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Local shop makes sure brides shine

By Kitsey Burns Harrison

In any wedding it's the bride that is the star of the show and nothing helps her to shine more than the wedding gown itself. There are a multitude of things to plan for when it comes to weddings, the venue, the food, the guest list – but the all-important dress for that special day is one of the most iconic parts of any wedding. No one knows that fact better than seamstress Annie Lee Pierce O'Mara.

O'Mara began sewing at age eight. She came from a large family and her mother was an accomplished seamstress who made many of their clothes. O'Mara said with four older sisters at home she often got dresses passed down to her or even wore new things made for her but in the same style as a previous year. She said she took some teasing from classmates because of this. Soon learned to make her own designs and changes to her clothes and the love of sewing as never left her. O'Mara worked at several corporate jobs

COURTESY OF IVY AND DUST

The bride's bouquet features popular fall colors of sage green, cinnamon and terra cotta.

COURTESY OF IVY
AND DUST

O'Mara altered
this bride's
wedding gown
to feature full
length finger
tip sleeves
to mirror the
gown worn by
her mother.



COURTESY OF IVY AND DUST

The back and neckline of this gown were altered for a custom fit for this bride.



COURTESY OF BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

This bride opted for an addition of sleeves for the final alterations on her wedding gown.



COURTESY PHOTO

At Blessed Beyond Measure, O'Mara does more than just basic alterations, she works to create a bride's dream wedding dress with special customizations such as this dress with added sleeves.

over the years and often did alterations and sewing on the side for friends or coworkers but in 2018 she opened her own shop in Jonesville called Blessed Beyond Measure. She began doing all kinds of alterations but two years in she realized the real need was for work on formal wear and wedding gowns.

O'Mara serves customers throughout the region and even out of state, there is such a need for formal wear alterations at a reasonable price. She said her customers are often astonished at the rate she charges compared to the shop where the dress was purchased.

For O'Mara, it's more than just a hem here or a tuck there, her ultimate goal is to customize the gown so it fits the bride "like a glove" and makes them feel as beautiful as possible on their special day.

"Instead of the dress wearing them, I want them to wear the dress and that means a very tailored fit for them, very customized," O'Mara said. O'Mara works closely with brides, based on appointment only, to ensure they are fitted and all the alterations made in a timely manner ahead of the big day, and even earlier to account for bridal portraits made ahead of the wedding.

O'Mara has also seen wedding dress styles change over the decades. She recalled the popular styles of the 1980s through mid-1990s for wedding gowns involved big sleeves, high



COURTESY OF BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

For this gown, O'Mara solves the issue of it being too wide in the back by creating a gorgeous heart shaped opening detail.

necklines and big bows on the back.

“Styles do trend but there’s always those classic looks,” she noted.

While cleaner lines are more popular now, O’Mara said there is still a lot of variety in the design styles brides are choosing. What she called “textured” gowns with a lace overlay is often popular at more relaxed venues such as the popular wedding barns and outdoor weddings. These gowns can be a little bit looser, not as heavy and more comfortable for brides.

Many brides are going for simple dresses with no beading or rhinestones but then there are some still choosing gowns with lots of appliques or even scalloped hemlines.

As far as sleeves, O’Mara said most of this year’s dresses she has worked on thus far are sleeveless but brides are now requesting modifications that can be changed out on the gown either for pictures or after the ceremony.

“They like when I can alter those dresses and make them flexible,” she said. “So I will design sleeves for them that they can attach either with snaps or hooks and eyes so they can take them off.”

While its always been tradition to get married in white, O’Mara said many brides are moving away from that. Since she opened her shop she said she has probably only done a dozen or so true white wedding gowns. A very pale pink color known as blush is becoming increasingly popular O’Mara said. She’s also done several black wedding dresses, a few in different



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

This bride poses for a pre-wedding photo alongside her mother who holds her own wedding gown. The bride wore an altered version of her mother’s dress for her rehearsal.



COURTESY OF BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

Using extra appliques from a bride’s dress on the bow from the mother’s wedding gown, O’Mara creates a custom shadowbox keepsake for the mother of the bride.

shades of blue and even an orange wedding gown.

When it comes to the bridal party, O’Mara said cinnamon and terra cotta are the hot colors this fall. Greens in shades from a deep pine green to sage are also popular. O’Mara said brides are also offering their wedding party more choices these days when it comes to selecting bridesmaid dresses. Sometimes they just tell them a color and let them order something online in a style that fits them, she explained.

Even for wedding gowns, purchasing online is becoming a trend, O’Mara said.

“There are some challenges to those,” O’Mara said of wedding dresses purchased online, but it can be a cost saving over purchasing from a boutique and she’s happy to work with brides to make it perfect for them.

“I don’t care what you paid for your dress, I feel like you should feel beautiful on your wedding day and I do not let them leave my store with their garment unless they are 100 percent satisfied.”

Using vintage or hand-me-down family gowns is another trend some brides are going towards.

O’Mara recently had a bride who purchased a vintage wedding gown from the 1960s with pleats, something that’s

very unusual now. The bride plans to pair the gown with her mother's veil from 1983. Another bride O'Mara has worked with had her mother's wedding gown shortened and altered to wear to the wedding rehearsal. O'Mara said they brought the gown to her shop where the bride, mother and grandmother opened the seal on the box the gown had been stored in years before. There were tears all around, she said. As a special surprise for the mother of the bride, O'Mara also used appliques from the daughter's dress paired with the bow from the mother's wedding dress and created a shadowbox keepsake.

"It's exciting," she said of special projects like that.

O'Mara doesn't just work on making brides shine for the big day. While many grooms and groomsmen do choose to rent tuxedos, there are still some who purchase suits that need altering. She sometimes even creates custom bow ties or pocket squares for the grooms using fabric hemmed from the bridesmaids gowns so it's a perfect match. She said she sometimes does this for prom couples too.

The name of O'Mara's shop — Blessed Beyond Measure— is fitting for her as she says she feels blessed to have this skill and talent and loves her job making sure brides look picture perfect for their special day.

Blessed Beyond Measure is located at 146 S. Bridge St. in Jonesville. All alterations are by appointment only. For more information call 743-444-2299.



COURTESY OF BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

This bride, seen here with her mother, wears an updated version of her mother's wedding gown for her rehearsal dinner.

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Trending bridesmaid palettes

Autumn is a season full of color with changing leaves and falling seeds.



Many brides take inspiration from the colors around them as they plan their autumn weddings, embracing the rich and warm hues that define the season.

Wedding Shoppe tracks what colors are selling each season to identify top wedding color trends. For fall 2024, it invites people to embrace dark and warm colors, with some of their favorite standout colors that are stealing the spotlight being olive green, classic black and burnt orange.

Olive Green: Embracing Nature's Palette

Olive green exudes an earthy elegance that perfectly complements the natural beauty of autumn. Symbolizing peace, harmony and growth, this versatile hue brings a sense of tranquility to any bridal party. Whether paired with rustic



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barnyard settings or lush outdoor venues, olive green bridesmaid dresses effortlessly blend with the autumn landscape, creating a seamless connection with nature.

This sophisticated shade flatters a variety of skin tones and can be styled with gold or copper accessories for an extra touch of warmth and luxury.

Classic Black: Timeless Sophistication

While black may seem unconventional for a fall wedding, its timeless appeal and understated glamour make it a perennial favorite among brides. Contrary to popular belief, black bridesmaid dresses can enhance the cozy ambiance of an autumn affair, adding a touch of drama and sophistication to the bridal party ensemble.

Paired with metallic accents or rich jewel tones, black creates a striking contrast that highlights the season's opulent beauty. Whether opting for sleek silhouettes or romantic lace details, black bridesmaid dresses exude effortless chicness that transcends trends.

"We mostly just love the sleek look of black bridesmaid dresses with lots of greenery, black ties for the groomsmen and a beautiful white wedding dress as the star of the show," Wedding Shoppe wrote.

Burnt Orange: A Tribute to Autumn's Splendor

Embrace the fiery hues of fall foliage with burnt orange bridesmaid dresses that capture the essence of the season's vibrant palette. Radiating warmth and vitality, this bold color infuses weddings with a sense of energy and excitement.

Whether adorned with delicate floral patterns or embellished with metallic accents, burnt orange bridesmaid dresses evoke a sense of autumnal romance that is simply irresistible. Pair with rustic bouquets featuring sunflowers, dahlias and dried foliage for a cohesive look that celebrates the beauty of nature in all its glory.

Wedding Shoppe recommends pairing the burnt orange bridesmaid dresses with navy groomsmen suits.

Welcoming the Warmth of Fall

Incorporating these trending bridesmaid dress colors into your autumn wedding palette is a surefire way to create a memorable and visually stunning celebration. Whether you opt for the earthy allure of olive green, the timeless sophistication of classic black, or the vibrant splendor of burnt orange, each hue offers its own unique charm and elegance.



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Go retro with an '80s aesthetic

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Couples planning fall weddings are embracing a blast from the past with the resurgence of the '80s look.

Characterized by bold colors, oversized silhouettes and a touch of flamboyance, the '80s revival trend is sweeping the wedding scene.

Wedding Cinematographers credits this revival as mirroring one in the overall culture which is once again tapping into '80s fashion, music and entertainment. It's an aesthetic that took over the world's fashion runways

revealing fall 2024 looks and has spread to weddings.

"This nostalgia for the '80s, combined with the decade's hallmark of bold self-expression and fun, appeals to couples looking to infuse their wedding day with a unique and memorable vibe," Tomasz Kornatowski, a wedding videographer wrote. "This

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trend reflects a departure from the more subdued and minimalist aesthetics, embracing instead the lively and expressive spirit of the '80s."

Bold Colors and Graphic Prints

One of the hallmarks of the '80s aesthetic is its fearless use of color and pattern. For fall weddings, couples are incorporating bold hues such as electric blue, fuchsia and neon green into their color palettes, adding a pop of excitement to the autumn landscape.

Graphic prints, from geometric shapes to abstract designs, are also making a comeback, adorning everything from bridesmaid dresses to table linens. These vibrant colors and eye-catching patterns evoke the bold spirit of the '80s, infusing weddings with energy and personality.

Fashion in the '80s were synonymous with oversized silhouettes and statement details. For fall weddings, brides are opting for voluminous ball gowns with dramatic sleeves and exaggerated proportions, channeling the iconic style of the decade. Grooms are embracing bold patterns and textured fabrics, from oversized plaid suits to velvet blazers, adding a touch of retro flair to their ensembles. Bridesmaids are also getting in on the action with mismatched dresses featuring ruffled sleeves, shoulder pads and other playful details that pay homage to the '80s.

Retro-Inspired Decor and Accessories

When it comes to decor, couples are turning to retro-inspired elements to create a nostalgic ambiance for their fall weddings. Think neon signage and cassette tape centerpieces that harken back to the heyday of the '80s. Velvet lounge furniture, metallic accents and geometric shapes add a touch of glamour to the reception space.

Event Planner Jove Meyer told Martha Stewart Weddings that disco balls aren't just for afterparties. "Disco balls are the new photo booth: Everyone has to have one! These retro balls are groovy and fun and set the tone for a great dance party. They are being used with lights to dance, but also in sculptural ways for decor: There are now custom disco shapes, disco mirrors, disco tables, disco hats — all things disco ball are back."

Couples are also incorporating '80s-inspired accessories into their wedding attire, from statement earrings and bold headpieces to retro sunglasses and leather jackets, adding a playful twist to their bridal looks.

The fun spreads to the celebrations with the carefree spirit of the decade, as couples incorporate iconic '80s hits into their playlists and serve retro-inspired cocktails at the bar. Photo booths featuring props such as oversized sunglasses, inflatable guitars and Rubik's cubes let guests channel their inner '80s rockstar.



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Non-Traditional Entertainment

Microtrends are emerging as a delightful way to infuse celebrations with personalized touches and unexpected delights.



In the realm of microweddings, where intimacy reigns supreme, couples are exploring non-traditional forms of entertainment to add an extra layer of fun and flair to their special day.

Caricature Artists

Forget traditional photo booths — caricature artists are stealing the spotlight with their ability to capture the essence of guests in a playful and humorous way. Set up in a cozy corner of the venue, these talented artists create custom caricatures on the spot, providing guests with one-of-a-kind keepsakes that double as entertainment. From exaggerated features to witty captions, caricature portraits add a touch of whimsy and laughter to the festivities, ensuring that all guests leave with a smile on their face.

Tattoo Artists

For couples with a penchant for body art, hiring a tattoo artist to provide live tattooing at their wedding adds a unique and deeply personal touch to the celebration. Whether it's matching tattoos to commemorate their


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union or temporary designs such as henna that reflect their love story, guests can participate in the festivities in a truly meaningful way. Each tattoo becomes a long-lasting reminder of the couple's special day, creating a lasting bond between them and their loved ones.

Interactive Guest Books

Guest books are taking on new life, with couples opting for interactive alternatives that encourage creativity and engagement.

From fingerprint trees and polaroid photo albums to puzzle pieces and message-in-a-bottle stations, these unique guest book ideas provide guests with an opportunity to leave their mark on the celebration in a tangible and memorable way.

Couples can treasure these personalized keepsakes for years to come, revisiting the heartfelt messages and well wishes shared by their nearest and dearest.

Non-Traditional Entertainment

Couples are embracing a wide range of non-traditional vendors and entertainment options to create unforgettable experiences. From live music performances and acrobatic acts to food trucks and DIY cocktail bars, couples are getting creative with choices that reflect their personalities and passions. Whether it's a tarot card reader offering insights into the couple's future or a virtual reality



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experience that transports guests to exotic destinations, the possibilities are endless when it comes to infusing weddings with unique and memorable moments.

Timing

At Small Shindigs, a wedding planner said she has seen more couples leaving behind the traditional Saturday evening weddings for more unique timing options including weekdays, brunches and lunches. It's a way for couples to be able to secure unique venues and specialized vendors.

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Savor fall foods



*Innovative trends
are shaping the
culinary experience
of autumn weddings.*

From creative non-booze alternatives to interactive food stations and late-night fast food bites infused with nostalgia, fall wedding receptions in 2024 are all about indulging the senses and creating unforgettable moments.

Non-Booze Alternatives

While traditional alcoholic beverages are a staple of wedding receptions, couples are increasingly opting for creative non-booze alternatives that cater to all guests. The pandemic saw a drop in alcoholic beverage consumption amongst the younger generations as they focused on better health and wellness.

Handcrafted mocktails infused with seasonal flavors like apple cider and pumpkin spice alongside artisanal sodas and botanical-infused waters provide a range of memorable drinks for everyone. These beverages provide a welcome break from alcohol while adding a touch of sophistication to the drink menu.

Nancy Parrague Barclay, partner and vice president of Paula LeDuc Fine Catering & Events, told Martha Stewart Weddings there is an increased emphasis on personalized experiences and radical hospitality. "This will mean more specialized zero-proof beverage offerings as generational preferences shift."



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Interactive Food Stations

Interactive food stations have been a popular choice for wedding receptions, but in 2024, couples are taking the experience to new heights with chef-assisted action stations. Picture freshly grilled tropical fruits served up by a skilled chef, live-toasted s'mores stations where guests can customize their sweet treats, and fired local cherry flambé stations that dazzle with fiery flair.

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Those are the stations that event planner Emily Coyne told Martha Stewart Weddings are making appearances at fall 2024 weddings.

These interactive culinary experiences not only engage the senses but also create memorable moments that guests will be talking about long after the wedding day.

Cocktail Experiences

Couples are elevating the cocktail hour experience with curated cocktail experiences that showcase their personality and preferences.

From signature cocktails inspired by the couple's favorite flavors to craft cocktail bars featuring artisanal spirits and house-made mixers, there's no shortage of options to delight guests' taste buds.

Mixologists are on hand to shake up custom creations and offer expert guidance, ensuring that each drink is crafted to perfection. Whether guests prefer classic cocktails with a twist or innovative libations infused with seasonal ingredients, the cocktail hour is a time to savor and celebrate in style.

Late-Night Fast Food Bites

Couples are surprising guests with late-night fast food bites that tap into childhood memories or reference special trips taken together. Picture gourmet versions of classic comfort foods like mini sliders served with truffle fries,



ADOBE STOCK

gourmet grilled cheese paired with tomato soup shooters, ramen noodles, bowls of frosted flake cereals or decadent milkshakes topped with indulgent toppings. These playful and nostalgic treats provide a satisfying way to refuel and keep the party going well into the night.








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Innovative wedding trends

Technology plays a ubiquitous role in our lives and weddings are no exception.



This fall, expect weddings to incorporate technology in creative and new ways to make for memorable and unique experiences.

Going Virtual

Livestreaming ceremonies allow guests to tune in from anywhere in the world, ensuring that no one misses out on the joyous occasion. Virtual reality (VR) wedding experiences can help guests witness vows and join the dance floor fun from anywhere in the world.

But the VR experience goes beyond just a Zoom check-in. It can provide an immersive experience for those at the wedding site. Wedding Cinematographers explains, "With VR, you can design your dream wedding in fantastical landscapes or impossible settings. Fancy exchanging vows on a serene beach at sunset, atop a mountain or even in a recreated scene from your favorite movie or book."

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Interactive Options

Couples are opting for interactive guestbook experiences that allow guests to leave personalized messages, photos and videos online. These digital keepsakes can be accessed anytime, serving as a cherished memento of the wedding day.

There is also a rise of interactive wedding websites, where couples can effortlessly share important details, accept RSVPs and give updates to guests, creating a seamless and engaging experience for all.

From coordinating schedules to managing guest lists, personalized wedding apps streamline the planning process. With AI-driven features, these apps can even generate personalized vows based on the couple's love story and preferences.

Revolutionizing Imagery

Capture aerial shots of the fall foliage and wedding venue with drone photography. These perspectives provide a unique visual narrative of the wedding day, immortalizing precious moments from a bird's-eye view.

Also making appearances at weddings are holographic displays, where couples showcase images in 3D form, adding a touch of futuristic flair to the celebration.

More Technology

Transform the dance floor into a spectacle with LED dance

floors filled with colors and patterns. Couples can groove under the glow of neon lights, creating a mesmerizing atmosphere that enhances the celebration.

Smart wedding bands offer a modern twist on traditional wedding rings, with features such as fitness tracking, message notifications and even payment capabilities, ensuring that the bond between the couple remains connected in the digital age.

From custom cake toppers to personalized wedding favors, 3-D printing allows couples to bring their visions to life in new ways. These customizable creations add a touch of whimsy and individuality to the wedding decor, setting the stage for an unforgettable celebration.

Digital invitations offer an eco-friendly and convenient alternative to traditional paper invites, allowing couples to easily track RSVPs and manage guest communications online.

No Technology

Amid all this tech, some are going in the opposite direction. Phone-free weddings are becoming increasingly popular as couples seek to create intimate and distraction-free environments. By requesting that guests refrain from using their phones during the ceremony and reception, couples hope to foster deeper connections and ensure that everyone is fully present in the moment. Phone-free weddings also allow professional photographers to capture the day's moments without interference.

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The wedding budget



Invitations & Stationery

Save the Date Cards _____
Invitations, Reply Cards _____
Postage _____
Programs _____
Menu Cards _____
Place Cards _____
Thank You Cards _____
Calligraphy _____
Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Bridal Attire & Beauty

Gown _____
Veil/Headpiece _____
Alterations _____
Shoes _____
Lingerie _____
Accessories _____
Jewelry _____
Makeup _____
Hair _____
Nails _____
Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Groom's Attire

Tuxedo/Suit _____
Shoe _____
Cuff Links _____
Grooming _____
Accessories _____
Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Wedding Ceremony

Location Fee _____
Officiant Fee _____
Marriage License _____
Rings _____
Music _____
Wedding Consultant _____
Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Reception

Location Fee _____
Food _____
Drink _____
Rentals _____
Wedding Cake _____
Groom's Cake _____
Favors _____
Music _____
Security _____
Gratuities _____
Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Flowers

Ceremony _____
Reception _____
Decorations _____
Bridal Bouquet _____
Attendant Bouquets _____
Boutonnieres _____
Flower Girl _____
Parents & Grandparents _____

Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Photography

Photography _____
Videography _____
Albums _____
Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Transportation

Limousine(s) _____
Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Gifts

Wedding Party _____
Parents _____
Bride & Groom _____
Miscellaneous _____
Total _____

Honeymoon

Airline Tickets _____
Accommodations _____
Car Rentals _____
Food _____
Entertainment _____
Excursions _____
Souvenirs _____
Passports _____
Clothing _____
Gratuities _____
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Total _____

Miscellaneous

Gown Preservation _____
Other Expenses _____
Total _____

TOTAL BUDGET _____



Castle McCulloch

Legendary Wedding Venues

Castle McCulloch Captures Your Attention From The Moment You Turn Off The Main Road & Begin The Enchanting Drive Down The Winding Wooded Entrance. The Castle Is One Of The Most Unique Wedding Venues In The U.S., Offering An Envious Range Of Unparalleled Romantic & Intimate Onsite Locations, Both Indoors & Outdoors. Nothing Makes For A More Romantic Wedding Backdrop Than A Grand Ballroom In A Centuries-Old Venue, Or An Intimate Dinner Under Enormous Crystal Chandeliers, Surrounded By Beveled Glass Windows, And A Spectacular View Of The Romantic McCulloch Valley And Pond. The Great Hall's Vibrant History, Unique Stone Architecture, And Warm Hardwood Flooring Can Make Your Wedding As Legendary As The Venue Itself! We Are Firm Believers That Everyone Should Feel Like Royalty On Her Or His Wedding Day. Contact Us Today For A Tour And A Custom Quote. 336.887.5413 Info@CastleMcCulloch.Com

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for our upcoming
Eat, Drink and be
Married Wedding
Show!



www.CastleMcCulloch.com

The wedding of your dreams awaits you at Cross Creek.

Cross Creek Country Club's event facilities offer beautiful views, indoor/outdoor space, on-site catering & bar services, spaces to get ready, floor length linens and full service.



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