowns."

But do you lose out on sales you ask? Possibly. However, I think our reputation for excellent customer service and the trust that now comes with our brand means that our brides wouldn't feel the

need to consider asking for one in the first place.

There is no skill in selling full price gowns with any form of a discount. The art of great retail is knowing your worth and understanding your profit margins. Brides are not 'expecting' a discount. We, as an industry, have made her used to being told yes, she can have one.

If you absolutely feel like you have to offer her something, then a £50 accessories voucher is more than enough. For example, a veil that you sell for £120 might cost you £30, by offering her a voucher off the price off a veil, you will still be making a profit and you will also have your full dress price in your till. That's much more cost-effective than doing something as drastic as taking 10 per cent off a £1,200 dress and it costing your business a direct £120.





Jess Russell
Stunning Bridal
Northampton

"We have become increasingly more strict about discounts. We do a number of Designer Trunk Shows throughout the year and at those events we do offer a small percentage off all orders placed over that weekend on that particular designer's gowns. However, as policy, in order to secure the discount, a bride is required to pay a 50% deposit that same day. We always advise our brides of the date we expect to receive the dress from the

designer, but if a wedding date is too close to allow for normal deliveries and a rush order is necessary, no discount is given on the order that is placed at the trunk show.

If there are samples on the rail that we are prepared to sell – though this is not always the case – we will offer a small percentage discount.

During a bride's first appointment, if she does raise the subject of a discount and we believe it

may help us close a sale there and then, we do dangle a little incentive – but it applies only if an order is placed at that first appointment."

Got a problem in your boutique that is causing you headaches? Don't panic. We'll get your fellow retailers to give their views and words of wisdom on the topic. If you'd like to remain anonymous, we'll respect that. Drop us an email on susi@meanttobemedia.com.





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Off-the-shoulder gowns

Meghan Markle's brilliantly underplayed wedding dress by Givenchy's Clare Waight Keller confirmed that shoulders must be on show in the seasons ahead



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Shop talk

Hayley Hoyle owns two highly successful shops in Harrogate – The Harrogate Bridal Lounge and The Bridal Collection. A dedicated buying plan is core to the growth of her business; here she passes on those well-learned lessons

Having just returned from two huge buying events – the London and Barcelona Bridal Weeks – I have been reflecting on the importance of forward planning for such trips. I have two boutiques and, between them, pretty much span every corner of the bridal market, so as far as I am concerned preparation and discipline are fundamental to successful buying. Below are some of my top tips for getting the most out of your time...

Analyse the stats. Pull the figures for all of your designers, number of gowns sold, turnover, profit, previous sample spend and so on and work out your return on investment. This will help you when you come to discussing how much you have to reinvest in the next collection.

Also pick out notable best-sellers and biggest flops from previous buys, to avoid duplication or making the same mistakes again.

Go on to the stand armed with your full facts and figures for both parties to discuss. If the facts are there for all to see, you are less likely to deviate from the plan. The suppliers should also then be able to analyse your collection with you and suggest ways to maximise the stock you already have.

Always write out a buying plan. With so many people to see, I find it better to stick to a strict schedule. Left to roam as and when I please, I would procrastinate over dresses for hours, talking myself in and out of things all the time. Setting myself a time limit means I have to buy with my gut and not over-think things (another reason to have your facts and figures to hand).

Buying is hard work and requires concentration, so make sure you schedule drink and snack breaks to keep you hydrated and your head clear of the ivory haze.

Take your team with you. If you have staff, I highly recommend taking them with you. For me, it's proved invaluable staff training. It gets the team excited about the gowns and invested in the collections you are buying. It also gives them a sense of responsibility for the purchases.

Let the team select a couple of pieces they love, too. Being able to talk to brides confidently and enthusiastically about your collections is vital to the selling process. My team take pride in being part of that process, and I like to reward their hard work with a little involvement in a nice element of our job.

It's also great for team morale, plus it means we're all in the know about new things coming into store.

Don't be afraid to negotiate (and/or mull things over). When I say 'buy with your gut' I mean don't over-think styles or colourways or sizes. If it comes down to matters of business such as a big price increase, a decrease in exclusivity radius, an increase in minimums and so on; it's important to be clear about your expectations and what you can accommodate.

If a supplier is uncompromising on a particular element such as minimums, consider: would it be viable if they allowed you a bigger area of exclusivity? Whatever the scenario, there should be a compromise – it's in the interest of both parties for the relationship to be a long-term success.

If you feel you are drawing the short straw, don't be afraid to park discussions and go away to consider things fully; there should be no feelings of getting a raw deal.

Finally, enjoy it! There can be some unpleasant parts of our job, but for me, buying is one of the highlights. Plan your time so you get to do it in a calm, considered and enjoyable way, and you will come home inspired, having made some great business decisions.

Got advice or well-learned experience to share with fellow retailers? Tell all. Drop us an email us at susi@meanttobemedia.com.

Blogger's Best

Louise Hollis of Whimsical Wonderland Weddings tells us how she uses social media to promote her blog

Whimsical
WONDERLAND
WEDDINGS

Blog name

Whimsical Wonderland Weddings

When did the blog launch? April 2010

Number of followers? Over 150,000, across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.

Tell us a little bit about you...

Whimsical Wonderland Weddings is all about beautiful real life wedding stories, featuring sublime style and photography. Friendly, helpful and welcoming to all that visit, it's a place to relax while planning the big day. We like to showcase an array of wedding styles, locations and ideas to offer inspiration to our readers.

What's the criteria that makes one story better than another?

When accepting features, first and foremost we look for incredible photography. I love beautiful light, thoughtful composition, a clear distinct editing style and a mixture of documentary moments and detail shots. It is important to us that we showcase the best wedding photography from around the world.

We do focus on UK weddings primarily and also feature styled editorial shoots from super creative suppliers. We then look at the style choices and feel of a day to decide if a wedding story will fit our blog and

make our readers feel inspired.

How do you use social media?

Social media has certainly changed over the past eight years. It began with building a base from Twitter, then onto Facebook before Pinterest came onto the scene. Now, it's all about Instagram. It certainly leaves me wondering what will be next around the corner, so it's all about staying current and planning ahead with your social media strategy. We promote all of our features across our social channels – Instagram is the most engaging and it's always lovely to hear from suppliers and planning couples alike over on our feed.

Should bridal boutiques run blogs on their own website? If so, any tips?

Absolutely! Adding a blog to a website really adds personality, ensures your visitors are seeing your latest news

and is always great for SEO strategy.

Keep the blog up to date. There's nothing worse than clicking on a blog and seeing that there hasn't been a post in a year. Once a month minimum is a good goal to set if time is short.

Feature beautiful photography (ask permission from the photographer when featuring images and credit appropriately!) and showcase your brand and its personality through your blog posts. Your writing style need not be formal in a blog feature.

Share your blog via your social channels to add a different dimension to your social feeds. Social media is often about sharing a small snippet of information, while a blog post can be much more detailed and informative.

To read more of Louise's blogs, visit whimsicalwonderlandweddings.com. You can also follow her on Twitter: [@W_W_WeddingBlog](https://twitter.com/W_W_WeddingBlog).



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HOW TO: WEB TEMPLATES part 2

We'll talk you through how to use a site like wix.com's editor program to tweak, switch and adapt a bog-standard template into the website of your dreams



template, but don't let that put you off – it's a bit like viewing a house with the intent to buy: you might not like the size of the bathroom, but if you knock that wall down there and change the tiles over here... It's about looking at the potential that lies within these templates and how you can adapt them to your own style.

Once you've picked a template, you'll be taken to the Wix editor program. Everything within the template is clickable, and, as a result, editable. Let's start with the most important thing: you'll want your business's name in a prime spot on your landing page. With Wix you can highlight text and there are options to those of you familiar with word processors: you'll be able to pick a font, a font size – possibly in pixels (px) rather than sizes you're used to in, say, Microsoft Word – colour, text alignment (left, right or centre).

(Some web templates might offer an option of seeing the page in HTML coding format – 'Text' view – rather than the actual 'visual' view. On page 67, we've got some HTML tips for beginners.)

Picking the right font will be an important consideration. For web viewing, it's best to use a sans serif font (like this one, where there are no small lines at the ends of characters) for longer sections of text. For a headline such as your business name, you could opt for a serif font, if you feel it better represents your business and audience. (Times New Roman

Last month in Part 1 we learned to walk before we could run with regards to web templates. It's not a spur of the moment thing, after all – your website speaks volumes about who you are as a business and what you offer.

You've got an idea of the sort of site you want and you have a whole camera roll of quality images (and maybe a video) ready and waiting. We also recommended that you plan and sketch out your dream landing page (the home page of your

website) onto paper first. Got that to hand? Great, let's start making it an e-reality!

We're going to use **wix.com** as our web template site, but there are of course plenty of others to choose from (**1and1.co.uk**, **moonfruit.com**, **uk.godaddy.com**, **wordpress.com**). You can start with a total blank canvas (recommended for those with experience in this field) or there are loads of pre-designed, excellent templates separated into various genres. The shot (left) was originally a 'plant boutique'

LEARN BASIC CODING... IN UNDER FIVE MINUTES!

To understand a screen full of HTML, you need to learn to love the first basic structure of this new language: the chevron. What's a chevron? These < > are chevrons, and they are wrapped around text commands at the start and end of what text you want to style. We've included some basic examples below, that you might want to use in your own site template.

Bold: Wedding Trader - **Wedding** Trader
Italic: <i>Wedding</i> Trader - *Wedding* Trader
Underline: <u>Wedding Trader</u> - Wedding Trader

Not as scary as you thought, right? The first chevron tells the immediate text to perform its command, while the chevron with the forward slash indicating it to stop. This following below is an example of us using all three commands.

<i>Wedding</i> <u>Trader</i></u> - ***Wedding* Trader**

Here we told the word 'Wedding' that it needed to be bold and italic. We then told 'Trader' that it no longer needed to be bold, but it was to remain italic, and for it to be underlined.

In this final example, we'll show you how to recognise a hyperlink. There's nothing worse on a website than having a dead hyperlink (a link to a different website or page) that, in fact, leads nowhere, or just shows a dreaded 'error' page. Here's how to add a working one.

To see more, visit Wedding Trader's website.

This may look intimidating in comparison, so let's break it down to make sense of it all, how it works, and why it works.

- There are chevrons, as per usual. To begin with, the 'a' is the code informing the text that 'I am a hyperlink'.
- The 'href' is the attribute that holds the hyperlink's destination – in this case, Wedding Trader's website.
- The href needs an equals sign (=) after it – note, no space – so the following web address can indeed be the destination of the hyperlink.
- The web address itself needs to be in 'dumb' speech marks (so straight, not curly).
- We've closed the chevron, written the actual text that we want to be the clickable text that leads to the link (in this case, 'Wedding Trader's website'), and then closed the hyperlink with a simple , as if to say, 'stop'.
- Don't forget the full stop at the end of the sentence after that closing chevron – it's still a normal sentence, remember!

is an example of a serif font, for comparison). Test various fonts to see the impact it has on your page.

Once you've done this, click the Save button. It's vital that you get into a regular habit of doing this, since your edits will not save automatically! The first time you save, you'll be given the option to create a custom domain (the web address for your site).

Wix also allows you to resize text boxes. You can click-and-drag them around to wherever suits

you. You'll quickly see that you can be as creative as you like, but remember, like we said in Part 1, don't go too wacky. Simple is almost always best, and cleaner.

There will be default images on the landing page, but you're going to want to change those, and upload a glamorous image that you've already shot. It's a simple case of doing exactly that – you can either pick a standard background from Wix's selection, or upload your own. You can then

add as many or as few additional images (or videos) as you wish.

There's a vertical tool bar on the left-hand side, and one of these is titled 'Background', which allows you to upload. You'll probably want to not go overboard on images – after all, too much of anything can be overwhelming. What you could do is create a Gallery (within the 'Add' button) that allows a smart grid layout of images, or a slideshow of multiple images that change on a timer. Having something that animates is a great way of capturing your audience's attention to where you want them to look.

It's vital that you have a Menu bar somewhere visible on your landing page; many sites have these horizontal, at the top of the page. This will allow your audience to easily navigate their way around your site. Again, in 'Add', you can pick a menu style.

You'll also need a 'Contact Us' space; many sites have these at the bottom of the landing page, or on a separate, designated page itself, reachable via the menu bar. Wix even allows you to add a Google map, showing your business's location, as a pre-designed contact tool. Simply pick anything you like from these menus, click, drag-and-drop them onto your template.

There are two buttons in the top-right corner of Wix's editor: Preview, and Publish. 'Preview' is a vital checking tool, to see if the page looks as good as you'd envisioned. There's also an all-important 'Mobile' viewing option too, which cannot be ignored. 'Publish' is once you're absolutely delighted with the site and it is perfect, tested and ready for the whole world to see. Between now and then, the rest is up to your own imagination! Experiment, have a play around. Show it to people, get feedback. Don't rush. The wait will be worth it.



WEDDING FAVOURS THAT HELP BEAT CANCER

Thank your guests for celebrating your wedding by making a donation in place of a wedding favour. Choose from our range of **favours** and **personalised cards** as a meaningful keepsake of your donation.

To browse our range of **wedding favours** and find other ways to support Cancer Research UK with your wedding,

visit cruk.org/favours

JUDE AND COLIN'S STORY

"We chose Cancer Research UK favours for our wedding as it's a cause that's close to our hearts. Everyone has been affected by cancer and so many of our guests commented on what a wonderful idea the pin badges were."



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK



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Cancer Research UK is a Registered Charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666) and the Isle of Man (1103).

Q&A



In recent months we've had some interesting questions coming in from you all. So, from this issue onwards, Suzanne Lurie of Affinity Resolutions will be checking the inbox and coming up with answers to your legal worries

I am sure you've heard this before: difficult bride, mind-changing and foot-stamping (yes, really!) throughout the whole deciding and buying process. She was lovely when her dress arrived and went off happy, but now, a month after the wedding, she has lodged a complaint to say that the fabric on the back seam split during the evening's festivities, ruined her big day, and she is demanding her money back or she says that she'll use social media to tell the world about our 'pathetic service, bad attitude' and so on. What do I do? I know this is blackmail, but bad reports on social media could seriously damage my business – word of mouth is so important in the bridal business...

I am sure your experience is not uncommon, sadly. First of all, I would suggest contacting the customer by phone and saying how sorry you are that she has had this issue.

It is important that while you express sympathy, you do not say that you have caused the problem. Reassure her that you want to help and ask to see the dress so you can establish exactly what her complaint is. Once you have been able to inspect

the dress you may be able to establish if it was a defect in the garment or an accident that occurred during, say, the evening's dancing.

I would also recommend that you take photos of the split seam. If there is a defect, then offer her a settlement. I would not suggest a full refund, because you should take into account that she had the dress for the most part of her day. If you cannot find a defect, you can either stand your ground or offer her a goodwill gesture.

If your customer is not prepared to let you see the dress, then she is being unreasonable.

It is important that you follow these steps and if your customer decides to post a bad review you will be able to respond to that review explaining how you dealt with it. Any reader would understand you had gone to every possible trouble and perhaps it was a difficult customer.

I would also recommend that after every interaction with this customer, you keep a brief written record of the date, who you spoke to and what was said. If this situation does escalate to a claim, then you will certainly be able to show that you made every effort to reach a settlement.

Going forward, you may want to check your terms and conditions of business and perhaps include a clause that says that you must be notified of any problems within seven days of the wedding day.

One of my managers has asked me for equity so that she will benefit if I ever sell the business. How does this work and what claims could she have?

Equity is a colloquial term, which is used to mean a share of a business. If you are a limited company, then your manager will become a shareholder. If it is just you running the business, then your manager will become a partner and you will have created a partnership.

If you decide to do this, consider first of all if your manager would be able to fulfil the role. As an owner, they need to demonstrate a strong work ethic, business acumen, initiative and work independently. If your manager can demonstrate that they fulfil these criteria, ask yourself if this is what you really want. Once given, it is very difficult to take back. But if you decide to go ahead, it does not have to be an equal share of the business.

I would definitely suggest you seek legal advice to ensure that the correct documentation is drawn up. If you are a limited company, then you will need a shareholder's agreement, which will help to ensure that any disputes in the future can be resolved. If you are a business, then you will need a Partnership Deed.

Consider also what could happen if your manager takes a share of the business and then leaves, retires, or dies. Ensure that you have the right to buy back her share of the business. Again, this can all be covered in the legal documentation.

You can contact Suzanne on:
suzanne@affinityresolutions.co.uk
07377 710875
affinityresolutions.co.uk

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THE BRIDAL ROADSHOW

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& MONDAY 20TH
AUGUST 2018

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WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH BRIDAL RETAILERS



THE BRIDAL
ROADSHOW

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR OUR
LATEST RETAILER INCENTIVES





THE BRIDAL ROADSHOW

2018

What is The Bridal Roadshow?

We are the UK's largest independent trade roadshow for the wedding industry, stopping at locations all over the UK providing bridal retailers the chance to come and see new collections and ranges from all the top designers and manufacturers. Here you will find all the information you require about our exhibitors, the events and more importantly, how we can help you as a retailer.

What you can expect as a retailer attending the Roadshow:

- £1000 prize giveaway at each show
- Complimentary cocktail bar experience
- Candy cart, kindly sponsored by The Wedding Retailer Magazine
- Fizz & cupcakes in support of Cancer Research UK
- First look for many retailers at the new collections
- Spread the cost of buying across the year by selecting a roadshow to suit you
- All our venues have free parking & great transport links
- Lovely relaxed atmosphere in comfortable surroundings
- Meet reliable and trusted suppliers, as we only allow established companies to be involved.

1. Birmingham
2. Harrogate
3. Dublin
4. Glasgow
5. Bristol



What the Retailers Say

“ Love the shared ethic of this show's organisers & exhibitors, certainly working to help the industry rather than having profit as its motivation. Love the excitement of the £1000 draw, the chilled-out atmosphere and the easy networking. ”

Joanie Dillon, Platinum Brides, 9th February 2017

“ Well worth going to if you're a retailer. Informal and friendly atmosphere in a more relaxed setting. More conducive to taking your time looking and comparing and getting just what you want. ”

Gill Payne, Moments In Time Bridal, 21st September 2017

“ I couldn't believe it when my shop won the £1000 raffle prize not once, but twice! There were so many lovely dresses & accessories to pick from though that I really struggled to choose what to spend it on. It was a really enjoyable and well-organised show, thank you. ”

Julie Wong, Brides & Belles Dalbeattie, 19th September 2017

ATTIRE

COUNTY WEDDING

LOVE OUR Wedding

Scottish Wedding DIRECTORY

DD DESIGNS



IRISH WEDDING DIARY

WEDDING Trader

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR OUR LATEST RETAILER INCENTIVES



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BRIDAL RETAILERS

DO US A FAVOUR, LIFESAVER

Anthony Nolan saves the lives of people with blood cancer – and by choosing from the charity’s new range of wedding favours, you can help support their lifesaving work.



LIFESAVING'S IN OUR DNA

“Following my leukaemia diagnosis, I was unsure I’d live to see my wedding day. Without Anthony Nolan and my stem cell donor I wouldn’t be here today. They’ve given me an opportunity to live.”

Ruth and her husband, Peter,
celebrated their long-awaited wedding in May 2017.

BUYING AGENDA

*Source the big names and
the bright newcomers at the
forthcoming events*

16th-18th June 2018
**ROME FASHION WEEK,
ROME**
romefashionweek.eu

29th-30th July
**HARROGATE
FASHION WEEK**
harrogatefashionweek.com

9th-11th September
**THE HARROGATE
BRIDAL SHOW**
theharrogatebridalshow.co.uk

7th-9th October
**THE KNOT COUTURE
SHOW, NEW YORK**
coutureshow.com

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WEDDING Trader

COMING NEXT
MONTH IN THE

August issue

- *Travelling right – join us on a journey*
- *Opinions – this is the best place for them*
- *Show-stoppers – upcoming trends*
- *Answers to your questions*

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INDUSTRY *Classified*



From job vacancies to new closures or relocations, you'll get the lowdown on opportunities and announcements here

NEWSFLASH

CHARITY BASH

Bromley Brides are hosting a deeply personal charity fundraising event on June 30th from 4-9pm at its shop on West Wickham, Kent. Brides will have a fantastic opportunity to view the shop's extensive range of designer dresses and meet a variety of local people who provide wedding services, including florists, hair and make-up artists, jewellers and photographers.

This is an exclusive opportunity that will allow brides to explore and plan multiple parts of their wedding under the same roof – with an all-important glass of bubbly in hand! Not only that, but there will be live entertainment from a professional singer.

This event is raising money for Griffins, a school for blind and deaf children. This charity is close to the heart of all who work at Bromley Brides after Becky Griggs-Tyman, who owns the shop, became aware of the school's unique and wonderful work when her own daughter, Isabella, was diagnosed as blind. Isabella attends Griffins once a week.

All the money raised from ticket sales will help continue to fund the excellent and vital work of the school.

For details regarding tickets for this wonderful cause, please contact Andy Jackson on andyjackson@email.com.

DREAM TEAM

Luxe Bride and Love My Dress are delighted to announce that they are entering a partnership. The trade association and the wedding blog website said, "For a long time now the wedding industry has taken a massive rap from press, mainstream media and ill-conceived TV shows. There has been an extremely unfair message delivered, even through supposed feminist publications, that treat the business owners in our industry like money grabbing pariahs and assume that all brides adopt a princess complex as soon as they become engaged.

"As retailers, we have found it very hard to get air time for what we know to be actually happening in our shops right now, our partnership with Annabel and Love My Dress will provide us with the voice and platform we need to redefine the bridal boutique and bridal retail experience."

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

NEW STORE

Congratulations to Stacey Stevenson and her family on opening their brand new bridal boutique in Stannington, Morpeth, in Northumberland. The White Room Brides will cater all brides, with dresses in a range of sizes. Good luck!

RELOCATION

Bliss Bridal Gowns in Perranporth, Cornwall, is relocating to a new premises on the Nansledan development on the edge of Newquay. This move has come due to owner Tracy Ashton happily acknowledging that Bliss Bridal had outgrown the modest-sized seaside town. A larger boutique allows the business to grow too, so good luck with the move, Tracy, from all of us here at Wedding Trader!

STOCKIST SEARCH

LOVE OUR WEDDING

The UK's favourite free monthly consumer magazine, Love Our Wedding, is looking for more boutiques across the UK to stock their magazines free of charge. These handbag-sized magazines are perfect for you to gift to brides that come in store or for goody bags at special events. To become a stockist now, email andy@meanttobemedia.com. We'll send it in the same delivery as your copy of Wedding Trader!

WHAT ABOUT ME?

Do you have news of your own that you want to share with the rest of the bridal world? Just celebrated an anniversary of your store opening? Have you closed a store, or perhaps moved to a bigger, shiny new premises? Maybe you've won a snazzy award and you can't stop smiling? This is the place to be heard! Send us your news by emailing tom@meanttobemedia.com.

"I know that in these tough trading conditions we retailers feel we have plenty to gripe about, but knowing those problems are commonly felt makes them much easier to deal with. I really appreciate everyone's honesty... It certainly makes me feel more part of a community."

"I find it really interesting getting up close and personal to our suppliers. Often we know so little about them and can only judge them by their own collections. Hearing what inspired them is fascinating!"

"That suppliers are coming back through your pages with views that may counteract our own, is healthy and refreshing. I have changed my mind about certain issues as a result. And also about certain suppliers, I have to say!"



RACHEL SIMPSON

"At a recent trade show I was talking to a group of colleagues over a drink and we were all saying that we'd love occasional advise on decor trends that could be translated to a bridal retail environment."

"Hey, Ellie Sanderson. That was one brave piece in the last issue of Trader. It certainly must have ruffled a few feathers, but then that's what discussion is all about. Good on you, girl!"

...and finally

*Got a view? Share it with us.
We're here, every day, every week,
every month, to help make your
working life better*

"I wouldn't mind reading more on finance, generally. Do you think you will be able to include a column in Wedding Trader in future that's not just about retail needs, but about personal issues, too?"

"Thank you for that feature on trade associations. I am not a member of any yet, but being able to compare what each has to offer is really helpful and I am sure it will influence me when I am ready to take that step and joining one over another."

"Loved reading your article on South African designers – I was only familiar with two of them before. The question is... Where are you taking us next?"



FREYA ROSE

"I have long been an admirer of Halo & Co and reading their views on display really got me thinking about what I can do and *should* do. I know that is often the simplest ideas that make the most sense, but sometimes you need someone to spell out the obvious. I have been playing with lighting after hearing Nicola's thoughts."

"I for one am delighted that you are introducing us to labels we may not have come across before. It also confirmed my thoughts about a couple of labels I saw in Barcelona – and I have now decided to stock certain lines that I feel will give me an edge over the competition."



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