

# Contemporary

BY KAREN VITT / SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

For contemporary couples, a blissful wedding falls somewhere between the grandiose (think Charles and Di in St. Paul's Cathedral) and the just plain gross (um, Britney and Kevin's "Pimps and Maids" nuptials, complete with chicken wings and coordinating tracksuits?)

Both extremes are outlandish to independent modern women, who would rather the big day reflect a more balanced blend of tradition with a personal twist.

"The contemporary bride has a great sense of self and is not easily influenced by trends," says Carmen Bailey, a Portland wedding planner and co-owner of Ella/Posie Boutique. "She dedicates more time and thought on how to create a meaningful celebration than keeping up with Joneses."

Originality is at the heart of most contemporary bridal looks, as many brides find it increasingly important to express their own personal style over that of lofty society. "The modern bride wants

to be herself at her wedding and feels alienated from the frothy princess fantasy associated with traditional weddings," says designer Elizabeth Dye.

Whether a dress is off the rack or custom-made, contemporary brides can create a look of their own by experimenting with nontraditional dress lengths and cuts, using offbeat colors in unexpected places and mixing vintage heirloom jewelry with personal pieces from local designers. Many brides are also incorporating fun, modern jewelry and sexy colored shoes with the intention of wearing them long past the reception.

"The great thing is, there are so many traditions surrounding the bride's attire — the white dress, the veil, orange blossoms, something borrowed/something blue — that a bride can have a lot of fun choosing from the customs that appeal to her and riffing on them," Dye says. "Humor and personality go a long way toward making the bridal gown fresh."



Custom wedding dress with vintage rhinestones by Elizabeth Dye **\$500** At [www.elizabethdye.com](http://www.elizabethdye.com) or 503-201-4544 / Pushkar Junction silk with rhinestone clutch purse **\$129** At Sole / Black feather and Swarovski crystal comb **\$375** At Mink / Vintage rhinestone bracelet **\$78** At Gilt

## tips

The contemporary bride mixes time-honored tradition with her own personal style for an entirely original look. "She is not afraid to wear a bit of color, don a vintage hat or create a one-of-a-kind dress," says Carmen Bailey of Ella/Posie Boutique. Here's a checklist of looks that modern brides can incorporate into their wedding ensemble:

- Cutouts
- Pleating and draping
- Bold color accents
- Sashes
- Feathers and fur
- Appliqués and embroidery
- Mismatched vintage lace
- Rhinestones and gems
- Gold jewelry
- Vintage brooches
- Playful headpieces

### THE BRIDESMAID

Kathlin Argiro Atelier striped taffeta dress **\$275** At Anna's Bridal Boutique

Smoky quartz necklace **\$125** At Adorn

Twirl wrist corsage **\$60** At Ella/Posie Boutique

Special Occasions by Saugus Shoes silk sandals **\$129** At Bella Moda



Twirl choker and wrist cuff  
Choker **\$30**, cuff **\$40**,  
At Ella/Posie Boutique

Valerie Stevens peau de soie purse **\$36** At Meier & Frank

Special Occasions  
by Saugus Shoes  
strappy satin  
sandals  
**\$79**  
At Bella  
Moda

