

# How the royal wedding influenced the latest bridal trends

(ARA) - Although the latest Brides American Wedding Study shows the average cost of a wedding in 2010 was \$26,501, a decrease of 5 percent from 2009, weddings continue to be big business. But many couples are opting to cut the guest list instead of big ticket items like wedding gowns.

In fact, the average wedding gown cost \$1,289 in 2010, a 20 percent increase over 2009, according to the study. This is no surprise to the millions who were glued to their television sets this past April during the most talked about wedding since the 1981 royal wedding of Lady Diana to Prince Charles. Many brides are now emulating the elegant lace gown worn by Catherine Middleton, now the Duchess of Cambridge.

In addition to beautiful lace, the newest trends in wedding gowns include color, soft sleeves, short hemlines and eco-friendly materials.

Whether it is Chantilly, Alencon, duchesse, guipure, or ribbon, lace has become one of the hottest trends this year. "Designers at all price points have debuted collections featuring full frothy skirts, wildflowers and lace used in both traditional and modern ways," says Kate Campbell, department chair of Fashion & Retail Management at The Art Institute of Tampa, a branch of Miami International University of Art & Design. "This particular trend parallels the more feminine, elegant trends we see in fashion everywhere

- including more fitted and ladylike styles reminiscent of Grace Kelly and Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy."

While not for everyone, the use of color in wedding gowns has been growing in popularity. Rich and vibrant, or more subdued, color in bridal wear is everywhere. Some brides choose soft pastel colors, such as blush, rose or skin-tone. Others opt to wear vibrant hues of lavender, green and deep pink. Less bold brides are more likely to use hints of accent color on sashes, bows, embroidery, hems, necklines or beading. "The bride who chooses to add color to her dress is fashion forward and confident - it's not for the faint of heart," says Amber Chatelain, lead faculty for the Fashion & Retail Management program at The Art Institute of Tennessee - Nashville, a branch of The Art Institute of Atlanta.

Another interesting new trend in bridal wear is short gowns, especially for brides choosing destination and beach weddings. While they may be short in length, these dresses are not short on style. Some offer sophisticated laces, chic feathers or multi-layered organza mini-skirts.

Soft sleeves are enjoying a comeback. Designers have debuted soft, romantic sleeves, including traditional cap sleeves in florals and tulle, modern silhouettes using vintage elements, sequin fringe and flutter sleeves, and romantic off-the-shoulder versions. "The softness and

elegance of the sleeves in bridal wear mirrors today's general fashion trends, where designers are highlighting the elegance and beauty of the female form in very soft ways," says Charlene Parsons, who heads the fashion programs at Miami International University of Art & Design.

Eco-friendly options have also increased in popularity. "There are now numerous eco-friendly designers whose sole business is to create wedding dresses made with earth-friendly fabrics and materials, using techniques that are in harmony with the earth," says Crystal Shamblee, department chair of Fashion Design for The Art Institute of Philadelphia. Secondhand and vintage wedding dresses are another eco-friendly choice.

Whatever fashion trends a bride chooses, one that will never go out of style is a gown



that fits well, is figure flattering and makes the bride feel like she's the most beautiful woman in the world on her big day.



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