



FASHION

WHERE TO SHOP FOR A WEDDING DRESS IN NEW YORK CITY, ACCORDING TO A BRIDAL STYLIST

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Oh, the saga of finding a wedding dress in New York City . . . when faced with so many options, it can be difficult to know where to begin. How do you cut through the plethora of boutiques, designer showrooms, and department stores to find the non-negotiable stops on your search for the dress?

We sat down with Julie Sabatino, the woman who first introduced the idea of a “wedding stylist” to the world (think a kinder, gentler, cuter version of Anthony Marantino in *Sex and the City*) and started The Stylish Bride, a small company focused on helping women with the searching, shopping, and ultimately, the styling of their wedding dress. The Stylish Bride can also be enlisted to handle all of the wedding weekend event dressing—including but not limited to, the rehearsal dinner dress, a bridal luncheon look, and an after-party ensemble—as well help shop for bridesmaids and mother of the bride outfits if necessary. As part of your package, Sabatino and her stylists can be booked to be on site while you’re getting ready to handle all of the day of steaming and styling too—and most importantly, this white glove service will ensure there’s not even the hint of a wardrobe malfunction.

Sabatino founded The Stylish Bride, thirteen years ago, after experiencing a less-than-enjoyable hunt for her own wedding gown. “I searched for someone to help me, who could listen to what I wanted, look at my body type, mediate between my mother and me and understand my wedding,” she explains. Sadly, that individual did not exist, so Sabatino created her own service.

After leaving a career in investment banking, she got a masters at The Fashion Institute of Technology and was then armed with the connections and know-how to efficiently and effectively start her own business. Working with Sabatino and her team ensures you’ll get a certain level of special treatment you won’t get if you go it alone (and yes, she can even pull dresses straight off the runway weeks before they hit showrooms).

Booking The Stylish Bride obviously means you’re indulging in a luxury service, but it’s well worth it if it results in finding the perfect dress and maintaining your sanity—*amiright?* We think so, and in the spirit of spreading the wealth, we peppered her with questions and got her short list of must-stops when wedding dress shopping in NYC. *So without further adieu, we present the top 6 salons/stores Sabatino thinks one must visit when shopping in New York City for a wedding dress, as curated by The Stylish Bride herself.*

Mark Ingram Atelier 110 E 55th St, New York, NY 10022. Phone: 212.319.6778

“Mark Ingram curates his collection with a very specific bride in mind,” explains Sabatino. This atelier boasts one of the most intimate and luxurious shopping experiences a bride could dream of, “you will be very well taken care of at Mark’s and he often gets some of the better sample sizes of coveted designer gowns.” If you are searching for a personalized and curated experience, Mark Ingram’s Atelier should without a doubt be on your list.

Pro Tip: Like many ateliers, this one is appointment only and often gets booked months in advance. “Mark himself has the eye of a master tailor, so brides should feel confident knowing that he has employed only those with the same attention to flattery and detail,” says Sabatino.



Saks Fifth Avenue

611 Fifth Avenue, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10022. Phone: 212.753.4000 Sabatino says Saks Fifth Avenue is a “must see” while wedding dress shopping in the Big Apple because of its diverse array of designers. The NYC store is one of the department store’s two bridal salons in the country (the other is in Beverly Hills) and boasts over 20 featured designers in the salon at any given time, ranging from Oscar de la Renta to Berta Bridal.

Pro Tip: “Expect to have a hard time getting your appointment, the Saks Fifth Avenue brand has incredible loyalty, so it’s on most brides’ NYC must-see lists. Also expect for there to be crowds once in the salon,” says Sabatino. But, Sabatino points out that “brides have access to the rest of the store. So if you forget your shoes for a fitting (which oddly many brides do) you have the entire Saks shoe department only steps away to pull from.”



Bergdorf Goodman

754 5th Ave, New York, NY 10019 Phone: 212.872.8957

Sabatino gushes about Bergdorf Goodman's bridal salon, declaring it "an absolutely lovely and intimate setting on the seventh floor" she pauses to count and then declares "yes, definitely intimate . . . there are only four dressing rooms." While the selection is more curated and less diverse than Saks, it is just as impressive in other aspects. Never a chaotic experience in any way, Bergdorf Goodman excels in their ability to host countless designer trunk shows, where "they turn the entire lounge and reading area into a designer showroom and sometimes the designer makes an appearance themselves."

Pro Tip: A bride and her wedding party benefit from having access to an entire high-end department store next door, just like at Saks, so if you forget Spanx, shoes, or even want to see what your dress would look like with jewelry, it's all possible. Sabatino particularly likes Bergdorf's evening wear offerings and the fact that a bride can find looks for her wedding party (even the Mother of the Bride) all in one place. Something else to keep in mind, "if you're craving an unconventional look for your wedding (white just isn't your thing), Bergdorf Goodman has an impressive curation of alternative bridal looks too."



Gabriella New York

155 Wooster Street, #3W New York, NY 10012 Phone: 212.206.1915

"For the 'downtown bride,' Gabriella is a must-see salon," says Sabatino. "They have a great selection of different designers ranging from big names like Reem Acra and Monique Lhuillier to smaller lesser knowns like Inbal Raviv and Yolan Cris. Housed in a beautiful loft space, the salon has a cool downtown vibe."

Pro Tip: "They have an online booking system which is so great! I love being able to schedule my clients anytime of the day or night."



Kleinfeld

110 W 20th St, New York, NY 10011 Phone: 646.633.4300

A wedding dress shopping excursion in New York City would not be complete without a visit to this iconic bridal empire. Brides from all over the world fly to New York to go to Kleinfeld. What some brides do not know is that while they have many mainstream brands, they truly excel at their selection of unique designers. "They have cultivated an impressive list of designers who exclusively sell their bridal collections at Kleinfeld. Everyone from Christian Siriano and Dennis Basso to Tony Ward design bridal collections for them."

Pro Tip: "Make your appointment on a weekday if you want to avoid the crowds. The weekends get very busy!!!"



Trunk Shows

Brides often forget about the importance and prevalence of trunk shows, but they are without a doubt one of the best ways to view all of the looks in a designer's bridal collection in one sitting.

Pro Tip: Trunk shows will only showcase the most recent season's looks, but if a bride knows the designer she is after, she should call the flagship store to find out when their local trunk show is being held. Sabatino reminds us that a little internet research can go a long way. Iconic department stores like Bergdorf Goodman often post a schedule on their bridal salon website with upcoming trunk shows, so be sure to check that out when putting together your wedding dress search schedule!