

Passion for a *Wedding*

This month MK Pulse's image consultant, *Nancy Stevens* of *Altered Image*, focuses on Weddings which are her passion. From big dress and veil to elegant suit, her goal is to make her brides look wonderful.

Welcome to my special bridal column. The wedding season has already started in earnest (eek!) and getting married should be the most exciting time of our lives, yet often it turns into a stressful and emotionally charged event. Here are some pointers to keep you in control and organised:

Accessories: Once your dress is chosen, choose your accessories. Ensure that if wearing a veil, it is the right length for your dress. If wearing a hat be aware that if you are vertically challenged, a very large brimmed will make you look like a toadstool! Fascinators are a great alternative if you have fine hair and don't want to have 'hat hair'!

Bridesmaids: In order for your girls to look and feel comfortable, assess differing body types, for example an apple-shaped girl looks better with some ruching across her middle and a pear shape looks great in an empire line. If you have a buxom bridesmaid, then go for a strappy dress so she can wear a bra and similarly if you have a less-well endowed girl, then strapless is fine.

Colour: Ideally have your colours analysed before buying the dress. I offer colour clinics on an individual basis, or for a maximum of five people, this is a fun evening to be pampered with your bridesmaids but also helps you decide whether to go for off-white, cream, ivory, white, champagne, rose pink etc for your dress. It is really helpful to ascertain what colour wedding dress best suits your skin tone. It will also help in choosing bridesmaid shades according to whether they are olive or fair skinned.

Dress: THE most important decision you will ever make apart from your choice of husband!! Allow at least nine months in which to find a dress as most dresses need to be ordered at least six months in advance and then need time for alterations. Choose a dress which really suits your shape and that will not date. The current trend has been for strapless dresses and continues to be very popular but this will not suit you if you have a big boobies, not great upper arms or suffer from 'back fat'.

Eating: Having worked in the Bridal industry I have lost count of how many brides have tried on dresses that are several sizes too small with the premise of going on a diet and trying to lose weight for the big day, it is ludicrous to put oneself under all that pressure to lose weight just for one day and put it all on again after the wedding. It's far better to buy the dress a size or two too big as it can be taken in but obviously cannot be let out if it is too small!

Fake tan: There are a plethora of fake tans available. Please, please have a trial session at least a month before the wedding. Fake Bake, Heavenly Bodies and St Tropez are best. Do not forget to exfoliate within an inch of your life though – streaks are not attractive!

Grooming: If you are not a devotee of waxing, do not try it two days before the wedding. Book an appointment four days before your fake tanning treatment. Another tip is to get your eyelashes and brows tinted, this will save on having to wear makeup on honeymoon and a tint usually lasts up to three weeks. As your hands are on display all day have a manicure (and pedicure).

Hair: Have a trial at least a month beforehand. Show your hairdresser a picture of your dress and explain the look you are trying to achieve. If you are going sophisticated and elegant, then a chignon will suit, if you are going romantic and feminine, then a half-up do, with the sides up will be in keeping. **I recommend Kim Knights on 07791 620572.**

Image: How you look on this most special day has to fit with who you are, this is not the time to try something daring and new as you don't want to send your fiancé screaming for the hills and you want to be comfy. You want to look like you, only better!

Jewellery: What you will wear will be dependent on if your dress is very plain, add a bit of sparkle with crystal or diamante necklace and earrings. If your dress is very Hollywood and you are going for the tiara and a cathedral length veil, DON'T go for necklace, earrings, bracelet etc – you will be gilding the lily and will detract from the dress.

Kissing: Not only will you be puckering up to your beloved but will probably be kissing lots of maiden aunts. So you need to ensure that your lipstick stays on all day. Max Factor Lipfinity is THE only lipgloss which will stay on all day and it's only £10!

Lingerie: Please, please visit Bravissimo or John Lewis to get the correctly fitting bra and take your dress (if appropriate) with you to be measured. A word of warning: if you don't normally wear stockings and suspenders, the biggest day of your life is NOT a good time to try them out; it will also be setting a precedent for the rest of your married life!

Makeup: Wedding makeup is an art. Most of my prospective brides say "I don't wear much makeup, I want a really natural look" but I have to stress both the importance and difference of day makeup to wedding makeup. The camera never lies and it can be cruel and if you are hardly wearing any makeup, you will look totally washed out in the photos and the dress will be the focus of attention rather than you as a package.

I recommend Madeleine Davis on 07787 161805.

Photography: Practise your poses, if you aren't comfortable in front of the camera, start practising flashing those pearly whites now. Any photographer worth his salt will show you how to pose, never stand full on in front of the camera, it will only widen you, always stand, slightly twisted, best foot forward. This, apart from your dress, is the most expensive part of your wedding.

I recommend Binky Nixon on www.binkynixon.com

Skincare: if you are a soap and water girl (naughty you!), start a new skincare regime at least six months before the wedding. Get into the cleansing, toning and moisturising habit.

Shoes: Order well in advance and wear them around the house to break them in, choose a pair of shoes that obviously look fab but more importantly are comfy, 12 hours on your feet makes for a very long day. ☐



Ask Nancy

"My daughter is getting married in September but I am actually dreading the big day. I'm not a particularly confident dresser, am 50 this year, a size 14-16 with a bigish bust, am 5'3", my hair is grey and is very fine and have olive skin and blue eyes. I really don't know what suits, as Mother-of-the-Bride I want to wear a hat but just don't want to get it wrong and feel self-conscious all day – please, please help!"

Lucy K in Middleton

Do not despair Lucy, all is not lost. Let's start logically from the top and work our way down...

Hair: If you are on the petite side, a narrow brimmed hat will be preferable but I would recommend you try a fascinator as this alleviates the hat-hair scenario and you will not have time between the service and reception to re-do your barnet.

Support: Next pop along to Bravissimo and have the best bra fitting ever. This will lift and separate your boobies and give you your torso back, ensuring you now look taller and slimmer. Don't put yourself under pressure to diet either – that's what Magic Knickers are for!

Colour: You obviously know the wedding colour scheme already and would suggest as I've not met you, that you either have your colours done or judging from your description, you are a "winter" which means you can wear primary, bold and blue-based colours. I would recommend cerise, cobalt or emerald green. NO head-to-toe pastels for you!

Style: A wrap-over dress will enhance your bust with a spot of ruching to detract from the tummy area. A bolero jacket will cover the tops of your arms. Avoid short sleeved, collarless jackets as they are terribly headmistressey and pashminas need constant adjusting. Just below the knee length is good.

Shoes: Do not go for the same colour shoes as your dress, too Queen Mum but try this seasons' metallics which go with everything, look fab in the day and transfer well to evening.

Accessories: If you are going for the fascinator, avoid dangly earrings as you will look a Christmas tree and go for statement necklace OR bracelet OR a cocktail ring.

I hope that this has helped you Lucy. Wishing both you and your daughter a very special day.

If you have any fashion issues you would like some help with, please email me at nancy.stevens@alteredimagemk.co.uk or visit my website www.alteredimagemk.co.uk

