

MAID TO ORDER

BRIDESMAIDS ARE A MAGICAL FOIL FOR THE BRIDE, ALWAYS IN THE BACKGROUND, ADDING A SPLASH OF DELICIOUS COLOUR, VERY LOVELY; BUT HOPEFULLY NOT A PATCH ON THE BRIDE...TO PULL THIS OFF NEEDS A WELL MANICURED, FIRM HAND.

It seems as though everyone has an anecdote about a bridesmaids' cat fight where even the nicest girls have turned into banshees during the frock talks. It's not surprising, it's only natural for any girl to fight for the dress that will make her look best in front of a crowd.

An authoritative, opinionated bride can save potential hissy fits, dramas and even walk-outs. As a rule, the more freedom the bridal party is given, the more anxiety it will cause the bride. Unfortunately un-controlled bridesmaids have been known to upstage the bride, can there be a worse nightmare?

Never send the bridesmaids off shopping for their gowns unsupervised. The result could be an ego-tussle that will end in tears, the bride's tears.

The attendants will respect strength and confidence and will warm to the bride's decisions in the end if they are true friends.

Democracy is a winner in politics, but not essential in bridal party planning. The bride is numero uno and holds the casting vote in all her attendants' dress and accessory decisions. It's the golden rule. Her wedding, her day, her photos; the bride must have her way.

There are many interesting ways to manage the bridesmaids' look. The bride generally selects her dress style first, then moves onto the style and more importantly colour choice of her attendants' wardrobe.

If the bride has a colour theme in mind for the decorative aspects of the ceremony and reception, that is the clue to the maids' colour direction. What they wear will impact on the overall look of the wedding.

The bride should listen to the maids' ideas and preferences; their gowns should be comfortable, have a flattering fit and suit the formality of the venue.

The larger the number of bridesmaids the more complex the matter as there are more tastes, hair colourways and figures.

The options for the attendants' style are many and varied. To cater for a variety of body shapes each maid can have the most suitable dress silhouette for her figure but the group is dressed in identical colours. Or, if figures are similar, the same style in a pre-selected palette of colours can cater for different hair colours. All the dresses can be in the same style and colour but in different shades so they can complement skin tones.



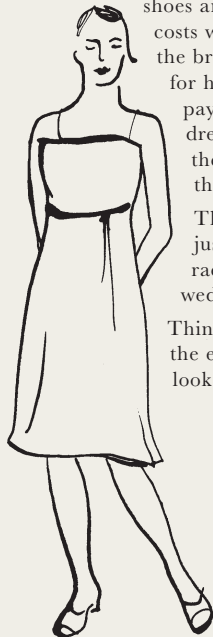
FASHION

If there are more than four bridesmaids, take the maid of honour on a store check-out to give her an idea of the styles that are suitable. The wedding party can then start shopping sooner rather than later, sensible if payment by lay-by is involved.

The bridesmaids don't have to wear the same shoes but they should be compatible styles especially if the dresses are short. Shoe comfort is important, weddings are hard on the feet.

Colour can be used to advantage with shoes that are the same style but in different colours, or shoes that are in the same colours but different styles, they all work. Matching the bouquet and accessories with the shoe colour looks effective.

The bride may picture her maids dressed in pure simplicity or extravagant opulence, the deciding factors will be style and the all important budget. Each attendant should be comfortable with the expense.



It's accepted that bridesmaids pay for their dresses, shoes and accessories so it's important to discuss costs with the girls at the beginning. If however, the bride's choices are extravagant, it's not unusual for her to contribute to the costs. The bride might pay for the fabric and the bridesmaids cover the dressmaking. Or, the bridesmaids could pay for the dresses and the bride picks up the tab for the shoes and accessories.

The bridesmaids are the bride's best accessory; just a step down from her in glamour, but radiant, lovely and happy, enhancing the wedding in their highly prestigious role.

Think of their gowns as the corporate uniforms of the event projecting unity, friendship and a great look.