

REAL BRIDES *TELL ALL...*

Four real brides tell us the best (and worst) things about their dress shopping experience



THE FACTS: Kimberley Day selected style 3117 from Allure Romance by Allure Bridals at The Bridal Lounge.

KIMBERLEY'S STORY: "I only visited one other store before The Bridal Lounge. I found it was very difficult to book an appointment due to their opening hours and my work commitments – there was absolutely no flexibility. It was my first experience of trying on dresses and I felt very pressured to make a decision. I felt I was being steered towards a style that didn't suit me.

I chose the majority of my suppliers from my local area, as I like to support local businesses. So I ideally wanted to use a local store. I enquired about a dress I had seen online, as I knew The Bridal Lounge stocked this designer and, although they didn't have that particular one in stock, Sara was quick to respond and was extremely helpful, providing me with suggestions of other similar dresses. I was invited to the store for an open evening so I could have a look for myself and fell in love with the boutique instantly.

Through the whole experience, from the first appointment, I was made to feel like a princess. Sara naturally makes you feel at ease in the beautiful boutique. The passion she clearly has for her work shone through and made the experience extra special. She really took the time to get to know me and helped me pick out the perfect gown!

My favourite part of the whole process was definitely my first appointment – going to the boutique with my bridesmaids and trying on beautiful dresses. We even had a glass of fizz, it was so lovely!" ♦



THE FACTS: Jessica Lima chose the Juri by Enzoani Blue from Along Came Eve for her overseas wedding.

JESSICA'S STORY: "My maid of honour mentioned the boutique to me after she had walked past it and noticed how beautiful the front window was. So, I took a look at its brands and styles online. I really liked what they had, so I booked my appointment.

I only visited this one shop and chose my dress on my first visit! I feel my experience was really positive. I felt that booking various appointments at different boutiques would overwhelm me, so I started off with just the one and it just so turned out that I was really happy with what I found there.

Trying on all the dresses was really fun and I loved it, but it can also be exhausting. The dress I chose for my wedding day got the "yes" from those I took with me, I felt that if went elsewhere and looked at others I'd never decide, so I went with my gut and committed to that dress on the day I found it.

I was drawn to this store's very beautiful window and I was very excited for my visit. I found Kendal and her mum helpful and they didn't pressure me in the slightest. I felt comfortable trying on a variety of dresses... and I tried on a good few! Once I found my dress, it all felt really easy and straightforward.

They have a really nice area upstairs for viewing dresses, which made the experience really special. My mum, two sisters and two friends and I were all left to choose some dresses for trying on, which was a really fun experience. Along Came Eve also has a really lovely dressing area with lots of space. I had help with getting each dress on and I felt well advised on every style, while feeling comfortable and at ease.

My favourite thing was probably seeing all the wedding dresses for the first time and picking out different ones to try on. I also enjoyed adding personal choices to my dress in the fitting process and accessorising. My wedding was abroad and in the summer, so I added delicate sparkle to the train and bodice area."





THE FACTS: Ellie Rose Madden married in the Milan by St. Patrick from Wedding World in Shropshire.

ELLIE'S STORY: "Wedding World was recommended to me by a friend who had recently married. I was in Shrewsbury one Saturday and decided to pop in to book an appointment. Ann was so welcoming and managed to get me an appointment for the following weekend. Thankfully, Wedding World was the first shop I visited...and the last! I had other appointments booked but I cancelled them as I found my dress. In fact, I chose the first dress I tried on.

Ann told me to choose six to eight dresses off the rails. She told me she knew which dress in the shop would suit me best, but she wanted me to find this for myself! Ann told me to choose one dress I thought I wouldn't like, to eliminate the style. I tried this dress on first...and I loved it...and I said yes to the dress! Amazingly, it was the dress Ann had written down for me – she is the Queen of Wedding dress styling!

Once I knew which dress I wanted, Ann then accessorised it with the most beautiful veil and jewellery. The lights were turned down, I was given a bouquet and told to 'walk down the aisle'. The mirrors were set so that I could see myself at every angle that the congregation would see me. My mum was in tears, and for me, that was the start of the excitement for my wedding. The best thing about the shopping experience was spending quality time with my mum. I love my bridesmaids to bits but eight of them, all with completely different styles, trying to help me choose my dress would have been chaos!" ♦





THE FACTS: Kiri Samantha Rogerson bought her Morilee Fatima gown from Brides of Southampton.

KIRI'S STORY: "Before shopping, I did lots of online research into different bridal styles and boutiques near me. I searched in 10+ bridal shops before I found 'the one' at Brides of Southampton. My mum and I randomly decided we would have an appointment after having lost hope in other boutiques. Sure I'd been to stores before and liked many dresses, but nothing was jumping out at me. I didn't really have any negative experiences, I just couldn't find the dress I wanted.

On top of offering a brilliant customer service, I found my perfect dress at Brides of Southampton! Gemma and the other lovely ladies who worked at the boutique helped me try on different styles of dresses – but I wasn't blown away by any. Just as I'd given up hope and was about to leave the store, I showed Gemma a photograph of a dress I'd found online that I really liked the look of. She told me she didn't have that exact dress, but that she did have something very similar in store.

Back in the changing room I remember thinking nothing much of it, but it was only when I walked into the main room with it on and spun around to face the tall standing mirror, that I felt completely blown away – I'd found the perfect dress! Gemma then added a long, plain veil which had a couple of small gems on it and wow, it was perfection. The team listened to what I liked and didn't like, they were patient, experienced in their industry and most of all, they made me feel really special. It was almost like I was their friend rather than just another customer." ■

