

# BRIDES OF '85

## Phenomenon of '80s: executive bride

**H**ere come the brides — older and more sophisticated than ever! According to bridal industry figures, of the more than 1.5 million women marrying in 1983 for the first time, one-fifth were over 25 and, of those, one-third were over 30.

Anyone who has paid attention to wedding invitations over the past few years will also realize that brides are not only older, they are also frequently executive brides.

These are brides with full careers from which the celebration of marriage is a brief, yet important pause in their hectic lifestyles.

Brides in their mid-20s are more likely to be career women, and this trend peaks with brides aged 30. Both their wedding celebrations and their bridal ensembles are more sophisticated than their younger counterparts' choices, even if the older bride is marrying for the first time.

This changed picture of the American bride is not an overnight phenomenon. It is the result of social and economic changes shifting through society for the past two decades — and it is certainly making changes in the bridal fashion business.

Editor-in-Chief of "Modern Bride," Cele Goldsmith Lalli, comments, "Older brides often choose lace and trains when marrying for the first time.

However, the type of gown an executive woman selects is likely to be more highly styled. For bridal designers and retailers, this fine line has been a fascinating challenge."

She adds, "Today's career woman has a very different perspective concerning her wedding plans than a young woman just out of school — but she does want to look very special with just the perfect dash of tradition."

Darlene Katz, buyer of bridal gowns for the JCPenney Co., observes, "The new brides want it all! They want their careers, their perfect wedding, a spouse and family — and they want happiness and fulfillment, beginning with the gown they select from us.

"This career bride in the throes of wedding planning is an exciting customer. Her ideas are specific and her vision is quite clear — she is a confident shopper." Katz notes that there are also many "executive brides" who are "encore," or repeat, brides.

To serve these women, bridal retailers are showing a wider range of sophisticated, trend-setting choices in their new collection.

The spring, 1985, bridal fashions at JCPenney's larger department stores reflect influences from both Italian and French designers. Lustrous embroidery and fine laces are much in evidence.



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