

Sukran Bridal and Tuxedo

by Isabelle Ghaneh

The number one item at the top of a bride's agenda is the selection of a wedding dress. Finding a style that suits you and will please your groom, as well as "wow" your family and friends, isn't easy. Brides can spend hours trekking from one bridal shop to another in search of their dream dress.

Sukran Aryl, who has been designing dresses for over 30 years, was born in Turkey. Sukran started to sew when she was seven. She began designing and making her own clothes when she was in her teens.

Sukran initially went to college to become a pharmacist. When she came to America in 1978, she had her degree in hand. However, she soon became a dressmaker and designer.

"I was living in a condominium in Norwalk and making my own clothes. A neighbor saw me wearing a dress and loved it. I told her it was one of my own creations. She asked me to design a dress for her. I went to the fabric store and picked up the material and went home and made her a dress. She was thrilled and told her friends and family what I had done for her," Sukran said.

As word of mouth increased Sukran's dressmaking business, she continued to work from home, but "I outgrew my living room and had to set up a separate establishment from the house. My first store was in Westport in 1981. I was on Main Street, behind the Remarkable Bookshop, which is no longer in business. My shop was 500 square feet and gave me more space than my living room. I eventually moved to the Post Road in Westport. After many years there, I came to my current location, which is on the border of Westport and Norwalk," she said.

Sukran decided that her passion was to do weddings, and she focused her dressmaking abilities on creating bridal dresses. She also designs and sews wedding veils.

As Sukran got to know the brides and their moms, she started to devote her attention to mother-of-the-bride dresses. Many women had gowns that they wanted to have updated and reworked for their daughter's weddings.

"We specialize in dresses for mothers of the brides. We will completely take apart and redesign a dress for the mother from one that she has. We create a new version and modernize the dress," Sukran said.

Sukran works with brides according to their budget. She carries a wide selection



Designed and made by Sukran, this gown is one of many she has created.

– Videler Photography

of bridal dresses from manufacturers, as well as bridal accessories such as shoes and veils, and she has tuxedos, too.

"Brides come in and we look at photos. Many say they have tried on tons of dresses, and they want the top of one dress and the bottom of another to be matched together on their dress. I work with them. I can change around the tops and bottoms, or I can start from scratch and design the dress, based on what the bride wants." Sukran is happy to work with a bride's ideas.

"One girl came in this past October and was thrilled I would listen to her," Sukran said. "She wanted a black wedding dress. This had been her dream since she was a teenager. She called me and said she couldn't find one. I said come and see me

and we will talk. I listened to what she wanted and I drew it for her. She loved the idea and she was in heaven walking down the aisle. Her dream of a black wedding dress had come true. You can come in and we will find a way to make your wedding-dress fantasy become a reality," Sukran said.

Two years ago, Sukran had the pleasure of watching her daughter get married wearing one of her designs. It was a happy day for mother and daughter.

Sukran's Bridal and Tuxedo is located at 563 Westport Ave. in Norwalk. Hours: Mon. to Wed. 10:30 to 5:30, Thurs. 10:30 to 7:30, Fri. 10:30 to 5, Sat. 10 to 5:30, Sun. 12 to 4; 203-847-0607; sukranbridal.com; sukranbridal@aol.com.