



Bridal Gown Care



Storage Tips

**Museum Quality GownCare
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rave *fabri***care**
master cleaners



SUBCONTRACTORS

Make sure that you select a bridal gown specialist that does all their work in-house and does not use a subcontractor.

Comment:

You might be surprised to learn that the vast majority of dry cleaners, bridal boutiques and other service providers in the USA don't clean, hand finish and archivally preserve the bridal gowns entrusted to their care.

Instead, they ship their gowns to a wholesale wedding gown processor for "cleaning and boxing."

There are about 10 such wholesale processors scattered around the country. And how are these bridal gowns handled by these undisclosed third parties? Your guess is as good as ours.

DECORATIVE TRIMS

Make sure that you select a bridal gown specialist who knows how to clean a bridal gown with beads, pearls, sequins and/or other decorations and find out exactly what that specialist does to protect beads, pearls, sequins and/or other decorations from damage.

Comment:

Beads, pearls, sequins and/or other decorations on a bridal gown have always presented ordinary cleaners with a major

challenge. The big unknown is: Will they melt or deluster? Will they get otherwise damaged? As a result, many ordinary cleaners often reject these gowns as "uncleanable" or "extremely risky".

SUGAR AND SALT STAINS

Make sure that you select a bridal gown specialist who will not only remove visible stains such as hem soiling and makeup, but sugar-based stains such as champagne and soda and salt-based stains such as perspiration and sea water as well.

Comment:

The removal of sugar-based and salt-based stains are particularly important.

Sugar-based stains, caused by clear, sugar-based liquids such as champagne, cannot be removed by the dry cleaning process alone. Left untreated, these stains will caramelize over time, resulting in unsightly yellow or brown marks. In much the same way that an apple that's cut in half caramelizes and turns yellow or brown when exposed to warm air.

Salt-based stains, caused by contact with the skin or perspiration, cannot be removed by the dry cleaning process alone. Left untreated, these stains can change the color of the fabric and/or deteriorate the fabric over time.

HANGING

Make sure that you hang your bridal gown using the loops sewn into the side seams.

Comment:

Whether before or after the wedding, hang your bridal gown by the fabric loops that are typically sewn into the side seams. If your gown does not have fabric loops, we'll be happy to sew a set in for you.

These loops are designed to carry the weight of the gown so that the shoulders of your gown don't stretch out of shape.

PLASTIC

Make sure that you do not store your bridal gown in any type of plastic, vinyl or nylon, irrespective of color. And that you never seal your gown — either hermetically or vacuum — in any type of plastic irrespective of color.

Comment:

There are a number of reasons not to wrap your bridal gown in plastic, vinyl or nylon or seal it in plastic of any color.

First, plastic is a chemically unstable material that off-gasses acids as it ages and deteriorates. When these acids come

into physical contact with your gown, the fabric could turn yellow and/or brittle.

Second, plastic, vinyl and nylon does not "breathe" and all fabrics — even synthetics — must breathe.

Third, plastic, vinyl and nylon traps moisture, which, in turn, could lead to the formation of mildew.

INSPECTION

Make sure that you select a bridal gown specialist who provides you with the option to personally inspect your bridal gown prior to preservation.

Comment:

Almost every wholesale wedding gown processor will automatically box and seal your gown in a box that they call "acid free". By contrast, a bridal gown specialist will always provide you with the option to personally inspect your bridal gown prior to preservation.

Now, you may ultimately decide, that there's no reason to inspect the gown, but, the very least, you have the option to do so. This will provide you with the peace of mind that your gown has been properly cleaned and hand finished into walk-down-the-aisle condition.





ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

Make sure that you select a bridal gown specialist who uses bridal gown chests that provides at least two levels of protection:

- protection against light, soil and dust, mold, mildew, insects, and changes in temperature and relative humidity, **and**
- protection against the ravages of harmful atmospheric (outdoor) and environmental (indoor) pollutant gases that are highly oxidative, harmful atmospheric (outdoor) gases that are acid precursors and harmful acid degradation by-products generated within the paperboard as the paperboard naturally ages.

Comment:

In other words, avoid preserving your bridal gown in a conventional wedding gown box used by ordinary cleaners, bridal and floral boutiques, wedding planners and consultants, home-based, independent sales representatives and self-styled wedding gown specialists.

These boxes include storybook wedding gown boxes — a 1960's technology — and alkaline buffered wedding gown boxes — a 1980's technology

ARCHIVAL CHEST SIZES

Make sure that the archival storage chest you use is tailored to the size of your gown (excluding any detachable tulle skirt).

Comment:

Ordinary cleaner typically offer one size of storage chest. Your gown will fit in their box irrespective of size. Even if it must be flattened like a pancake.

Even if the hand finishing (if any) is destroyed in the process.

You should always insist that the archival storage chest is sufficiently large to accommodate your gown with a minimum of folds and creases. This is why we offer at least 8 different sizes of archival storage chests.

STORAGE

Make sure that you store your bridal gown in a cool, dark and dry environment. This rules out attics, basements, garages, storage lockers and the like.

Comment:

As a general rule, you can accomplish these objectives by avoiding in any environment that could subject your gown to extreme fluctuations in temperature (heat) and/or relative humidity (moisture).

If you elect to preserve your bridal gown in archival materials you can accomplish this by storing your bridal chest under a bed or on the shelf of a walk-in closet.

If you elect not to preserve your gown and decide to hang your bridal gown in a closet, ensure that the gown is enclosed in a chemically inert, breathable storage bag, that the closet door is left open, that there is plenty of air circulation, and that there's no artificial light above the gown hanging area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the restoration, hand cleaning, hand finishing and/or preservation of a bridal gown, please visit our website.