

BRIDAL BUYER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

ALAN
HANNAH

One of the UK's best-loved design teams share the secrets of their success

FEELING
LUCKY?

BE A WINNER AT
2018's BRIDAL
BUYER AWARDS

Dynamic
detailing

FIRST LOOK AT
THE NEW SEASON'S
HOTTEST TRENDS

London
Bridal
Week

THE BIGGEST AND BRIGHTEST
EVENT ON THE FASHION CALENDAR
IS COMING TO THE CAPITAL

EXCLUSIVES!

*Caroline Castigliano,
Stephanie Broune,
Ellis Bridals, True Bride
and more*







Sincerity




CASABLANCA®
BRIDAL

CELEBRATE FOREVER.



CASABLANCABRIDAL.COM



LBW LONDON
BRIDAL
WEEK.2018

We'll see you there.

25 – 27 March | ExCel London
A new destination for bridal.



STAND / C38

Agents for England, Ireland, Scotland & Wales
ANDY & DENISE BURGESS-FARRANT
enquiries@casablancabridal.co.uk
Mobile: 07759 226220

A woman with dark hair styled in a bun is sitting on a curved stone ledge. She is wearing a long, white lace wedding dress with a deep V-neckline and a long train that spreads out on the stone floor. The background features a large, modern fountain with multiple tiers and a glass railing. In the distance, there are modern buildings and a clear sky.

SKY

COLLECTION

by *Eddy K*

www.eddyk.com



@eddyk_bridal

SKY131

Contents

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

Let my start by saying Happy New Year! 2018 is full of opportunity, and the start of the new buying season is just a couple of months away. The Bridal Buyer team is looking forward to March in particular - London Bridal Week and White Gallery are set to be spectacular. It will be the first bridal super-show of its kind in the UK, and has so much to offer. You'll adore the ease of having two events co-located under one roof, not to mention the added benefits of the exclusive seminar programme (which has been designed and will be run by the industry's most sought after experts). In addition to the educational programme, there will be a business clinic, first-look fashion shows, and, of course, a hugely impressive line-up of exhibitors - the show's impact is set to be phenomenal, and I for one can't wait.

This issue we bid a very fond farewell to Susi Rogol as our Editor-In-Chief. She has had a huge impact on the success and quality of Bridal Buyer, not to mention on the industry as a whole. Take a look at some of her finest covers from the past years over on page 11.

Alicia Marie



Up front

Cover Alan Hannah's Enchanted Garden gown adorns our front cover of this edition - see more on page 22.

11 A word from our Editor In Chief
Susi Rogol reflects on her time at the helm of Bridal Buyer

15 What's new
The latest stories, designs and events... plus five minutes with Motee Maids

22 Dynamic duo
Meet our cover star Alan Hannah and find out about the iconic brand

26 Online forums
Susi Rogol addresses the recent debate regarding forums

29 Beat the fakes
How is the industry combatting the global issue of counterfeiting?

Trends

33 A Royal affair
Prince Harry is set to wed the vibrant Meghan Markle in May. But what will the American Beauty wear?

34 Round the world
With LBW and White Gallery around the corner, we look at some of the global brands heading to the capital

39 Time to look back
This season it's all about how dresses look from behind

42 Elope in style
Everything you need to know for brides that are getting married overseas

45 Prom night glamour
We talk to one of the industry's best known prom brands

48 Thoroughly modern Millie
Yvonne McGregor discusses the launch of her latest labels

Events

52 London calling
All eyes are on the capital as London Bridal Week and White Gallery are fast approaching

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

56 There's something about Ellis

The leading label reveals all about what it will be showing this March

60 Caroline Castiglione

The designer makes creating beautiful gowns look easy - what's her secret?

62 Three decades of sparkle

We look at Australian designer Stephanie Browne's latest collection

64 Bridal Buyer awards 2018

Tell us why you stand out from the crowd and win a BBA this year

Business

68 Business news

Professional news and advice

72 The digital playbook

Our new columnist Warren Knight kicks off his new series on digital

74 Keeping secure

Make sure your shop is safe and sound with our guide to security

77 Taking stock

Ellie Sanderson's ideas for a prosperous 2018

79 Great idea

How to develop your business this year

80 BBSA + RBA

The latest from the industry's two key associations

83 Q+A

Steve Sidkin looks at the issues surrounding data protection

85 Ask Raj

Our super-knowledgeable legal expert answers your business questions

87 Top tips

How to maximise sales on accessories by creating an alluring display

Features

93 Abi Says...

Our bright, funny, expert columnist urges you to keep on learning

94 True Bride

The brand's Lydia Sayles gives us a potted history of the brand

98 Boutique success guide

We talk to boutiques from around the UK on how to combat common problems

103 Shop talk

Look around an award-winning shop

107 The White Closet

The northern boutique's latest venture

109 Enhance your interiors

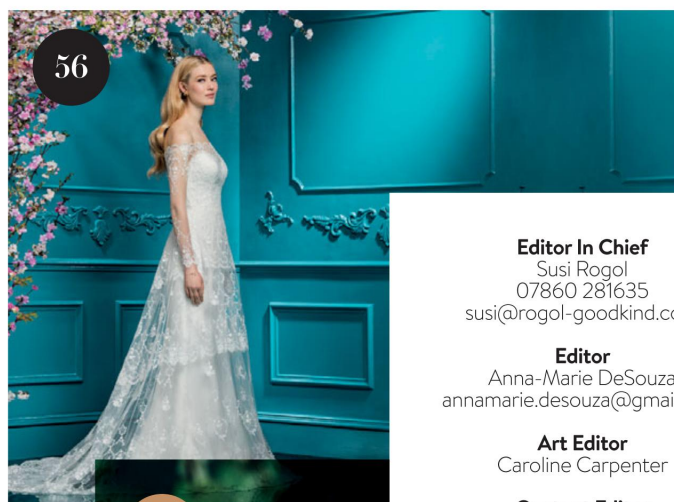
Create a space with style and substance



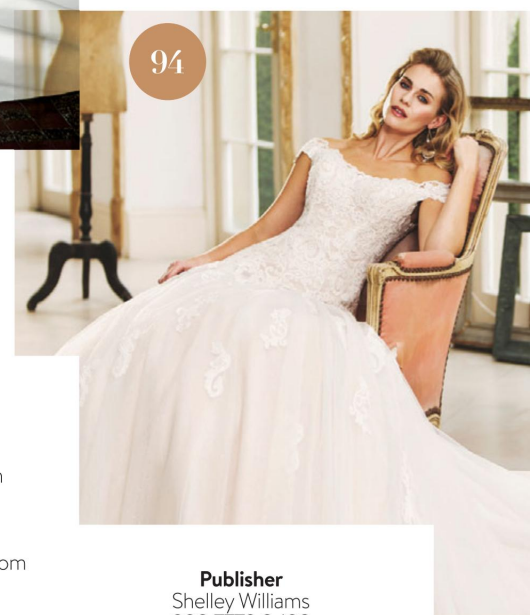
109



60



56



94

Editor In Chief
Susi Rogol
07860 281635
susi@rogol-goodkind.com

Editor
Anna-Marie DeSouza
annamarie.desouza@gmail.com

Art Editor
Caroline Carpenter

Content Editor
Zoe Burke

Sub-Editors
Clive Burton & Sophie Vening

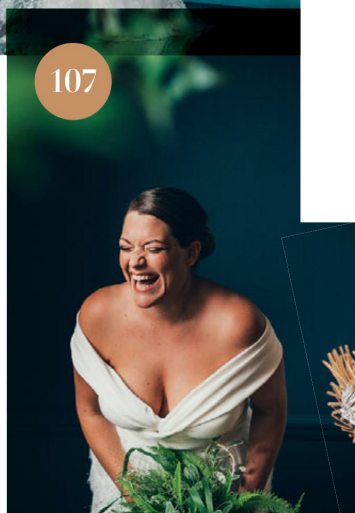
Publisher
Shelley Williams
020 7772 8498
shelley.williams@oceanmedia.co.uk

Head of Content & Marketing
Cassandra Roberts
020 7772 8317
cassandra.roberts@oceanmedia.co.uk

Senior Marketing Executive
Ella O'Keefe
020 772 8344
ella.okeefe@oceanmedia.co.uk

Head of Bridal
Wendy Adams
01423 770120
wendy@bridal-uk.com

Subscriptions Alliance
020 8955 7040
ocean@alliance-media.co.uk



107



62



DESSY GROUP

For more information contact Michele O'Neill
email: michele@dessy.com or call: 0845 838 1041

Free samples for qualified accounts • Apply online: www.dessy.com/retailers



donnasaladobridal

Celebrating More Than Two Decades of Bridal Heritage

Tel: +44 (0) 1604 792869 | Email: donna@donnasalado.com | DONNASALADO.COM

LBW LONDON
BRIDAL WEEK.
25 - 27 March 2018
ExCel, London

**VISIT US AT
STAND C27**



A word from our Editor In Chief...

After 16 glorious years at the helm of Bridal Buyer, and having nurtured the magazine along the way from one

delivering newspaper-style show reportage to the industry's hugely-respected business voice, it is time for me to take on fresh challenges and enter a new and more diverse chapter in my career.

However, I am not going too far from the environment I love with a passion and the people and businesses that I have grown so close to over the years. The bridal industry has long been the centre of my life and will continue to be so with my involvement in other projects in the market. There is also a book to get started on.

It is an exciting time for me, and one that will allow me to focus on delivering information and – I hope – advice and opinion, to a broad audience – something I could never have reached without the support I have enjoyed from you all – retailer, supplier, service provider, contributor and, of course, Ocean Media Group itself.

And that support will continue to be returned: I will be at every show on the bridal buying calendar, I will be in regular contact (yes, emails will always be headed urgent!), I will be talking to you, writing about you and





promoting you, and I will continue to work with Ocean Media's editorial content team as and when needed.

Knowing that I am leaving Bridal Buyer in the very capable hands of Anna-Marie DeSouza who has the experience, the enthusiasm, and the innovative thinking needed to drive the title forward to achieve new heights, is wonderfully reassuring. A-M will do bridal proud, no question about that.

And the Bridal Buyer Awards, my special baby, is set flourish under the direction of Georgia Pick who has worked with me on the programme for many years. We have already planned the 2018 categories and the judging panels are about to be selected. Each year the Awards have grown in stature and the standard today is world-class. I am so very proud of what we – the industry – has achieved. I will, of course, give Georgia any help, ideas and support if needed, and I will make myself available to anyone who wants to ask questions or needs advice and guidance on entering.

There is no need for me to say farewell, because this new chapter has little to do with goodbyes. It is rather a big hello to a new world of opportunities that I will be embracing wholeheartedly... and in which you are all involved.

Here's to a wonderful year ahead.



martin thornburg

A MON CHERI COLLECTION



MON CHERI
BRIDALS

EXCLUSIVE
AUTUMN 2018
CATWALK SHOWS

4th/5th March 2018
DUBLIN, IRELAND

18th March 2018
CAMBRIDGE, UK

To make an appointment call

01954 232102

or email

weddings@mon-cheri.co.uk

www.mon-cheri.co.uk



WHITE ONE COLLECTION

ST. PATRICK

SINCE 1964

Book an appointment at www.sanpatrick.com

What's NEW

Paolo Sebastian

We're living out our 'happily ever after' since seeing the amazing Disney-inspired collection 'Once Upon a Dream' by Australian based couture house Paolo Sebastian. The collection pays homage to the classic fairy tales that have enchanted people for years; each gown features striking attention to detail – from an embroidered stroke of midnight to lyrics from classic Disney songs. We're obsessed with this gown, embroidered with the line 'A dream is a wish your heart makes'. See the full collection by searching 'Paolo Sebastian' on bridalbuyer.com paolosebastian.com

VISIT BRIDALBUYER.COM FOR THE LATEST NEWS, VIEWS, EVENTS & MORE

What's NEW

ROYAL WEDDING

All eyes are on Meghan Markle...we all want to know what she'll choose to wear for her May wedding to Prince Harry. British Bridal Icon Stephanie Allin has sketched out a gorgeous design that she feels would be perfect for Meghan. She says: "I am envisaging a beautiful silk crepe gown and something with a lot of movement and modern sensibilities." See our other dress predictions on page 33. What do you think? Let us know on Twitter @BridalBuyer using the hashtag #MyBridalBuyer



THE PLACE TO BE

It's all happening on Park Walk in Chelsea – Katya Katya London has recently opened its new flagship store, and Emma Victoria Payne Bridalwear has moved there too!

We were able to take in both boutiques' gorgeous shop fronts on a recent visit to SW8. Search 'Katya Katya London' on bridalbuyer.com



BAG IT UP

Rainbow Club is famous for its diverse range of shoes. So we were delighted to see its new range of clutch bags. They can be custom-dyed to suit any colour scheme or theme. See the full collection on bridalbuyer.com



DIARY DATE

25 - 27 MARCH 2018

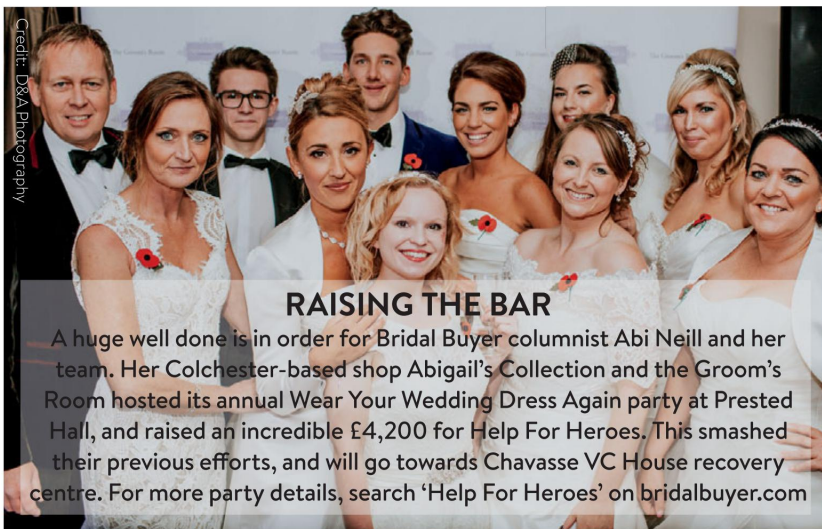
London Bridal Week will be the biggest and brightest show to ever hit the capital.

The unique event will showcase the very best of what the bridal community has to offer, from big name brands and cool designers to new kids on the block.

londonbridalweek.com

RAISING THE BAR

A huge well done is in order for Bridal Buyer columnist Abi Neill and her team. Her Colchester-based shop Abigail's Collection and the Groom's Room hosted its annual Wear Your Wedding Dress Again party at Prested Hall, and raised an incredible £4,200 for Help For Heroes. This smashed their previous efforts, and will go towards Chavasse VC House recovery centre. For more party details, search 'Help For Heroes' on bridalbuyer.com





STARSTRUCK

The celestial inspired trend has everyone starry eyed – from the bridal fashion shows to the high street, stars are everywhere. Galia Lahav, Jenny Packham and Paolo Sebastian are just a few designers adding an irresistible sprinkle of stardust to their bridal creations - a detail which has been quickly picked up by both jewellery and accessory designers, too. Get ready to get star-gazing at London Bridal Week and White Gallery to ensure you're ahead of the curve on this dazzling trend.



MAGGIE SOTTERO

World-famous bridal brand Maggie Sottero has introduced three new collections for 2018. Introducing Maggie Sottero: Emerald Collection, Sottero and Midgley: Khloe Collection and Rebecca Ingram: Juniper Collection. We're loving the luxe fabrics and amazing back details on offer. maggiesottero.com

PERSONAL TOUCH

No one can resist something with their name on it, right? So the new personalisation service from Charlotte Mills is set to be a big hit. Brides can now get their white leather bridal trainers customised with a pattern and colour palette of their choice, as well as their new married initials. Dreamy!

charlottemills.com



VISIT BRIDALBUYER.COM FOR NEWS, VIEWS, EVENTS & MORE

What's NEW

TIME TO CELEBRATE

Ocean Media Group – the company behind Bridal Buyer, The Harrogate Bridal Show, London Bridal Week and White Gallery – has announced a series of new acquisitions. At a launch event at London's Wallace Collection, CEO Matt Miller confirmed the company has recently bought wedding planning website confetti.co.uk and will be launching Confetti magazine later this year. Luxury wedding show portfolio Bridelux has also joined Ocean Media – going forward, the Luxury Wedding Fair will now be known as The Bridelux Showcase. Stay tuned for more exciting developments!



MOTEE MAIDS

We caught up with Motee Maids to find out what you can expect from the brand at White Gallery 2018

What's the inspiration behind your latest collection?

We are building on the success of the current Pearl Collection, which is inspired by the tradition of wearing pearls on your wedding day, but in a contemporary slightly bohemian way. The embellishments are the focus, with silhouettes kept elegant

and clean, highlighted with pearls and subtle silver beading. Our new silhouettes and colour ways give a nod to current bridesmaid trends.

Describe a typical bride?

A Motee bride wants her maids to look and feel effortlessly elegant on her special day. She wants to pick dresses that will ensure each maid has something unique and exquisite to really represent the significance of her wedding day. She appreciates the artisan nature of the product, and exceptional service from independent retailers, and seeks this out for her day.

What styles and fabrics feature in this collection?

We will be showcasing our

customisable range of bodice and skirt silhouettes that can be combined with our unique colours and embellishments to create over 300 different options. In addition, we will be showing new bodice and skirt designs and exciting new embroidery. Fabrics will be soft tulle and georgettes with our signature stretch jersey lining to ensure an easy fit for all.

How has the collection been received so far?

We have been so pleased with how the debut collection has been received and absolutely thrilled with our stockists who love the idea as much as we do. Brides are really embracing the concept of coming up with their own range of gowns and we love seeing the creative combinations they make.



Motee is known for its intricate detailing and beadwork

Dresses come in a range of chic colours and are all lined in jersey for comfort



CHARLOTTE
BALBIER

Discover the Bohemian Blush Collection Online
charlottebalbier.com

ESSENCE
of AUSTRALIA®

essensedesigns.com



Stella York®

stellayork.com

martina liana®
martinaliana.com



SORELLA VITA®
sorellavita.com



To make an appointment to view any of the collections please contact:
Mark Hewitt: 07712 625212 | Jennifer Eadie: 07717 452676
Jo Hewitt: 07789 900486 | Lisa Davis: 07866 456399
sales.uk@essensedesigns.com



DYNAMIC DUO

Bridal Buyer takes a seat with Alan Hannah, the award-winning brand that retailers and brides can't help but love

Bridal Buyer has had a long-standing love affair with the Alan Hannah brand. Not only has the label's Marguerite Hannah been crowned British Bridalwear Designer of the Year at the Bridal Buyer Awards on multiple occasions - most recently in 2017 - but her glorious creations have graced the cover of the magazine many times... including this issue, where the breathtaking Enchanted Garden gown has swept us off our feet. We visited the creative Alan and Marguerite Hannah at their workshop in north London to find out about the history of the company, as well as Marguerite's unique design process.

Alan founded his namesake company in the late 1980s; at the time he was designing headpieces and accessories. Marguerite joined the company in 1990, and it's here that the story really starts - retailers and brides fell in love with her unique, show stopping designs, and so did Alan; the couple are now married. In 2010, the Mia Mia label was launched, and the most recent string to the company's bow is Rita Mae, founded in 2014. Each of the labels has its own very distinct style, offering real creative outlets for Marguerite to produce a huge variety of gowns for brides with a host of different tastes.

A fun exchange between the duo tells us everything we need to know about their working relationship - they bounce creative ideas from each other and obviously share a great deal of fun and respect. "When Marguerite joined the company, she had a focus on eveningwear, but I was trying to persuade her to do bridal. Eventually, she designed a collection for young bridesmaids, which was really popular. Due to the success, I kept nagging her to do bridal, and eventually she agreed to make a range of bridesmaid gowns in ivory - it was so well received. So again, I asked her to do wedding dresses... and eventually that's what happened," says Alan, with a wry smile. And the response from Marguerite: "I had always loved tailoring and costume, so if you hadn't persuaded me to do it, I don't know what I would have done! You could say, he made me do it!"

The designer expresses how much she adored working on the bridesmaid dresses, the fabrics and detail let her creativity flourish. "I really enjoyed doing the bridesmaids collection, so I suppose Rita Mae is my nod towards that," she smiles. But just how do her designs evolve and where does her inspiration come from?

"Sometimes I see a fabric and that initiates the design. I am very aware of fashion and current trends: I pay close attention to catwalks and what's popular. But for me, I think working with fabrics and beading is key, especially for Alan Hannah. I do sketching at home, I catalogue these and when I am ready to work on a collection I set the sketches and fabrics alongside each other, and this evolves again when I work on a dressmaker's model and see how the fabrics drape. For Alan Hannah I work on two or three gowns, and I think of the scenes on the catwalk and how these will run at White Gallery. I will do five or six dresses of that look, and then I do six groups of those - everything has to be cohesive and come together. For Mia Mia and Rita Mae I have to design the whole collection at once with sketches and swatches; they are done in such a different way."

At 2017's White Gallery, one of the stand-out pieces of the whole exhibition was the Candice gown featuring a blue hydrangea motif. For the past 20 years there has been a hand-painted dress in each



The delicate embroidery and bead work on the Enchanted Garden give it a pop of colour and elegance that brides adore



The full skirt and lace detail give the Yolanda a pretty and feminine edge

The Gabriella is chic and cool. Perfect for modern brides looking for contemporary twists on classic silhouettes



Romantic and feminine, Rosanna is a gorgeous fairytale gown



The hand-painted Candice gown has been a best seller this season

Alan Hannah collection; something that's highly anticipated by the industry each year. "When we first did a painted dress, I thought 'it's beautiful but it won't do well'," recalls Alan. "It then went on to become our best seller." Brides love the elegance and difference the detail creates, and many will use the same flower or pattern on their cake or bouquet - and some will even request a painted swatch to frame as an extra special keepsake. Marguerite explains the process: "We work with an artist in Madrid - she loves painting realistic flowers, but she has done abstract designs for us, too. I create a template of the dress and mark on it where I want the motifs and then she applies the design. It is all hand painted, so each one is slightly different."

As you can see from the picture on this page (top right), the gown is beautifully detailed - the photography of the collection itself is outstanding, completely doing justice to the dresses. The brand's images are lauded throughout the industry, they are elegant, chic and always impactful. But how do they continue to get it so right year after year? Alan explains that they started investing in top-notch

photography in the early 90s, they recognised that images of the collections were integral to the success of the company - before the time of social media and online, the photography was the only glimpse of the collection that people would see. "We worked with photographer Ian Philpot for 10 years," says Alan. "We clicked with him and he convinced us to spend more money on models - after the first set of images we knew that it was worth the investment. The philosophy is to keep it simple; a beautiful girl and a really good photographer."

"Our latest shoot is all about the dresses and we wanted iconic images," adds Marguerite. "We worked with the same photographer as last year, Ed Miles. We had to make sure we used the right dresses, those that show our flair and those that were popular at White Gallery. We want to

please the stockists with what we shoot, so we look for what attracts the brides."

This thought and care for customers is indicative of how the company works - the duo really celebrates the personal service that they can offer. "More and more people are appreciating that Alan Hannah is made here in the UK at our workshop," says Alan. "There are practical benefits, too, as we can get things done really quickly."

Marguerite adds: "Stockists will phone us when there is a girl in the dress and can ask us for advice. People are surprised that we have such close contact - but it's something that I enjoy. Every dress we work on will have

the bride's name on it, so that when working on it, it has that personal touch." This level of care promotes positivity in the workplace, which means that the company has a group of much-loved, dedicated employees, and retailers, too. Anne Priscilla Bridal in Glasgow, for example, has worked with the brand for 20 years: "We have long-standing staff and long-standing stockists. We are in it together," smiles Marguerite.

Alan goes on to explain that the company doesn't have a huge export model, although they do sell some of the labels outside of the

UK. "We don't do a great deal of exporting - we have a good relationship with a company in Japan, and have stockists for Mia Mia in Australia - but we are happy with this limit at the moment," he says. Marguerite expands this point: "There is something to be said about overgrowing. We are happy with what we do - we can provide a good level of service. I oversee everything that goes out, I can see dresses being made and that gives me the greatest pleasure. We like to look at every order - it keeps it really personal. That is why Alan Hannah has been so successful and we want to retain the pleasure we get from it. As a designer, if it becomes too big you are just running it and not doing it." Just at the close of the interview, Alan has the perfect final statement for his wife and business partner: "You love being an artist." ■

More and more people are appreciating that Alan Hannah is made here in the UK

visit us at...

LBW

LONDON
BRIDAL WEEK.
25 - 27 March 2018
ExCeL London

VICTORIA KAY
DESIGNER BRIDAL WEAR

FOR STOCKIST ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL 01424 439165 OR EMAIL SALES@VICTORIAKAYGOWNS.CO.UK

WWW.VICTORIAKAYGOWNS.CO.UK

FEATURE FOLLOW-UP

ONLINE FORUMS

Susi Rogol discusses the recent debate regarding online forums and explains her stance on the issue

In the 'A word from our editor in chief' article in the November/December 2017 issue of Bridal Buyer, I talked about my views on the possible dangers of unmonitored forum posts. It certainly grabbed attention and elicited responses from various retailer quarters, all voicing very different reactions.

There were those who castigated me for having passed comment in the first place; those who agreed wholeheartedly with my sentiments (but who, interestingly, did not want their names mentioned for fear of retribution); and those who felt I had 'taken sides'. There were also those who went on social media to thank me for an honest approach (brave was a word mentioned), but more importantly, there were those involved in forums themselves, as mediators, who were quick to point out the controls they had established and adhered to, regardless. This latter few wanted it known that they actively encourage support between users and, where possible, between retailers and their suppliers. And there were those retailers who, for one reason or another, had stopped using certain forums because they felt uncomfortable about the content. It was a mixed bag of responses and that is, after all, what debate is all about – allowing every party to be heard on the same stage and same topic.

There has been some misunderstandings regarding the apology statement that I would like to clear up. I would like to make it clear, those who have been upset that we published the retailer's statement should be aware that we were asked to publish this by the retailer to help her resolve a conflict. The words are verbatim, nothing was changed. In retrospect, we could have positioned the apology elsewhere to avoid confusion.

Where are we now? I have never been one to back away from controversy. Lively debate – however fractious – leads to greater insight and often to differing influences. I stand by my views on the topic of forum dangers but, because some forum organisers have pointed out their own modus operandi, I now believe there are options for those who want to share news and offer support to colleagues within the bridal industry. ■

It was a mixed bag of responses and that is, after all, what debate is all about – allowing every party to be heard





MARK LESLEY
BRIDALWEAR

Award Winning Design and Customer Service

Tel: +44 (0) 1621 784784 | Email: info@marklesley.co.uk | MARKLESLEY.CO.UK

LBW LONDON
BRIDAL WEEK.
25 - 27 March 2018
ExCel, London

**VISIT US AT
STAND C27**

LBW

25 – 27 March 2018
ExCeL London

MODECA
STAND A50



MODECA

DUTCH DESIGN

2019 COLLECTION

Doutzen

Beat the FAKES

Zoë Burke looks at how the industry is battling the issue of fake gowns across the globe

Counterfeits are a constant threat to the industry – but the battle to reduce their impact on suppliers and retailers is ongoing. Bridal Buyer caught up with a selection of key industry figures to see what is happening to counteract fakes as we move into 2018.

Richard Lill, director of Lionheart Portfolio, understands the threat posed by counterfeits to the industry as a whole: “Counterfeiting is something that is a problem for both retailers and suppliers equally. The BBSA has been instrumental in protecting the industry, enlisting the help of the government and constantly updating and working with the internet giants such as Google and eBay.”

Rebekah Hock of the BBSA agrees – highlighting the perks BBSA membership offers to both retailers and suppliers: “Retailers can take advantage of free wedding dress insurance for customers, and association with the ‘Brides Beware’ campaign, which shows at national retail and trade shows to continue to raise awareness against counterfeiting. Suppliers can also receive expert advice on taking legal action against websites that are selling counterfeits of their designs.”

The issue with counterfeits is that many businesses hit by this are relatively small, and the counterfeiters can hide within the internet. “Any online counterfeiting, is almost impossible to eradicate,” confirms Lill. “At best, we can minimise the impact – suppliers should sign up to the latest counterfeit technology, which does work.”

The consumer press can do more to deter brides from turning to cheap, fake alternatives too, claims Lill: “Retailers need the help from the wider industry including the consumer press. They need to continually send the message to brides, highlighting that ‘cheap is

never good and good is never cheap’.”

Continuing in his efforts to educate the public about the risk of buying a fake, Lill has created a brochure that retailers can give to brides that visit their store. “It is not branded as Ladybird as this is meant to instil the virtues of buying from a reputable retailer with the experience and knowledge to make them look and feel great with a quality dress that will look as good at the end of their special day as it did at the start.”

It’s an undeniable fact that the mindset of today’s consumers has changed: “When you can order and receive delivery on the same day, disposable fashion is becoming the norm. Suppliers like Ladybird have worked hard over the years to assist retailers with selections of styles available from stock and shorter lead times, so they can be positioned and prepared to combat this change.”

Whilst the threat of counterfeits continues to lurk, it’s crucial for suppliers to make it as easy as possible for retailers to sell their stock, and to provide an unmissable experience for brides to discourage them from seeking implausible offers online.

For more on Richard Lill’s thoughts on combatting counterfeits, search ‘Richard Lill on counterfeits’ on bridalbuyer.com

Update from the ABPIA

The ABPIA legal team has a new litigation strategy; we will begin filing actions against entities that aide or enable counterfeiters’ businesses • DMCA filings on behalf of our members has resulted in 20 million search results being removed from search engines • Senator Robert Menendez sent a letter to the head of Google asking them to answer questions on how counterfeiters continue to get away with using stolen images on the AdWords platform • The ABPIA continues to take action against domains in the Federal Court – seizing domains’ assets and names. Current action includes nearly 200 defendants. ■

The industry is taking steps to prosecute fraudsters using stolen images of quality gowns



The BBSA continues to campaign to raise consumer awareness of fake dresses in the UK





EXCLUSIVE AUTUMN
2018 CATWALK SHOWS

SOPHIA TOLLITM

— AUSTRALIA —

*Enchanting*TM
by MON CHERI

4th/5th March 2018 - DUBLIN, IRELAND

19th March 2018 - CAMBRIDGE, UK

To make an appointment call **01954 232102**
or email **sales@sophiatolli.co.uk**

WWW.SOPHIATOLLI.CO.UK

Trends

LATEST GOWNS • NEW BRANDS • EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS • GLOBAL FASHION AND MORE



Ones to watch




Keep your brides happy and show your insider knowledge by staying ahead of the trends. This month we look at one of the biggest trends for 2019 - back details. What's more, we review the latest styles for destination wedding gowns and go around the globe to discover a range of innovative designers that brides will swoon over ■

A woman with blonde hair styled in an updo, wearing a silver tiara, is leaning against a large, textured tree trunk. She is wearing a white, long-sleeved wedding dress with intricate lace detailing and a deep V-neckline. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green foliage and a stone wall.

DANDO

LONDON

www.dandolondonbridals.com

 Dando london Bridals  @dandolondon  @dando_london

A ROYAL AFFAIR

Here's our pick of gorgeous styles for Ms Markle's wedding to Prince Harry in May



Galia Lahav

Paloma Blanca



Paolo Sebastian

Ellis Bridals

Meghan Markle promises to be a breath of fresh air for the British monarchy. The minute their engagement was announced, all we could think about is what kind of wedding dress she will go for. Will she follow tradition with long-sleeved lace, or will she continue to challenge the norm? Here are our top picks for the future Princess Henry of Wales...

GALIA LAHAV

When you're going to be a princess – or duchess, at the very least – you'll probably want to dress like one on your wedding day. This wonderful Galia Lahav creation is definitely fit for a princess and would look perfect paired with a tiara and some serious jewellery. The soft pink hue still offers a hint of rebellion, whilst the shape is totally classic.

PALOMA BLANCA

We've never seen her look anything less than immaculate – and this Paloma Blanca wedding dress would complement her style perfectly. It's sleek and elegant, but still has a fun, surprising twist in the form of an oversized bow at the back.

PAOLO SEBASTIAN

This Cinderella-inspired gown by Paolo Sebastian couldn't be any more perfect for a princess. It's the palest shade of icy-blue, which would look stunning on her, and has plenty of sparkle that will light up under all those paparazzi camera flashes. We especially love the 'stroke of midnight'

embroidery – it's a subtle nod to her new role and her happily ever after.

ELLIS BRIDALS

Kate Middleton wowed the nation with her gorgeous lace sleeved gown by Alexander McQueen in 2011. Meghan may follow suit – if so, this lace beauty by Ellis Bridals could be ideal. It even has an on-trend high-neck, so we know Pippa Middleton would approve.

THEIA

Even though she's marrying into the British royal family, Meghan is an LA girl and we'd hope she'd channel some of that LA-cool into her wedding day look. This gown by THEIA would be ideal – it's the right cut for a May wedding. It's laidback but luxe enough to hold its own amongst royalty.

CAROLINE CASTIGLIANO

We can just imagine Meghan looking flawless in this classic design. There's no lace, so she can avoid comparisons to Kate and Pippa, and whilst the long train and clean-cut satin say 'royal', the cut out back and casual pockets still add a hint of LA.

GEMY MAALOUF

Of course, we know Meghan has strong opinions and isn't afraid to speak up and stand out – whether it's to talk to *Vanity Fair* about the tribulations of dating a royal, or making speeches about the challenges women face today. So we wouldn't be surprised if she chose classic lace but made it her own – this Gemy Maalouf creation puts a twist on tradition. ■



Antonia by Theia

Irresistible by Caroline Castiglano



Gemy Maalouf



Australia
Wendy Makin is celebrating 25 years of designing gorgeous gowns. She launched her label in the UK in 2002 and has expanded her portfolio in recent years with a Ready to Wear collection in 2012 and the French collection in 2015. The latter has a vintage theme, featuring light, floating fabrics, beautiful lace and delicate beading. See them at stand 603, White Gallery



Belgium
Rembo Styling creates innovative and chic dresses for brides who want an effortless look. The brand has also launched the Civil line – designed for brides planning a civil ceremony. New for 2018 is a striking bridal jumpsuit, shorter gowns and a range of relaxed, boho-chic styles. See them at stand 503, White Gallery



USA
Since 1997, Casablanca Bridal has been creating bridal gowns of superb quality with attention to detail. Its original designs make it a truly stand-out brand across the globe. The most recent collection includes its trademark exquisite beading, luxurious fabrics and elegant detailing. See them at stand C38, London Bridal Week



Canada
Paloma Blanca is a family-run business and has been operating in Toronto since 1937. It creates beautiful gowns that are 100% Canadian-made. The dresses are for brides looking for a timeless style that is fashion forward with a quality finish. See them at stand D27, London Bridal Week

Round the world in WEDDING DRESSES

With London Bridal Week and White Gallery approaching, brands from across the globe are getting ready to head to the capital. Zoë Burke takes us on a whistle-stop tour to reveal what designers you can expect to see at the shows, and some additional beauties she found along the way

Germany

Aimed at the modern bride, Kaviar Gauche creates a selection of striking dresses every year that are available at their bridal concept stores across Germany. Put together by design duo Alexandra Fischer-Roehler and Johanna Kühl, they aim to offer the perfect gown to any kind of bride - whether they want simple and modern or romantic and opulent.

Lebanon

Gemy Maalouf caters for the unconventional bride. Its collection captures a distinct style - combining elegance, modernity and romance. Based in Lebanon, the brand is internationally renowned for its fashion-forward creations. See them at stand 104, White Gallery

South Africa

Kobus Dippenaar launched Anna Georgina in 2012 as a tribute to his mother. The made-to-measure bridal service grew out of Kobus's passion and desire to make haute couture fashion more accessible. Available in a range of on-trend colours, including blush and pale gold, his gowns are both sensual and cosmopolitan. See them at stand 605, White Gallery

Taiwan

Brian Chen, of Brian Chen Bridal, is known as the 'musician designer' as his designs are inspired by his passion for music. Designed with captivating lines, using only the finest fabrics that move gracefully, his romantic gowns allow brides to write their own story by creating dresses that allow them to feel the best version of themselves. See them at stand 207, White Gallery

Spain

Pronovias started life in Barcelona as a prestigious fabric store in 1922. It presented its first collection of gowns in Spain in 1964, launching the brand we know and love today. It's now available in more than 105 countries and is a favourite of high-profile figures and celebrities across the globe, as well as with countless brides. See Pronovias at stand B36, London Bridal Week

Dando London

Driven by the creative tour de force that is Christine Dando, Dando London launched in 2016 and set out to celebrate the feminine shape from every angle.

Gowns are constructed with a softness and drape that is designed to flatter and make the wearer look truly stunning. See Dando London at stand D51, London Bridal Week

Eliza Jane Howell

All Eliza Jane Howell gowns are hand-beaded, and some include the extra embellishment of hand embroidery, too. All the gowns are individually made using a combination of traditional and modern beading techniques and patterns, resulting in something truly exquisite. See them at stand 307, White Gallery

Christie Couture

After five years in bridal retail, Lesley Christie decided to design her own collection – Christie Couture. The gowns are all about flattering silhouettes, made using good corsetry within the designs and quality fabrics throughout. They are designed to appeal to all kinds of brides. See the brand at stand D32, London Bridal Week

True Bride

True Bride creates gowns that are romantic and truly timeless. Every bride that picks a dress from the brand can expect to feel radiant on her wedding day. The typical True Bride girl is classic, elegant and subtly seductive, so she needs a signature dress to match. See them at stand C3, London Bridal Week

Sassi Holford

For over 35 years Sassi Holford has been making dream dresses. The business started in 1988 when she was asked to create a Diana-inspired gown for a friend – the brand is now internationally renowned with retailers in the UK, Europe, Dubai, Japan and the US. All her dresses are handmade in England by her talented and passionate team. See Sassi Holford at stand 305, White Gallery

Coco Amore

Coco Amore was launched in 2016 by Coco Alexandre, a British designer based in the West Midlands. Until the launch of her own label, Coco had been designing for high-end bridal houses across the world. The iconic Coco style comes from fusing the modest and the daring to create fashion-forward pieces that will make a real style statement. See them at stand 200, White Gallery

HOME-GROWN GLORY

There's a wealth of gorgeous dresses being created by designers around the globe, but the London shows are a great opportunity to view home-grown talent, too. We couldn't go around the world in wedding dresses without casting a spotlight on those in the UK...

BADGLEY
MISCHKA.
Bride



BADGLEYMISCHKA.COM



SOTTERO AND MIDGLEY

AS UNIQUE AS THE BRIDE WHO WEARS IT

SOTTEROANDMIDGLEY.com



Rebecca Ingram™

TIMELESS ELEGANCE. MODERN VALUE.

REBECCAINGRAM.COM

Time to look BACK

This season it's all about how dresses look from behind. Read on to find out which designers are following suit

WORDS HANNAH WILKINSON

The autumn 2017 shows saw the big brands pull out all the stops – and if Harrogate and New York are anything to go by, detail will continue its reign well in to 2018.

The presentations across the globe provided a key insight in to the hottest trends for next year, and the new season offerings dazzled with texture, stunning silhouettes and intricate design. And, although some styles have sparkled and faded over past seasons, one trend remains constant; show-stopping backs.

Demand for beautiful back detailing has grown significantly over the past few years, with illusion backs, keyholes and lace detailing leading the way, putting a spin on the classic silhouette. Even while the industry's top names paraded gowns with a renewed focus on necklines, collections this year still featured the sexy back detail that modern brides are asking for. With daring and decadent, as well as subtle design options, it's no wonder this playful trend has remained so popular.

"We've really enjoyed finding sophisticated and glamorous ways to create flattering back details, for a variety of shapes and sizes," says Romantica of Devon's Hayley Badham. "In our 2018 collection we have a variety of illusion backs, keyhole backs, low lace backs and striking V shapes. Keyholes have featured in previous collections but, with the recent wedding of Pippa Middleton, we have ➤

Sottero and Midgley, style
Grady, maggiesottero.com

also tried to ensure that we have included a variety of these styles to meet needs and current trends.”

With the popularity of period dramas like *The Crown*, it seems that some brides are reverting to more traditional silhouettes with a modern twist, too. “We see back details continuing to be a popular feature but with a more decadent design, full-illusion backs will begin to fade and striking lace and keyhole backs will feature more prominently,” adds Hayley. “Fabric choice is evolving too, with mikado and guipure lace featuring more prominently in collections, which will no doubt impact the way keyhole backs are designed to flatter the body.”

Across the pond, in the Fall/Winter Justin Alexander collection, the spotlight was on drama – with silhouettes, simplicity and embellishments taking centre stage. Here, details included linear beading on illusion backs, new and unique floral-inspired designs, as well as gorgeous low backs adorned with romantic lace.

Italian designer Eddy K’s latest collection also provided a wealth of striking styles. Always one step ahead of today’s trends, these pieces aimed to be even more impressive from the back than from the front – whether a keyhole design, crossed straps or illusion with plenty of beading.

Similarly, Paloma Blanca’s sister label, Mikaela, has taken some non-traditional steps this season to provide its brides with modern and unique options. As well as guipure laces and delicate splashes of pearls and beading, racer backs and intricate spaghetti straps presented an endless selection that will be ideal for 2018’s style-conscious brides.

But while some designers

With the popularity of period dramas like The Crown, it seems that some brides are reverting to more traditional silhouettes with a modern twist

are aiming for impact, others have taken a more subtle approach to the trend. One brand that has definitely ticked the right boxes is Australia’s Zavana Bridal. “Many of our gowns feature a lovely low back, but what we’ve been experimenting with is beaded back detail for our 2018 collection,”

says Marketing Manager, Lilly Moseley. “We think the way beading can drape naturally over the back makes a design so beautiful and delicate. Our Zavana ZB201 gown (pictured) actually has removable beading – so brides can walk down the aisle making heads turn, but can also switch the look later on the dance floor.”

It certainly seems the trend won’t go away any time soon – and it’s not just the bride who can benefit. “We always aim to be as fashion-forward as possible with our bridesmaid designs, and our stockists look to us each season for glamour

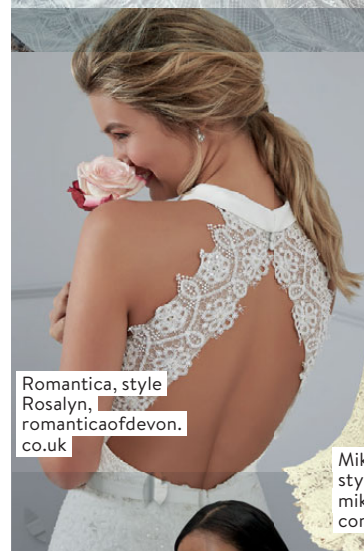
and individuality,” says Lydia Sayles of True Bride. “Our elegant True Bridesmaids style M740 was inspired by Pippa Middleton’s stunning wedding dress, with its romantic heart-shaped back. The lacework on ours complements the fitted bodice perfectly. What’s more it’s finished with a neat cap sleeve and dramatic high neckline – we think it says it all!”

So, it’s clear that women everywhere are lusting after the look and, with so many options, this desirable style is sure to fit and flatter every shape, size, style, and member of the party. From bold and dramatic cuts to subtle illusion lace and elegant embellishments, you’ll certainly be spoilt for choice over the coming year. ■



Eddy K, style CT192, eddyk.com

Zavana Bridal, style ZB201, zavanabridal.com



Romantica, style Rosalyn, romanticaofdevon.co.uk



Mikaela Bridal, style 2194, mikaelabridal.com



Justin Alexander, style 99002, justinalexander.com



Christina Wu, style 15658, eternitybridal.co.uk



Ladybird®
WWW.LADYBIRD.NL

STYLE 218016

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT

UK BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER | RICHARD LILL | 01423 876 380 | 07767 351 270 | RICHARD.LILL@LIONHEARTPORTFOLIO.COM

ELOPE IN STYLE

Weddings abroad are soaring in popularity, so what advice do you need to pass on to brides?

WORDS JESSICA BROWN

Many couples are tempted to jet off to an exotic location for a wedding soaked in glorious sunshine. Whether it's a Caribbean paradise, a chic European hideaway or an iconic city landscape, saying 'I Do' abroad has never been more popular.

Lisa Redgrave, wedding planner from hitchedinitially.com, has seen a remarkable increase in brides and grooms wanting a destination wedding. "I've been organising bookings in Italy for 10 years, couples getting married abroad is constantly increasing, my business grows by 30% every year," explains Lisa. "The main reason is the weather; sunnier destinations are the dream but you also get value for money abroad."

Halving the cost is one advantage of marrying overseas but travelling with just a handful of loved ones is another. "Less guests means less stress. On average my weddings have 40 guests and for that you can have a very good wedding for around £7,000," says Lisa. "That includes everything, all the legal stuff, wedding planner, dinner, flowers, everything. People don't want to spend £20,000 on a wedding anymore. It's so expensive to buy homes nowadays people aren't keen to blow a huge amount on their nuptials. Family and friends are happy to travel to destinations for a wedding as it means they get a holiday themselves, too."

Retailers are becoming savvy when it comes to advising brides on suitable dresses to take abroad. While some brides will always choose the dress of their dreams, others are listening to the experts. "I have noticed a trend for two pieces on brides," continues Lisa. "It's very sophisticated and looks absolutely stunning for a wedding abroad. However, I've also seen brides getting married on beaches in big, heavy gowns with tight bodices covered in beads. I wouldn't recommend it, but girls buy the dress they want to wear, without thinking how uncomfortable it may feel in the sunshine."

Stephanie Hislop from Emma Roy of Edinburgh agrees that girls will follow their heart when picking their wedding gown. "We have a constant flow of brides wanting sunshine



on their big day," says Stephanie. "People are realising you don't need a big castle wedding in the UK, going abroad with a handful of people you love is perfect and a good idea. Brides should look for a lighter dress, without the big underskirts. However, we do have brides who just get their perfect dress, if that's a big princess gown they say they'll just deal with the heat when they get there."

James Waddington from Romantica of Devon thinks brides need to be more serious when choosing a wedding

dress to wear abroad. "Brides need to buy the right dress to travel with, they need to think about the heat and how they're going to transport it," he explains. "Rather than buying a big heavy dress, they should look at chiffon or a crepe bridal gown. They are much lighter so they will have a better experience wearing it on a beach and will be far less flustered. Also they can pack it easier and loosely, and won't have to deal with bad creases."

Transporting a wedding gown to the dream location is something brides need to be advised on, especially if they are boarding a plane. "There are bespoke wedding dress boxes brides can buy and carry for hand luggage on a flight," explains Lisa. "These are perfect for the cabin measurement restrictions. Brides can travel so easily with their dresses these days and then use the box to store their dress afterwards."

Retailers know the perfect way to pack and travel with your gown, so it's always best to consult the advice of a professional before you jet off. "We pack most dresses into a standard canvas travel bag, which is perfect as they allow the dress to breathe and not get creased while travelling," explains Stephanie. "However, some of the big princess gowns won't fit and are best to go either in a normal dress bag, or in a double duvet cover."

With beach weddings on the rise, what trends are brides going to be wearing throughout 2018? "Crepe is coming right back into fashion and will be really big for next season," explains James. "It's perfect for a hot sunny day and is a little heavier than chiffon so can cover up all those lumps and bumps - it doesn't crease easily. Light blushes, Champagnes and light pinks are all still very much in fashion, as well as dreamy illusion trains, they look amazing."

Stephanie agrees saying we are seeing a move away from the standard lace gowns. "Brides are either going for super simple, very sleek and sophisticated, or the complete opposite, really fun with lots of texture," she concludes. "We're seeing a lot more crochet as opposed to lace, this can look really beautiful if it's done in the right way."

HOW BRIDES SHOULD PACK GOWNS

1. Casablanca's Charlotte Pratt says: "Ensure you have access to a garment steamer. Whether that is something you bring with you as a portable steam iron or confirming the hotel have one on site."

2. Don't be afraid to gently fold the gown. Heavy laces wrinkle less, but can be heavy to carry around.

3. Special Day's Joanne McFadden says: "I transported a dress for my own wedding; to eliminate lost luggage issues, I advise taking your dress as carry-on luggage."

4. Bring a needle and thread in case of any last minute emergencies!

5. Call the airline in advance if you have a very large wedding dress to carry and know it won't be able to fit in as standard travel cabin luggage. Airlines are usually very helpful.

Sottero and
Midgley

A woman with long, wavy reddish-brown hair is sitting on a set of stone steps outdoors. She is wearing a white lace wedding dress with a long, flowing train and a full skirt. The dress features intricate lace detailing throughout. She is looking back over her shoulder at the camera, with her hand near her face. The steps are covered in green moss and surrounded by lush greenery and ivy. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

MAGGIE SOTTERO®

IMPECCABLE STYLING. INCOMPARABLE FIT.



PROM NIGHT GLAMOUR

Claire Robertshaw from Alexia Designs discusses the brand's Blush collections and its colourful array of prom gowns

WORDS REBECCA FOSTER ►



How long has Alexia been in the prom market? The Blush collection first launched in America in 2006, before coming to the UK in 2009. It's been going from strength to strength ever since – I'd say about 60% of our business is from the prom sector.

How has Blush evolved since it was first established? It did well right from the word 'go.' We currently supply about 65 retailers in the UK. A lot of the collection's development has been based on the feedback we get from the girls buying our dresses. One of the things that's become an important theme is that girls don't want to turn up to prom to discover someone else is wearing the same dress. We responded to that by establishing our exclusivity policy.

How does that work?

We offer an exclusivity radius to each of our stockists, which generally covers an area of about 10 to 15 miles. Because of that exclusivity, the proms don't usually fall into another boutique's area. The problem we're finding is that more girls are travelling greater distances to find their perfect prom dress, and it's impossible for the shops to police that. The main intention is that each retailer will take note of the customer's name, the dress they ordered, which school they go to and what the prom date is. That means if another client comes in, they'll be able to check back against those details to ensure they don't sell the same piece to two people going to the same event.

What trends can we expect to see emerging in terms of prom attire?

Interestingly, style choices seem to be different in various parts of the country. In Scotland, for example, our Pink collection does very well – that encompasses lots of ballgowns and two-piece outfits. However, in Essex, the slinky, more fitted pieces tend to go down well.

Where do Alexia's designers get their inspiration from? The collections are all very fashion-forward, so our designers tend to get a lot of inspiration from what they see on the catwalk and at various fashion weeks. We try to follow day-to-day fashion as well, because that's what young girls like.



A flattering mermaid-style skirt gives the 11224 ensemble, priced at £579, a stylish edge.



The C1018 has exquisite bead detailing at the back, this design is one of Claire's favourites in the Couture by Ven collection. Priced from £659.



Are there any standout silhouettes?

We've got a lot of fishtail dresses – they seem to be really popular this season and lots of girls are asking for them. We've also got a selection of cold-shoulder and jersey-fitted designs. We tend to try and appeal to as many people as possible.

Are there any signature styles that shine through the collections?

We've got a lot of prints in the range right now – not bold, heavy ones like last year, but more delicate designs. There's also a selection of beautifully-beaded pieces. There's lots of exquisite beading throughout, with a few pieces from the Couture range standing out in particular. That collection also features some gorgeous statement bows.

What kinds of fabrics feature throughout the Blush collections?

Mikado is very popular – it's quite plain and a little bit firmer. It hangs off your figure nicely, so if you've got curves it's great. Jersey is probably the most popular, and that really does cling to the body. We do have some lace and chiffon, too.

Do the Blush collections reflect any colour trends? We find that the classic, bright colours, like the reds, sangrias and sapphires, are very popular. Off-white was a big trend over the past couple of years, but it seems to have tailed off a bit now. We've also introduced a beautiful mint aqua colour this season, plus some lilac pieces, too.

Do you have any favourites? I have a couple of favourites – in the Couture collection especially. C018 has beautiful beaded back detailing, with a low scoop cut that's filled with beads. I also love the C1044, which has a fitted jersey skirt with a similar back. This one comes with the flowing Mikado skirt as well. I also love the way the skirt on C1054 fans out at the back – it's gorgeous.

What can we expect to see in the future?

Our priority is to keep looking at trends to ensure we're as fashion-forward as we can be. We also want to stay in touch with what the girls are asking for. A lot depends on what happens this season as to what our looks for the next season are going to be. ■



Shown here in fuchsia, C1044 is one of Robertshaw's favourite pieces. Priced at £599, this gown is from the Couture collection.

11538 features a flowing skirt and a striking hand-beaded top and is priced at £525. It comes in a selection of hues, including sky blue, mint and dreamsicle.





WWW.MILLIEMAYBRIDAL.CO.UK



This season it's all about the back detailing, as shown in the new M38

Thoroughly MODERN MILLIE

We talk to Yvonne McGregor about the launch of her latest labels, Millie May and Millie Grace, and take a look at the brand's dazzling new collections

WORDS REBECCA FOSTER

After the launch of her debut label - White Rose Bridal - 21 years ago, expert stylist Yvonne McGregor has added another two brands to her portfolio. Launched earlier this year, Millie May and its plus size counterpart Millie Grace have been well-received by the industry - each is already stocked by 65 retailers. We catch up with McGregor to discuss the new ranges and discover how each one evolved.

THE MILLIE MAY CONCEPT

With three decades' worth of industry experience under her belt, it comes as no surprise that McGregor's latest brands respond directly to the industry's needs. She has been quick to recognise the sales competition facing bridal boutiques - big retailers and online vendors selling at bargain-basement prices.

"Wed2Be, for example, has killed many local businesses," she says. "The downside of the company is if a potential buyer goes into one of their shops and picks up a dress, it's possible that a lot of people will have already tried it on. It'll be grubby and might even have buttons missing."

Following multiple conversations with boutique owners, McGregor sparked the idea that would eventually evolve into the Millie May brand. The concept for the new label focuses on delivering the once-in-a-lifetime experience of buying a wedding dress for an affordable price, by offering a range of made-to-measure pieces. Despite the challenge posed by the low prices and sheer convenience of internet shopping, it's McGregor's view that a quality experience in a local boutique will always hold a special place in the hearts of most brides - and that's the foundation that Millie May is built on. The label's plus size sister range, Millie Grace, is based on the same principle. "The dresses in Millie May range from £175 to £265, averaging at £235. The typical price point for a Millie Grace piece is about £250," says McGregor. "You get the whole experience for an affordable price."

According to McGregor, the journey to purchasing the perfect dress is something no bride-to-be should miss out on. "Every shop has a sale rail - but just because someone has a limited budget that doesn't mean she wants a sale dress," McGregor explains. "A bride-to-be still wants the experience of trying it on, being measured and then told it will arrive in 12 weeks' time." So, what else sets Millie May and Millie Grace apart from Wed2Be? In addition to

the authentic boutique experience, brides can also make use of the brands' made-to-measure service. "The dresses can be altered to reflect what the customer wants," says McGregor. "That's never been known for a label in this price bracket."

CREATIVE INSPIRATION

With a back catalogue of spectacular White Rose Bridal designs, McGregor's experience and expertise has fed directly into her latest collections for Millie May and Millie Grace. It's from the brides-to-be themselves that McGregor draws a large proportion of her inspiration. "I love doing designer days," she says. "You get so much from the brides-to-be. Many of my best styles have resulted from conversations with people who come in, try on the dress and say, 'I like it, but I'd prefer it with X, Y or Z.' It's this type of feedback that inspires new collections."

The pieces in the debut Millie May collection showcase an eclectic array of styles, from fashion-forward frocks to more traditional designs. "There's a real variety in terms of silhouettes, including A-lines, fishtails, trumpets and ballgowns," says McGregor. "There's also some T-length dresses in there, as we're seeing a lot of ladies wanting to pair these dresses up with a fantastic pair of

shoes. We've tried to accommodate everyone!" In terms of fabrics, lace features heavily within the Millie May and Millie Grace collections. "I think it's going to be a long time before it falls out of favour," she says.

McGregor reveals that she is particularly drawn to MM35, an ultra-pretty lace gown with three-quarter sleeves and an illusion neckline. "I love the ruching at the back - it's so Beyoncé!" Thanks to its elegant, timeless appeal, MM24 is another of the stylist's favourites.

In terms of trends for the season ahead, McGregor predicts that Bardot necklines will continue to soar in popularity as brides move away from strapless styles. Going forward, you can expect to see the Millie Grace line expanded to include significantly more pieces. "You'll probably see a few more fishtail silhouettes in the upcoming collections. We're also seeing a growing trend for exquisite back detailing, so that's likely to work itself into our Millie May collections, too." ■

McGregor has designed a range of affordable design-led dresses, including the M01

The new collections feature a range of different styles, including this A-line M31 dress

LOOKING AHEAD

Despite having launched less than 12 months ago, the future is looking rosy for both Millie May and Millie Grace, with McGregor feeling optimistic. "Feedback from the industry has been positive," says McGregor. "A lot of people have already made repeat orders, so 2018 is going to be busy for us. I believed business would be good - but not this good!"

This MM15 dress has a delicate neckline

The MM07 features on-trend three-quarter length sleeves



LANESTA

www.lanesta.com

Events

LONDON BRIDAL WEEK • WHITE GALLERY • BRIDAL BUYER AWARDS • DESIGNER INTERVIEWS



London calling

All eyes are on our nation's capital in the run up to 2018's London Bridal Week and White Gallery in March. The fashion shows will set the trends for 2019, and will be the first chance for the world to see a host of exclusive new collections. Find out more about the destination event on page 52, and read what some of the designers have to say about their new season styles from page 56. ■



London Calling

London Bridal Week will join forces with iconic luxury buying event White Gallery in March...here's a glimpse of what to expect

The industry has its sights set on London, where the world of bridal will take over the city from 25th-27th March 2017. London has long been home to some of the globe's most coveted fashion stars, making it the perfect location for the most exciting new development in the bridal calendar – London Bridal Week, co-located with the iconic White Gallery. The destination event provides somewhere for ideas and innovation to meet, it's a place where the very best of the industry can come together and experience the latest in collections from around the world.

BIG NAMES, AND NEW NAMES

ExCeL London will be home to the UK's first bridal 'super-show'; by consolidating two exhibitions, the event will have a truly unique offering – retailers can access everything from mid-range collections through to designer names all under one roof. A host of market-leading labels, from Ellis and Amanda Wyatt to Allure, Alan Hannah, Morilee and many more, will be launching their brand new collections for the first time at the show.

The rebrand to London Bridal Week highlights the fact that the event is unlike anything the bridal community has seen before. Significant emphasis has been placed on curating an outstanding exhibitor base, and attracting exciting new talent to the show – a broad representation of the best manufacturers and designers that the industry has to offer. Show organiser, Ocean Media Group (OMG), has signed a three-year commercial deal with ExCeL to focus on creating a show with longevity – ensuring this will be the ultimate meeting place for the bridal community now and far into the future.

WHAT'S ON

Both London Bridal Week and White Gallery will each run a full fashion show programme alongside the exhibitions, featuring a selection of the finest UK and international labels. This is a perfect opportunity for you to discover the latest trends for your brides and see how the gowns move and look on brides – which will help you to make the best buying decisions for your business. Take a look at the participating brands on whitegallery.com and londonbridalweek.com.

Exhibitor lists are updated weekly with exciting new additions.



Take advantage of the show's numerous networking opportunities across the three days

There will be bridesmaid and eveningwear collections exclusively launched at both shows

This year also sees the launch of the Bridal Retail Success Academy, which will support retailers in all aspects of running a successful business. An exceptional seminar programme has been crafted with sessions from experts including Warren Knight and Wendy Rivera. A full list of topics will be announced shortly.

The exhibition also offers the perfect opportunity for you to meet suppliers, catch up with industry friends and forge new relationships. There will be a number of networking areas within the show, including the Champagne Bar, Cocktail Bar and the Bridal Buyer Lounge. If you are looking for after-hours fun, a party will take place at the close of the event on Sunday night, plus you can join some of the biggest names in the industry at the annual RBA Awards on the Monday evening.

This year, travelling to the event and staying close by has been made easier than ever before. OMG has been working with a dedicated concierge team, who are on hand to make accessing the event as easy and convenient as possible. The team will be available to assist exhibitors and visitors with travel,

accommodation and restaurant bookings. For those visiting the show by car, OMG has secured 500 free parking spaces. For more information, visit londonbridalweek.com/essential-info.

WHITE GALLERY

There is a whole host of amazing designers showing their collections at White Gallery. We caught up with five brands to find out what you can expect.

Miranda Templeton: "White Gallery gives us access to the luxury end of the bridal industry, which we don't necessarily see at other shows. You can expect to see silver, gold and rose gold designs in the new collection. Beautiful new leafy vines, metallic filigree belts and a new twist on the tiara will all feature strongly. We will bring 30 to 40 new designs, which will sit alongside the main collection of around 80 pieces."

Gemy Maalouf: "It is always a pleasure for us to be part of White Gallery as we get to show our latest collection at one of the most prestigious bridal events. We always aim to offer a modern and fresh twist while keeping in mind our identity and aesthetic. Our new collection will vary between 60 to 70 pieces, but what exactly will we be showing? Stay tuned." ♦



The destination event will see exclusive launches of a host of 2019 collections



The show takes place at ExCeL London, from 25th-27th March



Elbeth Gillis: "White Gallery is a place for us to showcase our collections, meet prospective stockists and catch up with the owners of the stores we already supply. It is also a great way to meet and network with others in the industry and the media. This season, we are focusing a lot more on separates and giving the stores and brides the power of choice. We are very excited and proud to be working on a South African part of our collection as well, utilising ostrich feathers and mohair from local farmers. We will show at least 30 pieces, probably more."

Motee Maids: "The environment and experience for buyers and brands is really considered a pleasure to attend. This is where Motee Maids launched last year and we look forward to sharing our collection with more people. We want to showcase the 'Motee Maids create your own gown' concept to more boutiques to build on a successful first year. We will be showing a new colour, embellishment and exciting new silhouettes."

Amy Mair Couture: "This will be my second year at White Gallery. I will be showcasing very innovative designs that feature relaxed, elegant and effortless bridal, which I believe is what ladies are looking for at the moment along with pieces that have a 'punch' involving textured fabrics and sculpturing silhouettes with a glamorous and daring edge! Our embroideries were very well received at the show last year, so we have a new embroidery in production in Madrid that we have been developing for the show. We are looking forward to pushing our own design boundaries and creating gowns that have their own identity in the industry."

LONDON BRIDAL WEEK TRENDS

The trends revealed at LBW will truly shape the face of the UK bridal scene long into 2019 – and the industry is eagerly anticipating the new collections from British and European brands, as well as those from further afield. We meet five exhibitors to find out what you can expect.

Crystal Breeze: "We look forward to showing our Eveningwear/ Prom collection of about 100 pieces. Many of our customers like to order for Autumn delivery, then top this up with our later collection at Harrogate in September. Expect to see figure hugging silhouettes, sheer backs and midriff cut outs, too. Sequins are definitely making a big comeback this year."

Find out more about the shows at londonbridalweek.com and whitegallery.com



Caroline Castiglione will showcase her latest collection at White Gallery, find out more on page 60

Ladybird: "We will be showing examples of the 12 Ladybird design stories: Ladybird, Plus, Vintage, Bohemian, Sensual, Silhouette, Flowy, Pink line, Princess, Maternity, Affinity and Deluxe. The design stories cover almost every trend, silhouette and price point, which range from £150 – £510 wholesale. For us, colour has made a slight return with new shades like ice green and beige; soft tones bring a depth to our designs as they can highlight the intricacy of delicate lace detailing and give a warmth to a variance of skin tones. Silhouettes are getting fuller in the skirt, with some dramatic princess gowns and by contrast the drop waisted A-line and body skimming fit'n'flairs."

True Bride: "What will you see from us? Expect red-carpet-worthy bridesmaid dresses, and bridal gowns that will sparkle and shine all the way to the alter. It will also be the official launch of our plus size collection! You will see sexy, super glam bridesmaid gowns featuring skirt splits, and bare shoulder bardot necklines. But, as always, there will be an emphasis on wearability across all sizes. The bridal collection sees floor sweeping gowns, heavy beading and head turning extra-long trains."

Casablanca Bridal: "While last season was a combination of sexy and bohemian with many figure hugging silhouettes, this season turns up the volume and scale on sophistication. We are hoping and expecting that our buyers are going to look at the collection and say "wow, that's really different – in a good way!" We have a lot of variety in atypical neckline shapes and sleeve lengths, along with some very unique laces, lots of sequins, and some unique colours such as amber coloured embroidered lace and blush silky satin, which make for great show pieces."

Rachel Allen and Marys Bridal: "With the launch of Marys and Lo'Adoro by Rachel Allan in the UK, we are incredibly excited to be showcasing our full collections in London. The well-established Mary's Bridal brand has a time honoured tradition of creating affordable classic gowns and traditional silhouettes. Fall 2018 marked the start of a new age for Mary's Bridal as we strive to create timeless gowns that are infused with modern touches and romantic detailing. The collections are rooted in traditional ivory with accents of blush, light blue, champagne and nude tones. You will see a fantastic choice of fabrics from tulle and Mikado to satin and lace." ■



Many of the UK's top designers will be at the show, including British favourite Sassi Holford





Rainbow CLUB



INTRODUCING OUR 2018 COLLECTION



With over 30 years of experience we offer boutique bridal shops the reassurance of a leading award-winning brand, innovative designs to include a range of exquisite handmade veils and complete marketing support. Offer your customers the finest possible choice.

SHOES / VEILS / HANDBAGS / CLIPS

+44 (0)1392 207030

A woman with long blonde hair is shown in profile, wearing an off-the-shoulder, floor-length white lace wedding dress. She is standing in front of a teal-colored wall with ornate, carved moldings. Pink cherry blossoms are draped over the top left corner of the frame. The lighting is soft, highlighting the intricate lace details of the dress.

There's something about ELLIS

An iconic UK brand, Ellis Bridals has seen it all, but we have much more to see from the company - including its highly-anticipated new collection, which will launch at London Bridal Week

British bridalwear is lauded for its brilliance world-wide, in part thanks to the iconic designers that come back season after season with impressive, creative collections that brides adore.

And it's hard to discuss talent in the UK without mentioning Ellis Bridals – a true legend in the field. Established in 1912 in London by Ada Ellis, who honed her craft by creating bespoke dresses for London's early 20th Century aristocracy, her distinctive, elegant style meant the brand blossomed, carving a place for Ellis at the forefront of British bridalwear, where it remains to this day.

In 2018 we will see the return of the brand to Ocean Media's celebrated London show, and the gowns on display will not disappoint. We talk to the company's James Ellis to discover what's in store and the importance of the eagerly awaited London Bridal Week (LBW).

London Bridal Week is coming to ExCeL – what are the benefits for retailers?

Excel is a great space for a show, and over the last few years has been filled with restaurants and bars. I think that, as everything is within walking distance, it will be a really enjoyable and social event. Having the White Gallery brands and the London Bridal Week brands alongside each other will ensure a much more interesting event for the retailers. Having too many shows to go to is the number one reservation from retailers, so this one destination, with a larger selection of brands, should help with that.

When was Ellis's first trade event?

We were the first brand to sign with Harrogate when it started all those years ago. We are really hoping LBW will now become the main show in the UK.

What should we expect to see from you at LBW?

The 2019 collection is all about the juxtaposition. We are creating some wonderfully romantic English country garden floral embroidery, which we are carefully fusing with clean and modern styles. Silhouettes are contemporary and sleek, but still applied to classic styles. The collection is a perfect mix of archival designs blended with forward-thinking styling.

Can you tell us a little more about the details?

Touching on the English country garden theme there will be some Victorian-inspired styling, such as high necklines and full lace sleeves, which is very on trend, mixed perfectly with modern off-the-shoulder and ballet necklines. One trend for



Kelsey Rose is Ellis Bridal's maids collection. It is elegant, fun and glam

2019 has to be more colour, and we have embraced this with unique tonal beading, but also in our fabrics. Subtly we have brought in soft blushes, pearls and vintage rose tones to make sure that we have a design not just for every retailer, but for every bride.

Will LBW be the first chance retailers have to see your newest collections in their entirety?

Absolutely. This will be the launch of our 2019 collection in the UK. We will have the complete range there and it will be the only show we attend in the UK. We will of course have our sales team on the road, too, and we will be showing at Barcelona in April. A UK launch is always very important and exciting to us and the feedback we get from our loyal retailers is vital to our progression, so we are very pleased that they will be the first to see the new designs.

What percentage of your stockist network do you expect to see at LBW?

A very large percentage. Ocean Media has negotiated excellent hotel rates and has some fun social events planned. There is a concierge service provided by Ocean Media that handles all your travel at highly discounted rates. I think this should help bring in retailers from all over the UK.

What's the best way for retailers to spend their time at the show?

Plan your schedule wisely as this is a big show, and also a new show, so you won't necessarily know where you are going straight away. Study the brands and if possible make appointments with them so that you know that your time is allocated wisely. Aside from that, enjoy it! Shows are a great opportunity to share experiences with other retailers and the brands you work with.

Why is it so important to attend?

From a personal point of view, we feel it is vital for our UK retailers to attend as it will be the only time they will get to see the collection within a showcase setting this year in the UK. We now find the majority of our retailers want to do their main buy in March/April. What's more, we always have an amazing payment plan on offer for the retailers that buy at the show, which has proven incredibly popular over the years. ■



Blush pink is an evergreen best seller. See the latest styles at LBW

OUR INDUSTRY GREATS

"We have to mention **Ada Ellis**, who the founded the company in 1912. It is the oldest bridal brand in the world. She was a bridal pioneer."

"**Susi Rogol** has always been not just a great supporter of us, but of the industry as a whole. A true advocate of retailers and brands, bringing them together and increasing the dialogue between them."

"**Tony Barnard** our northern agent who retired in 2017, he had been in bridal for over 30 years and for those of you who knew him, I am sure his name puts a smile on your face."

JLM EUROPE
JLMCOUTURE.COM

Hayley Paige

Blush
BY HAYLEY PAIGE

LAZARO

tiadora
BY ALLISON WEBB

TARA KEELY

Hayley Paige
O C C A S I O N S

For more information
please contact Stephanie:
stephanie@jlm europe.com
+44 (0)1423 873320




A woman with reddish-brown hair styled in a low bun stands in a garden, wearing a long-sleeved, floor-length white lace wedding dress. She is looking off to the side with a gentle smile. The background is a lush green hedge and trees, with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a soft, romantic atmosphere. The dress features intricate lace detailing throughout, including a deep V-neckline and long sleeves.

Jessica Grace by Tiffanys

With an unrivalled focus on supreme quality and exquisite detail, the stunning new Jessica Grace bridal collection from Tiffanys boasts the ultimate in classic and couture design sophistication.

t: 02380 334322 e: tiffanys-online@hotmail.co.uk
www.tiffanys-online.co.uk



The Carousel gown shows off Castigliano's talent for corsetry

See more from **CAROLINE CASTIGLIANO** at White Gallery this March

CAROLINE CASTIGLIANO

We meet the designer and find out about the history of the brand, as well as how it has reached the celebrated status it has today

Known for her corsetry and beautifully tailored wedding dresses, Caroline Castigliano is a designer who really understands the needs of brides. Her most recent 2018 collection, Celebrating Romance, is just as stylish and chic as anticipated. Her latest gowns feature beautiful silhouettes and a mixture of understated yet strong lines. It's a collection that shows skill and craft, as well as displaying her expert knowledge of dressing women. But what's the history of the Caroline Castigliano brand, and what can we expect in the future? We caught up with the designer to discuss her collection for 2019 and delve into her career highlights.

Castigliano's reputation has gone from strength to strength, dressing some of the world's most stylish women - think celebrities, film stars and dignitaries. Her career is undoubtedly dazzling, but it could have ended up taking a completely different direction had she followed a different passion: "As a child I was always interested in designing and making clothes, my mother

taught me to sew when I was only five years old," she says. "By the time I was age 10 I was able to produce clothes for myself. At this time I had no idea what the future held for me. I was sent to dancing school when I was 12 and a career in TV began quickly when I had a part in a television play for the BBC, so acting became my life. It wasn't until I was in my twenties that I realised I wanted to take a different direction".

After a period in the States working on 'Survival Kit,' where she designed active sportswear for women, Castigliano returned to the UK in 1990 and set up her first bespoke bridal boutique in Surrey the following year. "My first bridal collection had similar inferences to the gowns that I design today, I based the bodices on corsets, I created beautiful movement in the skirts, and the gowns had a feeling of complete simplicity and beauty," she reveals. "The beauty of a gown is when you see it on a bride. When a girl is wearing a dress that truly represents her personality and style, somehow everything lights up."

Soon after opening the boutique, Castigliano decided she needed to work with a designer that was already an

This image: The Simplicity dress is perfectly named. The ultra chic, paired back elegance of the dress speaks volumes. Right: The back detail on the Irresistible gown, is just as the name suggests




established name to boost her profile, and that person was Jasper Conran: "We worked together and designed a collection that launched very successfully; the label was Jasper Conran for Caroline Castiglioni, and we received enormous levels of coverage in the national press. Shortly after, Jasper designed the wedding dress for Princess Margaret's daughter Sarah Armstrong Jones, and this gown received phenomenal critical acclaim, all of which had an enormous impact on the brand."

Obviously this achievement helped to spread the brand's name, but Castiglioni places great emphasis on the importance of advertising, too. She reflects on the tools that worked for her in the early years, and recalls that, at the time, digital and online outlets didn't really exist, and what mattered was the magazines that you advertised in. "Brides Magazine was at the forefront so I took single page adverts right at the front in every edition. In those days, you were aware the minute a magazine hit the news racks as the phones would immediately start ringing."

In addition to smart marketing, the success the brand has received is in no small part thanks to the retailers that support it; something Castiglioni appreciates and celebrates. "They are investing in our brand and we want to invest in them to ensure they are successful," she explains. "We offer designer days to our stockists, but we like to feel we go much further than this in supporting them, for instance we offer training days for our stockists." This is just a glimpse at how the designer interacts with her retailers, something she recommends emerging brands take note of, too. "It is of the utmost importance to build a relationship with your retailers; understanding their needs and supporting them makes everybody more successful. We help with marketing and social media by developing stories, videos and photography that our stockists can easily use themselves to help build their store."


So what more does the future hold? Castiglioni is currently creating her 2019 collection, which she will be unveiling in London this March. She reveals that she's working with some "stunning new fabrics" but is keeping the styles and inspiration closely under wraps. "The first trade event I was involved with was three years ago when I launched the collection at White Gallery; previously I had only shown the collection from our Knightsbridge boutique. This year's White Gallery will be the first time any stockists will be able to view the 2019 collection, which is very exciting, we're all looking forward to it." ■




The naturally inspired
Silver Fern headpiece



The Abbey Gardens Comb
mixes on-trend metallics
with a touch of sparkle



The delicate drop
Queenie Earrings offer
a touch of elegance



Delicate blue Cornwall
Chandelier earrings

Three decades of **SPARKLE**

Stephanie Browne is celebrating 30 years of luxury fashion and bridal accessories, Zoë Burke finds out more about the brand and the iconic styles that brides adore

Stephanie Browne is a name synonymous with stylish, unique jewellery, and it's no surprise after 30 years in the business. After starting in Melbourne in 1988, the brand has grown significantly – it's recognised globally and Stephanie has designed for celebrities, TV shows and movies, too. Each of her originally crafted collections is handmade using only the finest materials. Ahead of the brand coming to London for White Gallery this March, we caught up with Stephanie to find out more about what she's learned after three decades in the industry.

Tell us about the history of Stephanie Browne – how did the company start?

We will be celebrating 30 years in 2018, since first opening in 1988. My darling dad, Robert Biddle, helped me to start my business. He was a well respected bridal retailer in Melbourne and had a need for beautiful accessories to accentuate his gowns.

He encouraged me to create some beautiful pieces – which I handmade for him. They sold as soon as we put them on display in his store. The rest is history with my first store opening in Melbourne not long after.

He also encouraged me to travel to New York for our first trade show in 1994 – it was terrifying! But that's where I met Kleinfeld, which was located in Brooklyn at the time. They were my first US stockist and have remained so ever since. I'm so proud of all the wonderful people we work with in the industry and our loyal stockists we have built up over the years. Without everyone's support we wouldn't be where we are today.

What inspires you?

Nature firstly, especially the ocean, which I live close to – as well as architecture, fashion, film, plus distant lands and their history. You have to get out and look at things; such as antiques. I go to exhibitions and I love



The Silver Fern tiara is perfect for brides with a love of organic, pretty shapes from nature

art. Coming from a family of artists, it's not hard to find someone to go with!

Which accessory trend do you wish would come back around?

I do have a penchant for chunky 80s earrings – and they are starting to make a comeback!

Are there any trends that you are glad to see the back of?

The 80s tulle puffs! Every headpiece had one attached – oh, it's just too much! And it makes it difficult to see the bride.

What are you most proud of in your three decades in business?

That we have remained a family business. My son Andrew, who is an actor, also works in the business as a jeweller, and my gorgeous daughter Chelsea now works in our Premier store and assists with visual merchandising and design. A new generation is bringing a breath of fresh air to what we do.

What lessons have you learned over the years that you can share with small business owners?

Be true to yourself and your style, don't copy others, have a little faith... It takes time to build a brand name

and a good reputation.

What can we expect from you at this year's shows?

For our 30th anniversary we will perhaps celebrate some of the iconic styles I have created over the years, but I don't want to give too much away before White Gallery 2018!

What styling advice would you encourage retailers to give to brides?

Take your mum or a good stylish sister or friend with you when you go accessory shopping. Do your research first and bring along a picture of your dress to help the stylist get an idea of what she or he can recommend. That's how we work.

I always tell brides to choose a style of earring that they would wear again. That way you're suiting not only your special day, but your personality. Finally, don't be afraid to dress up – accessories are finishing touches and they are very important in creating your complete look. ■

QUICK FIRE QUESTIONS

Gold or silver? Silver

Diamonds or pearls?

Diamonds but that's a personal preference!

Earrings or necklace?

Earrings

Tiara or headpiece?

Headpiece

Leaves or flowers?

Leaves



Bold, bright gold: Melinda earrings



The Augusta comb is pretty and delicate



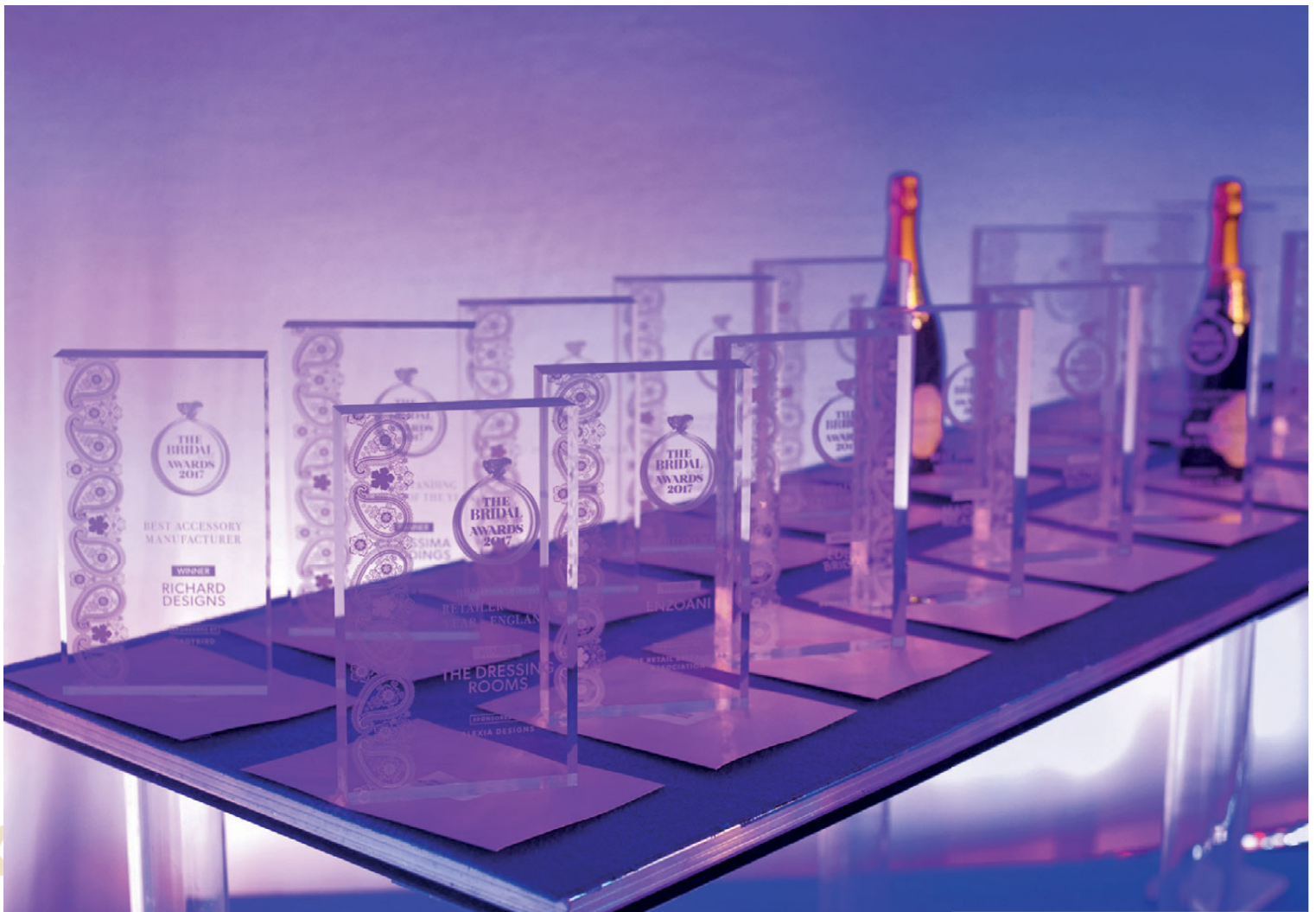
The Kanda earrings give a nod to the current pavé trend



Brides with a love of all things celestial will adore the Galaxy crown

The Splendour is the ideal accessory for princess style dresses





BRIDAL BUYER AWARDS 2018

It's the new year, so what better time to reflect on your strengths? Entry to this year's industry awards will open soon; it's time to think about your accolade-worthy submission

Dinner, drinks and dancing to celebrate the best of the bridal industry? Sounds like the perfect night, and something that you should definitely be a part of. The Bridal Buyer Awards 2018 is set to be the biggest and brightest awards event to date...but, as they say, you have to be in it to win it – so you need to start considering your entry application as soon as possible.

See our list of categories (right), and once you have decided which one (or ones) suit you, then you're ready to start your submission. Log on to awards.bridalbuyer.com to get an overview of the entry process, and then take the time to consider what you'll write, what your strengths are and what really makes you stand out from the crowd. Before making your entry, you need to create an account on the website – it's an easy step.

From there you will be asked to select a category from the dropdown menu, and then you'll be automatically taken through to the entry questions for that category. Don't rush in answering, you don't have to complete your entry in one session. The initial registration process means that you can save your work as you go along. When your entry has been successfully submitted, you will receive an email confirmation – remember that once you have pressed the final 'submit' button, your entry cannot be amended. So, make sure you have checked and double checked what you have written.

There is no limit to the number of categories that you

can submit. However, it is far better for you to create one or two really strong entries in the categories that best suit you, than to enter all the categories with so-so write-ups. To submit additional entries, click on 'Make Another Application' in the box on the left-hand side of the page and repeat the submission process. All entries are confidential; only the judges will view your form.

The award winners will be announced, and the celebrations will take place on 10th September 2018, during the Harrogate Bridal Show. The spectacular black-tie event attracts an audience of more than 600 guests from all sectors of the industry, including retailers, suppliers, designers and the media. It not only offers the opportunity to revel in the success of all the finalists and winners, but provides an unrivalled networking opportunity, as well as being a fun-filled evening for all. Find out more at awards.bridalbuyer.com.

Deadline for entries is 4th May 2018.



RETAILER CATEGORIES

Bridalwear Retailer of the Year – *England*
 Bridalwear Retailer of the Year – *Ireland*
 Bridalwear Retailer of the Year – *Scotland*
 Bridalwear Retailer of the Year – *Wales*
 New Bridalwear Retailer of the Year
 Best Mens' Formalwear Retailer
 Long Standing Retailer of the Year
 Best Retailer Customer Service of the Year
 Retailer Website of the Year
 Best In-Store Design

SUPPLIER CATEGORIES

Best Bridalwear Manufacturer of the Year
 Best Bridesmaid Collection of the Year
 Best Prom Collection of the Year
 Best Mother-of-the-Bride Collection of the Year
 Best Plus-Size Collection of the Year
 Best Headdress Collection of the Year
 Best Supplier Customer Service of the Year

SPECIAL CATEGORIES

Student Designer of the Year
 Wedding Dress of the Year
 British Bridalwear Designer of the Year

SEVEN STEPS TO SUCCESS

Some of 2017's winners share their top tips on making a winning application:

"Self-promotion doesn't come naturally to everyone, but it's absolutely critical in an awards entry. Don't lose sight of the fact that you need to shout about what makes your business special.

Think about your USP's and what separates your business from others. It's not a time for modesty and the judges are searching for stand-out entries, so go for it!"

AIGAIL'S COLLECTION

"Set some time aside and enjoy filling in the forms. By writing everything down, I realised how much we'd achieved in the last year."

MAIDS TO MEASURE

"I stayed up until around 2am to write down the essence of what I wanted to portray in my answers. I sent the document through to my brother Andrew - he edited it for me and ensured that the responses were within the word count. I had made a couple of enquiries as to how strict the word count was, and was told it absolutely had to be within the restrictions. I also asked about supporting evidence and we sent through extra videos and pictures to enable a fuller understanding of what we do at Eden Bridal. I think working between the two of us was beneficial, it ensured a more complete application, so I would advise having more than one person look at your entry."

EDEN BRIDAL

"Start your application well in advance of the deadline so you have plenty of time to create thoughtful, comprehensive answers. Don't be afraid to brag about your accomplishments! And finally, try to focus on one or two categories in which your business truly excels.

This will make it easier to include real data, photos and personal stories that prove your success over the last 12 months."

ESSENCE OF AUSTRALIA

"My best advice would be to answer the questions as honestly as you can, rather than trying to second guess what the judges want to hear. The truth is you don't know, so being yourself is the best way to be - imagine you're actually talking to the panel. Also make sure your entry is factual, concise and to the point!"

RACHEL SIMPSON SHOES

"Don't lose confidence in your entry! I had completed entry forms for the past two years, but then I thought there is no way we could win so decided not to submit. Last year I just went for it and look what happened! Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to complete the entry so you can think about all the points you want to include, then you can be confident you have given it your best."

MILIMILI

"Try your best to put yourself in the shoes of a bride and explain what it is that your boutique does that is unique and inspiring. I found that completing my entry over a few days/weeks was best; I would go back into the boutique and have a day with brides and then I would have lots more inspiration to help answer the questions asked by the Bridal Buyer team. Good luck and remember anyone can win, we did!"

DOTTY BRIDAL ■

COYA COLLECTION

View the collection at:

London Bridal Week | ExCel London
March 25-27, 2018 | Booth #B50

Book your appointment today!

Email: sales@coyacollection.com

Website: www.coyacollection.com

Agents Welcome





Business

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR THE BRIDAL RETAIL INDUSTRY

STAY AHEAD

Let our experts guide you through the technicalities of working in the bridal industry. The BBSA and RBA bring you their latest updates and highlights from the past 12 months.

New columnist Warren Knight launches the first part of his new 6-part guide to online activity - don't miss it! Our resident tech guru Chris Partridge shines a light on shop security, and gives his advice on how to stay secure. Plus, our team of legal eagles answer your questions and tackle the latest business hot topics ■

BUSINESS FOCUS

Professional news and advice to keep your company ahead of the pack

WORDS ADAM BERNSTEIN



THE ADVERTISING MINEFIELD

While a firm can do what it wants when it comes to advertising, there are issues if they don't follow the rules. The ASA, the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all media, applies two codes of practice – CAP and BCAP Codes. Both are used to regulate non-broadcast and broadcast advertising respectively.

In terms of law, retailers need to be aware of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA) as it sets out consumer rights and remedies. Here, any public statements made about goods and services (including advertising) will be relevant in assessing whether the goods comply with the quality standards set out in the CRA.

Firms should also be aware of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). These prohibit

any unfair, misleading and/or aggressive commercial practices. There are 31 'blacklisted' practices that are expressly banned, such as displaying a quality mark without authorisation or falsely claiming to be a signatory to a code of conduct.

Under the Codes, adverts must be identifiable as adverts, not be misleading and not likely to cause harm or serious widespread offence. Particular rules also apply to comparative advertising. Because the CPRs prohibit unfair, misleading and/or aggressive commercial practices, the ASA will take factors identified in the CPRs into account when it considers whether a marketing message breaches the Codes.

The rules make an advert misleading if it is likely to deceive consumers and cause them to take "transactional decisions" that they would not otherwise have taken.

The ASA's rules also apply to social media. Adverts and social posts must be clearly identifiable.

If the ASA finds that an advert breaches the Codes, it will ask the advertiser to withdraw or change it. Although the ASA cannot impose fines, it does have other sanctions at its disposal, which include publishing its decisions and asking media owners to refuse space for an ad until it has been changed. It can also refer the advertiser to Trading Standards or the Competitions and Markets Authority. Lastly, engaging in a practice that is banned under the CPRs is a criminal offence, punishable by a fine, up to two years in prison or both. Consumers have access to civil remedies against those that breach the CPRs. These include unwinding the relevant transaction or receiving a discount.

INSIDE JOB

Fraud committed by staff can be particularly upsetting, and according to Action Fraud, nearly one in five small businesses will be defrauded at some point. There are countless ways that an employee can abuse trust such as: fake purchases of goods or services; false references and qualifications; and fake accounts and invoices. While fraud is an ever-present risk, you can take preventative measures to protect your business. The first step is to proactively check on everyone that is employed, especially where they have access to

systems such as tills or the company bank account. References should be sought and followed up with calls. At the very minimum, confirm an employee's identity, date of birth, residential address, qualifications, employment history, criminal history, and financial background. The process can be undertaken as part of the statutory obligation to ensure that an employee has the legal right to work in the UK.

Engender the ethos that criminality will not be tolerated. Policies and procedures need to be written so that on joining, every

employee is given an anti-fraud policy. As harsh as it sounds, firms need to strictly control access to their back rooms and systems. As soon as an employee leaves their access should be terminated immediately. Passwords should be changed and possession should be regained of company laptops and mobiles.

Processes need to be put in place so that no one person has sole control over tills, cheque books or the ability to singly authorise

purchases over a given (low) value. Invoices should be checked to ensure that they are from genuine suppliers; unexpected requests to change bank accounts should be verified; and suppliers need to be informed in writing each time a payment is made.

Fraud is an unpleasant fact of life. However, those that make it harder for employees who are criminally minded will be much better off. Remove the opportunity and you'll eliminate the temptation.



BETTER BROADBAND

Under a range of new protections set out by Ofcom recently, broadband subscribers must receive better information about speeds before they commit to a contract. Broadband is an essential service, and speed is a vital factor when shopping around. But there can be confusion between what broadband customers believe they are buying, and what they actually receive. Ofcom is proposing to enhance its existing Codes of Practice, which commits internet companies who have signed up to it to give customers the estimated range of speeds they are likely to receive, as well as the right to exit their contracts penalty-free if their speed falls below a minimum level. Ofcom is also planning to improve speed information at the point of sale and in contracts, by reflecting the slower speeds people can experience at 'peak' time; and by ensuring providers always give a minimum guaranteed speed.

EXPORT FINANCE HELP FOR SMALL FIRMS

Companies could be prosecuted if they fail to prevent staff from facilitating tax evasion under The Criminal Finances Act 2017, which has introduced two new criminal offences. The offences hold corporations and partnerships liable when they fail to prevent their employees, agents, or others who provide services on their behalf from criminally facilitating tax evasion. This is a significant change from existing law under which they can only be found liable for criminally facilitating tax evasion if the most senior members of the organisation – typically the board of directors – are aware of the facilitation.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCE

Small businesses struggling to access finance from banks can now be matched with alternative finance options under a new government scheme. RBS, Lloyds, HSBC, Barclays, Santander, Clydesdale and Yorkshire Bank, Bank of Ireland, Danske Bank and First Trust Bank, now have to offer access to several finance platforms including Funding Xchange, Business Finance Compared, and Funding Options (with small businesses having to give their permission before their details are shared). These platforms will share these details with alternative providers and go on to facilitate a conversation between the business and any provider who expresses an interest in supplying finance to them.

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL FEE

Are you eligible for employment tribunal fee refunds? If so apply now! The process comes after the Supreme Court ruled the fees to be unlawful. The first 1,000 claimants will be contacted individually and given the chance to complete applications. As well as being refunded, successful applicants will also be paid interest of 0.5%, calculated from the date of the original payment up until the refund date. To register, email: thelpwithfees@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk ➔



NEED TO KNOW: TAX

Self-assessment applies to those with complex tax affairs such as landlords, the self-employed and those that have made a capital gain. Since 2014, those on more than £50,000 and receiving child benefit also need to complete a return. If you receive a tax return you have the legal obligation to complete it. If you think you must file a return, register for HMRC's Online Services (gov.uk/log-in-file-self-assessment-tax-return). You'll need your 10-digit unique tax reference (the UTR) number and should allow time to register as the process involves a code that is sent by post.

Completing a tax return requires information from several sources – P60, P11D, P45, P2, national insurance number – as well as details on trading income, taxable benefits, income, investments, interest, foreign income, and any capital gains from the sale of assets (shares and property for example) but not the sale of your main home. When filling out the return you will need to consider the tax reliefs available to you. These include monies you've paid into a pension or approved government small business investment vehicles, gift aid donations to charity, and the marriage allowance.

There are a number of key dates to note – October 31, January 31 and July 31. Your tax return needs to be submitted by 31 October if on paper, or 31 January the following year if it's submitted online. The tax you pay will depend on your profits and is made in two estimated instalments; January 31 of the tax year you're in (to 5 April) and July 31 immediately



following, with a balancing payment on 31 January after the tax year. The instalments are based on your previous year's return, and set at half of last year's liability. If your income has risen or fallen you should contact HMRC using Form SA303 to revise the amount up or down – that won't affect the interest on over or underpayments once the position's finalised, but it will stop HMRC chasing.

Remember: You need to complete and submit a tax return even if there is no tax due to HMRC. An automatic penalty of £100 is given to taxpayers who do not submit by the deadline, with further penalties of £10 a day applied after three months to a maximum of £900. Six months late means a penalty of £300 (or 5% of the tax owing if this is greater). If you are 12 months late, you will be charged another £300 (or 5% of the tax owing if this is greater). Late payment also incurs a penalty plus interest: 5% of tax unpaid after 30 days; another 5% of tax unpaid after 6 months; and another 5% of tax unpaid after 12 months.

INCOME ALLOWANCES

The Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG) is urging HMRC to be ready to publicise new income allowances. By law, individuals have to notify HMRC of a new source of income by 5 October in the tax year following that in which the new source began. According to LITRG, things could get very confusing. From 6 April 2017 those with rental and/or trading income below £1,000 will no longer have to tell HMRC about the income by the deadline or pay tax on it. If the trading or property income exceeds the allowance, they will need to notify HMRC and can choose whether to calculate their taxable profit in the usual way or by simply deducting the allowance. LITRG is concerned that some taxpayers may register for and complete a tax return when they do not need to do so. Others with income above £1,000 may not realise that they need to register, which could subsequently result in significant penalties for late notification and filing.

NETWORKING COULD HELP

FSB is urging small business owners and the self-employed to make use of business networking groups to help increase their wellbeing and mitigate mental health problems often caused by isolation. Feeling lonely can have a negative impact on mental health, says charity Mind, which is supporting FSB's campaign. For advice, visit the wellbeing hub: fsb.org.uk

DEBT PROBLEMS SOLVED

The government is considering offering individuals in debt with up to six weeks free from further interest, charges and enforcement action. This period would give those affected time to seek financial advice, which is key in helping people access a range of solutions to help them get back on their feet. The new scheme could include legal protections that would shield individuals from further creditor action once a plan to repay their debts is in place.

SPECIAL DAY

Bridal Wear

Sales agent required for
Scotland and North of England.
e-mail bernard@specialday-ireland.com

www.specialday-ireland.com

The Digital PLAYBOOK

Digital expert Warren Knight kicks off his new six-part series on how to transform your boutique's online presence, starting with formulating your website

FIND
OUT MORE
about Warren at
thinkdigitalfirst.com and
don't miss his London
Bridal Week seminar -
for details go to
londonbridalweek.com



Are you happy with your website? It is a very simple question, but the answer will be a lot more complex. You might be saying; "Yes, but I know I need to spend more money to make it better". Or; "Yes, but it is the new year, and things are a bit slow which is to be expected."

Regardless of whether your answer is a "no" or a "yes, but" there are always things you can do better on your website. We are in a new year, and there is no better time to take a step back, and really look at building a website that will drive success for your bridal business.

Google processes 40,000 search queries every second. That's 3.5 billion searches per day, and 1.2 trillion search per year. Your bridal business is contributing to those searches but the question is; how much? I want to help you. I want to make sure that you are doing everything you possibly can to start the New Year off on the right foot.

There are two different approaches here. The first, is based on building a new website from the ground up on your own. The second, is about going to an agency, and having them build a website for you.

OPTION ONE BUILD YOUR OWN

If you are going to build your own website, here is a simple three-step plan to get you started.

1 Choose a platform

You might be thinking about starting with a new website because the platform you are currently using is not giving you the functionality you want. I have found this to be the case with bridal businesses, and if this is true to your business, here are a selection of things you need to consider when choosing a website platform.

- It's free to use (or is within your budget).
- Beginner-friendly and easy to edit.
- Has great blog functionality.
- Offers a variety of plug-ins to help you grow your business online.
- Selection of templates that are "responsive" meaning your website will change size based on device.
- Offers hosting functionality.
- Allows for eCommerce functionality

2 Domain name

When choosing a domain name to

represent your online identity, it needs to be relevant to your bridal business, and easy for your audience to remember. The domain names that are most memorable, are typically the most successful.

Consider a domain name that is unique so that your audience does not confuse you with another business, the right extension that identifies your business (.com, .co.uk, .org etc) and finally; be memorable. Choose a domain name that is easy for your audience to remember.

3 Choose a template/theme

Regardless of the platform you use for creating a website, you will need to choose a template. Do you want your website to be more visual based, where you showcase dresses? Or written content based? Are you going to be writing a lot of unique blog content? How many pages will you want on your website and are you going to sell bridal products and/or services online? All of these questions are important, and will need answering when choosing a template.

Feel confident with what you choose and

make sure you spend time looking at your competitors and understanding exactly what you want from your website.

Key things to remember

If you are going down the "option one" route, here are five things that you need to think about at every step of the way.

Have a plan: the same rules apply online, as they do offline. Understand your target audience, USP and website promotion.

Clean homepage: there is so much content online, that when a visitor comes to your website, you need to show real value. One way to do this is a professional, clean homepage.

Slow servers: it has been reported that a potential prospect will wait for a website to load for just four seconds before "bouncing."

Contact page: don't forget about having a contact page with either a contact form, or an email address and telephone number.

Quality visuals: If you are going to use visuals to display your content on your website, make sure they are high quality.

OPTION TWO AGENCY WEBSITE BUILD

The alternative solution is to go to an agency, and have them build your website for you. The costs can vary from £500-£10,000 depending on what you're building. In my opinion, anything between £3-6k will get you a "good" website fit for purpose that you manage yourself on a day-to-day basis. When choosing an agency, consider the following:

- **It may take some time** Working with an agency is a long process, and takes 3-4 months (or longer), so be as patient as possible.
- **Do your research** Find an agency who has worked in the bridal industry, and can create a website with the functionality you are looking for.

• Ask lots of questions

My suggestion would be, once you have narrowed down your search to three potential agencies, reach out to some of their existing clients to see how they found the process.

• Be prepared

You will be giving a lot of design control to the agency, so make sure you create a mood board and wire frames followed by a brand style guide, then build (in that order).

5 TOP TIPS

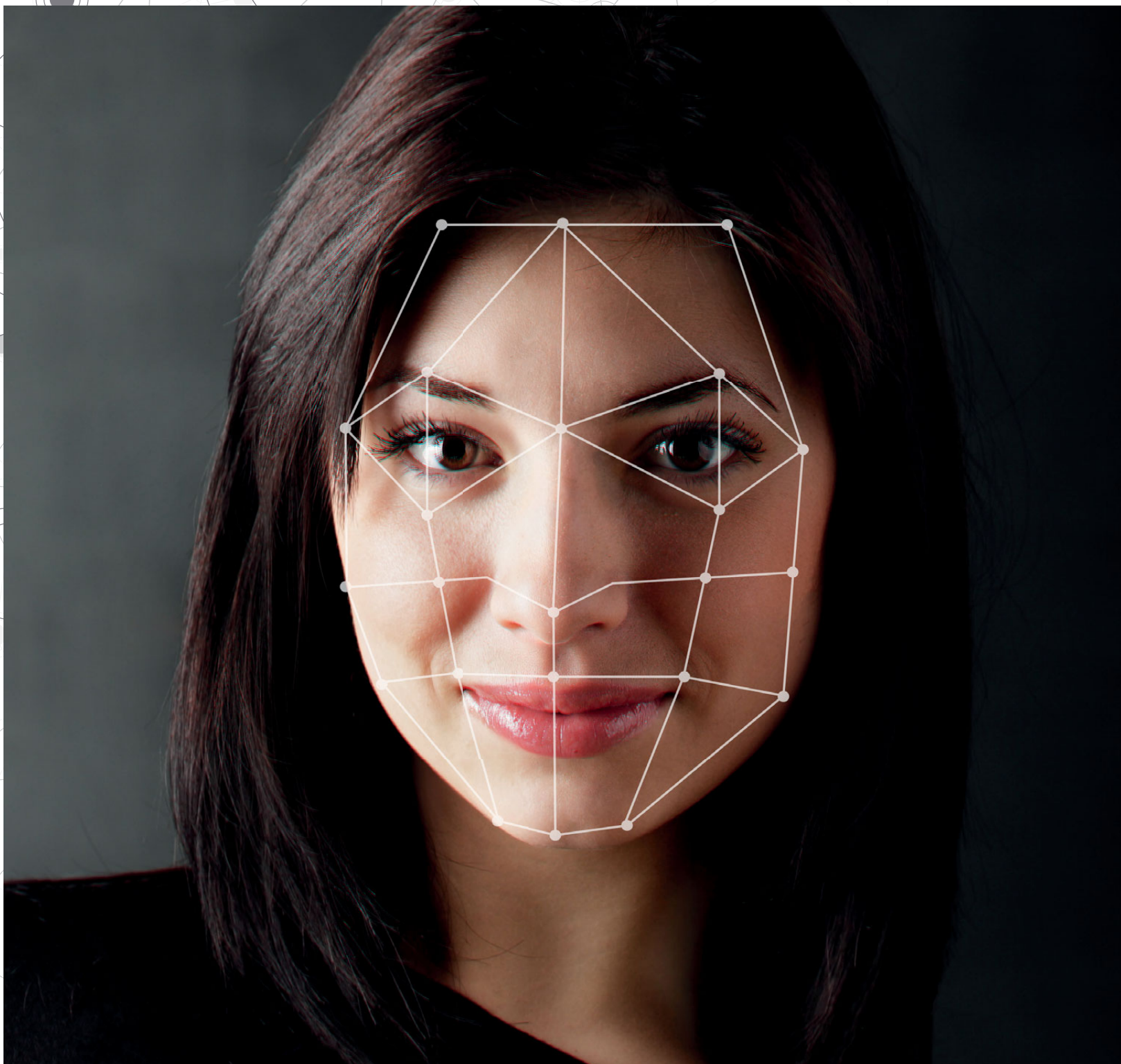
- 1 Social proof is an important part of a successful business, so make sure you have reviews and testimonials on the homepage.
- 2 Social media icons: You want two different types of icons; the first, are

social sharing icons, and the second, icons where people can connect with you inside of the social networks you are using.

3 Having a blog with regular content is important to Google, and... it will get your website index 434% more than a website without a blog.

4 Think about copy. Define your tone of voice from your store and brochures to your website and social media. They must all match and be brand consistent.

5 Think about the call-to-actions on your website. What do you want your website visitors to do? Sign up for your newsletter, come and visit you in person, or give you a call? ■



SECURE YOUR STOCK

Protecting your premises is vital to the health and well-being of your business. So how can you keep things safe? Tech expert Chris Partridge investigates

Technology is making things very hard for shoplifters. So hard, indeed, Amazon is trialling grocery stores that allow shoppers to help themselves to what they want and walk out of the shop without going to the checkout - the goods are automatically charged to their account. It is said to be almost impossible to steal stuff without setting off the alarms.

Amazon's unattended store format, dubbed Amazon Go, is a convenience store selling relatively low-cost items. They won't be anything like the average bridal retailer, selling high-value gowns and accessories, largely because brides (and their mothers) come to the store for skilled fitting, advice and reassurance, things that no robot can supply. But the underlying technologies have potential for cutting out shoplifting and shrinkage in all retail outlets.

A wide range of technologies are used to safeguard stock in unattended stores, but the three most important are RFID, facial recognition and a smartphone app. The smartphone is crucial because it establishes the link between the store and the customer's account, in Amazon's case, Amazon Prime. Customers fire up an app when they enter the store, which brings up a QR code that is scanned into the turnstile at the entrance. As they pick goods off the shelves they are automatically added to the shop - put anything back and they are subtracted. There is no checkout - when the customer leaves the store the app pays the bill automatically.

One of the subtle features of the system is that you have to have an Amazon Prime account to go into the store at all - it is as if you needed to be a registered customer to go into your local supermarket. For the likes of Tesco this is a problem - they can't suddenly demand that all their customers sign up for a compulsory Clubcard before going in.

At least one large chain in the US, believed to be Walmart, has introduced facial recognition. Cameras at the entrance take images that are scanned for the faces of known shoplifters, who are challenged by a security guard and escorted out.

Shoplifters get on the register when they are first caught. On fingering a suspect, the security staff offer them a choice: face the police or be banned from the store, with the added condition they agree to their face being scanned into the system.

Retailers would love to share the facial scans, but this raises privacy issues. Even the keenest *Law and Order* fan sees the danger in a *Big Brother* system where a single attempt to steal stuff leads to total exclusion. The next step is behaviour recognition, where computers look for suspicious actions in much the same way as an experienced shop owner looks for customers who seem to be wary of the staff and take items to obscure corners.

Mobile points of sale, such as wireless tablets that enable staff to take their computer to the customer, are major weapons in the war against crime, as staff can be much more

proactive in assisting customers. For small but valuable items such as jewellery, smart displays can detect when things are removed and sound an alarm or send a text if several are taken at once.

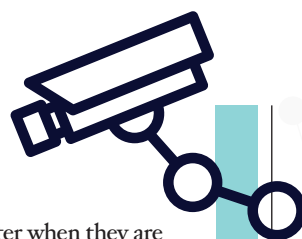
Improvements in product tags are also helping to deter shoplifting. The old radio-frequency (RF) tags are bulky and can only do one thing

- sound the alarm. RF identification tags (RFID) are much more discrete, and carry a complete stock number for the item. Because the scanners only sound the alarm for your own stock, false alarms are minimal.

RFID tags have lots more to offer than improved physical security. Stocktaking can be completed in a few minutes by waving a wand. Fashion store River Island now does stocktaking weekly instead of yearly, with the result that staff pilfering is detected rapidly, greatly improving the chances of identifying the culprit. And, of course, it radically improves inventory accuracy from about 70% to 98%. RFID tags have come down by 75% in price since the introduction of a global standard in 2005, now costing as little as 5p a tag, depending on volumes. Adopting these

tags could even allow bridal shops to abolish the checkout completely, automatically scanning every item as it is placed in the bride's bag and charging her account electronically.

There is no checkout - when the customer leaves, the app pays the bill



5

LOW-TECH SECURITY TIPS....

HOWEVER SOPHISTICATED SECURITY TECHNOLOGY BECOMES, THE BEST LINE OF DEFENCE AGAINST SHOPLIFTING IS VIGILANCE:

1 Greet every customer as they come in. This simple step establishes a personal bond that criminals find unsettling - research shows shoplifters tend to avoid shops with attentive sales people. Get greeting!

2 Watch out for the overdressed, such as people wearing heavy coats in summer. In the run up to Thanksgiving 2017 in the US, a woman was arrested with more than a thousand dollars worth of fashion accessories concealed in the turkey costume she was wearing. Most won't go to these extremes, but be vigilant.

3 Keep your stock well organised and neatly placed. This will help you to spot gaps immediately.

4 Talk to your neighbours and create a community of shop owners. It could mean you get to hear about new shoplifting strategies before you become a victim.

5 Post signs warning against shoplifting. Psychologists say signs with eyes are surprisingly effective in deterring casual theft. ■

annais
b r i d a l
www.annaisbridal.com

1812
AMBROSIA



Altea
ANNAIS
COLLECTION



1814
AMBROSIA




BECOME
OUR PARTNER:

contact us on
UK@annaisbridal.com
/ 00 48 510 811 342
/00 48 71322 10 51

Our Partners

The Bridal Emporium
Abelle Bridal
The Bridal Loft
The Burr Bridal
Perfect Day
Blessed Bridal

 annais bridal UK
www.annaisbridal.com

TAKING STOCK

Ellie Sanderson reflects on 2017 and provides her top tips for a prosperous 2018

What an interesting year 2017 turned out to be. There was much to celebrate as shoppers

embraced independent shops, but there was a great deal of pressure too. Most retailers are stocked to the max at the moment and stuck between a rock and a hard place managing stock commitments and selling samples.

Stock turnover is a key performance indicator in any retail business, but even more so in an industry where the single item value is as high as bridal. The high street giants expect anything from a x3.8 to a x4.2 turnover of stock. This means that every stock item displayed has a repeat of x3.8 – x4.2 times a year. I have spent the last month looking at the average for bridal along with other stock management challenges.

The range in bridal is x2.4 – x7.5, for total stock versus sales. For example: Stock holding of 100 dresses and turnover 200 a year means you have a stock turn of x2. Stock holding of 70 dresses and a turnover of 300 a year means you have a stock turn of x4.2. Stock holding of 110 dresses and a turnover of 550 a year means you have a stock turn of x5.

This includes ALL stock, old, new and it includes sample in the sales, too. At the moment retailers seem to be running to keep up with stock commitments and constantly looking to clear out dresses before the next buying season begins. The temptation to sell a sample just to liquidate the asset and get cash in the bank is getting greater.

STOCK COMMITMENTS

Most retailers have dropped the number of suppliers they buy from in the last year to ensure that they can truly focus on repeats and not just sample buying. There are however still some big labels out there demanding minimums of 16 or 20 a year. Whilst these labels have offered mass marketing and been footfall drivers in the past, a lot of the product is no longer unique and so buying 20 of them is just madness. I almost fell off my chair when one shop told



*All the samples we
are shown in March
are massively
invested into way
ahead of receiving the
cash for the samples
from retailers*

me they buy 10 to keep the supplier happy and another 10 in duplicate styles / sizes to use up as their bridal stock. I think we all know this goes on, but we cannot continue to do this or we are enabling the problem.

One of the labels I sell took a grown up and pragmatic approach in 2017, their collection was flexible, interchangeable and it meant I got great value for money. Augusta Jones has been one of my old time labels, and the sales rep Christine Marchant has a positive impact on how this label connects with its retailers. There is always a concern if repeats don't happen and offerings of help / loan dresses to make sure we have the product offer right. Whilst I bought less this year from them I have repeated more as the relationship is a two way street with the same end goal – selling a dress at full price and full margin to a bride.

OUR SUPPLIERS

There are two sides to this business though and we need to remind ourselves of that and be mindful that our suppliers are our partners and need to make a living, too. They need sensible buying and proper brand commitment from retailers, not one season wonders. Not label hoppers or disingenuous buyers who have no money to pay when the samples once they are made. They need shops to stop and think about what they are spending and to spend it wisely.

I had a great chat with Sassi Holford last week and something she said is worth us all thinking about. All the samples we are shown in March are massively invested into way ahead of receiving the cash for the samples from retailers. They too have to take a leap of faith and design, invest and hope we buy. It's a nervy time for everyone, which is why the communication needs to stay positive and close.

My final plea is to the suppliers that keep inventing new labels. Please STOP splitting labels into two or three to gain more market share. It takes huge advantage of retailers who are desperate to be successful, it also diffuses the power of your brand. Instead focus on great unique product that is not a rehash of last year's best sellers. Splitting labels means the product is no longer exclusive and whilst some retailers may invest, it will probably only be for the short term. ■

— BARCELONA —
B RIDAL
FASHION WEEK

23-29 APRIL 2018
MONTJUÏC VENUE



Fira Barcelona

www.barcelonabridalweek.com

#BBFW18 @ f t p y in

**THE
POWER
OF
UNIQUENESS**

FASHION SHOWS 23 - 27 APRIL | PROFESSIONAL TRADE FAIR 27 - 29 APRIL

#BBFW18

It all starts with a GREAT IDEA

A new year, a new rethink. Training expert Maria Musgrove says that hitting on the right strategy to develop your business is key in these competitive times

By the time you're reading this you're probably packing away your Christmas sweater hoping that 2018 doesn't have the same peaks and troughs of last year... when things went quite in 2017, it could be likened to the first verse of my favourite Christmas book:

*T'was the night before Christmas
When all through the house
Not a creature was stirring
Not even a mouse*

Traditionally, a quiet December was followed by a cracking January. For the past three years, however, our December has rocked and January has bombed. Mondays and Fridays are now the new Saturday (possibly to avoid our £25 weekend charge). We've had Saturdays with waiting lists and Saturdays without a single appointment! The pattern is that there is no pattern with days when I call the shop like a BT engineer checking the line and "phone a Facebook friend" before crying "Houston we have a problem!" So... in the spirit of that Christmas book:

*If your shop is like the Marie Celeste
Here are some ideas
To make you different from the rest*

Poet Laureate I am not! Here are my suggestions for a successful 2018: 'You cannot be everything to everyone, if you decide to go north, you cannot go south at the same time', so said Jeroen de Flander author and strategist. Many shops give



little thought as to who is 'their bride,' meaning their gown collection is as random as a four-year-old at a Pick 'n' Mix counter. Whatever your view of WED2B they have a crystal clear offer which is affordable gowns (under £699), off the peg, in a range of sizes, open seven days a week without appointment.

Michael Porter in his book *Competitive Advantage* says: "The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do" and Jack Welch wrote: "If you don't have a competitive advantage, don't compete." With this in mind, here are a few ideas:

IDEA 1: Define your competitive advantage and who your bride is. Think about why she should buy from you. Ask some of your current and past brides the same question either

individually or in a focus group. Then, be prepared to change.

We all know that knowledge is power. I prefer Dale Carnegie's "Knowledge isn't power until it's applied." We can't know everything about every designer but what is key is knowing how to access and use that information.

IDEA 2: Ask your team to write 'the Dummy's Guide' to each of your designers and then hold a Mastermind Chair session on key facts (not just lead times, colour and train lengths) such as provenance, the designer, how they came to be part of your collection and how you select the gowns. Their story becomes part of your story and when incorporated into your 'sales talk' you're reinforcing your competitive advantage.

Helen Keller wrote "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much." David's Bridal joining forces with Vera Wang et al is an example of a partnership being a win-win for all players. Hubspot's article on co-branding is a fascinating read at <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/best-cobranding-partnerships>

BMW and Louis Vuitton's pairing outlines that what they have in common is they're both in the business of travel, value luxury and are well-known, traditional brands. Few of us have the clout to co-brand at these dizzy levels so my final thoughts are:

IDEA 3: Connect with like-minded suppliers to promote each other. Luxe Bride asks us to name our preferred suppliers and I'm now collaborating with brands like The Ivy and the Queen's jewellers, Collins & Sons (both in Tunbridge Wells) to re-inforce Pantiles Bride's longevity and luxury.

IDEA 4: Join an association such as the RBA, BBSA, Luxe or a Facebook Forum. Why not buddy up with another retailer or contact me to discuss coaching, training and/or to join my new Bridal Business Owners Club with monthly webinars and lots more. I promise you it will be better than my poetry!

*For more details visit
bridalsalestraining.com or call
Maria on 07768 297290 ■*

How to design your WINDOWS DISPLAY

From pyramid formations and popular themes to knowing your customer, the RBA's Nicola Garton provides key advice learnt from the association's recent Visual Display training day

The Retail Bridal Association's (RBA) Visual Display training day was held at the Millennium Gloucester hotel in Kensington, London towards the end of 2017.

The guest speakers on the day were Helen Goodwin and Janet Billings from Made You Look, a company that specialises in the basic rules of visual display, window dressing, interior displays and merchandise styling.

In retail's testing times and, with competition fierce, standing out from the crowd has never been so crucial. Getting brides through the doors is paramount and a good window display is essential in order to create that perfect first impression. What's more, with so many customers shopping online, we all have to work extra hard to get noticed.

Helen and Janet ran a fantastic seminar in the morning, covering all the ingredients of what makes a sensational window display, providing step-by-step action plans for everyone who attended. One of the key points we took away from the workshop was that the most successful displays are often based upon a pyramid. They recommend a large area of space around your display to draw your eye and attention to the merchandise – measuring approximately two thirds space to one third display. They also revealed the key

steps to an amazing display and how to find inspiration.

After an interesting morning of presentations, everyone got the chance to try out some of the

techniques so expertly taught by Helen and Janet with an interactive workshop and a Q&A session. Subjects covered included mannequins, jewellery, covering panels and how to group items. All attendees left with food for thought and all our RBA members have been proudly sharing their new and improved displays on Facebook. The techniques learnt on the day have certainly made our members step outside the box, try something new and, hopefully improve footfall. For more information on Made You Look and their training seminars visit madeyoulookmadeyoustare.co.uk or call 01904 654 933.

THE STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Location Where is your display? Do you have a window, shelf, table or cabinet? Who will see it?

2. Know your customer How old are they? What do they like and what are their interests?

3. Inspiration Where do you find it? What's your budget, colour scheme, props and materials?

4. Good techniques Consider, space, focal points, balance, grouping, suspension and creating depth.

5. General housekeeping Are your lights working? Is your signage correct? Are your windows clean? Is your merchandise faded or dated?

HELEN & JANET'S TOP TIPS

- Have a plan for your window display, decide on what story you want to tell.
- Decide on a message, colour and theme.
- Keep the display simple.
- Clean the window and floor area.
- Gather your stock and mentally decide what will go where.
- Make sure clothing is ironed or steamed and items are dust-free.
- Position largest items, key product

and mannequins first.

- Start positioning the remaining stock based upon a pyramid formation. ■



BBSA yearly review

2017 was quite a year...but what have the highs been for the BBSA? The association reveals all

There were a whole host of highs and lows last year, but with 2018 upon us, it's a great time to reflect on the 12 months that are now

behind us. It's a year since the BBSA opened its membership to independent retailers, with the aim of forging closer links between them and suppliers. The response has been magnificent with well over 100 new members joining from the UK bridal retail sector. The benefits of being stronger together in the face of pressure from internet retailers are plain to see: protection of intellectual property, brides secure in the knowledge they will receive the actual dress they order, and not a fake, and an interchange of information between stores and suppliers to ensure levels of service are 5 star.

The BBSA has continued to champion the Brides Beware campaign, which came to light with high profile coverage from a BBC consumer affairs programme. The BBSA will continue its presence at all retail bridal shows to highlight the perils of buying collections that are marketed and knock down prices on the net. In addition, the BBSA will take double page adverts in the retail show guides to further highlight the Brides Beware campaign and encourage retail stores to join the trade body.

The BBSA after show party at the Crown, Harrogate, in September was a resounding success. Over 500 people

attended and grooved until the early hours. This is now an annual event with food, drink and music.

Bridal Sale Week ran again at the end of 2017. It has the specific aim of helping stores to clear unwanted stock, and in turn allowing retailers much needed cash flow headroom. It was very well received and a great success – we have a series of testimonials from those that benefitted:

Victoria's Bridal Boutique, Orpington, Kent: "We have had the most amazing sale week and we want to say thank you to everyone at the BBSA for all their help. The social media really helped to get brides through the door. We can't wait for the next one. What an amazing weekend it has been."

Emma Hartley, Colne, Lancs: "Crazy busy day, we have had our busiest month since we opened 20 years ago. The sale worked brilliantly for us."

The Wedding Wardrobe, Waterloo, London: "The sale went in full flood from Saturday and is continuing this week, by being nationally advertised in a professional way and also on our own website, I felt this has helped drive brides into the shop. We had quite a few enquiries and bookings before the event and someone travelled down from the North which was great. I do think it is worth belonging to the BBSA and the benefits of having the wedding insurance really helps."

The Wedding Wardrobe, Waterloo, London: "The sale went in full flood from Saturday and is continuing this week, by being nationally advertised in a professional way and also on our own website, I felt this has helped drive brides into the shop. We had quite a few enquiries and bookings before the event and someone travelled down from the North which was great. I do think it is worth belonging to the BBSA and the benefits of having the wedding insurance really helps."

If you would like to join the BBSA please contact Justine on Justine@bridalsuppliers.co.uk ■

As a not-for-profit organisation Amanda Bradwell would like to extend a thank you to all members of the BBSA who have contributed to a successful 2017.

LBW LONDON
BRIDAL WEEK.
25 - 27 March 2018
ExCel, London
VISIT US AT
STAND D31

PROPRESS

Professional Steamers



www.propress.co.uk

Bridal
Styled by Steam

Q&A

with Steve Sidkin

In the coming months, new data protection rulings will be in place. Here's what you need to know about the new laws



Q I have heard about GDPR and cyber security. Are they the same thing? Should I be worried?

A Whether or not you should be worried is a Rumfeldesque question. But, in short, the answer to your first question is no. GDPR stands for the General Data Protection Regulation which comes into effect on 25 May 2018 and represents a significant change in data protection law with which businesses will have to comply.

On the one hand many concepts in the GDPR are familiar from current data protection laws, such as the concepts of data controller, data processor, personal data and sensitive personal data. Also, the data protection principles are broadly similar to those under the current law, but with added detail and an important new accountability requirement.

However, the GDPR contains many additional and more onerous obligations, including detailed record keeping and documentation requirements, and some significant new data protection concepts. In addition, the penalties for getting it wrong are much more severe!

Meanwhile cyber-security is continuously in the headlines. Data security breaches can put individuals at risk and cause them loss; they also expose the company to reputational damage, claims, fines and other potentially serious consequences.

People are increasingly aware of their privacy rights, and expect the organisations they entrust with their data to respect it and handle it securely. As the UK Information Commissioner commented, GDPR presents an opportunity:

"to look at how we do things afresh. To consider where we can improve. Getting it right means not only following the letter of the law, but taking people with us, demonstrating to customers that you're taking your responsibilities with their data seriously."

It is therefore important to understand what is new. In summary GDPR means: Extended territorial scope; Higher standard for consent; Increased requirements for privacy notice; Accountability requirement increased record keeping obligations, Principle of data protection "by design" and "by default"; Right of consumers to "be forgotten" and to data portability; Concept of pseudonymous data; Direct obligations and liability on data processors. Requirement to carry out a data protection impact assessment; Requirement to appoint a data protection officer; Mandatory data breach reporting; One-stop shop for multinationals, with a lead supervisory authority; and Significantly larger fines if you get things wrong – up to 4% of annual worldwide turnover or 20 million euros (whichever is the greater).

Many businesses have taken the view that GDPR does not apply to them. Put simply, this is nonsense. The law applies regardless.

Other businesses are aware of some cut off point for businesses employing less than 250 employees. Put simply, this is an urban myth. However, it is the case that, for GDPR to apply to a business employing less than 250 employees, it is necessary that the data processing the

business carries out is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of data subjects, the processing is not occasional, or the processing comes with specified categories. Accordingly, a business which processes data on a regular basis or processes special category content such as racial, political or genetic material - of any amount - will need to comply with GDPR.

Finally, it should be noted that GDPR will not be affected by Brexit. This is because the UK will still be a member of the EU in May 2018 when the GDPR takes effect and, in any event, the Data Protection Bill currently before Parliament will make GDPR part of UK law not least as following Brexit, the UK will need to be regarded as having "adequate legal protection" for personal data, so as to allow transfers of data to the UK from the EU. ■

Many businesses have taken the view that GDPR does not apply to them. Put simply, this is nonsense. The law applies regardless

MODA

WHERE FASHION COMES TOGETHER

18–20 February 2018
NEC Birmingham

Apply to exhibit
or register for your ticket
at moda-uk.co.uk



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Legal expert Raj Dhokia resolves your business related and personal legal queries

Q After visiting my shop, a bride has posted comments on social media criticising my staff, my stock, even my décor. How can I handle this?

It is unlawful to criticise a business without any real foundation online, and it is within your right to make a claim for defamation, that being when an individual publishes a knowingly false statement. Making a claim against the perpetrator is arguably the most effective way of getting the message across that publishing these statements online could cause irreparable damage to the business targeted by these false statements. The legal remedies available include: a claim for damages, an injunction, publication of a summary of the court's judgement and an order to remove the defamatory statement. If the identity of the perpetrator is unknown, it is also possible to obtain a court order for the operator of the website to disclose their identity.

Q I am a small shop with just me and a part-time member of staff, so I tend to develop a close relationship with my brides. But how much can one leave to trust? How often should I have new terms and conditions drawn up and should they be handed to every customer?

It is important to provide customers with terms and conditions and the principal reasons for doing so are:

- To provide certain of the required pre-contract information to the customer.
- To provide the customer with a reference document which will answer questions the customer may have. For example, what, if any, guarantee the trader is offering. To modify the trader/customer relationship to the limited extent permitted by law. For



Raj of Freedman Green Dhokia looks at the legal issues you may face

example, the trader may exclude liability for failures caused by circumstances which are genuinely outside its control.

Excluding liability to the extent permitted by law is perhaps the most persuasive reason for a business to use standard terms and conditions. Businesses are advised to keep their terms and conditions under review at all times, but clearly this can be difficult in practice and can be costly. For smaller businesses, a health-check every couple of years may be the best compromise. An update may be prompted by a significant change in the law. For example, the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA 2015) represented a substantial overhaul of the existing consumer law regime such that terms and conditions that were in force before the CRA 2015 came into force may now be out of date. Small business owners need to keep an eye out for changes in the law and take advice if they think their terms and conditions need to be updated.

A customer needs to agree to the terms and conditions if they are to apply to the contract between the business and that particular contract. Traditionally, a customer would sign the terms and conditions but, of course nowadays many contracts are entered online, be it via an exchange of emails or via a



For a private consultation with Raj, email r.dhokia@fgdlaw.co.uk

website and, as you say, customers frequently indicate their agreement to terms and conditions by clicking a tick box (or similar) on the retailer's website. If your customers place orders via a website it is something worth considering.

Q What's involved in going to the small claims court?

To issue a claim using the small claims track, the value of the claim must be no more than £10,000. The small claims track is a simplified procedural system for dealing with lower-value claims. The rules and procedures are designed to be less formal and more accessible to litigants in person. However, except where certain rules have been disapplied, the court has the same powers to grant remedies in a small claim as it does for claims on the multi-track and the fast track. It is generally quicker and cheaper to bring a claim on the small claims track, as there is no need for substantial pre-hearing preparation and the formalities of a traditional trial.

The procedure for the preparation of the case and the conduct of any hearing are designed to make it possible for litigants to represent themselves, further reducing the cost of bringing a claim. Small claims will usually be managed and heard by District Judges. Only limited costs are recoverable in small claims proceedings (which is why it is common not to instruct solicitors). The rules for the small claims track are contained in Civil Procedure Rule 27 and Practice Direction 27. ■

KNIGHT & BRIDE

wedding concept

"LET YOUR PHILOSOPHY
DESIGN YOUR BRIDAL"

Marketing&Sales

Showroom-Frankfurt
"Hauser der Mode" Kölner Str 1 Raum 05.14
65760 Eschborn/GERMANY
• Tel: +49 171 70 35 876
• Tel: +90 545 939 15 89
• info@knightandbride.com

Social Media

- Instagram: kbbridal
- Facebook: Knight and Bride
- Web: www.knightandbride.com
- LinkedIn: Knight and Bride Bridal Co




WILVORST
since 1916

UK agent - Andrew Roberts Agencies Ltd
Island House, East Swinford - Mill Swineford, Bristol, BS30 6LW
Tel: 0117 932 7905 - wilvorst@ara.uk.com - www.wilvorst.de

FOLLOW US:      #WEDTIME



Jupon Ltd
Tel. 01753 622 922
Fax 01753 622 933
info@jupon.com
www.jupon.com

Out on DISPLAY

How do you make the most of your accessories? Neil Flatley of Linzi Jay and designer collection Arianna Tiaras says it is all about light and space

1 The most important factor for any retailer wanting to display and sell bridal accessories is light, and lots of it. Crystal and pearl products need it to emphasise their warmth and texture. Bathe them in the correct light to get the attention of your bride, soft for ivory pearls, bright white light for crystals.

2 Display your chosen pieces against different coloured backgrounds and see what works best – darker colours can help emphasise brightness but can also dull the senses when viewed casually. If that is the case, a neutral tone will work better in that particular situation. Experiment to get the right results.

3 I believe that headdresses and tiaras should generally be on display in the 'open' – I don't like the idea of the locked glass cabinet, although I know a lot of retailers swear by this method. I think that products like this have greater appeal to brides who will be tempted to touch them and try them.

4 At Linzi Jay, we offer a table-top headdress stand that will accommodate around 20 headpieces; it is a great space-saving device for displaying headdresses and, say, jewellery.

5 Why not try a glass bell jar for your very special tiara or unusual shaped headdress? Maybe suspend some of your products from the ceiling or a high rail in an effective display? The effect is impressive and you won't be using valuable desk or rail space.

6 Veils can be awkward to display as they can look lifeless without the correct lighting. Avoid hanging them in a straight line but rather look for innovative ways to display them. Try pulling the veil tight or fanning it out to show off the edge or the scattered components. You could even pin a veil against the wall.

Consider suspending long veils from up high so that the bride can see the edging or at least the main selling feature of the design.

7 Try using brightly coloured headdresses and/or veils for your window display at certain times of the year. It's all about getting the customer's attention in a positive and desirable way – colour and warmth always have appeal.

8 If you follow the research that supermarkets have undertaken, you should try to put your optimum products and best-sellers at eye level if possible. Products that are four-inches off the floor obviously won't get the same degree of attention. Items at eye or table level – if you have space – will be noticed and produce results. The use of colourful florals or simple greenery can enhance any accessories display by breaking up your existing

colour scheme which is more than likely to be predominantly silver, gold and ivory.

9 Look for alternative artefacts to display your products upon; search online for props that will enhance and compliment your accessories, such as odd-shaped items that make your product look great. Garters, for example, can be suspended from something rather than wrapped around a tube; and they look even better when hung from a very sparkly (but small) imitation tree with the correct light on them. Try using a shimmering cone for display, too, or even mirrored boxes.

10 Making use of limited space is the biggest test for retailers. Take some inspiration from the larger department stores who, admittedly, have a huge budget to play with. They get the most out of space and use lighting very effectively. How often do you walk into a store and find something irresistible because it is displayed so invitingly? ■





marysbridal.com

MARY'S[®]

Price range is £119 - £699

THE LONDON BRIDAL SHOW, STAND B19

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Kirsty Voce | kirstyvoce@rachelallan.com | 01765 570040

James McKenna | jamesmckenna@rachelallan.com | 07551 006995



Contact information:

Kirsty Voce
kirstyvoce@rachelallan.com
01765 570040

James McKenna
jamesmckenna@rachelallan.com
07551 006995

rachelallan.com

LO' ADORO

Price range is £435 - £805

THE LONDON BRIDAL SHOW
STAND B19

Joan Lee Accessories

IMPORTERS - EXPORTERS - WHOLESALERS



Please
visit us at
Stand A25
LBW
25 - 27 March
ExCel, London

0161 456 2211 • joanleewholesale@btconnect.com
www.joanlee.co.uk

FASHION BY LAINA



Our 2018 bridal collection "Rêve de Fleur" redefines bridal fashion for women by creating delicate and unforgettable wedding dresses with flawless hand detailing. Each wedding dress is a love story written in fine, luxurious fabrics, adorned with hand-applied beads, sequins, gemstones, and defined by impeccable silhouettes in shades of light and dark ivory.

Contact office@fashionbylaina.eu,
visit www.fashionbylaina.eu

Designers of Wedding Decorations & Accessories



Our elegant Scripted Marble collection adds a modern flair to the big day. Featuring beautiful marble detailing and glossy gold lettering, this range is perfect for on-trend wedding themes.



neviti
10th Anniversary

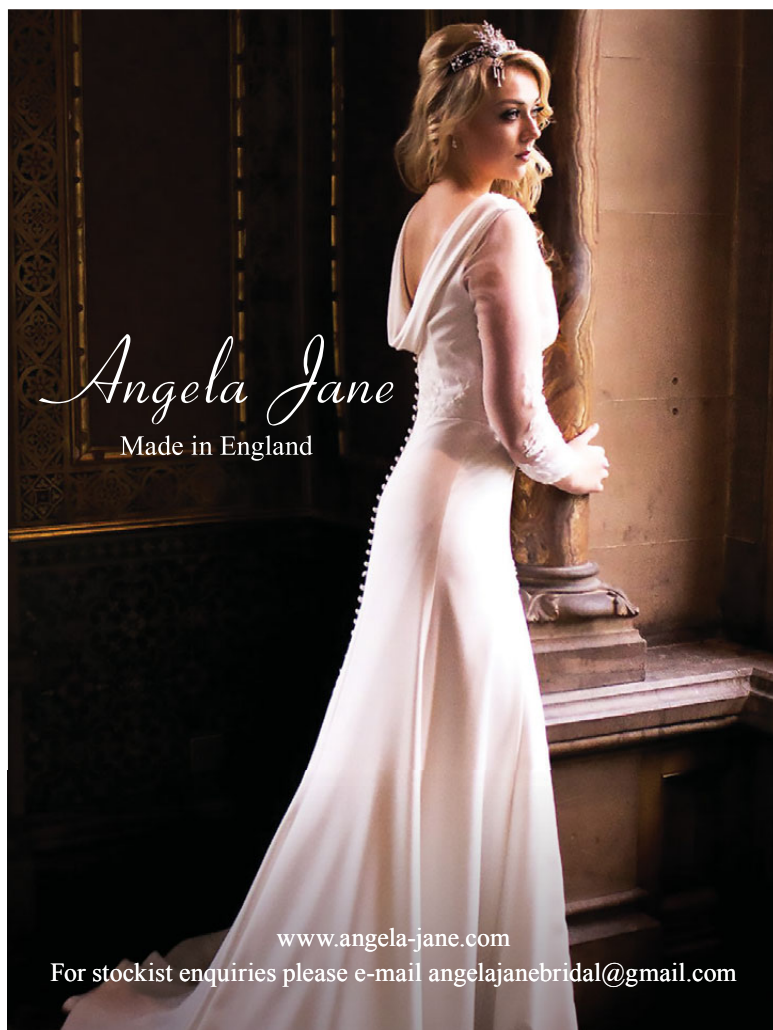


Tel: +44 (0) 1494 883428
www.neviti.com

neviti

Angela Jane

Made in England



www.angela-jane.com

For stockist enquiries please e-mail angelajanebridal@gmail.com

Features

RETAIL TRENDS • EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS • BOUTIQUE SECRETS • INTERIOR DESIGN & MUCH MORE

Let's talk shop

From key words from our expert Abi Neill, to an in-depth interview with True Bride, this month's Features section has a whole host of topics to help you make your boutique even better than ever. Turn to page 98 to get some troubleshooting tips from retailers across the country, and find out how House of Snow bagged a 2017 Bridal Buyer Award for its customer service (103). ■





Motee
MAIDS

WWW.MOTEEMAIDS.CO.UK

PRESENTING AT THE WHITE GALLERY 2018
FOR STOCKIST INFORMATION EMAIL INFO@MOTEEMAIDS.CO.UK

KEEP LEARNING

Training and expanding your knowledge is key to running a successful business, says Abi Neil, so be on the look out for some business education

I love to learn, but I'm no academic. At school I really had to apply myself as studying didn't come naturally. Biology was my least favourite subject, partly because the teacher was bonkers and she'd often share weird stories about childbirth!

In some respects, business ownership isn't much different to being at school (fewer eccentric teachers), but in terms of application and 'learning', I've found I have had to study continuously over the years to drive my business forward. Things change so fast now and keeping up is a task in itself. From the latest in Facebook digital algorithms to consumer shopper expectations; as business owners, we have to wear so many hats and keep abreast of so much, sometimes it's enough to make my head spin and brain ache.

I appreciate that finding time is often a challenge - and I definitely suffer from FOMO (fear of missing out) - so I've joined various business networking groups and participated in a fair few training courses. In my quest to 'learn' and stay up-to-date, I enjoy reading books on subjects such as mind set, motivation, marketing and management. The courses I've invested in have been sales-based for our team (usually in-store) and I've participated in some great online programmes in social media and marketing. There's so much to learn from experts in our field as well as from each other.

So where to start? Well if you're seeking education online, try searching within Facebook. Before you know it, you'll have access to free tasters and intro courses plus there's masses of pre-recorded webinars that will cover pretty much everything. Okay sure, you'll get bombarded with options to take additional courses at a cost (usually at the end of the webinar) but there's much to be gained from the free carrot-dangling info that you're given as a taster. Joining an entrepreneurial forum or local business



group can also help spread your knowledge and business wings beyond bridal. Talking with non-bridal business owners about your daily challenges can be useful and inspiring because, essentially, we're all driving at the same thing; a successful and profitable business and a healthy work/life balance.

Attending seminars during London Bridal Week, RBA conferences, or talks at Excel's The

Business Show could be just what you need to get fired up, rejuvenated and ready for 2018! All aspects of business management and development can be found from marketing, digital media, recruitment, financial management and sales. I myself love working with various bridal (and non-bridal) trainers and have subjected our team to tons of worthwhile stuff over the years.

Talks at trade shows are a fantastic way to gain knowledge. At London Bridal last year I booked to see Wendy Rivera's (Do You Speak Bride) training and Warren Knight's digital bootcamp. Both were well worth the investment, and I gained a great deal from the free seminars I'd

attended, too. You may consider learning from the experts at the forthcoming London Bridal Week so head to the show for the free education even if it means an earlier train or an overnight stay: I mean do you really want your competitors gaining more knowledge and insider tips than you? For us, continual investment keeps our shop wheels turning. Last week I attended an RBA visual merchandising training day with one of my colleagues. It was well worth the effort and money and we both came away buzzing with ideas. That's despite getting lost on the underground!

On that note, I'll say bye for now and maybe see you at the London Bridal Week seminars or business clinics. ■

*In some respects,
business
ownership isn't
much different to
being at school*

Dressing maids in a variety of dress styles all in the same colour remains a popular trend. Style M740, left, and M750, right, are set to become best sellers

Nicki Flynn's creative diversity is evident in the range of styles and details on display in the latest collection. Left to right are styles M742, M755 and W306

TRUE BRIDE

We meet Lydia Sayles, the creative designer behind True Bride, to find out more about the company as it launches its latest collection

WORDS SOPHIE VENING



Above: The blush millennial pink colour on the M756 and M727 continues to be a strong trend
Below: An elegant neckline and pretty detailing gives the W305 an luxurious finish

T rue Bride's latest collection True by Nicki Flynn is effortlessly glamorous, fusing together innovative design with decadent detailing. We caught up with the brand's creative designer Lydia Sayles to discuss the history and future of the brand.

Having spent 20 years working in the fashion industry, designer Nicki Flynn was ready for a new career direction. With a bit of hard graft and sheer determination she single-handedly designed her own collection of maids and bridals. And so, in 2005, True Bride and True Bridesmaids was born, featuring a small range of stylish, elegant, timeless and, competitively priced gowns, ranging between £495 and £2,000 for bridalwear, and from £199 for bridesmaids. Fast forward 11 years, and the brand is stocked in over 200 stores across the UK, Ireland, Europe and Australia, houses seven labels and employs a dedicated team of nine.

So what's the secret to the brand's success? Some may say the ability to evolve. The True umbrella has always stayed one step ahead of the game, maintaining a strong fashion edge, delivering something different, but always staying relevant to the mainstream market. Once Flynn felt the company's foundations were established, she added a small designer collection to the range and over the years has introduced three stand-alone bridesmaid collections; Luna by Nicki Flynn (a collection of red carpet worthy dresses), Essentials (a chic collection of price-conscious bridesmaid dresses with emphasis on style and cut) and True Match (a capsule collection of stylish mix-and-match tops and skirts for the discerning bride seeking a unique look).

In 2015, in celebration of the brand's 10th anniversary, Bridal Belle was launched, a retro celebration of tea-length bridal dresses full of fun, flirtation and character with a touch of retro glam and nostalgia to go with.

True's use of stunning, quality fabrics with beautiful beading and detailing, in addition to the cut and comfort of the True Bride construction, defines its style. The brand's latest collection True by Nicki Flynn – a collaboration of the Nicki Flynn bridal collection with the brand's main line – delivers just this. "Think uber-glam," says Sayles when describing True By Nicki Flynn. "We've designed slinky lace gowns with sheer detailing for tasteful sex appeal and silver beaded gowns for a vintage inspired vibe, encrusted with crystals and diamantes and finished with delicate flutter sleeves. Ultra-

flattering off-the-shoulder dresses are paired with extra-long trains and beaded capelets will make an appearance, too," she says. "As always we will take elements of the bridal gowns and apply them to our signature bridesmaid silhouettes. We're moving towards a new palette for next year, so expect to find rich bridesmaid shades of teal, raspberry and cobalt."

But it's not only good design that make's a brand successful in the bridal industry, it's its relationship with its retailers, as well as its marketing and advertising strategies, too: "When Nicki launched True Bride and True Bridesmaids she literally took her collection on the road and started cold-calling stockists," recalls Sayles. "Retailers immediately started to show an interest in the brand and business grew from there. She slowly got involved with trade advertising and, of course, ensured she always exhibited at the most important trade event – Harrogate Bridal Show."

In such a competitive industry, Sayles suggests listening and responding to the customer's requests and suggestions is crucial for a flourishing brand. "We recently launched a plus size collection which we're still really excited about – our retailers had been pushing for this for some time. We took existing best sellers instead of launching brand new styles because they are tried and tested designs that continue to repeat, and feedback has been that with the right body support for the fuller figure, they would have even more mileage," she reasons. "We've launched this to our existing stockists, but only as a starting point."

"We've really managed to establish our name within the market, most notably in the last 5 or 6 years. This is because we promote not only to buyers, but to consumers too. It's created a demand for the brand. We've also developed our social media presence to ensure we're reaching the right audience – we're loving the world of digital marketing!"

Relationships are essential in this business and having a good rapport with stockists will ultimately result in high sales and brand success. Sayles says designer days and trunk shows, where the retailer can loan the entire new season collection, have always been successful marketing tools for True Bride. "We also work with retailers to list them on our adverts to help drive brides to their doors." Asked if there are any other plans on the horizon, Sayles explains: "to keep doing what we're doing – it seems to be working! And keep investing in the right people." ■

LBW

**LONDON
BRIDAL
WEEK.2018**



25 – 27 March
ExCeL London

Register now to receive the latest show news, collection updates and exclusive offers.

londonbridalweek.com



A new destination for bridal.

London Bridal Week is set to become the first bridal 'super-show' in the UK, bringing collections from the world's leading designers and manufacturers under one roof.

Timed to be the first major event in the international calendar, it is a fusion of large-scale trade fair, fashion show, and educational seminar programme.

The newly created event will cover 10,000 square metres - making this the largest bridal trade show ever to be held in the city, and the ultimate Spring buying destination.

Fashion Shows.

The Fashion Show Theatre will seat an audience of up to 250 retailers and press, and will host up to four different shows each day.

This is the perfect opportunity to discover the latest trends, watch the dresses come to life, and make the best buying decisions for your business.

Be inspired.

London Bridal Week is more than a buying event - it is a meeting place for the international bridal community.

Learn and be inspired at the Bridal Retail Success Academy, network at our after-hours events, and above all meet the world's finest manufactures and designers in one calm and accessible environment.

FEATURES | *shop talk*



BOUTIQUE SUCCESS GUIDE

Top tips for troubleshooting

Every business has its challenges, and bridal is no exception. The 'difficult' bride, the poor social media review, the dresses that are never collected... Jill Eckersley talks to retailers about the trickiest challenges they've had to face, and how they overcame the issues

Meet Kimberley, from Eden Bridal in Belfast, who says:

"How do you move samples on? When we took over the business a couple of years ago, we inherited old stock with the shop. I had a sample sale, and sold them well below cost price, feeling that it was better to have some cash than dead stock! Dresses that didn't sell were sold to a pop-up store or given to charity.

Going forward from there we have put OTP prices on the gowns and found this very successful. We at Eden believe in being transparent with our brides and offering them the best service we can.



All our gowns have high-quality labels, which include the price and then, below that the OTP price. I think it is imperative to have clean and well-kept samples on the rails, and we train staff to ensure the gowns look perfect after each try-on. Labels including an OTP price have proved a valuable part of our business. We sell one or two every week. Now I don't need to have sample sales, and we can cater for brides on a tighter budget who may not want to admit it!"



Shannon from Dotty Taylor Bridal in Holmfirth, Yorkshire, says:

"One of the trickiest areas we have faced is setting realistic sales targets, and maintaining positive figures compared with previous years. It's very hard to set targets when you are a new business. We have now been trading for two years and I still sometimes find it difficult to set achievable goals.

We now aim for a 10% increase on previous years. When we didn't have any 'last-year' figures to compare with, I would look at the store's overheads and break-even figures and add at least 40%. It is important to make targets achievable, so that the team feel good when goals are hit! If targets are too high, it can be de-motivating and the team will lose its drive to succeed.

We have a sales board in our staff area where we monitor how much has been made each day, week and month, alongside the targets for those periods.



The board also monitors what the staff have sold, our best-sellers, and units of each designer sold. It's really helpful for the team to see all this and it also fosters a healthy sense of competition.

Another little tip is to place the sales board near where the staff take their breaks. That way, they have time to read and digest all the information."

Lauren Wade from MiliMili Bridal in Colchester says:

"One of the most frustrating problems we faced since we opened involved alterations. We used to use an independent seamstress. She would visit our boutique for the fittings, or we would send the bride to her. Whichever way, there always seemed to be a breakdown in the process! Brides would turn up at the wrong place, dresses were not always where they needed to be, sometimes the seamstress wasn't there. Also, by sending our brides and their dresses elsewhere, I felt we were losing the personal touch.

After thinking long and hard, I

By sending our brides elsewhere I felt we were losing the personal touch

decided the best thing to do was to bring the alterations in-house and employ a seamstress. Luckily we had an upstairs room which I fitted out with everything necessary. We now have an on-site seamstress and all the work on our dresses is completed here. Our brides are much happier because they don't have to take their dress elsewhere. They feel we are here with them every step of the way. An added

benefit is that I have full control of the prices charged for alterations and can ensure they remain competitive."





Jo from YAP Bridal in Newcastle simply ran out of space! She says:

"In 2014 we were a growing business with our beautiful boutique brand going from strength to strength. However, we were starting to feel we couldn't deliver the quality we guaranteed to our brides - and this was down to space!

I could see my team were feeling stifled. Gowns looked squashed on the rails and merchandising was suffering, too. Bridal appointments were too 'busy' and crowded, and brides were not getting their exclusive time. Having just one fitting room was becoming a real issue. I realised that it was time to find somewhere fresh, new... and bigger!

We were in the perfect location in the heart of our beautiful city and I asked myself how I could increase my square footage and still keep my costs low?

After a year or more of looking at hundreds of properties, we ended up opening our bridal studio in June 2015. We are just two doors down from our original boutique - with reduced rent and rates. Our move was one of the best business decisions I ever made!"

Keeping up with relevant legislation gave Rebecca from The Dressing Rooms in Halesowen a few headaches. She says:

"Terms and Conditions have been a minefield since the new Consumer Rights Act came in in 2015. The 30-day rule (which allows customers to reject goods which are of 'unsatisfactory quality, not as described, or not fit for purpose,' for up to 30 days after purchase) caused much confusion for local Trading Standards and legal teams. There were many questions about how the new law would translate for the Bridal world. Having done a lot of research

I am really glad I joined the Association. The RBA has been invaluable to me

and investigation into this - and joining the Retail Bridal Association - I can now

safely say my T&Cs are fully compliant with the new law. I am really glad I joined the Association. The RBA has been invaluable to me, and we now get up-to-date, correct information from its expert team when needed. I'm just so glad I joined at the time I did. I now have total peace of

mind on a subject that I was not confident on in the past!" ■



Tina
Valerdi



All new and existing stockists are welcome
to view our new and current collections at
The London Bridal Show
@ STAND D40 March 25-27

www.tinavalerdi.com
uksales@tinavalerdi.com

MIRACLE PROM



Please visit our Birmingham Flagship Boutique to view all
our new collections of Wedding Dress, Prom, Bridesmaids
Dress and Flower girl / Holy Communion Dress.

26-28 Islington Row Middleway, Birmingham, B15 1LD.

E: enquiry@junepeonybridal.co.uk

T: 0121 454 8778

W: www.junepeonybridal.co.uk

25 - 27 MARCH

WHITE GALLERY

EXCEL LONDON

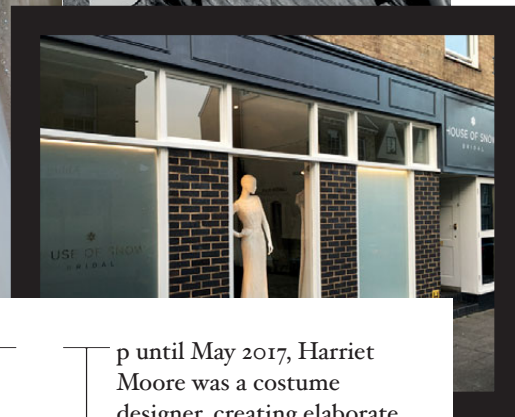


whitegallery.com

co-located with: **LBW** LONDON
BUSINESS
WEEK 2018



The collection of dresses stocked at House of Snow cover all price points



RETAIL FOCUS

House Of SNOW



A love of tailoring guided Harriet Moore into the bridal industry, and now her award-winning boutique is setting an industry example. Jennifer Grimble finds out more

Up until May 2017, Harriet Moore was a costume designer, creating elaborate clothing for television and theatre companies in America and the UK. Less than 18 months later and she is the proud owner of an award-winning boutique in the beautiful market town of Bury St Edmunds. Crowned New Bridalwear Retailer of the Year at The Bridal Buyer Awards 2017, House of Snow is quickly becoming the industry benchmark. We quiz Moore on how she transformed her boutique from fledgling to flourishing in less than two years.

"I always had a passion for bridal gowns," says Moore, for whom the industry has been a calling since her early teens. "I made my first wedding dress for a GCSE school project when I was 16. I modelled it myself in our local church."

Moore went on to study Costume Design at London College of Fashion, where she received a first-class honours degree. "Costume was the most elaborate design path I could take and it allowed me to express my artistic flair. I learnt essential skills associated with bridal gowns, including corsetry, which is extremely beneficial in this business. I'm able to understand the construction behind the dresses that I stock."

However, Moore decided to move away from design to focus on becoming a retailer, after a visit to the Bridal Buyer Awards in



Every Monday the shop is cleaned, ready for the week ahead



A TYPICAL MONDAY

"Mondays are usually incredibly busy with new bride appointments, so we like to start the week with a deep clean of the boutique. We spend time getting the store looking perfect, ready for our first customer. Then it is time for a cup of tea and essential admin! We usually have lots of emails to attend to and social media has become a huge part of our daily routine, especially on Mondays. We dedicate at least an hour to setting up our digital content for the next seven days, which helps me to get my head around what the week ahead looks like. Then it's time for ordering and other management jobs that need to be done."

2013 sparked a new goal. "When I was at the ceremony, with the company I worked for at the time, I just knew I wanted to be on that stage one day representing my own boutique."

In early 2016 Moore opened House of Snow. She named the store after her grandparents Betty and Dennis Snow, who were married for 62 years. Her dream of success was realised soon after when, a year later, she secured an award. "Winning the accolade was a huge achievement and helped remind me why I started the boutique in the first place."

CUSTOMER CARE

For Moore, customer experience is engrained in House of Snow's identity, something which she believes has been the key to its success. It offers its brides store exclusivity and personal attention, the sort of service one might expect from high-end fashion houses in Knightsbridge. Each bride is given full use of the boutique, meaning privacy and one-to-one advice from an expert consultant.

"We want our customers to feel like the only bride in the world," says Moore. Yet exclusivity does not mean a hard-sell. In fact, House of Snow encourage a more relaxed buying experience, overcoming the stresses usually associated with finding the perfect wedding dress. "We make suggestions and offer



House of Snow is located in picturesque Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk
01284 488188;
houseofsnow.co.uk





You can find the shop at
5a Hatter Street, Bury St
Edmunds, IP33 1LZ

friendly expert advice and we pride ourselves on our bridal knowledge.” House of Snow also hosts event weekends where numerous brides attend at once, for those looking for a more informal browse of the collections. By taking time to consider the customer in front of them, the staff at House of Snow have created a formula for success.

THE GOWNS

Maintaining a strong brand identity was key to taking House of Snow to the next level and sourcing the right collections became an integral part of Moore’s strategy. She began by finding designers that no other local retailer stocked. Moore was able to build her brand around the unique buying experience she was offering her brides. The selection process was lengthy. Each dress not only had to be unique, but they all had to work well together as an overall collection.

“I wanted to find gowns that complimented one another, while individually having something different to offer,” says Moore. The end result is five high-quality, balanced brands that cover all price points. There is a certain timelessness and vintage elegance to the dresses that Moore stocks, including pieces from Pronovias, Jenny Packham, Suzanne Neville, Watters Wtoo and Justin Alexander, brands that Moore herself has a passion for. “I would never stock anything that I don’t love.”

When discussing how her buying habits have changed since the store opened, Moore comments: “After a year in business, I now have the confidence to go with my gut decision. I don’t second guess myself anymore.” Knowing this reassures Moore about the direction to take House of Snow in. “It’s imperative to me that we truly believe in the quality and fit of all of our gowns, and I know that our current stock reflects the passion that we have for our brand and all of our designers.”

A BRIDE’S JOURNEY

So how does an award-winning bridal boutique guide its customers from browsing through to buying? When a bride makes an appointment, she is welcomed into the store and given two hours to shop at her leisure, trying on as many dresses as she wants.

“We don’t want our brides to feel rushed. Giving them time to properly understand what they are looking for is an incredibly important and special part of the wedding journey.”

After the dress is secured and the right size arrives in store, the bride is welcomed back for their first fitting. “It’s the perfect opportunity to try out different accessories and veils.”

The bride will then book an appointment with the boutique’s seamstress, Lara, who has 20 years of experience in bridalwear. “Most of our customers have one early fitting and then a final check.” Fittings usually start around eight to 10 weeks prior to the brides’ big day and Moore will look after the gown right up until the day before the wedding.

TOP TIPS

- “Strong brand identity is essential. Know what kind of boutique you are and stick to it. If you love your brand, so will your customers.”
- “Find the time to invest in social media. It has become an essential tool for us, so make it part of your daily routine.”
- “The little touches are important. Ensure your boutique is immaculate. Your brides will see how much care you’ve put into your space, and will know their dress is in safe hands.”

AWARD WINNER

The stylish boutique, with its impeccable customer service, fought off stiff competition to win the New Bridalwear Retailer of the Year accolade at the 2017 BBAs. “We were in complete shock as we knew we were up against some incredible competition. To make it to the finalist stage was a huge achievement, we were over the moon. Our application was honest and transparent of all the ups and downs since opening, and highlighted where we had succeeded and where there was room for improvement,” says Moore. ■



THE BRIDAL BUYER AWARDS 2018

10 SEPTEMBER 2018
Harrogate Convention Centre

CATEGORIES

RETAILER CATEGORIES:

Bridalwear Retailer of the Year, *England*
Bridalwear Retailer of the Year, *Ireland*
Bridalwear Retailer of the Year, *Scotland*
Bridalwear Retailer of the Year, *Wales*
New Bridalwear Retailer of the Year
Best Mens' Formalwear Retailer
Long Standing Retailer of the Year
Best Retailer Customer Service
Retailer Website of the Year
Best In-Store Design

SUPPLIER CATEGORIES:

Best Bridal Manufacturer of the Year
Best Bridesmaid Collection of the Year
Best Prom Collection of the Year
Best MOB Collection of the Year
Best Plus Size Collection of the Year
Best Headdress Collection of the Year
Best Supplier Customer Service of the Year

SPECIAL CATEGORIES:

Student Designer of the Year
Wedding Dress of the Year
British Bridalwear Designer of the Year

For more information or to enter
please visit: awards.bridalbuyer.com

Entry deadline: 4th May 2018

Thank you to our sponsors:

ALEXIA
WWW.ALEXIADISIGNS.COM

BBSA
BRIDAL BUSINESS SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION

CASABLANCA
BRIDAL
CELEBRATE FOREVER

ESSENCE
of australia

The WHITE CLOSET

The much-loved Manchester boutique is attracting more brides than ever before. We chat to Nikki Graeme about the launch of her new Capsule Curve collection

Tell us about your boutique? As founder of The White Closet, I set up the brand while on maternity leave. I was engaged at the time and as I began my dress search, I noticed a huge gap in the market in Manchester and Cheshire for luxury and fashion-forward brands. At the time, it was a very dated wedding dress market. When The White Closet opened in 2009, we knew we'd found our niche and haven't looked back since. My business partner, Eve Broadhurst, joined a year later. With my journalistic background and experience, Eve's skills in design and embroidery and our shared passion for interior design and developing a strong brand in the industry, we have a very creative partnership. Over the years, The White Closet has brought us beautiful brides, designers, life-long friends, awards and travels. In 2015, we decided to spread our wings to sunny Liverpool for an alternative bridal experience focussing on the exclusivity and privacy that a studio allows. Neither of us set out to own a bridal store, but our individual skill set turned out to be the perfect blend for the bridal industry!

What inspired you to start the Capsule Curve collection?

The launch of our Curve collection was long overdue. We held a survey over the summer asking our brides for feedback in all areas of our business, the reaction was amazing and the responses were invaluable. One of the overwhelming comments and concerns came down to sample sizes. Although our samples are mainly 12s and 14s, industry standard, we wanted to shake the 'skinny bird' label we'd been branded with by some brides and address this issue. Our Capsule Curve collection provides a curated selection of dresses in sizes 16-24, which we know suit fuller figures and means brides of all sizes can have the same luxurious experience. Since its early launch

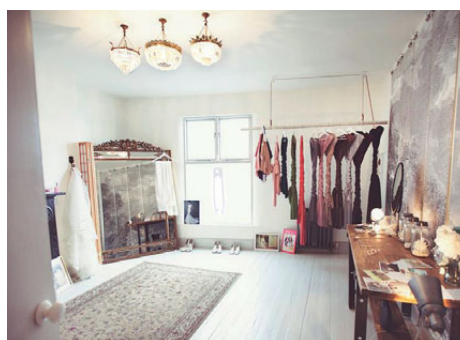
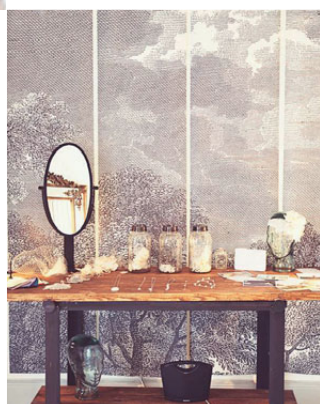
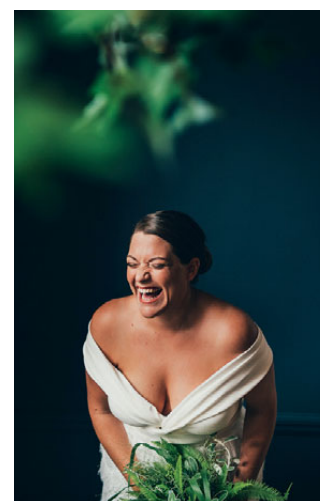
it has already been a huge hit with our brides, our years of experience fitting dresses to brides of all shapes and sizes means we know bodies, boobs and bums, and how to show them off! We were also keen to break away from the stigma that the curvier bride has to shop in the backwaters of nowhere to find lack lustre labels; we want to break through

this barrier and offer our beautiful, stylish curvier ladies aspirational brands, like Charlie Brear, Halfpenny London and Jesus Peiro and provide the opportunity to try the samples closer to their size.

How have our customers reacted? The response has been overwhelming and we have been inundated with enquiries and bookings. We believe we'll bring a new wave of brides to our business and, what we feel is an untapped market that we're keen to celebrate and explore. It's important to note that our Curve collection isn't segregated to a separate rail, or room, our Curve dresses simply sit alongside our usual bridal collections, but each Curve dress has a discreet logo to indicate it's a size 16 plus. This collection is about being inclusive, and to put an end to that heart-sinking moment a bride walks through the doors of a bridal shop and panics she won't be able to fit in sample dresses.

Should retailers be more accommodating when it comes to curvy brides? As part of our research, we saw a steady increase in ordering size 16 and up, year-on-year, it's a growing market that made business sense to explore. We

understand stores can't cater for everyone all of the time, but small changes such as ordering some slightly roomier samples can really make the customer feel comfortable and more confident in their order. Fingers crossed for continued change and growing confidence not only for our customers as brides, but for all of us as women. ■



BRIDAL

BRIDALBUYER.COM BUYER



Your
CONSTANT
INDUSTRY
connection

The newly re-launched **bridalbuyer.com** is an indispensable tool for bridal retailers, supporting in all aspects of running a successful business.

bridalbuyer.com gives you instant access to:

- ♦ Exclusive industry news
- ♦ Practical business advice
- ♦ Valuable expert opinion
- ♦ The latest fashion trends

STAY CONNECTED

bridalbuyer.com is updated daily with valuable industry news and advice. Visit the website now to register for free unlimited access.

OPPORTUNITIES

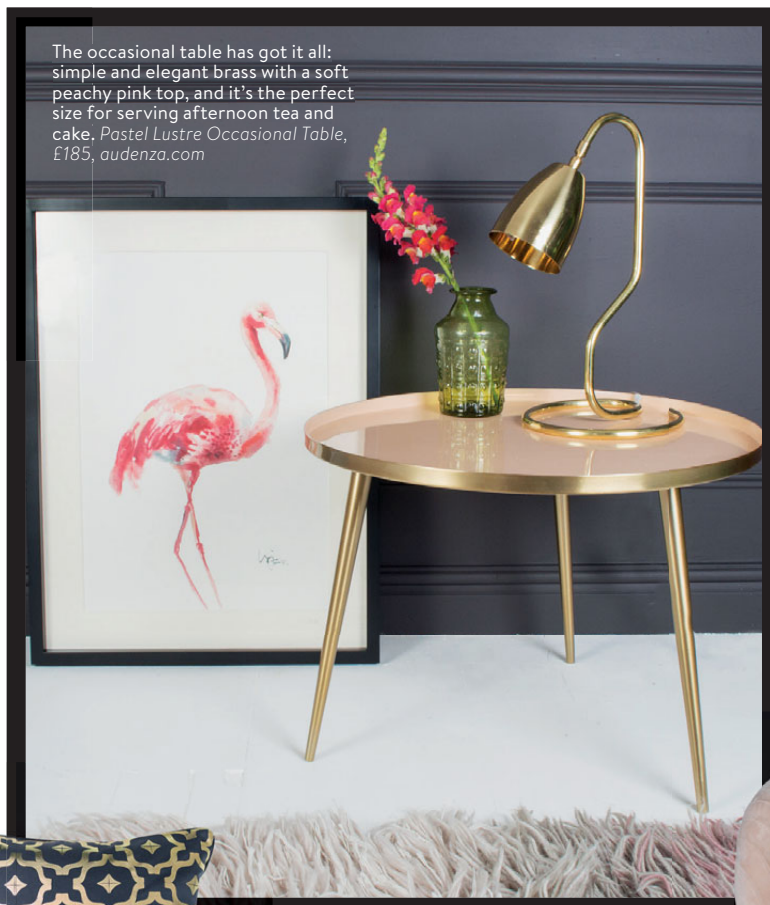
For digital advertising opportunities, please email:
nardene.smith@oceanmedia.co.uk



Practical pieces don't have to be dull; this brass waste bin has the perfect mix of form and function. *Menu Norm Wire Bin*, £89.95, black-by-design.co.uk



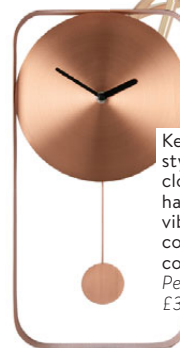
This stunning lamp mixes a polished copper cylinder with a patinated bottom. During the patination process, the *Verdigris* forms in random shapes, giving a unique finish. *Orvinio Table Lamp*, £108, darlighting.co.uk



The occasional table has got it all: simple and elegant brass with a soft peachy pink top, and it's the perfect size for serving afternoon tea and cake. *Pastel Lustre Occasional Table*, £185, audenza.com



This alluring table is ideal for dressing areas or in your seating section to place champagne glasses and coffee cups. *Twister Side Table*, £310, alexanderandpearl.co.uk



Keep appointments stylishly on time: this clock's curved shape has an almost retro vibe, while the warm copper keeps things contemporary. *Bard Pendulum Wall Clock*, £39, made.com

This metallic cushion is the perfect way to add a luxurious touch to a sofa or armchair. *Taha'a Pewter & Gold Cushion*, £85, penelopehope.com



SHOP THE TREND

Warm metallics

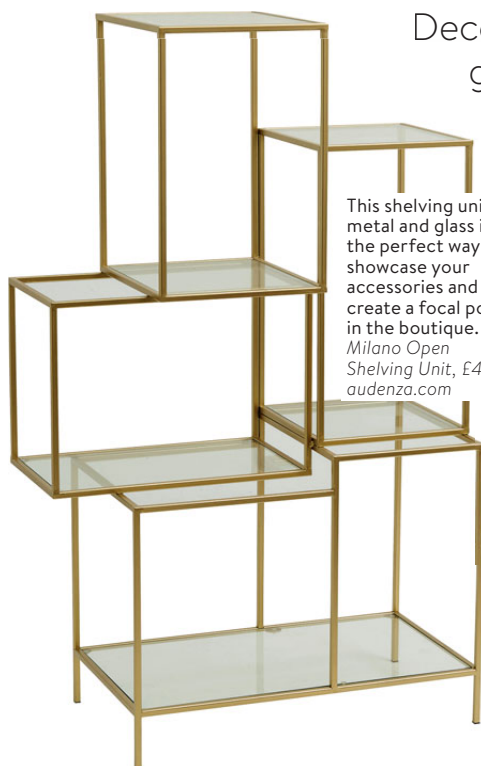
Decorate your boutique with glorious rose gold, copper and brass to create an on-trend and ultra-modern space

This blush pink, pleated velvet seat looks effortlessly chic, the tapered gold legs complete the look. *Hepburn Armchair*, £567, sweetpeaandwillow.com



USE THE LOOK

- Mix metallic objects with different textures elsewhere to balance things out – think a thick pile rug or large woollen throws
- Keep the rest of the colour scheme in your boutique fairly subdued. Greys are a perfect match for brass, while golds and coppers will look elegant alongside creams and blush tones
- Ease yourself into the trend with accessories. You can change pieces around and see what works best, and where, until you find the perfect balance. ■



This shelving unit in metal and glass is the perfect way to showcase your accessories and create a focal point in the boutique. *Milano Open Shelving Unit*, £425, audenza.com



Add interest and colour with your accessories, this tactile vase would look stunning filled with freshly cut blooms. *L'Abbaye Hammered Gold Round Vase*, £60, hegrondecarle.co.uk

Simple and sophisticated, this accent chair is sure to add glamour to your seating area. *Skyler Curve Accent Chair*, £305, shabbystore.co.uk



BRIDAL BUYER

A woman with blonde hair styled in an updo is sitting on a white, ornate chair. She is wearing a white, strapless wedding dress with a long train. She is holding a bouquet of white flowers and greenery. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

*Serving the
industry for*
26 YEARS

Bridal Buyer's reputation as the industry-leading bridal publication has been cultivated over the past 26 years.

Our mix of practical advice, exclusive industry news, trend information and expert opinion can't be found anywhere else; making Bridal Buyer an indispensable guide for bridal retailers.

Bridal Buyer is the official magazine of The Harrogate Bridal Show and the newly launched London Bridal Week, which will be held at Excel London in March 2018.

STAY CONNECTED

bridalbuyer.com is updated daily with valuable industry news and advice. Visit the website now to register for free unlimited access.

OPPORTUNITIES

If you are interested in advertising opportunities, please email:
nardene.smith@oceanmedia.co.uk

accessories

LOVEIT SOMUCH

NEW STOCK
NEW BROCHURE

Your supplier for crystal appliques, belts and trims

www.loveitsomuch.net
(01529) 461 354 pamela@loveitsomuch.net

fabrics

Bennett Silks Ltd www.bennett-silks.co.uk

100% Pure Silks & Silk Blends
Stock supported range,
competitive price structure
and worldwide distribution.

Your enquires are welcome
sales@bennett-silks.co.uk

T: +44 (0)161 4676 8600
F: +44 (0)161 480 5385

Established 1904
All your silk requirements.
Please check our website
for a full list of agents

THE PV FABRICS
IMAGINATION PRIZE 2016
HENRI PORTIER
BENNETT SILKS PREMIERVISION®

Platinum Bridal Fabrics

We are the UK's leading supplier of bridal fabrics,
laces, trims & crystal motifs.

- All products in stock
- No minimum order
- Next working day delivery
- Showroom viewing by appointment
- View our full collection online

www.bridalfabrics.co.uk

Visit us at Anchor Mill, Moss Fold Road, Darwen
Lancashire, BB3 0AQ
Call us on 01254 873333
Email - info@bridalfabrics.co.uk

fabrics

CARRINGTON FABRICS

carringtonfabrics.co.uk

fabrics designed
to inspire

Visit the website or call
01204 692223

ENGLAND

JAMES HARE
SINCE 1865

James Hare offer a truly unrivalled
collection of bridal fabrics for all
occasions. Silks, Faux Silks, Lace,
Embroideries and Tulle.

No minimum order.
24 hour delivery as standard.
Fabrics held in stock.
Sample book available to purchase.

t: 0113 243 1204
e: sales@james-hare.com
w: james-hare.com

Image courtesy of Alan Hannah

BRIDAL
BUYER

Catch up with the latest industry news, join discussions and gain fantastic insight into new collections. Source new suppliers in our comprehensive directory and read the latest edition of **Bridal Buyer** online



fabrics



Maison Henry Bertrand
Proudly delivering Creativity, Flexibility and Service since 1885

Luxury Silks & Silk Blends from stock, Heavy Crepes, Organzas, French dyed Chiffon Ombres. British Woven Brocatelles and Damasks, and Italian Jacquards and Cloques

Next day delivery with low minimums.

We also offer Dentelles Méry Laces



52 HOLMES ROAD, LONDON, NW5 3AB
E:sales@henrybertrand.co.uk | T: +44(0)20 74247000
W: www.henrybertrand.co.uk



Unit F4, Northfleet Indst Est, Lower Road, Northfleet Kent DA11 9SW
Tel: 01322 380480 Fax: 01322 380680

We offer a fast, reliable and friendly service on our continually increasing range (currently over 3,500 choices) of bridal fabrics, embroidered and beaded edgings, motifs and accessories. Our range of dress accessories now exceeds 1000+ articles including many brooches and buckles with crystals.

Showing at:
London Bridal Week, UK - 25th-27th March 2018
Textile Forum London, UK - 14th-15th March 2018
Paris Bridal Fair, France - 14th-16th April 2018
Interbride Düsseldorf, Germany - 5th-8th May 2018

We have no minimum order value or quantity.
Email: admin@michaelsbridalfabrics.co.uk www.michaelsbridalfabrics.co.uk



To advertise in the directory please contact

Shelley Williams on
020 7772 8498

fabrics

PONGEES
specialists in silk

SOIE SEDA SEIDE Silk

LUXURY BRIDAL FABRICS NOW ONLINE



An extensive collection of fabrics including: Duchesse Satin, Taffeta, Faille Double Faced Satin, Zibeline, Ghazar, Marocain, Heavy Satin Tulle, Organza, Lace, Chiffon and Douppion

Pongees Ltd
T.+ 44 207 739 9130 sales@pongees.co.uk
www.pongees.co.uk

Trade Eighty ... Silks

The Silk Suppliers of choice for many discerning Bridal and Couture Designers. From the lightest Silk Tulle to the heaviest Duchesse Satins and Crepe Marocaines as well as Digital Prints, Laces and Embroideries.

All on a Next Day Delivery.

Trade Eighty: Studland Hall, Studland Street, Hammersmith, London. W6 0JS
T: 020 8741 3777 | T/Fx: 020 8741 7775 | W: www.trade80silks.co.uk

BRIDAL BUYER
www.bridalbuyer.com

CONTACT US TODAY AT
OPPORTUNITIES@BRIDALBUYER.COM
FOR MORE DETAILS

iron and steamers

PROGRESS
www.progress.co.uk

BREATHING LIFE INTO FABRIC 020 8417 0660

BRIDAL BUYER www.bridalbuyer.com

Catch up with the latest industry news, join discussions and gain fantastic insight into new collections. Source new suppliers in our comprehensive directory and read the latest edition of **Bridal Buyer online**



recruitment

Agent Required

We are looking for an agent to sell all of our Collections in Scotland and the North of England.

Please forward CV to
bernard@specialday-ireland.com
www.specialday-ireland.com



BRIDAL BUYER

www.bridalbuyer.com

LOOKING FOR A SALES REPRESENTATIVE/ AGENT IN THE UK AND IRELAND?

NEED A UK DISTRIBUTOR?

WANT TO SELL YOUR BUSINESS?

...WANT TO BE REPRESENTED BY THE BEST?

Bridalbuyer.com's 'Opportunities' package gets the right people together and opens new chapters...

CONTACT US TODAY AT
OPPORTUNITIES@BRIDALBUYER.COM
FOR MORE DETAILS

If you are looking for a UK Sales Representative, Agent or Distributor or thinking about selling your business – we can help.

BRIDAL BUYER

www.bridalbuyer.com

Catch up with the latest industry news, join discussions and gain fantastic insight into new collections. Source new suppliers in our comprehensive directory and read the latest edition of **Bridal Buyer online**



wedding boxes

The Wedding Dress Box

The perfect way for brides to keep & preserve their Dress Of a Lifetime, after the wedding.



Wedding Travel Boxes

For Weddings Abroad
Plus unique wedding accessories for the bride.

01306 740193
emptybox.co.uk

THE EMPTY BOX COMPANY



CONFETTI

Celebrate in Style

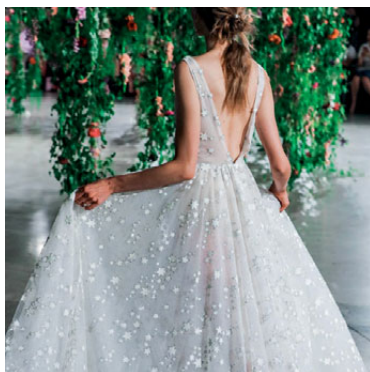
Confetti Magazine will be put in the hands of every individual responsible for planning a wedding via the Ocean Media wedding events portfolio.

CONFETTI.CO.UK

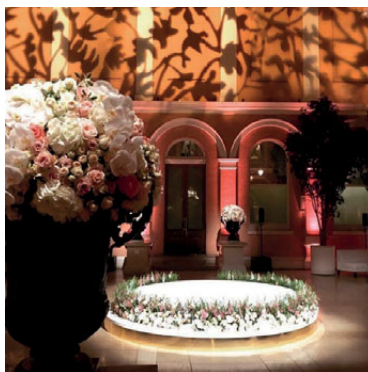


Instagram INSPIRATION

We've been out and about snapping the world of bridal; launch parties, boutique windows, the latest collections and more



We are obsessed with this @galialahav wonder! See their whole FW18 collection on the BB homepage



How amazing are the @wildaboutflower displays at the @confettiwedding and @brideluxofficial launch? #bridalbuyer



We're wondering what style of dress Meghan Markle will go for on her wedding day? #royalwedding



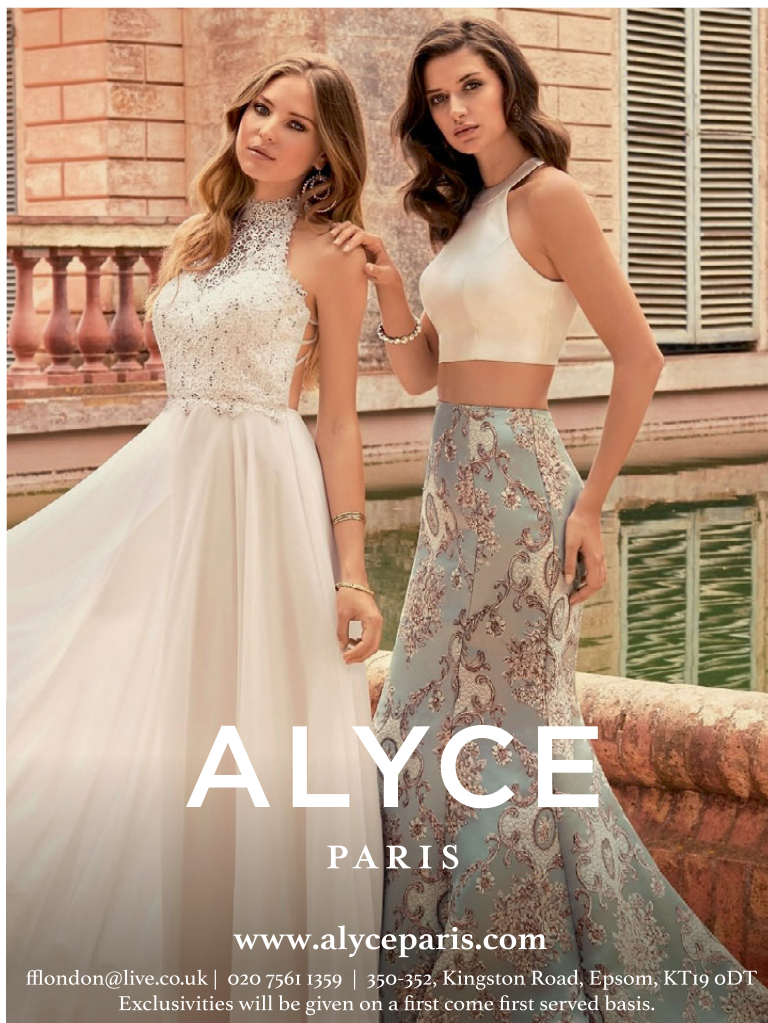
#Regram from @hollytucker - it's important to support local and independent businesses #retailer



Takeover! #thewindowat62 Can you spot the surprise in the window?! #channel4 #partytime



We are in love with these @sophiawebster beauties from @theweddinggalleryofficial #shoes



Two models are featured in elegant Alyce Paris dresses. The model on the left wears a white, high-necked, long-sleeved gown with a full skirt. The model on the right wears a white, high-necked, long-sleeved crop top paired with a long, flowing skirt featuring a detailed floral pattern in shades of blue and green. They are standing in front of a stone building with a balcony.

ALYCE
PARIS

www.alyceparis.com

fflondon@live.co.uk | 020 7561 1359 | 350-352, Kingston Road, Epsom, KT19 0DT
Exclusivities will be given on a first come first served basis.



A model is shown in a long, flowing, white lace gown with a high neckline and a full skirt. She is standing on a stone wall, looking down. The background shows green foliage and a clear sky.

Calla Blanche
18107 Dani Rose

www.callablanche.com | fflondon@live.co.uk | 020 7561 1359
350-352, Kingston Road, Epsom, KT19 0DT



A model is shown in a white, off-the-shoulder, long-sleeved gown with a full skirt. She is standing in front of a stone wall with a window and a hanging basket of pink flowers.

TARIKEDIZ

www.tarikediz.com | fflondon@live.co.uk | 020 7561 1359
350-352, Kingston Road, Epsom, KT19 0DT



A model is shown in a long, flowing, peach-colored gown with a high neckline and a full skirt. She is standing on a white pedestal, looking down. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Jasz
COUTURE

fflondon@live.co.uk
020 7561 1359 | www.jaszcouture.com
350-352, Kingston Road, Epsom, KT19 0DT

AMANDA  WYATT



amandawyatt.com