

How the Royal Wedding of Kate Middleton and Prince William May Influence Brides

The whole day was executed perfectly, the Middleton style pitched somewhere between ordinary and regal, but always careful not to do anything which might seem tacky or low-end (helium balloons aside). Would it have been the style that Kate would have chosen if she wasn't a royal bride? Perhaps not entirely, but it's hard to imagine anything wildly different for her. The wedding industry is keen to see how creative brides on a more modest budget take note of the Royal Wedding and bracing itself for some key trends to come out of it, both in direct copies and creative twists on the royal theme. Here the *Wedding Planner School's* Amber Hunter gives her thoughts and suggestions:

The dress, stunning and perfectly suited to the occasion is a classic style, an updated version of Grace Kelly's 1956 wedding gown, so it will be easy to find dresses in a similar style in the shops already, and exact replicas will be available by the end of the week. Unlike Diana's challenging Emmanuel designed gown brides won't feel like they are pushing uncomfortable fashion boundaries in similar gowns despite the Alexander McQueen name on the label. It's a style that will suit most slim, hourglass and pear shaped figures so it will be a good one to copy. But demure brides should take action against the cold. One text message I received from a young male relative during the ceremony said "is she smuggling peanuts in her bra?" referring most undeferentially to what was either an odd point in the stitching of the bodice or nature's unfortunate signpost. Even her second girl-next-door gown for the evening party suffered similar twin peaks.

There were no large flowers in the bouquet, but instead smaller springs of lily of the valley, sweet william, hyacinth and myrtle that picked up the size and shape of the Chantilly lace flowers which covered Kate's arms. Brides who want to recreate this can do so easily (albeit more expensively outside of the spring), or to put their own spin on things, could choose a bolder lace design and use larger flowers to match. The appliqué on the bottom edge of the skirt was Cluny lace, invisible to the TV cameras but it photographed beautifully up close and can be easily replicated on a plain smooth skirt.

The shoes never really revealed themselves, but were made bespoke by the McQueen design team using lace. A bride inspired by Kate could commission McQueen or their favourite fashion house to create a bespoke pair for her big day. Just remember to show to them off if you are going to go to all that trouble!

Kate's hair was not showy, and as nearly everyone predicted, half up, half down. The soft heated-roller curls gave it a sense of 'it just falls this way naturally' and although it rubbed against the very close fitting veil and rough dress, the messier it got, the more people loved her for her ordinariness. Because it was so hard to see the shape of Kate's hair, sister Philippa is more likely to become the hair-style icon from this Royal wedding. Again, half up and adorned with the flowers Kate was reported to have wanted for herself had she shunned the tiara after all, Pippa's hair stayed neat but soft throughout the occasion. The side parting may be a trend for 2011 and 2012 brides and bridesmaids, away from the hanging strands and quiffs of late. Kate took down her hair completely for the evening, so for modern brides, that means no more lacquered up-do's that stay in place even when fifty pins are removed.

The tiara which caused so much controversy before the wedding did make an appearance in the form of the Queen's Cartier eighteenth birthday present from her mother, given to the

Queen Mother by King George V. It is regal rather than bridal-fashion and perfectly reflected both the role of bride and of new royal. While bridal tiaras have been fashionable for the past ten years, most are thin and wiry and the trend was on the wane, so there may now be a re-emergence of heavier, more stately headwear reminiscent of an ancient Greek headpiece.

Silk will always hang as though it is heavy, even when it is as light as a feather, so the vintage-style silk tulle veil with added embroidery lay very close to Kate's head, front and back, a nod to the twenties perhaps and very traditional looking. It allows a better look at the bride's face but can make it look distorted like a bank robber if an unfortunate camera angle captures a front-on shot that appears to widen the nose. Brides who would like to take inspiration from the veil but make it their own could opt to position the tiara on top of the veil, or use volume or flowers in the front of the hair to lift the veil away from the nose and lips.

Kate's Robinson Pelham Earrings, a gift from her parents, will be an easy purchase for inspired brides, as long as stocks are available. The Welsh gold wedding band could well spark a hike in the value and popularity of Welsh gold around the world.

The Fiona Cairns cake, was anything but 'supermarket' with detail and intricate sugarwork of a precision that I have never seen before in the UK, even on the most pricey and ostentatious of wedding cakes. In the last few years cakes have either been completely plain or very busy (often with chocolate art), and this may well take the latter to the extreme. Given the relatively simple dresses in the wedding, the cake was a refreshing bit of fuss and pattern, even if the colour remained discreet and elegant.

Not forgetting the men of course, the full royal line up all looked tremendously handsome in their military dress uniforms. Even if the vibrant red of the Colonel of the Irish Guards uniform worn by William is not to your taste, the dashing navy blue-black worn by Prince Harry and Prince Charles may be suitable for many grooms. Sadly it is not possible for a man to wear a uniform or medals unbecoming of his service or rank in the UK, so any copycat grooms and best men will have to be non-Britons or invent their own uniform to keep the bride and guests swooning.

The groom driving his new wife along Pall Mall in an open top Aston Martin will be popular with grooms I'm sure and no less affordable to the public than hiring a standard vintage car and driver (assuming you can't borrow one from your dad like William did). It was a peek into their cheekier side after the solemnity of the morning's ceremony and the balloons and 'JUST WED' number plate capturing the new middle-class fashion of revaluing things that were once deemed old fashioned or tacky, such as 'ironically' serving bacon butties and chips in newspaper at very high-end weddings.

Mother of the bride Carole Middleton opted for cut over colour and adopted her daughter's understated elegance, perhaps in fear of overstepping the mark in front of her new extended family. "A wise choice unlikely to rock any style boats" said one interviewee. The TV cameras did not do justice to her ruffled-underneath hat, which added interest to a very clean ensemble. Mothers-of-the-bride hoping for a bit more colour might choose to copy her majesty the Queen, whose choice of radiant yellow warmed her skin and looked fabulous next to the Duke of Edinburgh's red uniform, although Zara Phillips and Camilla stole the

show for me outfit-wise and any mother of the bride or groom would look stunning in either outfit this year.

The bridesmaids dresses, yet again, simple and somewhat archaic, but then it is always inappropriate to dress under-twelves in anything but old-fashioned if distaste is to be avoided. The ring of flowers on their heads received much criticism from the people I interviewed afterwards, including references “a bit 1980s” “something out of four weddings and a funeral”, “too much like Diana’s bridesmaids”. Only women in their late fifties consistently expressed a contrary view: “the way little bridesmaids should look” said one. No doubt maid-of-honour Pippa Middleton’s simple white McQueen dress will be copied, perhaps even into the boardroom as well as the bridal party.

So the emerging stars are Pippa Middleton as a new style icon and designer Sarah Burton from Alexander McQueen, the popular wedding theme for 2011 and 2012 will be understated, almost colourless with one or two cheeky personalised moments just to connect the event’s identity back to the couple. An easy scene to recreate, although because of its simplicity couples wanting to make a splash on their big day might need to pull out something big to turn elegant and *understated* into elegant and *memorable*.