

Bridal Special

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO BRIDAL STYLE IN PHILADELPHIA

Wedded Bliss

WITH WEDDING SEASON UPON US, WE ROUND UP THE CHARMING VENUES, GOWNS, AND ACCENTS TO INSPIRE YOU AS YOU PLAN YOUR BIG DAY. BY ALEXANDRA LESHNER

As the weather warms, the flowers bloom, and the last hints of winter melt away, we once again find ourselves in wedding season. For couples who choose to tie the knot this time of year, springtime abounds with possibilities: Vibrant floral designs, exuberant color palettes, and breathtaking outdoor ceremonies are just a few. It's no secret that Philadelphia's wedding repertoire is deep—the city is bursting with one-of-a-

kind venues, stunning bridal shops, expert caterers, and every professional resource you could need to pull off the “I do’s” of your dreams. In these pages, brides-to-be who have yet to define their wedding style will find inspiration for choosing all the little details that suit them flawlessly. Whether it's jewelry, shoes, flower arrangements, or even some dapper looks for the groom, our ideas will have you well on your way to an unforgettable day.



The Arts Ballroom will lend your wedding an air of grace and charm.



Everlasting Love

TRADITION TAKES CENTER STAGE FOR THE BRIDE IN SEARCH OF TIMELESS ELEGANCE.



“The traditional bride is wearing either a simple A-line dress... or a ball gown.”

—NILAH PETSCHELT

Formal invitations, a sit-down dinner, and a live band are just a few of the elements that go into the dream day of a bride who appreciates tradition. The most significant feature, however, is a timeless dress. “The traditional bride is wearing either a simple A-line dress with exquisite lace detail or a ball gown,” says Havertown dressmaker and designer Nilah Petschelt of Nilah & Company (36 W. Eagle Road, Havertown, 610-853-9822; nilah.com). “Many of these brides are also adding lace sleeves to give their gown a more personal and customized look.” Just as traditional as the white wedding dress is the veil, which is one of Petschelt’s specialties. The process of handcrafting each veil is unique, she says, although every one features the finest laces and tulle from France, Spain, Belgium, and elsewhere. From among many fabrics and designs, Petschelt suggests those that best match the bride’s dress, but a few styles reign supreme. “Our most popular

veil styles,” she says, “are the Waterfall Standard veil with the cord and crystal edging—it’s a very versatile veil that goes with many dresses—and our lace-edge veils.” For the traditional bride, a space like the Arts Ballroom (1324 Locust St., 267-886-1472; artsballroom.com) fits the bill beautifully. “The building features the two-story Grand Hall, the mirrored Sylvania Ballroom, and a mezzanine,” says Leila Miller, director of catering for Starr Events, the venue’s exclusive caterer. “The mahogany floors, marble staircase, and crystal chandeliers and sconces [create] the perfect setting for a celebration, and brides can make a grand entrance down the sweeping staircase after gathering in a separate suite upstairs.” The Arts Ballroom also benefits from Starr’s customized food and drink offerings. “We start off by working with the couple to tailor our existing menus to suit their needs,” says Miller, “or we can create a completely custom menu based on any direction they would like to take it.”

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Madison gown, **Monique Lhuillier** (\$5,465). *The Wedding Shoppe*, 503 W. Lancaster Ave., Ste. 110, Wayne, 610-293-1299; wedding-shoppe.com. Custom tuxedo, **Commonwealth Proper** (from \$2,250). 1839 Chestnut St., 267-319-1741; commonwealthproper.com. Pigalace pump, **Christian Louboutin** (\$795). *Saks Fifth Avenue*, 2 Bala Plaza, Bala Cynwyd, 610-667-1550; christianlouboutin.com. Destiny three-stone platinum engagement ring, **Hearts on Fire** (\$17,900). *King of Prussia Mall*, 484-685-0432; hearts-on-fire.com

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW BONACCI (TUXEDO)



The Atrium at The Curtis Center is a vision of opulence and splendor.

Glamour Girl

THE BRIDE WITH VINTAGE TASTE WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH THE CLASSIC STYLING AND ART DECO ALLURE OF THE 1920S.

The Roaring '20s are the perfect muse for the bride who desires a wedding of old-fashioned glamour and revelry. "Partially due to the popularity of *Gatsby*, 1920s-inspired gowns are coming back in style," says famed designer Nicole Miller (*Hyatt at The Bellevue*, 200 S. Broad St., 215-546-5007; nicolemiller.com). The dress pictured here has the simple silhouette and elaborate beading of a 1920s design but with a contemporary youthfulness, which Miller says prevents it from feeling too old: "It's a modern take on a vintage style—it has a classic feel without looking like an antique. I think Philadelphia brides want to look pretty but not too frou-frou. This gown combines elegance and sophistication with a hint of nostalgia." The ideal venue for a wedding of this kind is one with strong architectural detail and character, like The Atrium at

The Curtis Center (601 Walnut St., 215-238-5750; cescapheballroom.com). "The couple that selects The Atrium at The Curtis Center completely appreciates the opulent beauty of the historic, grand space and understands the statement that getting married at a [venue] like this makes," says Cescaphe Event Group owner and CEO Joe Volpe. Ascend the dramatic entrance into the lobby—which is used for luxurious cocktail receptions and lounging—and the 12-story atrium, with its 750-square-foot Tiffany mosaic and two-story waterfall, a backdrop you'd be hard-pressed to find anywhere else. But the incredible décor isn't the only reason to book this breathtaking venue. "In addition to the decadent menu and custom-designed wedding cake," says Volpe, "we light the space with specially selected hues to accent the bride and groom's choice of colors."



"This gown has a classic feel but without looking like an antique."

—NICOLE MILLER

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Emerald-cut diamond ring, **Sasha Primak** (price on request). *Morton & Rudolph Jewelers*, 1900 Marlton Pike E., Cherry Hill, NJ, 856-424-1101; mortonandrudolph.com. Silk Allover Print pocket square, **Hugo Boss** (\$40). *Ventresca Ltd.*, 145 W. State St., Doylestown, 215-348-3139; hugoboss.com. Albion cuff links with onyx and diamonds, **David Yurman** (\$1,800). *King of Prussia Mall*, 610-265-6370; davidyurman.com. Blaine gown, **Nicole Miller** (\$2,900). *Hyatt at The Bellevue*, 200 S. Broad St., 215-546-5007; nicolemiller.com. Sinful sandal, **Stuart Weitzman** (\$398). 1711 Walnut St., 215-640-0400; stuartweitzman.com



Phoenixville Foundry is a sleek, chic setting ideal for subtle personal touches.



Simply Chic

MINIMALISM IS PERFECTED IN AN URBAN SETTING WITH SLEEK, MODERN ADORNMENTS.



“The key to any gown, simple or complex, is always fit.”

—IRINA SIGAL

A minimalist wedding allows the bride and groom to be the focus of the day. Just as the affair is tailored to fit the couple’s character, the dress should be an expression of the bride’s personality. “The beauty of customizing a dress is that there’s a lot of room for creativity,” says designer Irina Sigal (2038 Locust St., 215-772-1121; irinasigal.com), who has been creating custom clothing, particularly formal and wedding gowns, for 20 years. “Personality is everything in a dress, and it is incredibly important that the bride’s unique style shines through in a way that complements her best.” For Sigal, designing for the minimalist bride requires emphasizing the details and fit: “Simple gowns are all about the details, yet they must be immaculately constructed so that the fit is the star of the show. The key to any gown, simple or complex, is always fit.” A venue with rustic undertones is ideal for couples planning a minimal yet meaningful affair. A former industrial

site, Phoenixville Foundry (2 N. Main St., Phoenixville, 610-917-8400; phoenixvillefoundry.com) offers plenty of room for personalization. “The industrial-chic design, flexible open spaces, and neutral color scheme serve as a dramatic yet romantic backdrop for a wide array of bridal styles and customized themes,” says facility and events director Bob Tomasso. “The venue has a unique blend of industrial and modern elements, including 60-foot-high ceilings, clerestory windows, and sweeping staircases. Its three event areas can accommodate a single gathering for up to 500 guests or be broken up for more-intimate events. Additional spaces can also incorporate outdoor ceremonies, receptions, and performances.” The streamlined nature of the building makes it perfect for simple decorations. Bold but limited color schemes, modest table settings, and single-flower arrangements maintain the simplicity of the space while adding a hint of personality and liveliness.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Amelia halter gown, **Theia** (\$2,995). *Lovely Bride*, 237 Market St., 215-627-1800; lovelybride.com. Cotton-silk diamond-print bow tie, **Hugo Boss** (\$95). *Ventresca Ltd.*, 145 W. State St., Doylestown, 215-348-3139; hugoboss.com. Custom floral bouquet, **Evantine Design** (\$550). 7500 Wheeler St., 215-492-8545; evantinedesign.com. Cocktail ring with mother-of-pearl and diamonds, **Roberto Coin** (\$4,700). *Bernie Robbins Jewelers*, 2123 S. Eagle Road, Newtown, 215-579-8224; bernierobbins.com



Winterthur's idyllic landscapes make it a perennial wedding favorite.



Flower Child

FLORAL ACCENTS AND ROMANTIC TOUCHES HELP CREATE THE IDEAL GARDEN PARTY-INSPIRED WEDDING.

The romantic bride with a penchant for the outdoors will be enticed by soft color schemes, sweet tablescapes, and dainty accents. A simply structured gown with delicate details makes a distinctive statement, especially when it's custom-designed. Local dressmaker Janice Martin (*41 Cricket Ave., Ardmore, 610-645-4540; janicemartin.net*), who has more than 25 years of experience in custom bridal- and eveningwear, designed the pictured dress with just those elements in mind. "The lace on this gown was hand-beaded in France in a light floral design, and the fabrics are all natural—from the silk tulle on the bodice to the silk satin bustier and skirt," says Martin, who takes anywhere from a week to a year and a half to create a custom gown (although most clients should expect it to take four to nine months). "Also, this train, which can be gently bustled to the side, is long enough

to give the gown a lovely line, but not so large as to be cumbersome, heavy, or likely to catch on things. It has a fluidity and grace that most off-the-rack gowns can't offer." The delicate, romantic feel of the dress can easily be matched in a venue like the Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library (*5105 Kennett Pike, Wilmington, DE, 302-888-4600; winterthur.org*), whose gorgeous landscaped grounds and versatile ceremony and reception locations are sure to make any bride swoon. "Winterthur appeals to couples who have a love of nature but still like the grandeur of being on a historic estate," says catering director Laura Henriquez. "The estate spans almost 1,000 acres, making every wedding feel completely private and intimate. There are tons of nooks and crannies throughout the property where couples can enjoy a special moment together right next to the romantic waterfall and koi ponds."



"This gown has a fluidity and grace that most off-the-rack gowns can't offer."

—JANICE MARTIN

FROM LEFT: Diamond Butterfly ring, **Bernie Robbins Collection** (price on request). *Bernie Robbins Jewelers, 2123 S. Eagle Road, Newtown, 215-579-8224; bernierobbins.com*. Brass knotted cuff links, **Boss** (\$115). *King of Prussia Mall, 610-992-1400; hugoboss.com*. Botticelli gown, **Janice Martin Couture** (price on request). *41 Cricket Ave., Ardmore, 610-645-4540; janicemartin.net*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARTIN REARDON (GOWN)