

Preserving Your Wedding Gown

What Brides Need to Know Now

As wedding season soon approaches, uniformed brides are being misled on what it takes to properly preserve their wedding gown. Our expert, noted second-generation drycleaner and consultant, Johnny Xirouchakis, of Manhattan's Aphrodite Cleaners/Crystal Services has a comprehensive knowledge of fabrics and chemistry and has extensive, hands-on experience with numerous different kinds of materials. He has cared for heirloom gowns from three generations of brides and he will gladly fulfill the garment care needs of the entire bridal party, male and female.

Johnny's company often works with the bridal party when they come to him for fittings and alterations on their gowns and formalwear.

Johnny invented the "CPR" approach with your wedding gown: Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration. In the "Conservation" stage, your garment will go through a chemical stabilization process to assure that there will be no further deterioration to the gown. There are no changes to the design in this process; however, supportive backings such as fusible web or tulle replacement may be a part of it. This process is usually reserved for museum quality and vintage gowns.

When considering the "Preservation" phase, reports Johnny, it is important to note that there are many myths about storing and vacuum-sealing gowns. The environment the gown is to be stored in is critical, it should be PH neutral in a museum quality acid free box. Beware of boxes using any plastic "viewing" windows. Though aesthetically pleasing, they can destroy your gown. All metal fasteners, zippers, clips should be removed for true museum type preservation. As always, it is best to consult a professional to have your garment cared for. Johnny will be happy to repackage your gown to ensure its long-term safety.

Finally, if determined necessary during the "Restoration" process, the gown may be special bleached to restore whiteness or to remove oxidized (aged) stains. Panels may be changed, as well as repairing and/or replacement of the original lace, buttons or beading, and doing whatever is necessary to make an antique or museum quality piece functional and wearable.

The latest trend in dry cleaning is to have sentimental items such as quilts, military jackets, christening gowns and prayer shawls "C-P-R'd" for gifts.

Family members and friends who wish to give practical gifts at showers, bachelor and bachelorette parties and for weddings are selecting cleaning gift certificates for their loved ones.