



Brides and grooms-to-be gathered for the Brides 2014 runway show at the World Trade and Convention Centre. (Photos by Shannon Kirk)

Here come the brides

COUPLES AT BRIDES 2014 SHARE WEDDING PLANS

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Saying yes was easy. Now for the wedding plans.

Halifax's World Trade and Convention Centre hosted Brides 2014 last weekend.

Two floors and multiple rooms were filled with more than 2,000 people.

Visitors wandered through stalls occupied by over 130 vendors, browsing dresses and tuxedos, perusing their options for a DJ, and entering their ballots for a chance to win a trip to the "Royal Glitter Bay Villas in beautiful Barbados."

Glinting diamonds adorned many a guest's finger.

And much like the ring itself, there is no one-size-fits-all answer to how much one should spend on an engagement ring. Tradition says the groom-to-be should spend three months' salary on the ring.

"I think it's ridiculous, to tell you the truth," says Breagh MacInnis, who is planning her New Year's Eve wedding for this coming winter.

Sara Booth and her fiancé Tom Campbell feel the same. They attended the event hoping to find a travel agent to facilitate their destination wedding.

"There are better things that we can spend our money on," says Booth. "Like a wedding."

Some future brides, while not expecting a specific price tag, don't have a problem with the traditional spending amount.

Three months' salary "seems accurate," says Jessica Smith, who is planning an outdoor, September wedding with her fiancé Jordie Mann. "Girls have some expensive tastes."

"If it was up to the groom, he'd wear shorts."

— LANA ATWOOD
BRIDE-TO-BE

"I like it," says Chelsey Benoit, another September bride who will wed in Antigonish County. "I don't think it's necessary, but he came through with that."

Marilyse Melanson is on the fence about the issue.

"Honestly, it doesn't really matter, as long as you put thought into it," says Melanson, whose wedding next spring will be held in her hometown of Clare. "I want him to plan it."

The modern groom-to-be's involvement in wedding plans appears to depend on his fiancé's

preference, as well as his own interest in the matter.

"He has input," says Booth of Campbell's part in the process. "It's how much he cares what goes into the wedding."

"I'm more support, than input," Campbell says. "I'm not really picky."

Mann, on the other hand, is a willing participant.

"He's very involved," says Smith of her fiancé. "He's the organizer."

Benoit's fiancé plays a less active part. "I just run what I think by him," Benoit says with a laugh. "He says yes."

Lana Atwood's future husband has a supporting role in the planning.

"Every decision I make, I go over with him," says Atwood. "I don't want him to be shocked at the wedding."

However, she draws the line at apparel choices.

"If it was up to the groom, he'd wear shorts."

Tux rental or not, weddings are a notoriously hefty expense.

According to Chatelaine Magazine, the average cost of a wedding in Canada last year, including the honeymoon, was almost \$27,000.

Whatever brides expect from their fiancés in the form of bling and input, minimizing the financial burden of the wedding itself seems a common trait among

those preparing to walk down the aisle.

"I'm trying to keep it really cheap," says Atwood. "I want it to be relaxed and not cost a lot."

Some brides are finding ways to save on food. Atwood is providing finger foods, as opposed to a large meal.

MacInnis was going to have a destination wedding, but didn't want to financially burden her family.

Now that the wedding will be held at home, she plans to get her hands dirty.

"I bake, so I'll probably make all my cupcakes," she says. "That will save thousands, probably."

Melanson plans to make her own cupcakes and decorations as well.

Her fiancé is "ridiculously picky" about the photographer, so she's hoping what she saves on sweets will offset that cost.

Benoit wants to save money on the entire meal. She hopes the turkey dinner she has planned will be cooked and served by family and friends.

Regardless of their thriftiness and willingness to share the work, brides-to-be seem to have a good idea of what they want on their special day.

Melanson is already looking forward to the moment all heads turn.

"I think I just wanted the church because then everyone looks at me walking down the aisle."



Bride-to-be Marilyse Melanson.