

Occurring twice a year for Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter in January and July, respectively, the Haute Couture Paris shows traditionally end with bridal wear. This prevails in today's mid-2020s, where emphasis is given to sumptuous fabrics, classic silhouettes, immaculate construction, and faultless embellishment – often using sought-after artisanal techniques.

Marrying the past with the present requires an eye on sustainability – wearing an item of clothing only once feels too decadent as well as unsustainable. So, how can today's wedding dressing be entirely appropriate – making you look and feel good in a way that no other ensemble in your wardrobe does? Bridal wear should be attractive in all areas: it needs to fit the body, where it should and flatter your features. Moreover, it needs to enable you to stand proud when emotions come to the fore, and all eyes are upon you.

In terms of colour, white has been favoured for a long time. Queen Victoria (1819-1901) chose this colour to marry her beloved Prince Albert in 1840 and is often credited with lighting the spark. However, she was not the first royal bride to wear white: in 1559, Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587), married Francis, Dauphin of France, in a white wedding dress. Nevertheless, from the mid-19th century, white, ivory, or cream were de rigueur for matrimonial dressing.

Considering fabrics, those linked to feminine sensibilities are frequently chosen – light-reflecting silks that delicately shimmer over the wearer's body and exquisite lace used overall or for detailing and trims, layered over other textiles, or acting as a contrast over bare skin – ever-flattering in its on/off sensuality. For decoration, embellishment in the form of fabric manipulation and embroidery instils charm.

Three labels featured here demonstrate an elegant fusion of tradition and modernity: Cawley Studio, Namza Couture, and Renli Su.

Cawley Studio was founded by Hannah Cawley in 2017. London-based, she creates ready-to-wear, made-to-order womenswear, and bridal wear with fabrics sourced from England, Ireland, Portugal, India, and Japan. High-quality silks, typically slub silk dupion or smooth silk taffeta, are her premium choice for thoroughly romantic bridal dressing. ▶



Image left: Damsel Elysium x Renli Su.

Image right: Cawley Studio, "Bells Dress," layers of hand gathered silk dupion.