

10 Things to Keep in Mind While Gown Shopping



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1. Allow enough time

It takes most designers four to six months to deliver a completed wedding gown. And if you request any customization, like additional beading or lace, it can take even longer. Try to start your search at least a year in advance. Remember: You'll still need another two to three months for alterations once the gown arrives.

2. Before you shop, decide – firmly – on your budget

Then, call up bridal salons and ask if they have a good selection within that price range. At Designer Loft, we have beautiful gowns at most price points. Don't let yourself fall in love with a gown that is completely beyond your budget.

3. Don't wear black bra or panties when shopping for wedding gown

Brides don't realize the black, purple, or navy underwear can be seen through many white bridal gowns. It really ruins the look of the gown. Instead, opt for nude or ivory underwear when shopping – and on the big day as well!

4. Think about the venue and time of year

If you're having an outdoor wedding in July, you may want to re-think that heavy satin ball gown. And if you're hosting a romantic barn wedding, consider ditching the beaded ball gown.

5. You **do** have options besides strapless

While we have plenty of beautiful strapless gowns at Designer Loft, we also carry many V-neck, boat neck, and cowl neck gowns. Not everyone is comfortable in a strapless gown, and you should feel both beautiful and comfortable on your wedding day.

6. Do not feel that you have to wear a prescribed look on your wedding day

If you adore flowers, have some incorporated in your gown. If you love pink, shades of blue, or gold, choose a gown with hints of that shade – or a gown entirely in whichever color you desire. Feel free to express yourself on this most momentous day!

7. Don't bring your entire entourage

Take just a small group with you for your first round of shopping – or just one friend or sister whose opinion you really trust. Too often, we find a bride will come in with four or five family members, all with divergent views on what the dress should look like. This heightens the bride's anxiety, rather than making it a fun and relaxed experience. Come in with a person you trust first, and edit your choices. Then, you can come back with the troops once you have found gowns that you truly love and that represent you.

8. Don't be afraid to try on something you never anticipated

I cannot tell you how many brides come in swearing they want a ball gown, yet end up loving a slinky sheath instead – and vice versa. And brides who claim they want no beading can easily fall in love with a head-to-toe beaded number. Keep an open mind when trying on gowns; just like with dating, you never know when love will strike.

9. When choosing a gown, go with your heart and your instincts

Do not rely on what the trend at the moment is or which dress was worn on the red carpet last month. Instead, ask yourself: Does this dress make me feel and look beautiful? Will I love this dress in photos ten or twenty years from today? Finally, while I do *not* advocate trying to please all of the bride's family members when choosing the gown, I would suggest that the bride asks and considers what her partner would love to see her wear.

10. You will need more than one fitting

Most brides think there will be one fitting appointment, then they can pick up the gown and happily walk down the aisle. But please keep in mind once your beautiful gown arrives, it normally takes four to five appointments to make the gown fit perfectly. And if you're adding a jacket, sleeves, or additional custom changes, you might need even more than five fittings. Budget enough time, especially if your weight tends to fluctuate.

—Liz Sellassie



Guest blogger: Liz Sellassie, Owner and Manager of [Designer Loft](http://designerloftnyc.com) bridal boutique, a Manhattan bridal salon serving brides over the past decade with a variety of unique designers under one roof, in an atmosphere without sales pressure and snobbery. Designer Loft features today's top and emerging bridal couture designers, including a number whose work is shown exclusively at Designer Loft. The gowns reflect a variety of tastes, sizes, and styles, celebrating the diversity of every Designer Loft bride. Service is what makes us different! For more info and to see a listing of bridal designers and upcoming trunkshow events, visit designerloftnyc.com.