

# JUST LOOK ON THE BRIDE \$IDE

Model Lauren Dellolio shimmers in a \$50,000 St. Pucchi Couture gown at yesterday's Wedding Salon showcase, where the elite can still plan a wedding with wretched excess.



## Ultra-luxe vows defy Dow

By JENNIFER FERMINO

Let them eat floor-to-ceiling, Swarovski crystal-encrusted, organic white chocolate wedding cake!

As millions of Americans sweat over their dwindling retirement funds and falling home equity, a bevy of starry-eyed brides-to-be descended on the tony Prince George Ballroom on East 27th Street for the annual Wedding Salon luxury bridal showcase.

The one-day event — marketed toward the “top 1 percent of spenders” in the \$125 billion wedding industry — was a chance for almost-weds with big dreams and bloated bank accounts to peek at \$50,000 designer gowns, \$2,000 wedding cakes and 5-foot-tall centerpieces.

“It’s a one-time thing,” said soon-to-be-married Jenny Park, 24.

“It doesn’t matter how the economy is doing as long as I can afford it. Who cares how Lehman

Brothers are doing? It’s one day of my life.”

She said she’ll likely have 800 guests at her wedding, which will be in either Manhattan or South Korea, and is looking at Vera Wang dresses.

Cheryl Latvala, 25, of Ocean County, NJ, said she came to shop for wedding dresses.

“They have a better quality [of gowns] here, very high-end, very classy,” she said, surveying the dimly lit room where models in floor-length gowns paraded about in designs from the exclusive Bridal Reflections on Fifth Avenue.

Latvala, who was eyeing a \$20,000 ruched-bodice dress, said she plans on dropping between \$70,000 and \$80,000 on her big day — way more than the national average of \$28,000.

“You do it once, knock on wood,” she said.

Many of the florists, designers, and event planners said Wall Street’s woes aren’t stopping their clientele, who are firmly ensconced on Easy Street.

“This fall and this winter have been really

good,” said upscale florist Golf Srithamrong. “I’m very busy.”

He proudly showed off a huge \$2,000 centerpiece — featuring a clear cylinder vase filled with water and submerged Cymbidium orchids, then topped with 220 white roses and elephant’s-ear plant leaves — that he’d just used for a Long Island wedding.

Marc Wilson, an event designer, is constructing a ballroom-sized pool for an upcoming wedding that will be lit, filled with floating, multicolored orchids and topped with Plexiglas so guests can dance on top of the water.

Total cost — \$550,000. And that’s not including labor.

Tatiana Byron, whose bridal company, Wedding Salon, held the chichi show, said brides are still going all out for their wedding, but many are sticking to a tighter budget and paring down guest lists.

“The new rule of thumb is: Who have we had dinner with in the past year?” she said.

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## Traditional wedding dress is gown for the count

Fashion Editor

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**S**TRAPLESS is out. Wear color. Ditch the tiara for a headband.

The bride’s traditional wedding dress is being turned on its ear.

So much so, she may even wear three dresses instead of one, according to trends out of the Wedding Salon, a high-end bridal show that laid out offerings from the city’s top wedding extravaganza vendors.

Wearing multiple dresses over the course of the day and evening is the latest thing, inspired by celebrities’ wardrobe

changes on award nights.

“We have many brides ordering dresses for 2009 and 2010, where they’re wearing a gown for the party and then they’re switching into a short mini-dress,” says Cristina de Marco, general manager and vice president of Bridal Reflections.

She also said brides are shying away from strapless, which

is a little too common at this point.” And they’re also ditching the all-white tradition.

As for trends in accessories, girls are wearing a lot of what the bridal shop calls metal head pieces — and turning away from the tiara.

“Nothing wrong with the tiara, but they want to do something different,” she said.

One of the biggest looks is a headband, either lace or jeweled.

At Bridal Reflections’ Fifth Avenue location, the average bride spends between \$5,000 to \$6,000 on a wedding dress.

But de Marco admitted the average price has sunk by a third.

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