

# BRIDES & GROOMS

## Nailed it: Bridal parties have new tradition

By Edith Decker  
of the Daily Courier

For many brides and bridesmaids, the perfect dress, shoes and makeup aren't enough without the perfect nails. Making an appointment for the bridal party a couple months in advance is on most brides' lists.

Bridal parties often make it part of an extremely busy week to take a morning out at the nail salon for manicures and often pedicures as well — especially if the footwear is sandals. It's often a fun morning for the whole group to enjoy.

"I've done a few where I've taken one of the colors in the wedding and along with the white of the French nails to put them together for a bridal party," says Amber Mathews, co-owner of A Nail Detail in Grants Pass.

She says nail salons have hundreds of colors so "you're pretty much guaranteed to find a match."

And a color isn't all. For the big day, some special nail art might be in order, from acrylic nails with actual dried flowers embedded to a rhinestone on the bride's ring finger to an



EDITH DECKER/Daily Courier

An array of colors in nail polish, not to mention acrylic nails, mean a bridal party's nails can match one of the theme colors for a wedding.

airbrush of a monogram of the bride and groom's initials.

"I've seen where they've actually encased blue jean or denim inside the fingernails. Flowers or seashells. It's like endless possibilities," says Sarah Wright, a nail technician at A Footman and Her Nails downtown who has 13 years nail experience.

Both Wright and Mathews agree that the most popular style now for brides is French

nails.

"Usually people do a little more classy style for their wedding," Wright says. "It really just depends on the bride, too."

Among her most unusual requests was Hawaiian flowers for a bride headed to the island for her wedding and a dark purple polish with blue flowers for a bride with a unique sense of style.

Mathews says many brides

choose a clear polish with glitter, while the bridesmaids might all have the same color to match their flowers or gowns. It's common for people to bring in a gown or sample of cloth or ribbon to match.

For less formal weddings where the bride might be in sandals or barefoot, a pedicure is a must, too.

The cost for a pedicure and manicure can run up to \$40 a person, twice as much (or more) for acrylic nail sets. Groups often receive a discount, however, Wright notes.

Typically, members of the wedding party are expected to pay for their own nail service, although sometimes the bride or her family will pay.

Mathews says many people who've never had their nails done find themselves in a salon for the first time for a wedding.

As for grooms, men are welcome in nail salons, although few come in in this area, both Mathews and Wright say. It's more common for men to get a manicure in larger cities, they agree, but it's not unheard of. Mathews has a couple male clients who are professional card dealers and says grooms might benefit from a manicure before the big day.



EDITH DECKER/Daily Courier

A Nail Detail co-owner Amber Mathews works finishes up a client's nails. She says it's common for a bridal party to book an entire morning for manicures and pedicures before a wedding.

## Brides unfettered from rules when choosing the gown of their dreams

By Samantha Critchell  
AP Fashion Writer

NEW YORK — Many brides positively know what their wedding gown will look like long before they meet their groom, and they're not going to let a little thing — OK, actually a huge thing — known as the economy dash their dream dress.

They are seeking out gowns with smaller price-tags, according to industry experts, but their expectations haven't shrunk accordingly.

What's a gown designer to do?

Give these women what they want and bundle it up in a big white bow. There's really no arguing with a bride who has made up her mind.

At the most recent round of wedding fashion previews, observers said there were a lot of sellable gowns catering to a variety of tastes and lifestyles, none of which, however, were obviously pared-down.

There might have been a little less beading and fewer exotic trims, such as feathers, to keep costs down, but there wasn't an industry-wide movement toward gowns on the cheap, the insiders said.

"When I try to think of one overriding theme, it's that brides still want the options for the wedding they want to have," said Darcy Miller, editorial director of Martha Stewart Weddings. And of course, she added, each bride wants a different kind of wedding; it's a traditional, formal blowout for one, a more casual beach bash for another.

"Because of the economic climate, a lot of brides are willing to get a DJ instead of a band, do it on Sunday instead of a Saturday night, but they still have the wedding and still have the dream of what they wanted their dress to be," Miller said.

Designer Monique Lhuillier said she feels almost protective when crafting wedding gowns, which is different than the trendsetter role she might play when working on red-carpet gowns.

"It's a wedding, a celebration, a new life, a new love, a new chapter. I'm honored to be a part of it and rework the dress to make sure it's perfect in my own eye," said Lhuillier.

"I thought about the ulti-



mate bride and how much we could give her," said another designer, Reem Acra. "The perfect look is that she wants to stay young, stay fresh and be able to travel with the dress."

Acra captured modern and airy silhouettes influenced by a trip to Japan, where she was impressed with gardens, Zen and an aesthetic of purity.

There's no "flash" in the gowns, Acra explained, since she was aiming for a sweeter sort of beauty, when a bride gets caught up in the romance of the occasion.

"You want the bride to feel like she's getting married — that it's pure and real," she said. "After all, you're not getting married to throw a party or even to wear the dress. You are getting married to get married — for you, for him, for the both of you — and these dresses are supposed to reflect that."

Trends are barely a blip on Nicole Miller's radar as she does her bridal collection, nevermind that she also designs fashion-forward cocktail frocks.

A flattering gown that can be worn by different ages and body types is another story, though. "If I have a really good-selling evening gown, I'll do a version for bridal because I already know the silhouette is selling. I might add beading or longer train," she said.

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Associated Press

Models walk in the Kirstie Kelly for Disney's Fairy Tale Weddings fashion show. Above left: a model is laced into her dress at a New York fashion show.

What brides want most is to look fantastic, and what they think about is how gowns flatter their figure and appear in photographs, Miller said. That's why corsets sell so well in bridal, she added with a laugh.

Michael Shettel, designer of the Alfred Angelo collection, said sleek and slim is one pop-

ular direction for brides; the other, at the opposite end of the spectrum, is the modern ballgown.

"We approached this season with the inspiration of jazz on a summer's day," he said. "What was striking was how modern the casual sort of dresses looked with the juxtaposition of the jazz-world glamour."

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