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A Guide To Bridesmaids Dresses

By Lynn Donn

Choosing bridesmaids dresses is no easy task, but it's one of the most exciting and often the most emotional parts of the wedding planning process.

Inviting the special women in your life to be your bridesmaids; your sisters, your lifelong friends, your cousins and special family friends; is a way to seal important friendships during this very special time in your life. Choosing the bridesmaids dress, whether you do it yourself or together with your bridesmaids, is an integral part of the tradition.

Tips on Choosing the Right Dresses for your Bridesmaids

Naturally, it's the bride who will be the focus of attention on her wedding day, but it's important for the bridesmaids to look gorgeous too. Choose something simple and not overdecorated or detailed, but which will make your bridesmaids look elegant, sophisticated and feminine.

It's important to choose a dress style which will flatter everyone's figure. This is never an easy task, but empire waists and A-line or princess skirts will tend to suit most shapes and sizes.

If your bridesmaids have very different figure types and heights, and you think they might feel uncomfortable in matching dresses, a nice alternative is to choose the fabrics and colors, and allow each individual bridesmaid to choose her own dress style.

Always keep a budget in mind for your bridesmaids gowns. It's very unfair to expect your bridesmaids to buy overly expensive dresses, and it may damage your relationship with some of the most important women in your life. Around \$100-250 each dress is generally considered a reasonable cost. If you have your heart set on a more expensive gown, you might consider making up the difference yourself.

Classic Looks for Bridesmaids

Any kind of formal gown, semi-formal or evening dress can be chosen as a bridesmaids gown, so you have literally thousands of options. Satin, organza, chiffon, georgette, tulle, lace, brocades, and crepe

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are all classic fabrics for bridesmaid dresses. Whether you choose real silks and imported laces, or more economical alternatives will depend on your budget.

It's traditional to choose a one-piece dress or gown, but separates are definitely an option. Mixing and matching separate blouses and skirts makes it easier to find a style which suits each individual bridesmaid.

You should think about the time of year you plan to hold the wedding, and how this will effect your gown choices. Choose lighter fabrics for summer, and a sleeveless or even a strapless dress style. If your wedding is planned for a cooler time in the year, long skirts and sleeves are best, or include a shawl or wrap as part of the outfit.

It's a nice idea to choose your colors according to the time of year also. Fresh, soft colors are lovely for spring and summer; golds, copper tones and rusty reds for fall, and deep marine blues, teal green,

deep burgundies and plums, or platinum shades for winter.

Choose colors which will match the flowers which are in bloom at the time of year, so your gowns will tone in nicely with the bouquets. Discussing your color ideas with your favorite florist will make the job of choosing colors much easier.

For a very sophisticated, formal look, black or black and white never goes out of style.. Alternating black and white solid panels has a very dramatic effect.

For a more romantic look, use white or a solid color overlaid with black lace, either as a feature of the dress itself, or as a shawl or wrap.

Soft, pretty pastel shades like lilac, powder pink, cream, platinum and eggshell blue are always popular colors for bridesmaid dresses, because they always look good together with the white or ivory shade of the bridal gown. Adding dramatic color accents in the bouquets creates a very attractive look for the wedding party as a whole.

Another idea which works very well for bridesmaids gowns is to use a silk or satin fabric with a subtle crossweave in a contrasting color, and match the bouquets to the crossweave color. The bouquets will bring out and enhance the color highlights in the dress fabric, which has a very pretty effect.

Accessories for Bridesmaids

The simplest look will tend to work best, so accessories should best be kept to a minimum. Often a simple pair of earrings, a brooch or necklace is all the jewelry you'll need. It's traditional for the bride to give the bridesmaids their jewelry as a gift, which is a lovely idea.

For a very formal look, shawls, gloves and even small tiaras are always appropriate as bridesmaids' accessories.

Keep comfort as well as style in mind when you choose shoes for your bridesmaids. Very high heels may be uncomfortable to stand in for any period of time. Also consider the fact that the bridesmaids will most likely be wearing the shoes for the wedding ceremony and the reception, so choose shoes which will be comfortable to wear all day, then dance away the night.

Lynn Donn is the webmaster for

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Her website offers tips

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Be Nice When Choosing Your Bridesmaids Dresses!

By Hana Lee

You have chosen your dream dress, you and your future husband have decided on the wedding party and the bridesmaids are anxious to see what their dresses are going to look like. When choosing your bridesmaid dresses, don't forget to keep their emotions and tastes in mind!

Remember that although this is your big day, your bridesmaids have decided to share in your joy and help you make lasting memories. And one of the biggest ways that you can include them in the merriment is to ask them to help you with the decision. In other words, in addition to your own ideas, find out what their likes and dislikes are. After all, if they're not happy with your choice and they feel uncomfortable, it will show in your wedding photos.

Compliment your bridesmaids' figures, hair color and complexions when choosing their dresses. You can still be the center of attention while allowing your wedding party to glow and shine behind you. Be sure to have your bridesmaids try on several styles and colors and let them choose one or two of their favorites to help you make your decision.

As important as comfort is for you, it is just as important for your girls. So, when choosing the bridesmaids dresses, look for comfort in the fit and the style. If you are a courteous bride, thinking of their needs while tending to your own, it will be appreciated by your wedding party and they will be more willing to help you.

If you've ever been bridesmaid yourself, then you likely understand how important it is to consider cost when choosing the bridesmaid dresses. While you may be working on a wedding budget, keep in mind that your wedding party also may be hoping for affordable attire. Talk to your bridesmaids and ask them how much they are willing to spend.

Be sure while choosing bridesmaids dresses you record everything in a notebook so that you won't forget or lose the valuable information. Through the chaos of planning the rest of the wedding, it could be all too easy to forget sizes, styles, alteration decisions, and how much is owed on the dresses.

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Keeping everything in a notebook will help you stay organized and feel less stress.

After the bridesmaids dresses have been decided on, don't forget to ask about fittings. Find out how many fitting will be needed for each girl and exactly what the cost is for each one of them. Write down times and dates to help your wedding party remember and if possible, let the bridesmaids schedule the appointments themselves to ensure it is a good time for them.

Now you have chosen the bridesmaids dresses, they are happy about the color, style and fit. Don't forget the shoes! Remember to tell your bridesmaids whether they are to wear flats or pumps. And if you want them dyed to match the dresses, let them know and give them time to prepare. As long as you use respect and common courtesy, you will most likely have a happy wedding party thus giving you a beautiful, happy day to remember.

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