



*5 Ways Designer Wedding
Dress Shopping Has Changed*

& HOW IT AFFECTS TODAY'S BRIDE

THE STYLISH BRIDE®

BY *Julie Sabatino*

As with many things in our lives, COVID-19 has changed the designer wedding dress shopping landscape quite a bit. The world has been forced to adapt to a “new normal”, at least for now, and it's important to be prepared to shop in this environment. Because of the nature of my job, I am in constant contact with stores, designers, and alteration experts from around the country. I've put together the following list so that you can be prepared for your appointments and set up for dress success!

One thing I want to point out upfront is that brides today need to be more decisive than ever before. I can tell you firsthand that this is something that I really struggle with personally. In fact, I did a whole [podcast episode](#) on how brides make decisions because I find it so fascinating that for some, it's naturally easy, and for others, it's extremely hard (thats me!).

If you are someone that needs to see all your options before deciding, also known as “maximizers”, this new way of dress shopping is going to be particularly difficult.

You may be thinking... wait, wedding dress shopping is supposed to be fun! I think it still can be, if you go in knowing what to expect.

My goal by sharing this information is to help you increase your chances for dress success by teaching you how to navigate this new landscape, and hopefully sprinkle in lots of fun along the way!



XO
-Julie

WHAT HAS CHANGED

How Wedding Dress Shopping has Changed in the Age of COVID-19

Then

VS

Now

Lots of availability	 Scheduling	Salons are operating at half capacity so it's important to book several weeks in advance
Dress generally ordered 6 to 9 months before the wedding.	 Timing	Dresses should be ordered NO LATER than 9 months before the wedding.
No limit	 Guests	1-2 guests only
Consultants dressed you in the gowns	 Dressing	You dress yourself, or have the person you brought help
Try on as many dresses as you want during an appointment	 Dresses	Limit to how many you can try (varies by store)
None	 Safety Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Temperature taken upon arrival -Masks worn at all times -Keep 6 ft. apart
Salons provided shoes, corsets, and robes for client use and beverages upon arrival	 Amenities	BYO undergarments, shoes, and water as needed

*Policies vary from store to store and are subject to change.

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1

Fewer appointment times available

- Stores have reduced the number appointments to keep numbers in the stores compliant with the stat's regulations.
- Also, there is more time between appointments to sanitize the dresses. This reduces the number of time slots offered in a day.
- Appointments should be booked further in advance for all days/times, not just the coveted Saturday spots.
- All of these restrictions mean you are able to see fewer stores in a day and will limit how many times you go back to see a dress when deciding.

Expert Tip: *Prepare in advance. Spend the time to get laser focused on what you are looking for and identify the top 3 designers you like.*



For more information on how to do this, click here to check out my [Episode 2](#) of my Podcast where I give you lots of tips and tricks.

2

You will be allowed to try on fewer dresses during the appointment

- Many salons disinfect the dresses between appointments so there is a limit to how many you can try on.
- Often the consultants aren't in the fitting room with you, so it will take longer to change without their assistance.

Expert Tip: *Be clear with your consultant about what you are looking for, and trust them to guide you. They know the dresses and can be an incredible resource to adding and eliminating styles before you ever try them on.*

3

Social Distancing Practices

- You will be required to wear a face mask, and your temperature will most likely be taken at the door before entering. Some salons are also requiring gloves to be worn.
- Most salons are limiting the number of people that can come with you to one or two.
- You are encouraged to wear protective undergarments like a slip, camisole and shorts, or Spanx to limit the skin-to-skin exposure to the dresses.
- Bring your own shoes and robe because they won't be provided.

Expert Tip: *I've put together a list of my favorite items for wedding dress shopping that will help you navigate the process. [Click here for the list.](#)*

Expect longer lead times on dresses and fittings

- Dress production timelines are longer than they were previously. Instead of the suggestion to order your dress 6-9 months before your wedding, the new rule is 9-12 months.
- There will always be designers that can customize a dress faster, and in my own experience, these tend to be American designers that make their dresses here in the states.



- Traditionally your wedding dress fittings start around 2 months before your wedding. For the 2021 season, salons are encouraging you to not only start them earlier (3 months in advance) but also book them earlier. This is because so many weddings were postponed so there will be twice the number of dresses that need to be fit.

Expert Tip: *If you would like to loose weight for the wedding, try to have it done by your first fitting. If you continue to loose weight during the fitting process, the dress needs to keep being altered. Not only is that costly and time consuming, but it's bad for the dress.*

5

Simple styles

There are several reasons that a choosing a simplistic dress makes sense right now:

- a. A simple dress is much more versatile than one that is lace or embellished so if your wedding venue or date changes it will be easier to adapt the dress to the new vibe.
- b. They generally take less long to make because most designers stock fabric, but not embellishments and lace which are made overseas.
- c. Many of the factories that make these goods have been operating at half capacity and therefore able to produce less.
- d. As an added bonus, they also tend to be less expensive, and who doesn't want that right now?!?!

Expert Tip: When selecting a simplistic gown, the quality of fabric is incredibly important to how it looks in photos, so make sure it's made of natural fibers like silk whenever possible.



Happy Shopping!

Hopefully this information will help you navigate your quest for the perfect dress, but if you find yourself stuck, please reach out. I'd love to hear from you and help if I can.

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