

ORANGE COUNTY BRIDE

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by Diane Gardner

As you prepare for the most important day of your life, you can't help but re-conjure your childhood fairytale fantasy. A long flowing dress, your head adorned with tresses of silk, beaming with the glow of love as you look into your handsome Prince Charming's eyes. But this is more than a fantasy; it's your real-life day to shine. So, before tending to the nitty gritty details of place settings and wedding songs, go ahead and take a long look in the mirror. Envision yourself as that princess. Then hire a professional to make it happen!

A wedding hair and makeup expert (a.k.a. bridal fairy godmother) is very different from your usual hairdresser. You want an experienced professional, whose designs will complement your dress, your personality, and your lifetime fantasy. If possible, find a hairstylist that also does wedding makeup, or ask him/her if they regularly work with a specific makeup artist. You want experienced wedding designers for both because they will take into special consideration the way you look in person from head to toe, and how you will photograph in various lighting conditions. A professional can help you strike the difficult balance between looking natural in person and polished in photos. Chances are, you have a girlfriend or relative who used a terrific stylist for their wedding. Otherwise, your wedding coordinator should be able to provide a recommendation for you. Another good resource is the online guide provided by this publication, which enables you to search for a hair and makeup person in your area.

Look for a wedding expert you connect with. Chemistry is important, because you need someone who will listen, collaborate, and support your goals. Do speak to the stylist personally and make sure the exact person you want is available on your wedding day. If you have bridesmaids, ask if they can provide service for them too. Most hair/makeup stylists have another pro they can bring along to accommodate larger parties. You should also call to book a trial run of hair and makeup. This is essential to avoid last minute stresses and disappointments the day of the wedding. A trial run allows you to make adjustments in advance, to assure you feel calm and look flawless on the big day.

In terms of hair, you can book a trial run before or after you have decided on a headpiece. If you book before, your stylist can help you design one. If you book after, your stylist can design your hair around it. Most brides opt for the traditional tool veil, but remove it after the ceremony to reveal a gorgeous adornment of flowers or pearls in their hair. The makeup trial is equally important. Every bride wants to look both natural and picture-perfect, so finding the right makeup design in advance will give you piece of mind on your wedding day. You will also select with your stylist a lipstick or gloss, as well as a translucent powder, which you can have handy over the course of the day to touch up.

Prices vary, but your biggest mistake will be skimping on the budget in this area. Your first priority should be to find someone talented, who you trust to make you look exactly how you want. It would serve you well to ask for an hourly rate. This guarantees that you will not be overcharged if you are getting a simple hairdo and/ or makeup. On the other hand, if you have the hair of Rappunzle, your stylist will feel that they are getting the correct compensation for doing a difficult job. This takes into account your long lost aunt who shows up looking like she has been hiding under a rock since you last saw her. Your stylist will gladly give her the same princess treatment if he/she knows it's not a freebie. A happy stylist is more likely to bend over backwards to make your fairytale wedding a possibility. And now my dear, your carriage awaits!