

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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Diana: A Celebration **Wedding Dress Facts**

The Dress Designers:

- In her efforts to support England's fashion industry, Diana selected a young British couple, Elizabeth and David Emanuel of London's Mayfair district, who had been in business only seven years.
- The relatively unknown Emanuels were chosen for both their talents and their discretion. Diana had worked with David and Elizabeth on previous occasions, including her first public appearance after her engagement to Prince Charles, when she wore their revealing black off-the-shoulder gown.
- Following the wedding, demand for the Emanuels' designs and sketches skyrocketed.
- Even after their new success, the Emanuels insisted on keeping their operation small, believing that otherwise, "the dresses will lose their magic." Every dress is custom-made.

The Secret of the Dress:

- The *Toronto Star* dubbed Princess Diana's wedding dress the most closely guarded secret in fashion history.
 - From the time of the March announcement that the Emanuels would be making Diana's dress until the wedding in July, the windows of their Brooke Street couture shop were covered with blinds.
 - Security guards were hired to protect the shop from burglars, looking to steal a design that was worth millions, and from reporters, eager to have the first story on the dress.
 - Details of the bride's gown and the royal outfits of the Queen and other royal women were released in sealed envelopes the morning of the wedding, to be opened at the moment the 20-year-old bride stepped into the glass coach at Clarence House on her way to St. Paul's Cathedral.
- There were five months of intense fittings, and Diana had to have rehearsals to practice walking with the heavy 25-foot train.

The Dress:

- In keeping with tradition, most of the materials used in Diana's royal wedding dress were made in Britain.
- The dress is a romantic, fairy-tale gown made of ivory silk taffeta and lace, with a fitted, boned bodice, curved neckline, and a detailed finish.
- The wedding gown has a full skirt over a multi-layered, tulle petticoat, with intricately designed bodice panels. The entire gown is hand-embroidered with more than 10,000 tiny mother-of-pearl sequins and pearls.
- The 25-foot silk train is the longest in Royal history, and adds a touch of theatricality to the outfit. It has been called the dress of the century.
- The dress was made of six different fabrics, including 25 yards of silk taffeta, 100 yards of tulle crinoline, and 150 yards of netting for the veil.

Other Interesting Facts:

- Diana's five bridesmaids also wore dresses of ivory silk, modeled closely on her gown.
- Diana observed tradition by wearing *old* antique lace, *new* silk specially spun at Lullington silk farm in Dorset, a *borrowed* tiara from the Spencer family collection, and a small *blue* bow, sewn into the waistband of her dress for luck.
- A tiny horseshoe in 18-karat gold and studded with white diamonds, a second good luck token, was also sewn into the intricately embroidered dress.
- Diana's low-heeled slippers were made of ivory silk, top-stitched with pearls and sequins, with suede soles etched in gold.
- The bride carried a cascade of gardenias and golden Mountbatten roses, named after Charles' godfather, Lord Louis Mountbatten, and mixed with white orchids, lilies-of-the-valley, and freesias. The bouquet also included traditional myrtle and veronica flowers, cut from bushes grown from cuttings from Queen Victoria's wedding bouquet.