



Eternally yours

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stay put like dye, Coddington advised.

"We cannot always promise to remove some stains," she cautioned, "but we can always work on them."

Once a bridal gown has been cleaned, the next important step is to carefully pack it in a good quality heritage box with acid free tissue, where it can be safely stored for many years. At Coddingtons, gowns are vacuum packed and sealed in a special type of plastic, "like you would use for food," Pat Coddington explained. Clients are advised not to break the seal because that breaks the vacuum packing, and moisture could get in, causing mildew. Two boxes, one inside the other, are used. Coddington recalled that one client stored her gown in a room where there was a leaky

roof. The outer shipping box was wet, but the dress inside the preservation box was unharmed, she said.

Coddingtons packs gowns so that the headpiece shows. Normally these do not get dirty, as they are usually extra ornamentation, often removed at the reception.

Conant said that it is difficult to preserve headpieces that contain metal. Masters will try to preserve the veil if the customer wishes. Smaller boxes are available to preserve flower girls' dresses too, he said.

The staff at Bay Bridal Boutique in Traverse City usually advises customers on wedding gown care. They can provide a kit for wedding gown preservation, with a box and instructions for mailing the gown away for treatment. There is only one price for this service, which includes postage.

The tradition-minded bride who wants to wear her mother's

or grandmother's gown for her own wedding can also be helped today, even if the fabric of the family heirloom has deteriorated with time.

In some ways, wearing a mother's or grandmother's gown is a very good option, said Coddington, because often superior materials and workmanship were available in the past, and any beaded trimming is apt to be made of glass and sewn on. Some contemporary gowns are trimmed with styrene beads and sequins that can dissolve and fall off if not properly handled.

Clients are advised to bring in a heritage gown to be inspected on an individual basis. There are restoration techniques that can be used for the modern bride, and the freshly restored bridal gown can then be preserved for brides of the future.

Sheila Garrett is a local freelance writer.

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not just how you looked.*



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■ 41 percent of grooms share in the wedding planning with their bride; 14 percent of brides handle all the planning.

■ 36 percent of brides say they exceed their wedding budget; 6 percent spend less than planned; 58 percent say wedding costs ended up the same as estimated.

■ Half of weddings are financed by a combination of the bride, groom and both sets of parents; 30 percent of couples pay for the whole thing themselves; 17 percent of weddings are financed entirely by the bride's parents.

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