

Inviting invitations

Once the date and place of the ceremony and reception are finalized, it's time to create the invitations.

"A well-designed traditional invitation package has a certain elegant tactile nature that other formats can't compete with," says Chris Trubela, owner of the Citrus Store.

The standard package includes the invitation, double envelopes, reply and directions cards. Other stationery additions include menu cards, save-the-date cards, pew cards, table signs, favour tags, thank you cards, and ceremony cards.

- 24 hours news services



Think over what's underneath

One of the most thrilling aspects of getting married is wearing a beautiful gown.

You will have certain preference with regard to length, style, neckline and beading or embroidery embellishment. Fitting is another concern, for every bride wants to look her best on this momentous occasion in her life.

Special underpinnings can make a girl look taller, shorter, slimmer or curvier. They can smooth out lines, make those extra pounds disappear and no one knows but the bride herself.

The big secret is often the

body suit, a lightweight number that slenderizes from under the bust down to the thighs.

There are many different types of garment that can perform the miracle: Some short, some long and some just where you need it most. The Body Wrap by Spanx is one of the most popular styles. It has a high waist and lengthens and smoothes the body. It also comes in a nude shade, which won't be noticeable no matter what colour your gown.

There are also garments with padding in strategic places to enhance your shape.

The smooth front

bustiere is a popular item, strapless and low cut to stay hidden no matter how low the dress neckline is cut. They're of microfibre and lycra, sometimes with boning, satiny to look at and infinitely comfortable to wear.

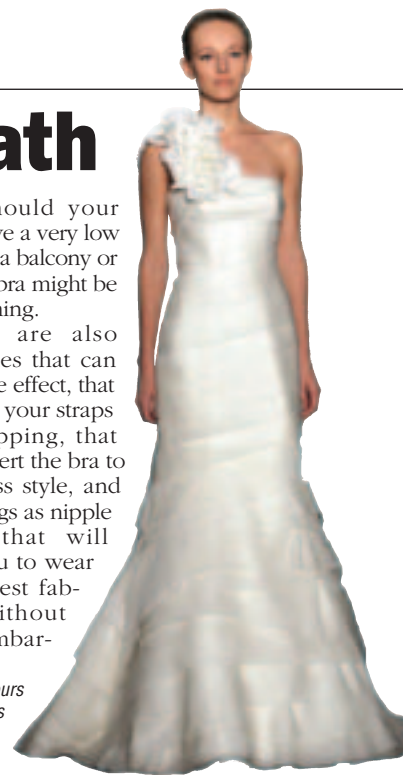
A good strapless bra is also a must-have under your wedding gown, and can be used over and over again as part of your regular lingerie. There are several styles to choose from, but the fitting is what's important. Having a professional fit your bra makes all the difference to how it looks.

You might want a bra that minimizes your bust, builds up or enhances your

bust. Should your gown have a very low neckline, a balcony or push-up bra might be just the thing.

There are also accessories that can add to the effect, that can keep your straps from slipping, that will convert the bra to a backless style, and such things as nipple covers that will allow you to wear the filmiest fabrics without being embarrassed.

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NEW LOOKS FOR BRIDESMAIDS

Say good bye to taffeta!

Gone are the days when outrageously tacky bridesmaid dresses were the norm.

When choosing their sidekicks' outfits for the big day, brides-to-be are more realistic, and no matter what the style or colour, versatility seems to be the trend in bridal wear this spring.

There's nothing more annoying than wearing a bridesmaids dress once, only to stash it away in a dark closet (never to be seen again).

Local boutique Narcissist has solved that problem with their popular Pamela dress (\$185), which is sold both off the rack and made-to-order and available in all sorts of colours, including brown, black and teal. Another bonus is the Pamela can be worn eight different ways and can take you way



beyond the wedding reception. "Our bridesmaids like knowing they're buying a dress that can be worn so many times," says Narcissist's regional manager Heather Crawford.

And bridesmaids no longer have to look like replicas of one another. Deborah Viccars, the co-owner of Frocks Modern Bridesmaids in Kitsilano, says the concept of matching bridesmaids dresses is passé.

Instead, brides are opting to let bridesmaids choose their own, allowing for funkier, less traditional styles.

Cocktail is a popular style for spring, especially in jewel tones like orange and peacock blue.

Also big this season is gun-metal grey. Very chic.

- Meagan Albrechtson, 24 hours

Amber dress by Charsa (\$325). Available at Frocks Modern Bridesmaids (2306 W. Boradway).



Hilary dress by Narcissist (\$149) available at Narcissist boutiques (3659 Main St. and 102-1548 Johnston Rd. in White Rock).

You glow girl

Blushing bride makeup tips

Cindy Leyland, a makeup artist at BeautyMark in Yaletown, shares some hot makeup trends for spring bride-istas.

For eyes, Leyland suggests a daytime smoky eye. The classic night-time look is toned down with shades of grey and added shimmer, creating a soft and dreamy look.

For cheeks, blushes in warm tones like pink and coral are subtle but pretty.

When it comes to the lips, Leyland cautions brides about wearing too much gloss or wearing darker colours. Instead, she recommends a light, low-maintenance gloss. That's because you'll most likely be lip-locked with your groom most of the day, and the last thing you want is for him to be wearing more lipstick than you.

- Meagan Albrechtson, 24 hours



Kebyn Aucoin Essential Eyeshadow Set (\$66) and Kimiko Beauty Sheer Tint and LipPLUMPER (\$40). Both available at BeautyMark (103-1120 Hamilton St. in Yaletown).

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