



The making of a couture bride

You need to pay just a little more for a designer dress by this wedding planner. **CHEONG PHIN** checks out how you can go about making one to order.

The elegant shapes of couture wedding gowns at Eric Choong Brides.

FROM the minute you're engaged to the moment you say "I do", any bride-to-be will face the daunting task of planning for that big day.

Needless to say, you'll want the wedding to be perfect and, most importantly, you'll also want to look beautiful on this special day.

Fortunately, a wedding planner can be enlisted to help you in making a success of your big day.

Looking gorgeous on your wedding day starts with choosing the most appropriate (or affordable) bridal gown that flatters your body and personality.

A wedding gown can be rented or bought off the rack from bridal shops, but nothing is more pleasurable than having the most important dress in your life specially custom-made by a fashion designer.

Admittedly, it'll pile on a little on your wedding budget but you will soon find out that it's worth spending that extra ringgit for the undivided attention and splendid results that this entails.

There's a handful of local fashion designers to choose from, but one top designer who has excelled in bridal wear for many years is Eric Choong.

A graduate of the Hong Kong Institute of Fashion Design, this boyish designer has been at it for 18 years, developing a reputation for a romantic and understated elegance in his work.

His trademark use of luxurious fabric, intricate detailing and modern interpretation of classic designs with an exquisite cut have garnered much praise from the fashion elite and celebrity customers like Paula Malai, Sheila Majid, former Miss Malaysia Tan Su Wei and Hong Kong actress Foong Po Po.

Focusing on structure and fit, Choong's wedding gowns are feminine and boast everything luxurious from intricate French lace appliqué on pure silk fabrics and elegant beading.

Here's an insight into the makings of a couture wedding gown from Eric Choong Brides - one of five shops of Eric Choong Kuala Lumpur.



Choong working out the finer details with silk organza on a sophisticated wedding gown.

First appointment
You meet with the sales manager to discuss your personal thoughts about your wedding gown, your special needs, the wedding date and, of course, the budget.

A portfolio of the designer's creations will be available for your perusal at this stage. A good selection of sample pieces is also available for you to get a feel of how an Choong creation looks on you.

Try on a few silhouettes to find the ones that suit you best and in which you feel most comfortable. This will, in turn, help you to decide on the right silhouette and style or even inspire you with more ideas of how you want your wedding gown to look like.

It will also provide a clearer indication of the different costs of each style of gown and its impact on your budget.

A proper quotation on the cost of the gown and a timing schedule (based on your wedding date) will be provided shortly after you make clear your requirements.

Confirmation
Upon confirmation of your order and appointment for Choong to design and make your wedding gown, the first face-to-face meeting with the designer himself will be scheduled. This will normally happen within the week.

Based on feedback from your first meeting with the sales manager,

only two sketches of the gown are proposed with the recommended fabric, colour and samples of the embellishments.

"Today, wedding gowns are no longer just pure white, but ivory, off white and pearl white. It's so much more gentler on our skin tone as compared to the starkness of pure white," pointed out Choong.

Choose from an extensive range of quality silks, French lace, hand embroidery and elegant beading.

Every possible detail of the wedding gown is discussed with you such as finding the right chiffon that is light enough to drape beautifully, but can support the intricacy of the lacework and the Swarovski crystals.

If necessary, try on the sample gown again to make sure you are comfortable with the design's silhouette and seek advice from Choong as you look into the finer details carefully before making the final decision. Ultimately, it's not how you look in the gown, it's more of how you feel.

Once all is agreed, a proper measurement of your body shape is carried out and the wedding gown is ready to be cut and tailored for a first fitting.

Fittings
Fittings are the most important part of this process of made-to-order wedding gowns. Do not rush through them. In fact, treat each



The spacious boutique of Eric Choong Kuala Lumpur.



Meticulous handiwork on a wedding gown with beads and Swarovski crystals.

fitting as important as the final fitting and check all details.

Comfort with the fit is crucial at this stage because whatever is incorrect can be corrected and adjusted for the next fitting session.

Choong will normally be present at this fitting to make sure the initial cut is flattering to your body shape and also explain the next stage of work to be done on the outfit.

Always bring a pair of proper shoes for this fitting so that the length of the gown

can be ascertained.

Adjustments

At the second fitting, the gown will have some of the embellishments like lace appliqué and beading.

Essentially, the gown would have been adjusted against whatever is incorrect from the first fitting. Again, Choong will be present at this session to personally adjust and fine tune the shape of the wedding gown according to your needs.

A glimpse of the embellishments to come will be fully explained by Choong and again, any disagreements over the applications will be rectified and finished for a third fitting. The veil will also be discussed here.

"The classic simple veil is complimentary but an elaborate one with embellishments will be charged separately," explained Choong.

Completion

At this session, the wedding gown is fully completed with all the hand finished lace applications and beading, ready for a final fit.

Choong will personally supervise

this final fitting session and meticulously checks to see if there is any adjustment to be made, or if any additional embellishments are necessary to further enhance the beauty of your wedding gown.

Gorgeous bride

This is the final fitting when all about the wedding gown is taken care of and adjusted for a perfect fit it.

It's a gown that is uniquely yours and one that is professionally made, fitted and hand-finished with great care. Prices start at RM4,000.

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Choong sketching out the proposed designs with fabric samples.