

DRESSING IN STYLE FASHION»

by RENNIE ACKERMAN



Monique Lhuillier, usually known for her elaborate lace, takes a modest approach to this corset (\$3,850) and tulle skirt (\$1,980) from her Spring 2010 collection.



This “Pocahontas” silk-satin mermaid gown from Reem Acra, \$4,800, is new for Spring 2010.

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simple is a trend

WHETHER OR NOT THE ECONOMIC CRUNCH has made a dent in your wedding plans, it has without question impacted the world of bridal fashion. “Simple, simple, simple” is the message of the moment; suddenly ostentation is out—clean lines and traditional silhouettes are ruling the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 bridal runways. (Perhaps there is a silver lining to the recession afterall?) Brides everywhere are opting for simpler, less ornate gowns.

“No more tiaras, smaller veils, and very simple, elegant dresses,” reports Rana Choi, owner of Rana Bridal in Englewood Cliffs (201-503-9611; ranabridal.com). “No more fussy details,

BRIDAL NOTEBOOK

New in the World of Fashion

Exquisite Bride (110 Essex Street, Millburn, 973-376-2770; exquisite-bride.com) opened its doors in Millburn this past

winter (top) and offers a wonderful selection of high-end bridal designers, including a separate Vera

Wang boutique within the salon. You'll also find Alvina Valenta, Badgley Mischka, Anne Barge, Reem Acra, Romona Keveza, Ulla Maijia, and more, so there's truly no need to venture into Manhattan....Fashion designer **Lela Rose** has paired up with

Payless to create an exclusive collection of dyeable shoes and accessories (right), all featuring designer details for less than \$50. The satin dyeable shoes can be ordered in 64 custom colors handpicked by Rose, and girls' dyeable styles will also be offered. The line is available in stores nationwide and at unforgettablemoments.com. Gotta love high-end design at Payless prices!...And Priscilla of Boston (565 Millburn Avenue, Short Hills; 973-376-2345; priscillaofboston.com) just announced the launch of its latest gown collection: **Jewel**. Aimed at the princess bride in search of a dramatic, glamorous gown, Jewel (left) offers classic yet modern, opulent yet elegant designs, with dresses affordably ranging from \$1,650 to \$2,950.—*Molly Tully*



Top: Marie Papp Photography

just a little bit of lace and some beading, but less beading than a few years ago." Some of her more popular lines are Augusta, which features easy, simple, and beautiful silhouettes for more casual daytime and destination weddings, and Alvina Valenta, whose gowns personify the new cleaner lines, yet remain ultra-elegant and sophisticated.

Another trend worth noting is color—or the lack thereof when it concerns the bridal gown. After a few seasons of pinks, reds, yellows, and some blues slowly creeping their way into bridal sashes, embroidery, and accessories, suddenly there's been a return to basics—and not whites, but ivory and champagne, which are the colors for 2009 and 2010. "With the simpler dresses, it's usually better to choose champagne or ivory than white because they just look a lot more elegant and expensive," Choi explains.

Michelle Bunting, manager of the

Bridal Manor in Sewell (856-582-1422; thebridalmanor.net), has found that destination weddings are more popular than ever, as the same budget can go a lot further. "You get more bang for your buck," she says. "Why do a party for four hours when for the same budget you can party for three days?" Destination gowns are "sleeker, simpler, and less expensive" according to Bunting. Whether here or away, almost all of her customers are looking for simpler lines. "No more lace and ruffles, but still some ruching—it's very flattering and that's always good."

Yvonne Baird of Country Way Bridal in Haddonfield (856-745-9005; countrywaybrides.com) finds that brides want to highlight their assets (after all those hours on the elliptical) in form-fitting "fit and flair" and modified mermaid styles. "It's a couture look, and we have found designers who deliver it at very reasonable prices," she says. The styles might be simpler, and budgets might

be tighter, but younger brides especially are looking for haute-couture looks at lower price points. While traditional accessories have definitely been streamlined, Baird notes many young women are looking for exciting new accents and adds that "peacock feathers are everywhere this season—veils, bags, and centerpieces."

And another trend worth noting: While a few years ago, Choi sold 100 percent of her brides white or ivory shoes to match their gown, she has watched that number decline to about 20 percent. The vast majority of brides are now opting for a silver or gold metallic shoe to complement their gown. The key here is wearability—and that's a trend that will hopefully stick around for a long, long time.

✿ For a listing of upcoming designer bridal trunk shows in New Jersey, go to newjerseybride.com.