

BRIDAL STYLE



Grace Lane London - Image courtesy of @batesandbates.co

FASHION

The vintage bridalwear trend every stylish newlywed is saying yes to

by Maisie Amis updated on May 20, 2025 Leave a Comment

Thinking about your 'something old'? Wearing a vintage wedding ensemble is a bold, beautiful nod to bridal history, and it's the ultimate fashion statement

There's something undeniably magical about wearing a gown with a sentimental story behind it on your wedding day. In a bridal world awash with trends and new season drops, more and more brides are turning to vintage and preloved pieces in their hunt for refreshing designs that stand out from the crowd. And for the brides with a creative eye, vintage dresses become blank canvases that they can lovingly restyle alongside a tailor to bring their unique vision to life. But for many, wearing a vintage wedding dress isn't just a fashion choice: it's also a statement of your commitment to sustainability, as of course by giving an already existing gown another life, you are reducing the environmental footprint of your bridal ensemble significantly. Plus, you never have to worry about another bride wearing the same look as you, making your gown feel completely unique. Vintage wedding dresses aren't for everyone, but that's exactly the point: they're for the brides who don't want what's on every Pinterest board or Instagram ad. They want detail, they want distinctiveness, they want an ensemble that holds memories of love stories past. If this sounds like you, we've got all the inspiration you need to guide you through your vintage wedding dress search.



Grace Lane London - Image courtesy of @batesandbates.co

Many celebrities have rocked vintage bridal looks, signalling their deep appreciation for fashion history. Actress Caroline Margaret Day wore exclusively vintage to her wedding at Rosecliff Mansion in Newport Rhode Island, stunning in a bardot satin gown adorned with intricate lace detailing. Princess Beatrice proved that vintage bridalwear is fit for royalty: wearing a Norman Hartnell ivory taffeta and satin gown encrusted with diamantés that had previously been worn by her late grandmother, Queen Elizabeth, in the 1960s. For her intimate backyard wedding in Los Angeles, actor Kat Dennings also departed from tradition by wearing a vintage Alexander McQueen ivory lace gown characterised by 70s style flute sleeves and a fit and flare silhouette. Each of these looks symbolise timeless elegance and personal authenticity, proving that vintage bridalwear can honour the past whilst simultaneously making an individual style statement.



But vintage bridalwear is certainly not limited to those in the spotlight. It can also be an affordable alternative to the traditional made to order bridal route. Grace Lane, founder of bespoke bridal atelier [Grace Lane London](#), says: "Buying vintage offers brides the chance to get a dress at a fraction of the price. My vintage collection is over 50% less than my bespoke service so it is a more cost effective way to work with me." So if you're on a budget, but also don't want to compromise on quality, investing in a vintage bridal ensemble could be an ideal option. Also, for those on a tight timeline, a vintage bridal gown is a perfect choice, as it's available immediately and doesn't require the extensive lead time of custom orders.

For many brides, beginning the process of finding the perfect archival wedding dress can feel daunting at first. A great place to start is to look at vintage bridalwear platforms and boutiques that offer vintage pieces: for the most standout archival designer treasures, we'd definitely recommend taking a look at [Tab Vintage](#). "I try to source a range of eras and styles, as each bride is unique and looking for something different and one-of-a-kind for her special day," explains Alexis Novak, founder of Tab Vintage. "The constant I'm looking for when finding vintage bridal is: 'Can it be found anywhere else?' If the answer is yes, then it's not for Tab. I try to find the best vintage that you can't find anywhere else." Offering a vast range of couture designer pieces from Halston to Jean Paul Gaultier, Tab Vintage is the go-to platform for the fashion forward bride envisioning a bridal look that appears as though it was pulled straight from the runway.



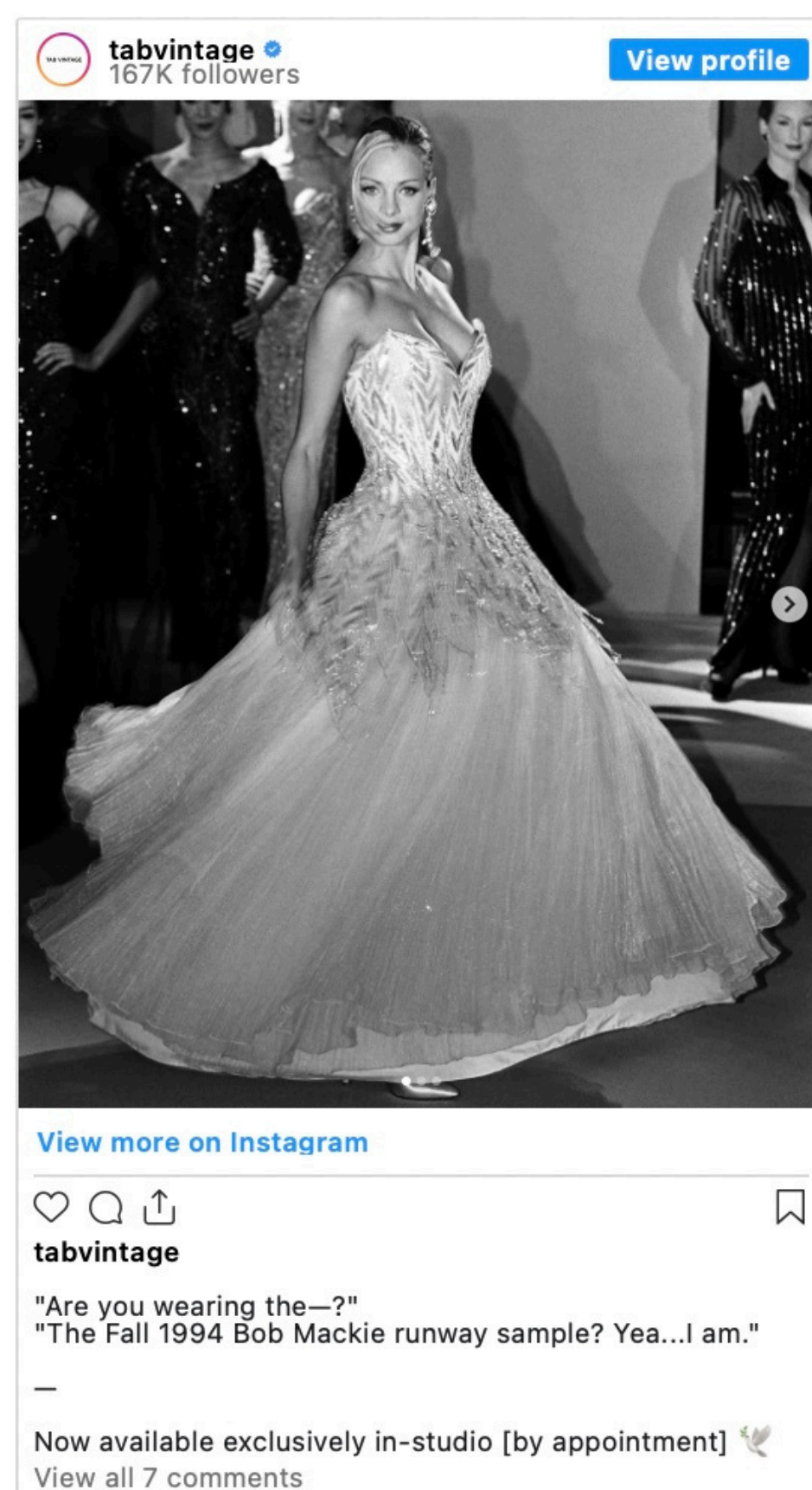
The next step is thinking about the bridal aesthetic you desire to exude on your big day, as a big part of choosing a vintage wedding dress is homing in on a particular style, silhouette or era that resonates with you. You may already have an era in mind that you are particularly drawn to style-wise, but if you visit a vintage bridalwear boutique like [Ashwell & Co](#), your stylist will also be able to advise which era will work with your overall vision and preferred style: "If someone is into minimalism, I might steer them towards a clean-lined 90s silk gown or a simple 40s crepe dress. For someone more romantic, Edwardian cotton or 70s lace can be gorgeous. It's about trying things on and seeing what feels like you," explains Kate Ashwell, vintage expert and co-owner of Ashwell & Co. Whether you're drawn to the glamour of the 1930s, the post-war elegance of the 1950s, or the free-spirited bohemian vibe of the 1970s, each decade offers its own level of distinctive character and charm. It's vital to keep an open mind during fittings, because who knows, the era or style you least expect to love could become the one that truly captures your heart.

An attribute that sets vintage bridalwear apart from contemporary offerings is often the quality, especially due to many of these garments being created prior to the emergence of fast fashion and mass production. "Vintage and antique gowns tend to be beautifully constructed, often with clever seaming and draping rather than heavy structure. The craftsmanship is unrivalled with the majority of them having been made in the UK with British fabrics," explains Ashwell. "You tend to find a lot more natural fibres in vintage dresses as opposed to modern gowns that often use man made fabrics. Nottingham lace, silk satins, handmade bobbin lace, cotton tulle are all found regularly in our vintage collection." So by choosing vintage, you're not only embracing bridal fashion history, but you are also investing in a level of craftsmanship and fabric quality that's increasingly rare in today's bridal market.



A common misconception that brides have about vintage bridalwear is that the garment will always be damaged as a result of being worn previously. However, the majority of the time vintage pieces are carefully restored and professionally cleaned, ensuring that they look as good as new. "We take meticulous care to ensure our garments have been freshly dry cleaned, mended, repaired, and taken as far as they can in quality to ensure when the client receives it, they don't have to do anything additional to it," explains Novak. "They can open it up from the box, or pull it from our rack and it's ready to wear." If the vintage bridal garment that you are considering isn't totally perfect in its original form, there is always room for customisation and adjustments. That being said, it's important to firstly consult with a bridal specialist tailor or dressmaker to discuss what you are envisioning, so that you can identify what is and isn't possible. "We offer alterations and customisation, such as adding sleeves, adjusting hemlines, or reworking a neckline," explains Ashwell. "We don't tend to do full redesigns, as the point is to honour the dress as it is, but small changes can make a huge difference."

One of the only downsides to vintage bridalwear is the lack of versatility in terms of sizing options, as of course due to their one of a kind nature there is only one size available. Archival garments are also tailored to the proportions and silhouettes of past decades, which can differ significantly from modern sizing standards. However, this is when the magic of alterations come into play, as depending on the garment's structure, a bridal gown can be altered down by two sizes, so if a dress fits too loose initially, you don't want to rule it out completely. Likewise, if a gown is too snug, many are designed with about an inch of extra fabric at the side seams, which a tailor can let out to create a more comfortable fit. "Tailoring is going to be key, as it is extremely rare that a bride comes in, grabs a dress, it fits her perfectly and she's out the door," explains Novak. "Tailoring is what will make the dress yours. Unlike other bridal boutiques we don't have 6-8 styles of the season and different sizing of each. We have approximately 300 styles of dresses, each in one size. So being open to trying a lot of different dresses and an open heart and mind as to what the tailoring possibilities are seem to be the best way to approach vintage bridal shopping."



If you're conscious about the environmental impact of your bridal ensemble, a vintage gown is not only a stylish choice, but it's also one of the most sustainable options, as giving a new life to a pre-loved piece reduces the demand for new textile production. "I believe we're all more conscious than ever of how wasteful the fashion industry is, especially the bridal industry. It's so much fabric, water, and excess for one day," continues Novak. "When brides choose vintage, they choose sustainability. It's really beautiful, wearing circular fashion on the day you say 'I do'. You choose something that came years before you to say yes to a life with the person you love for years to come."

With their unique, standout appearance combined with character, storytelling and sentimental charm, there's no wonder retro wedding ensembles are on the rise. Whether you are seeking a more sustainable bridal gown option or are simply drawn to one of a kind, antique treasures, a vintage bridal ensemble is ideal for the newlyweds who desire to stay away from the status quo.

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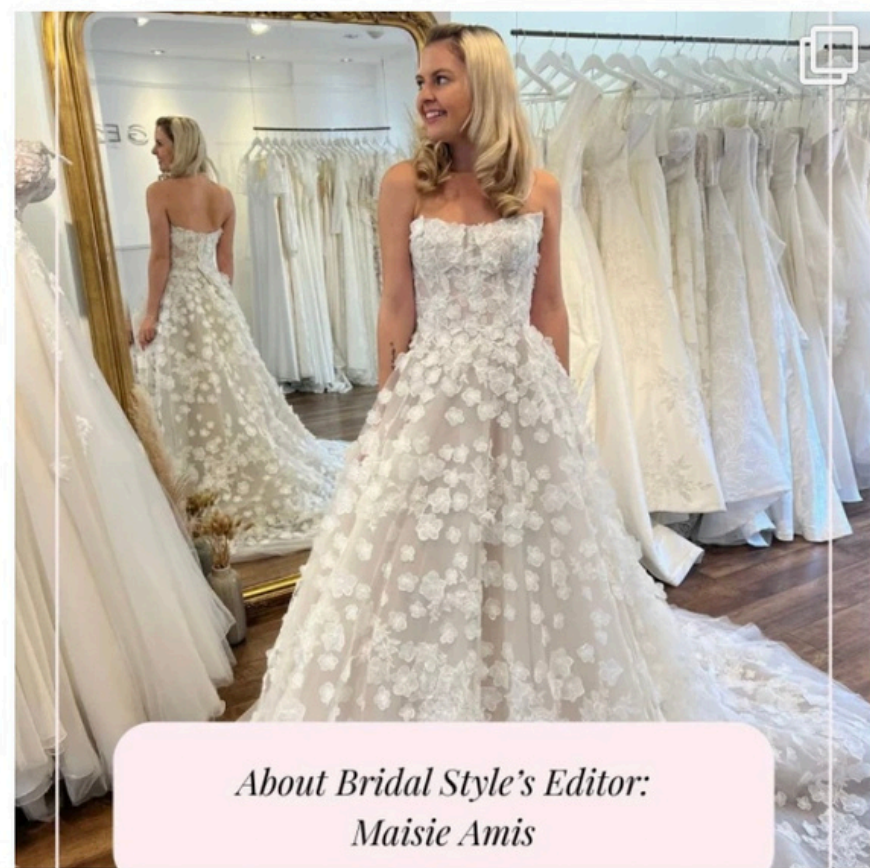
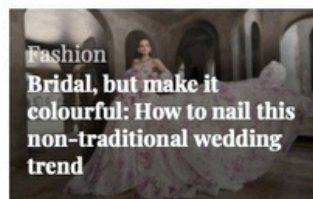
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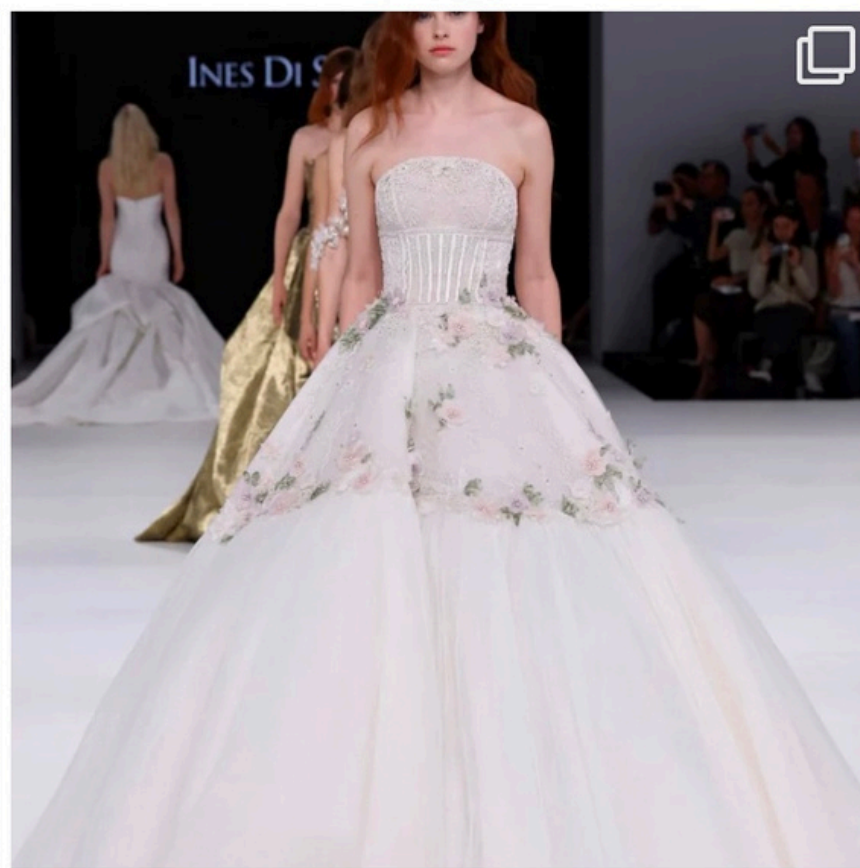
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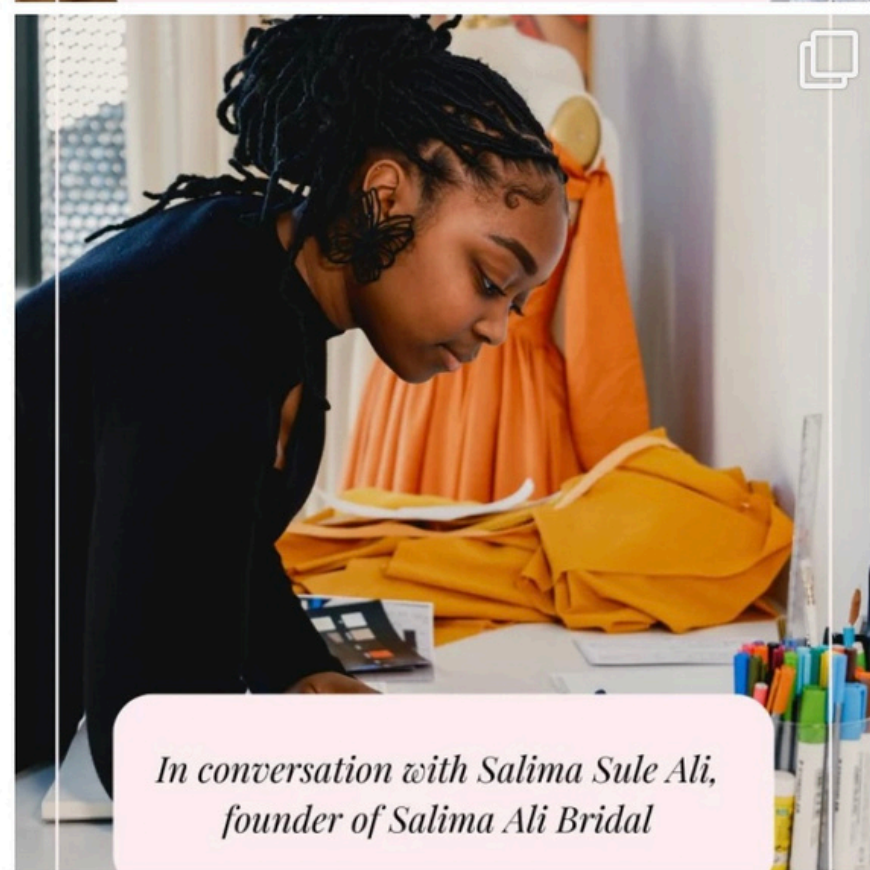
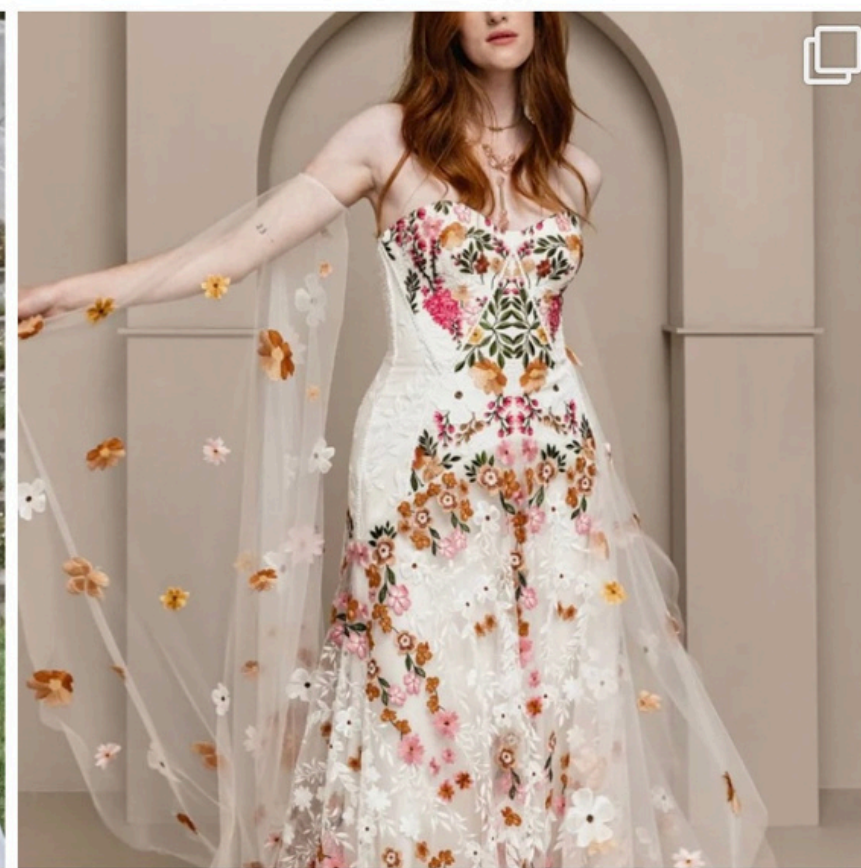
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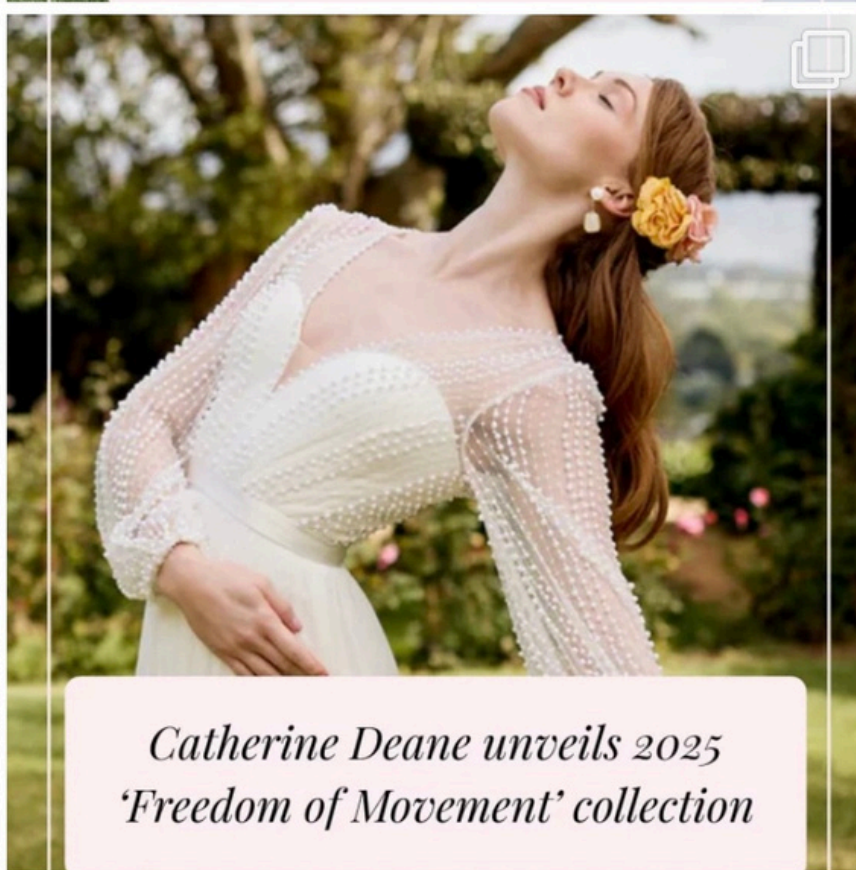
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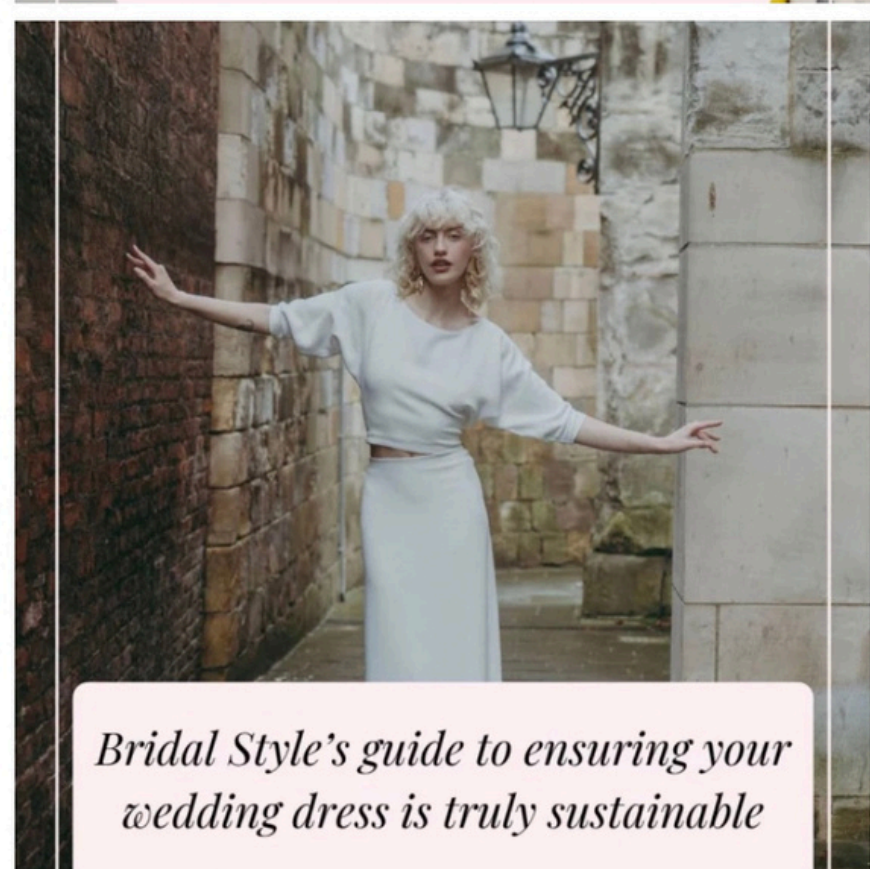
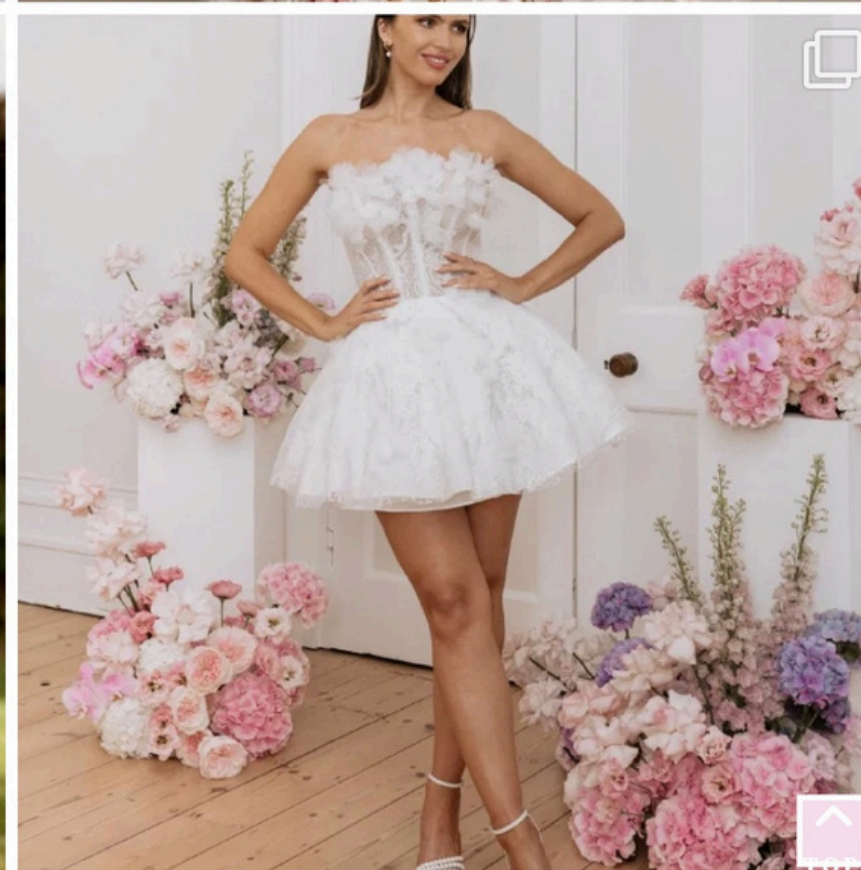
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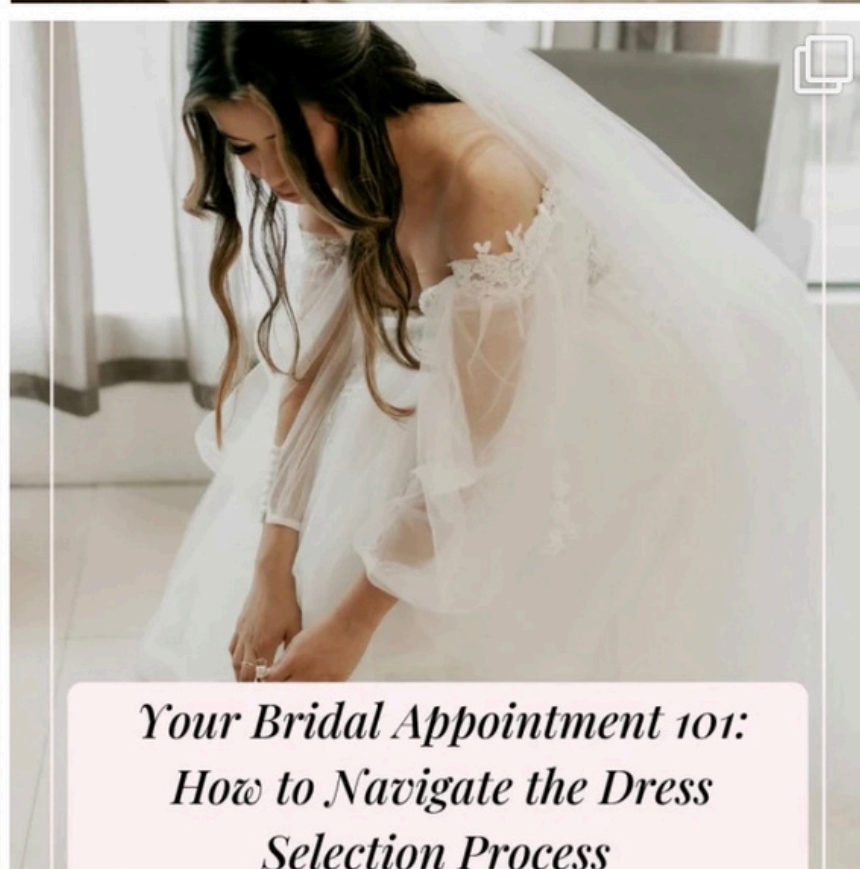
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