

match your 'do to your dress

You've got the gown of your dreams. Now, you have to choose a hairstyle that complements without competing. Our primer makes perfect partnering easy.



When total femininity is your aim, opt for a look with long, loose waves that echo a sexy sheath with pleated back.

GOWN BY DAVID'S BRIDAL.

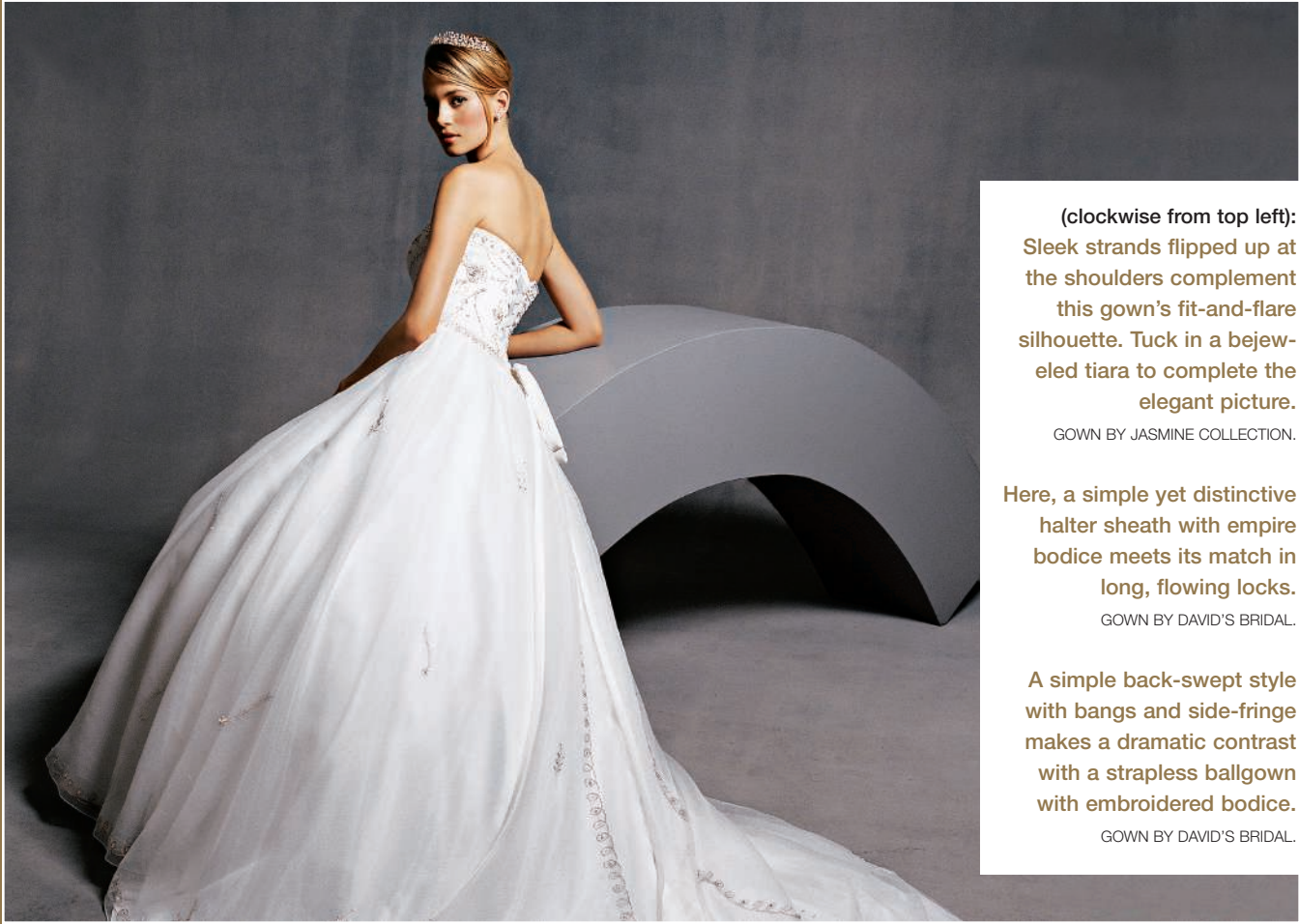
Most great hairdressers use a rule of thumb for bridal styling: The more beautiful the bride, the simpler the look. They consider the face first, hair type and headpiece next, then marry it to the overall look. "A good stylist should work with the face and present a total package, so that viewers see the bride, not the hairstyle," notes Robert LaMorte, owner of Robert Jeffrey Salon in Chicago. Gowns come into play because they say a lot about your personal style, and their line, texture and weight relate to the total image.

From the Top

The primary question about necklines is how high or low does yours go? A high neck with or without a lace overlay, a Queen Anne high-standing collar, the jewel neckline that follows the base of the neck, and even the bateau, which follows the collarbone, are most visible when hair is short or styled into an updo. Why choose a lacy collar no one can see?

Lowered neckline types like the scoop, the V-neck, the shoulder-to-shoulder Sabrina, or a square neckline provide enough balance for mid-length or longer styles—unless your aim is to open up your face, in which case a version of the updo works best. Going lower still are spaghetti straps, sweetheart necklines that take shape at the bust line, the tank (which can plunge lower) and the strapless gown. These leave shoulders bare, which may or may not work with updos, depending on how great you look with your face totally exposed. Side tendrils

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(clockwise from top left): Sleek strands flipped up at the shoulders complement this gown's fit-and-flare silhouette. Tuck in a bejeweled tiara to complete the elegant picture.

GOWN BY JASMINE COLLECTION.

Here, a simple yet distinctive halter sheath with empire bodice meets its match in long, flowing locks.

GOWN BY DAVID'S BRIDAL.

A simple back-swept style with bangs and side-fringe makes a dramatic contrast with a strapless ballgown with embroidered bodice.

GOWN BY DAVID'S BRIDAL.

(right) Be a part of your own fairytale in a strapless A-line with beaded lace bodice. Plump, pinned-up barrels add to the regal effect. GOWN BY DAVID'S BRIDAL.

(middle) To be retro-ravishing, combine a simple headband with a sleek bob and a spaghetti-strap, embroidered gown. GOWN BY JASMINE COLLECTION.

(below) A simple headband or tiara works well when gowns have special areas of interest like these beaded and embroidered caplet sleeves and asymmetrical waistline. GOWN BY JASMINE COLLECTION.



mitigate the issue. Also, big hair might make you look off balance with these necklines because the eye will go right to your hair, not your face.

Working the Total Image

Many wedding gowns have A-line skirts, some much fuller than others. The fishtail skirt, slip dress and somewhat body-hugging sheath are also popular. Waistlines, when they're evident, are either empire, natural or dropped. What matters most is the overall feeling. If there's a lot going on with your gown; for instance, if it has an empire waist with intricate beading and a full tulle skirt, a simpler, less adorned hairstyle is best. On the other hand, soft curls can underscore the texture of layered tulle, and a sleek, shiny bob can still look great with a sleek, satin sheath if stunning simplicity is your aim.

The best way to begin narrowing options is to pinpoint your personal style and how it relates to your dress. If you choose a gown because you love long, lace sleeves and a full train, chances are you won't be happy with a really simple hairstyle. If you fell in love with a simple satin, strapless number, it's doubtful that mile-high piles of curls adorned with enough flowers to fill a bouquet will be right for you, or the dress.

Look at the line of your gown, as well as its texture, and consider a hairstyle that works with it. Softly flowing curls emulate a flowing tulle skirt. A sleek, shiny updo or a classic chignon complement a long, slim gown. However, if you have a strapless sheath, gigantic, "big hair" jars the eye and stands out too much against the lines of the dress.

Strive for Balance

At Total Concern for the Bride in San Bruno, CA, bridal specialist and owner Catherine Myers says she encourages brides-to-be to bring in every hairstyle photo they like; then, she changes their minds.

"My job is to create balance," says Myers, "and doing so even takes into account the venue. For a winter wedding that's held in the evening, you can pull out every bauble you own; a church wedding should be elegant. If the venue is a hotel, you can play it down a bit. Issues like these and the headpiece matter a lot more than the dress."

Myers prefers to talk to her clients before they choose the veil or headpiece because often, they choose one that doesn't work. For example, if a woman opts for a busy, elaborate veil to use as a blusher, it might get in the way of her hairstyle, preventing her from showing it off.

"Wedding planning can be so much turmoil; you should visit your stylist before you choose a veil," stresses Myers. "I advise keeping it to a low roar, and prefer classic looks because in 12 years, you want your wedding photos to still look fabulous." Choices that stand the test of time include shiny updos, chignons, French twists, and even tucked-back bobs.

Say I Do

With any "event" hairstyle, if you move too far away from what's natural for you to wear, you risk ending up with a style that shouts and you won't feel comfortable. So, when you ask your stylist to create trial hairstyles, ask yourself if you feel beautiful and natural in the look. Like any great 'do, it should complement you, your facial shape and hair type.



(top) A strapless dress puts the focus on your face. Here, a tiara balances a loose chignon that's placed far back to allow a lifted hairline to frame the face. GOWN BY JASMINE COLLECTION.

(bottom) Feeling like Queen for a day? Sweeping hair off your face shows confidence that goes beautifully with a beaded and embroidered gown. GOWN BY JASMINE HAUTE COUTURE.

(right) Flowers tucked into a slick back-twist play off an asymmetrical A-line gown with split, lace-up back. GOWN BY DAVID'S BRIDAL.

(bottom right) Beautifully balanced twists and a hint of short fringe are a knockout with a contemporary drop waist gown with beaded bodice and spaghetti straps. GOWN BY JASMINE COLLECTION.

(below) An exquisite satin A-line with apron back just begs for a dramatically coiled updo that's all about shine. GOWN BY DAVID'S BRIDAL.



“Both hair and makeup ultimately go to the bone structure,” says Myers. “If a long nose is a challenge, fringe around the face will act like arrows, pointing to it. For the woman with a short neck, the height of an updo builds elongation. Hopefully, if this woman has also selected a lower neckline, it will open up the area, camouflaging her short neck in photos.”

Which goes to show, if you really want the total package to be stunningly beautiful and not shocking, you might want to bring an image expert with you to the bridal shop as you begin your search.

Your Mane Man

Should you use your regular hairstylist on your wedding day? Sure, he or she knows your hair, but the ability to create updos and long-hair looks is an art. Here's how to decide if they're good for the long haul, or if you should change professional partners for the occasion:

- ❖ Ask yourself if your regular stylist has a strong sense of fashion, including balance, line and form.
- ❖ Get a recommendation for a “special occasion” styling pro and have a consultation. Compare the ideas to those of your regular stylist. A good stylist should be able to come up with at least three options.
- ❖ If any stylist—new or regular—doesn't ask about the gown, the headpiece or the venue, it's likely they won't do best by you.
- ❖ Does the stylist make you feel good? If the person is sensitive to your stress and your needs, if you just feel right with your hair in his or her hands, chances are you can call it a match.

What About Short?

If you have short hair, from a funky crop to a shorter bob, what are your wedding-day options? Robert LaMorte offers these ideas:

- ❖ Skip the veil. It can be tired and fussy with short hair.
- ❖ Go with a classic, shiny, healthy bob. If your hair is long enough to flip up, remember that a veil will flatten it out.
- ❖ Add flair to hair with haircolor that enhances your skin tone. Dimensional shading dresses up a classic. A touch of caramel with brunette works great, but some brides need an even deeper shade just behind the caramel for character. Go too soft with color and you'll wash out your face. Change color too much and you won't be happy.
- ❖ Crimp it. You don't have to crimp it all; a good stylist can create a brushed-end effect or add just a few crimps here and there.
- ❖ The easiest way to add flowers is to take a little fresh baby's breath (best because they're translucent), twist the thread through a comb and clip it in at the sides. You can add 1-3 fresh budded roses, but don't go overboard.
- ❖ If your hair is cropped very short, chances are you like a funky look, but you can't make hair super-funky for your big day. Try slicking it back for easy elegance, or work in a few bobby pins with sparkly or colored stones attached.

(top) Full-figured brides can steal the show with a split-front empire A-line and a simple, close-to-the-head hairstyle. GOWN BY DAVID'S BRIDAL WOMAN.

A beaded, embroidered bodice can be emulated in softly textured curls, topped with a contemporary headpiece. GOWN BY JASMINE COLLECTION.

