



Record-Eagle/Elizabeth Conley

Seamstress Rachele Hansen, shown working in her Elk Rapids shop on the wedding dress she wore for her Nov. 23 wedding. Her design sketch is in the foreground.

Gowns that were something special

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...tive preschool in Lewiston. It was featured at a wedding gown fashion show the preschool had to make money. Gowns at the show ranged from old to modern, but none caught Render's attention like this one.

"I was mesmerized by its beauty, history and it's remarkable detail. It was off-white, satiny, billowy and so grand and lovely. I could barely take my eyes off it," Render said. "It had long sleeves and a high neckline and beautiful pearl buttons down the back. There was a huge amount of fabric and, as I recall, it had a long, sweeping train that trailed the model for a lengthy distance."

While the gown itself was spectacular, the story behind the gown is what really affected Render.

"To think it was made from the parachute her groom had used to jump into enemy territory as a young soldier — it surely told a story as it billowed across the stage on the model. She seemed to float," Render said. "I will never forget that gown and what it must have meant to both the bride and the groom."

SOMETHING...RED?

Each woman sees something different when she fantasizes about her perfect wedding gown. One may see a long train, another a short

one. One may want sleeves, another could decide to go strapless. Whatever details they may imagine, though, they all generally envision a white gown.

But not Rachele Hansen, seamstress and owner of Rachele Hansen Fine Dressmaking in Elk Rapids. For years Hansen has known exactly what color she wanted to walk down the aisle in — deep garnet red.

Hansen decided on the color 10 years ago while living in New York City. One day she was visiting the Metropolitan Museum's costume section and happened upon a Civil War-era dress — a garnet, wine-red dress.

"The color was just so beautiful I said, 'If I ever get married I'm going to get married in that color,'" said Hansen.

And that's exactly what she did last Nov. 23. Hansen used taffeta and velvet to make her 1879 Victorian-inspired dress.

As a seamstress Hansen has the opportunity to work with many different fabrics. She wishes prospective brides wouldn't be intimidated by ideas which may seem untraditional.

"I just wish brides would branch out more, break out of tradition a little and take a look at the variety of fabrics and colors that are available," she said.

Jill Jenkins is a local freelance writer.



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