

Put Your Best Foot Forward: Bridal Footwear

While a bride's gown, hairstyle and other accoutrements are the first things others see when she walks down the aisle, it's what she wears on her feet that may make the most impact on her wedding day.

That's because a comfortable bride is often a happy bride. And as anyone who has squeezed into too-tight shoes knows, one's mood can certainly turn sour if feet are covered with blisters and walking is uncomfortable.

While many brides are quick to pick the most beautiful shoes for their wedding day, perhaps they should choose more based on comfort than aesthetics.

That said, there are still plenty of options that are beautiful as well as comfortable.

Deciding on a Style

Shoes come in many styles that can complement a wedding day look.

Closed toe: These shoes are completely enclosed and may be preferred for the bride who wants to wear a full stocking.

They create an unbroken line from the gown to the floor. They're also elegant and ideal for winter weddings.

Peep toe: This offers the benefits of a closed-toe shoe with a little peek of toe. They're often considered sexy and sweet.

Open toe: These sandal-like shoes are best worn in warm weather and without stockings for a clean look.

Brides should be sure to splurge on a pedicure so their toes look neat and perfect.

Slingback: These shoes expose the heel for a little bit of drama. Make sure they fit well otherwise the heel strap may slide down and become a nuisance.

Choose Heel Height

Many brides want to be the belle of the ball, and to them high heels seem to be the way to achieve this. However, choosing a lower heel or a flat may be a smart move where comfort is involved.

A word of advice is to choose the lowest heel possible, which helps avoid snags on a gown or unsteady traversing down the aisle or up and down church steps.

Lower heels are also much more comfortable for dancing.

Breaking in Shoes

It is recommended to choose shoes prior to a last fitting so that the gown length can be adjusted depending upon the height of the heel.

Purchasing shoes early also gives brides a chance to break in their shoes.

Wearing the shoes around the

house and scuffing up the soles not only makes them more comfortable and less slip-worthy, it gives brides practice walking in them.

Plus, if upon breaking in the shoes she finds they aren't what she hoped for, a new pair of shoes can be purchased.

Remember, feet tend to swell as the day goes on, so brides may want

to choose a shoe a half-size bigger for comfort later on.

Bait and Switch

Some brides prefer to sweat out the ceremony and pictures in one pair of less comfortable shoes and then switch into a pair of satin slippers or even sneakers for the remainder of the celebration.

When favors or flowers are

dropped off at the reception, a friend can tuck these switch-out shoes under the bride's seat so that she can change into them at her convenience.

Wedding Traditions

Brides can create wedding memories by taking their shoes and having them bronzed, just like parents used to do with baby shoes.

They can also have all of the unmarried bridesmaids sign their names on the soles of the shoes.

The last name left that hasn't worn off after the end of the wedding is the next person who will be getting married.

Some brides prefer to wear shoes that match their wedding color or offer that "something blue."

Jewelery Tips For The Bridal Party

Chandelier earrings and sparkling crystal bangles are popular choices for today's sophisticated brides, according to the style experts at Carolee, the leading fashion jewelry company.

"Carolee has long been the jewelry destination for brides and their bridal parties," says Jill Maier, Carolee's vice president of design. "We have come to learn what brides want to create a look and style that is their own."

Carolee collections, including the new upscale Carolee Lux collection, feature a vast selection of classic and modern designs for brides, from demure to dramatic.

In the last few years, we've seen more brides look to mirror current fashion trends in their bridal jewelry," offers Maier.

That translates into bigger, bolder pieces like large drama earrings, glittering crystal and pearl

cuffs and statement necklaces that draw attention to the neckline.

Carolee Lux features exquisite designs with crystals and CZ, hand-polished and knotted simulated pearls and sterling silver, offering every member of the bridal party elegant choices.

Fashionable jewelry isn't just for the bride; it also makes a great gift for bridal party attendants.

Say, "thank you" with the very popular Sterling Sentiments(R) bangles that are engraved in five languages with Friend, Sister, Niece, Mother, Grandmother, or Love. These bangles are gift boxed and priced in the \$100 range.

Other treasured and affordable bridal gifts include freshwater cultured pearls.

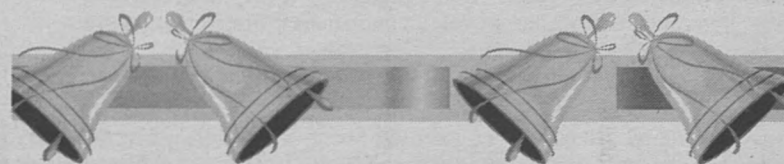
Hand-knotted necklaces, bracelets and earrings in stud or drop styles are available in pearl alone or pearl accented with cubic zir-

conia.

Prices range from \$40 to \$75, in styles that will appeal to a wide range of bridal party members.

The Carolee and Lux jewelry

collections are available at fine department and specialty stores worldwide and at www.carolee.com, where you can request a free catalog.



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