



## Bridezilla Rules!

One would think that when a woman reaches “a certain age” and plans to wed, she’s beyond the neuroses characteristic of many younger brides preparing for their Big Day. One would think that because of her added life experiences, she’s less anxious about every detail, less phobic about the pomp.

One would think. The truth, in fact, is quite the opposite. *Because* she’s had years to fine-tune her tastes as well as earn her own money, the “W” word often turns that very woman into—take cover—Bridezilla.

She may not have webbed feet, a scaly body, gnarly hands, and fanged teeth, but still, like Godzilla himself, she’s an aberration. She storms through the city of wedding cakes, flowers, and favors, demanding the best services her money can buy and unique, high-quality products that reflect her personality and style.

How do I know about this near-demonic transformation from reasonably stable female to Bridezilla? Because it happened

to me. On June 24, I married my longtime sweetheart, Charlie. For both of us forty-somethings, it was a second marriage.

Soon after Charlie and I announced our plans to marry, this foreign creature, Bridezilla, possessed me. According to an article in *The New York Times* last May, Bridezilla can be any age and even a first-time bride, and she frequently occupies the bodies of editors, public relations execs, and special events coordinators—women

whose professions demand they dot their I’s and cross their T’s.

Translation: She’s a self-purchasing

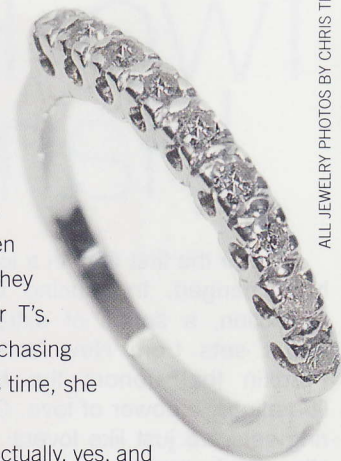
consumer in a detail-oriented career—and at this time, she happens to be a bride-to-be.

Can any good come of the curse of Bridezilla? Actually, yes, and the good news is for retailers of high-end jewelry and accessories. After all, while Bridezilla is imposing her insanity on floral designers, invitation engravers, and pastry chefs, she also stops in the better jewelry shops

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Platinum wedding band with nine three-point diamonds in a fishtail setting, circa 1953



ALL JEWELRY PHOTOS BY CHRIS TRAYER; WEDDING PHOTO BY JUDITH STURGES



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along the way. She's characteristically compulsive in search of the highest quality jewelry for herself, her fiancé, and their attendants.

For this reason, when Bridezilla arrives in your store, you must recognize her. Here's my version of who she is: She's no longer in her 20s, but in her 30s, 40s, and 50s; is about to wed for the second or maybe third time; is a professional woman, accustomed to buying her own jewelry, clothing, and accessories; and she's a holdout for high quality and unique design.

But perhaps most important, Bridezillas—at least the urban and suburban ones—see their Big Day not like blushing brides re-enacting a Cinderella-like fantasy with Prince Charming who's come to the rescue. For Bridezilla 2001, the wedding day is more like a movie premiere or a walk on the red carpet at the Oscars. Remember: We live in an age where celebrities are our kings and queens. When people asked me, "What are you wearing?" I heard the question as "Who are you wearing?" So without hesitation, I'd answer, "Nicole Miller dress and wrap, Erica

Clockwise from left: Diamond earrings with yellow briolette diamond drops, diamond toggle bracelet, and diamond fleur-de-lis bracelet by Erica Courtney, Los Angeles, California; Kathrine Baumann minaudière, Beverly Hills, California; two diamond line bracelets by JJ Marco, New York City

Courtney earrings and bracelets, JJ Marco bracelets, and Kathrine Baumann minaudière."

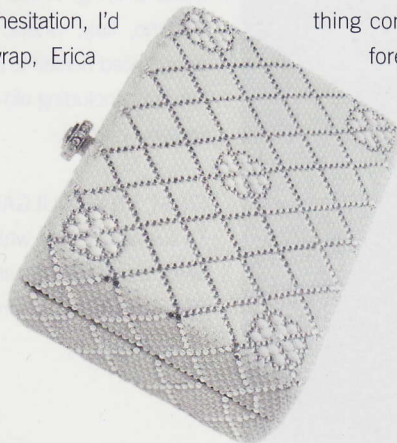
To be sure, ignorance is bliss. When all is said and done, if I didn't know that superstar Cathrine Zeta-Jones carried a Judith Leiber Austrian crystal purse on the day she wed

Michael Douglas, it may not have been essential to carry my beaded Kathrine Baumann bag. If I wasn't aware that actress Jennie Garth donned an Erica Courtney cuff on her carefully-crafted wedding day, it may not have been vital to wear earrings from the same California designer.

And if I hadn't known that A-list personality Madonna chose an Edwardian platinum and diamond ring to symbolize her love for new husband Guy Ritchie, perhaps my own mother's platinum and diamond wedding band wouldn't have seemed such a perfect choice for my bridal ring.

Today, I and many brides in my demographic group are influenced by celebrities whom we admire and what we read. We can't help it—impending nuptials make us fashion victims, at least for the occasion. So, yes, it's true, Bridezilla's wedding-day look takes work. But if you're there for her in her hours, days, and weeks of "need," you may find she's not a monster after all, but, in fact, something completely different: a committed customer, forever after.

PHOTO BY GAYLE GEGENHEIMER



*Louise DePasque*