

THE RADAR BRIDAL

BY REBECCA HESLIN



The Vienna by KenzieKate Invitations

CLUB WED

Relax: It's not like it's the biggest day of your life or anything

A DECENT PROPOSAL

Your guest list may look like a U.N. summit's roster, but your fete will be far more fun. Lure the global jet-setters in for the big day from Vienna, Mumbai and Paris with made-to-order paper goods courtesy of KenzieKate Invitations. Their 11 styles, all named after glamorous cities, can be customized to a bride's heart's content. The Hanalei, great for a destination wedding, will remind guests of the cool breezes and beautiful flora of tropical Hawaii. The geometrically patterned Stockholm will leave invitees longing for a party of power players. All invites are printed on creamy linen and draped with luxurious ribbons. The world already sets up shop in DC, so spread the international love. Available at www.kenziekate.com, or by calling 718.928.3946.

MODE TO ORDER

Admit it: You're a bride with a little 'zilla in you. Luckily, local designer Aimée Lauren Polisky—who is debuting her first couture bridal collection—has worked with Giorgio Armani and styled celebs like Sarah Jessica Parker, Macy Gray and Gwen Stefani, so she knows how to handle your diva ways. Her new 15-dress collection includes five blank gowns that work like canvases so your dress ends up *exactly* as you envisioned. But it gets better: Polisky only uses fabrics sourced from Fair Trade manufacturers and suppliers who don't use child labor. She also stitches a tiny pink ribbon inside the bodice of the dress to raise awareness of the cancer she battled back in 2005. That's what we call a haute cause! For more information on Aimée Lauren, call 202.550.4049 or visit www.aimeelauren.com.



Carine Halabi inside her DC dress atelier

GAL ABOUT GOWNS

We all know that when it comes to your wedding day, it's not who you wed but who you wear that matters most. Enter Carine Halabi. This matrimony maven's got connections from Kenneth Pool to Reem Acra, and now she's bringing them to Carine's Bridal Atelier, the newest high-end wedding gown oasis in Georgetown. A percentage of the sales benefit the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, a cause close to her heart, making doling out the dollars for your dream dress all the more palatable. Here, Carine offers DC brides her trend-resistant tips for wedding gown bliss:

What's the look this season? Girls don't want to walk down the aisle in their mother's dress anymore. This spring you'll see lots of simple dresses that focus on architectural touches. High fashion is really being factored into bridal gowns. Sleeves and necklines are back in a big way this season.

What mistakes do brides-to-be make? They almost always walk in thinking they already know what style they want. Women also tend to start dress shopping too early. It's hard, but you have to have patience. Otherwise, by the time the wedding rolls around, the dress might be out of style.

Name three must-haves for dress shopping. It's always a good idea to take images and ideas of styles you like. It's also absolutely critical to have your wedding site and reception set when you come in. It's much easier to select the dress, because there's a huge difference between getting married in a ballroom and a garden. Oh, and an understanding of gown vocabulary—like basque waist and sweetheart neckline—is always helpful.

How would you describe the aura of your atelier? I designed the store to be very Zen-like, with calming colors, music and lots of privacy. It's an easy place to feel comfortable. Since it's on the second floor, the brides can walk around to get the feel for their dress without worrying about people walking by outside.

How does your background benefit brides-to-be? I've worked with Vera Wang and I headed up the bridal salon at Saks, so I have experience right from the heart of the design world and extensive knowledge of the industry. If she falls in love with a designer's gown but thinks it's missing something, I can sketch it out for her, fax it to New York and make it happen.

Carine's Bridal Atelier, 1726 Wisconsin Ave., NW, 202.965.4696, www.carinesbridal.com.

AIMÉE LAUREN PHOTO BY JASON HOROWITZ/MIRROR BALL STUDIO; CARINE'S BRIDAL ATELIER PHOTO BY STEVE CANNING