

# Fall Bridal Showcase

## BRIDAL PARTY BEAUTY: Style ideas for attendants

By Monica Perez  
Copley News Service

Ah, the politics of weddings! So much of your energy, it seems, is spent on trying to please and not offend. So it is with attendant attire.

Jane, your maid of honor, looks wonderful in sea-foam green, a color that dies on bridesmaid Jackie. Susan's a lithe 5-foot-9, while Patti's a lovely butterball, 10 inches shorter.

Then the expense! How can you ask a good friend to shell out \$125 for a gown that might live out its remaining days in a closet? Ideally you would like the attendants to be able to wear their dresses again, but that criteria disqualifies 50 percent of the styles you love.

At some point you must put your foot down and make the decision yourself. And don't be tempted to give in because it's all too much trouble for one day of your life.

It's actually not. Your wedding day lives with you for the rest of your life in photographs and videos. Wedding albums are passed down through generations, yours is your mark in your family's history.

### START WITH COLOR

Everything to do with your wedding should revolve around a color palette, as opposed to a single color. Working with three or four complementary colors gives you more options as well as a more interesting wedding party — everything in, say, apricot can look flat. Go to a paint store and choose paint chip samples as your "swatches" to take with you when shopping for flowers, dresses, favors and decorations.

Make a list of your attendants and each one's best physical attributes. If you come up with lots

of long necks and rosy shoulders, look into off-the-shoulder styles. If they all have gorgeous legs, don't cover them up with floor-length gowns. Jot down skin and hair tones, and consider talking with a color consultant about your chosen palette; there are many books on this subject available, as well.

Once the decision has been narrowed down to three or four dresses for the women in the wedding party, set aside an evening or Saturday to tour from shop to shop trying them on; perhaps bring along a Polaroid camera and snap them dressed up. This is when you'll get their input, too.

Save the decision on the men's tuxedos or suits until after the women are taken care of; they'll be glad to be told exactly what they're wearing anyway. Again, look over the styles shown in bridal magazines; you may be surprised by your options in menswear.

### WHAT'S THE STYLE?

You're going to see more dresses in sophisticated, evening-type styles rather than sweet romantics, with strapless styles in front of the pack. Here's the fashion forecast for the season:

- Lengths are either above the knee or ballerina length.
- A strong showing of blues (cerulean, sea green, china blue), pinks (from sweet pales to coral and vivid fuchsia), yellows (classic, strong yellow), and the continuation of black-and-white combinations.
- Muted blossoms or Monet-inspired prints on tulle, chintz and especially sheer organza.
- Full, colored tulle skirts with fitted cap sleeve tops a la Grace Kelly.
- Strapless dresses with trailing stoles of tulle or sheer organza as



Bridesmaids will look pretty in ballerina-length floral dresses.

accents, draped loosely around the arms.

- All-over colored lace chemises that hit above the knee.
- Mixes of long and short, such as an above-the-knee sheath topped with a long, full overskirt (open in front to reveal a glimpse of the sheath — and legs — as you walk).
- Off-the-shoulder suits boasting novelty buttons (oversize, jeweled, uniquely shaped, etc.).

For the mothers of the couple, slimmer silhouettes, sophisticated evening wear styles in rich fabrics such as chiffon, organza and crepe are in this season. Beaded tops and even full ball gowns are the glamorous extreme. Embellished dinner jackets over strapless shorter gowns are strong, and very reusable.

For most of us, there aren't that many occasions to really dress the nines — keep that in mind when you start shopping for your wedding attendants.

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