



## MOTHER OF THE BRIDE

# THE RULES

Choosing a wedding outfit is a minefield of fashion dos and don'ts for the mother of the bride (or groom). Our top tips will keep you looking good for the big day

Words by Sarah Gillespie

### DO CONSULT THE BRIDE

You probably know your daughter better than anyone else and you'll be well aware of how important her big day is to her, so you are duty-bound to try to make things easier for her – not more stressful. She may give you free rein in choosing your outfit, guide you with a colour palette, or insist on attending all shopping trips with you and having the final say on your outfit. If you feel really strongly that your daughter is leading you in the wrong direction, let her know how you feel. "While it's nice to colour match with the wedding party, it's also important to complement your own skin tone and hair and find a style to flatter your shape," says Louise Brown of award-winning mother-of-the-bride boutique Catwalk (catwalk-falkirk.com).

### DON'T FORGET WHOSE DAY IT IS

Weddings these days are bigger than ever. Many mothers of the bride lament that they were married in a homemade dress and had their reception in the church hall. This does not mean it is your opportunity to turn up in an ensemble that would make Rose's entrance in *Titanic* look understated. Of course you want to look your best, but mirroring the style of the bride's day will look much better in photographs in the years to come. If she is wearing a simple, understated gown, or is on a tight budget, you dressing in a show-stopping number might not be appropriate.

### DO RECYCLE

Many mums are initially put off by the price of mother-of-the-bride outfits, with some costing more than wedding dresses. This is when you should remember the magic formula that women have used to justify expensive purchases to themselves since the beginning of time: CPW, or cost per wear. If you choose something you'll get more than one wear out of, and will save you buying an evening gown in the future, the once-daunting price tag becomes a bit more palatable. For example: a dress which comes with a bolero jacket and hat could be

worn with a pashmina instead of the jacket and a new fascinator for another wedding, while the hat could be worn with a different dress to the races and the jacket could be worn to work.

### DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE COMPETITION

One common worry we hear is that the mother of the groom is slimmer/taller/has a bigger budget. But it's not a competition! Traditionally, the mother of the groom would wait until the MOB had selected her outfit, at which point her son would pass on a colour or description so the MOG could choose her outfit. But, like many traditions, this has fallen by the wayside and it can turn into a frock free-for-all. A good idea might be for the MOB and the MOG to take a shopping trip together, making a day of it with a nice lunch. It's a perfect way to bond and spend time together – after all, you'll be family soon! There's a high chance she might be feeling the same and it is something you can laugh about over a nice glass of wine.

### DO ACCESSORISE

"Accessories can take a straightforwardly lovely outfit to a whole new level of style and elegance – so much so that a mum on a budget might consider ▶

**Above:** Style 25620 by John Charles, POA, stockists include Bear Necessities, Catwalk and Dressage of Peterhead  
**Right:** Observing a colour scheme compliments both the bride and you.



Photo: www.mackphotography.co.uk

# THOROUGHLY MODERN MUMMY

Janice Grimley-Evans of wedding planners Blue Thistle Weddings offers her thoughts on the role of the mother of the bride

Gone are the days when the mother of the bride was the organiser of her daughter's wedding – so what role does the modern MOB play?

Unless the couple specifically ask you to plan their wedding, it is very much a supporting role, and you should be prepared to be guided by them. Ideally, you should sit down together at the start to discuss specific responsibilities. This will prevent confusion and hurt feelings along the way.

If a situation develops where you feel your daughter should take your advice, approach the subject with care and tact. Begin by praising her for what she has accomplished so far with her plans and gently explain why you feel a particular decision is not wise. It may be best to do this over a fun lunch as she is less likely to become upset at your interference in public! If your daughter has a professional wedding planner, enlist their help – they are trained to deal with these issues and should be happy to mediate.

Ultimately, you must remember that this is your daughter's wedding and whether or not you agree with her decisions you should respect her wishes. Try to keep a sense of proportion about everything. At the end of the day, if the flowers aren't the perfect colour or her seating plan isn't ideal, it doesn't really matter. A happy and loving atmosphere is far more important.

By being supportive and encouraging, helping out when asked and remaining patient throughout, the outcome should be a very happy wedding day and an excellent relationship with your daughter and new son-in-law.

[www.bluethistleweddingnews.co.uk](http://www.bluethistleweddingnews.co.uk)



spending less on the dress and splashing out on a fabulous hat," says Michelle Scott, owner of the Kudos Couture boutiques ([kudoscouture.co.uk](http://kudoscouture.co.uk)). "You don't want your accessories fighting with the dress, so if you've chosen an elaborate outfit, keep accessories simple – maybe a slim and elegant court shoe and a delicate fascinator on a clip or band, rather than a statement hat."

## DON'T BE TEMPTED BY THE HIGH STREET

If you've ever walked into an event wearing the same dress as someone else, you won't need reminding that every city has the same department stores. Head for the independents instead. "Independent boutiques have a bespoke selection of special occasionwear and will only stock a few of each style – this will greatly reduce the risk of you turning up in the same outfit as a guest," says Louise.

"Shopping on the high street means you won't benefit from the expert advice from boutiques like ours," adds Shona Thorpe of ladieswear specialist Sheila Conn ([sheilaconnladiesfashions.co.uk](http://sheilaconnladiesfashions.co.uk)). "We also guarantee not to sell the same outfit to anyone attending your daughter's wedding."

## DO SUPPORT YOURSELF

One way to feel more confident when trying on dresses or outfits is to wear the correct underwear. Many mother-of-the-bride outfits have built-in support – perfect if you'd like some extra help

in achieving a slimming silhouette – but shopping in underwear similar to what you might wear on the day gives you the best idea of what a dress will look like, and will also give you a boost if you're planning to shed a few pounds for the big day. There is a wide range of options available, so shop around and try before you buy. If the wedding is going to be in the middle of summer, it might be a bad idea to pick some of the more 'intense' options as this can make for quite an uncomfortable day!

## DO YOU!

Rules are made to be broken. Where once weddings and other special occasions had unbreakable rules and strict social etiquette, this is no longer the case. As long as you are still appropriate and your daughter is happy, you have carte blanche to do what will make you feel best. You don't have to match the bridesmaids – but it may not be appropriate for you to wear white. You don't have to tell the mother of the groom what you're wearing – but she might not be the only one getting a surprise. You might be concerned about wearing something too revealing – but a flattering hemline or tasteful cleavage could turn heads for all the right reasons. It's all about confidence! ■

**1** Style ISL410 by Ian Stuart London, around £1117, stockists include Bear Necessities **2** Style 90328 by Condici, POA, stockists include Bear Necessities, Catwalk and Sheila Conn Ladies Fashions **3** The right accessories can take an outfit to the next level *See page 410 for stockist details*

