

ROCKING A NEW RING IN THE NEW YEAR?
David's Bridal Offers Helpful Wedding Planning Advice & Provides Insight
via Second Annual "What's On Brides' Minds" Survey

CONSHOHOCKEN, PA - January 3, 2008 -- With an extra twinkle in her eye and sparkle on her finger, it's no wonder the bride-to-be has a contagious glow. For the bevy of brides who got engaged between Thanksgiving and New Year's – 26% do so according to Condé Nast Bridal Media's American Wedding Study – now's the time to begin the exciting, yet sometimes hectic task of planning their special day.

To better understand the preferences and attitudes of today's brides and to offer the most relevant wedding planning advice, the second annual "What's on Brides' Minds" survey was conducted by Leflein Associates, Inc. for David's Bridal, the nation's leading bridal authority. The revealing survey found that while some bridal traditions continue to withstand the test of time, times are definitely changing. On the traditional side, men are still most likely to pop the question (78%), and 63% of brides continue to wear something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue for their big day. A popular new trend has emerged, with 38% of today's brides considering the option of buying more than one bridal gown for their wedding day. Nearly half of these respondents (47%) said they would select a second, more casual wedding dress for the reception, while almost 40% cited they would change dresses so that they could move freely on the dance floor. When it comes to attendants, most weddings include at least one bridesmaid. Perhaps indicative of the laid-back, informal attitude of the West coast, brides in this region are less likely to have large bridal parties with formal bridesmaid dresses than brides in the Northeast and South, who are twice as likely to have more than four bridesmaids. As a sign of the times, brides admitted that they are more likely to consult with friends (55%) or bridal websites (53%) for wedding planning advice, over their own mother (40%)!

Since today's modern bride clearly marches to the beat of her own drum, David's Bridal offers a multitude of up-to-the-minute planning tips to help each woman achieve her own unique wedding style, without breaking the bank:

- **Keep an Eye on the Bottom Line:** Establishing a budget is the first and most important step when planning a wedding. Determine which aspects of the wedding are most important, and scale back on items that are not a top priority. Almost two-thirds of survey respondents said that the wedding dresses they found were too expensive. To keep finances in check without sacrificing quality or style, try shopping for wedding attire at a store like David's Bridal that offers an unparalleled array of elegant bridal gowns ranging in price from \$299-\$1200. The survey also revealed that engaged couples are shifting their spending plans to extend beyond the wedding day and into the future: 40% of brides agreed that putting money toward the down payment of a house was their highest priority when making purchases before the wedding. With the affordable luxury of designer wedding dress collections from Oleg Cassini, Monique Luo and Galina, David's can help you plan for the big day and save for happily ever after.
- **Location, Location, Location:** Destination weddings are a popular trend, however the survey found that three-quarters of brides will be hosting their weddings close to home. Whether near or far, the location (and season) will influence everything from the floral arrangements and color scheme, to the all-important wedding dress. Reinforcing this notion, nearly two-thirds of brides said that their wedding locale would shape their bridal gown choice. Brides will save time and effort if they determine their location and overall theme before heading to a store to look at gowns. For example, a formal hotel venue provides the perfect backdrop for a dramatic ball gown or sophisticated slim silhouette, while a beachside setting may call for a tea-length wedding dress or a long flowing bridal gown.
- **Online Oasis:** The internet is a wonderful planning tool and a great time-saver, so it's no surprise that respondents ranked wedding websites as a top resource (53%) for useful wedding planning advice, tips and ideas. Today's brides shop for a variety of wedding products online; wedding invitations were cited as the most popular item (49%), followed

by favors (44%), bridal accessories/jewelry (41%) and bridal gowns (40%). However, when it comes to placing the actual order, the online purchase categories shift to wedding favors (33%), honeymoon travel arrangements (31%) and invitations (29%). There are numerous e-commerce sites that cater to brides, such as davidsbridal.com, which offers more than 4,000 unique wedding related items and services, including exclusive collections that make it easy to coordinate the entire wedding event. The new db Online Collection offers stylish wedding dresses designed to suit any size, budget, and timeline (sizes 2-26W, starting at \$99). The site also boasts Dress Your Wedding, an online tool that allows brides to create their own “virtual” wedding, experimenting with colors, dresses, accessories and backgrounds; perfect for the 84% of brides who said they want to visualize what their bridal party will look like prior to the big day. Interestingly, while blogs are prevalent, almost two-thirds of brides-to-be indicated that they don't feel that they are credible or helpful in planning their dream day.

- **Time is on Your Side:** 63% of recently engaged women give themselves less than six months before the wedding to purchase their bridal gown, while 38% wait until the final three months. Think that's not enough time to buy a wedding dress? Think again. For those who planned their nuptials in less than six months, many found their wedding gown at a bridal shop where they were able to try on the dress and take it home either that day or within a short timeframe. This is good news for the 37% of brides-to-be who indicated that one of the biggest obstacles when shopping for a wedding dress was that their gown of choice was not available to try on in their size. If you are planning on getting married under a tight timetable, visit a store like David's Bridal that stocks wedding dresses in size 0-26W, as well as special plus (28W & 30W) and petite (0P-16P) sizing options, to get a sense of what the gown will look like on you. To ensure all wedding preparations are timely and within budget, David's also provides a great savings booklet with each bridal gown purchase, amounting to \$1,000 towards future purchases at the store and with preferred partners, such as MW Tux, JCPenney and Liberty Travel.
- **Consult the Experts:** When searching for a wedding dress, brides should take advantage of bridal consultants' advice as they can provide great insight into the gowns' quality, fit and construction. In fact, more than 4 out of 5 brides agreed that their consultant positively affected their shopping experience. Consultants are constantly helping brides choose wedding gowns and are most familiar with the inventory, so they are best prepared to suggest a style that may be “the one.” In addition to these gown gurus, it's a good idea to bring along a friend or family member to provide honest feedback, as well as to help with full skirts and lace-up bodices. But don't expect today's bride to ask her fiancé for his opinion: the majority of respondents (53%) confessed that they don't plan on showing the dress to their beloved before the wedding day, while only one-third said they will ask his advice on planning the wedding at all. Another expert you might want to consult is a dance instructor to fine-tune the highly anticipated first dance. Surprisingly, as much as people love watching their favorite celebrities on *Dancing with the Stars*, 87% of engaged women said that they do not plan on taking professional dance lessons before the wedding. So even if you won't be learning any fancy footsteps, have fun with it and try not to step on each other's toes!
- **Customization is Key:** If you're looking for ways to let your personality shine through without paying a hefty custom price tag, you're not alone. Over 60% of brides would like to customize their bridal gown to reflect more of their personal style, but 40% felt that it would be difficult to do so without costing a fortune. To help with this all-too-common bridal dilemma, try to find a bridal shop that offers cost-effective solutions for personalizing your wedding dress. David's Bridal allows you to choose from a variety of sleeve options that can be easily added to strapless bridal gowns to create a unique style that is all your own, without blowing your budget. For additional ways to tailor your look, add a colorful sash or sparkling crystal brooch to your wedding dress. For the perfect finishing touches, don't forget to ask your consultant about coordinating bridal accessories: from tiaras and veils to handbags, shoes and jewelry, you can never go wrong by selecting pieces that complement your wedding dress and personal style.

- **Obliging Bridesmaids:** For the second year in a row, the top issue brides faced with dressing their bridal party was agreeing on one style to fit all different body types (63% in 2007 and 65% in 2006). Coordination is still in vogue, with almost three-quarters of respondents wanting their bridal party to wear the same color or color scheme, and 34% planning to have their bridesmaids wear the same dress in the same color. The desire for identical bridesmaid attire is stronger among brides in the Northeast compared to those in the Midwest (42% vs. 27%). Whatever your preference, it's a good idea to try a nationwide store that carries a large assortment of styles in a range of sizes to ensure the bridal party looks and feels their best. David's Bridal offers an impressive selection of stylish bridesmaid dresses, available in an expanded 30 color palette, to create a figure-flattering look, no matter what your size or style. They also recently introduced the new "Dress Up Your Dress" bridesmaid collection which boasts two versatile dress silhouettes, a sash and peek-a-boo slip, available in 30 colors, plus White, to mix and match, for the ultimate in personalization. These are just a few ways to choose wear-again options for bridesmaids, a perfect fit for the 39% of respondents who cite this as a concern when choosing bridesmaid dresses.
- **Showcase Your Style:** Even though we live in a celebrity-obsessed culture, 96% of brides-to-be said that they will not emulate the recent wedding of a Hollywood starlet, but instead plan on showcasing their own unique style. To create a seamless look, visit a one-stop-shop and choose a personalized color scheme that makes it easy to coordinate all aspects of the big day. From save-the-date cards and invitations to ceremony and reception items, right down to the icing on the cake, David's Bridal offers a wide array of coordination options, available both in-store and online, to create a cohesive event. Always keep in mind that your wedding is a time to celebrate your union as husband and wife and the start of your new life together. While advice from loved ones is important, take their suggestions into consideration, but ensure that your wedding is still all that you envisioned it to be. After all, it is your day!

"The recent survey reinforced that today's brides-to-be are looking to personalize and coordinate their special day, but don't want to spend a fortune for the custom look," said Robert Huth, President and CEO of David's Bridal. "As the only national bridal retailer, we listen to the feedback we receive from our brides and pride ourselves on responding to their preferences. We're pleased to be able to offer such a wide assortment of affordable, high-quality and fashion-forward bridal and bridal party fashions, accessories, gifts and favors – both in-store and online – to meet the needs of today's brides and help make the wedding of their dreams a reality."

While finding the love of her life is up to the bride, following these simple steps will help ease the wedding-planning process and make it more enjoyable. So when the big day finally arrives, her only responsibility will be to enjoy herself as she dances the night away.

Methodology

This Internet survey was conducted by Leflein Associates, Inc. from October 19–22, 2007. A total of 504 surveys were completed among a national panel of women (age 18+) who were recently engaged. This study has a margin of error of plus or minus 4% at the 95% confidence level.

With more than 50 years of bridal experience, David's Bridal understands the importance of providing brides-to-be with a vast selection of exquisitely crafted dresses, available at affordable prices. Today, with more than 280 locations nationwide, David's Bridal continues to expand its retail store locations, while maintaining its philosophy of superior quality, value and service. To locate a store nearby, consumers can call 1-877-693-BRIDE or visit www.davidsbridal.com.

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