

White, whiter and wow



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Fashion Notebook



Nuala's leather and nubuck Lalita, \$200, by Puma and yoga enthusiast Christy Turlington, at Ron White — The Foot Shoppe.

It makes sense that **Andrea Anastasiou** would name her new bridal boutique White, Toronto. As a stylist for *Wedding Bells* magazine, she has worked with little else for the past eight years.

Now Anastasiou will be dressing real-life brides rather than models at 19 Hazelton Ave. "It's a bridal magazine come to life," the bubbly Anastasiou promises, with designer gowns from Carolina Herrera, Monique Lhuillier, Blumarine and Nicole Miller, stylish accessories and shoes including the famous Christian Louboutins with the painted blue soles, and a separate loft for bridesmaids. Everything is spread out over three storeys in a gothic Victorian decorated like a modern Paris apartment. The boutique opens April 8.

Brides will benefit from Anastasiou's expert editorial eye and, as fashion editors are so adept at doing, her ability to mix expensive with affordable, "like a Carolina Herrera gown with some faux vintage jewels or a dress by Thread with a pair of Louboutins."

She will also stock vintage dresses for alternative or destination weddings, or all the fab parties a bride has to throw.

White, Toronto's first trunk show was held recently and featured **Anne Barge**, an Atlanta-

based designer who has been enthralled with brides pretty much since birth.

"My mother was a church organist and she would put me in a pew while she played weddings," smiles the impish designer, clad in an amusing Moschino suit. "There was never any doubt in my mind from the time I was 3 that I would design bridal gowns. I was sketching dresses from before kindergarten. It was not a question of if, but of when."

Barge's designs are "classic, not trendy," a deliberate stab at the prevalence of casual dress. "I don't think brides today even know what it feels like to be totally done up in a gown, with kid gloves and chandelier earrings," she says.

This spring's collection reflects the grandeur of Imperialist Russia with full-blown ballgowns and opulent trims. She even researched Czar Nicholas and Alexandra's wedding down to the last detail. The result marries swags of silk and cabbage-rose lace with sterling silver embroidery, vintage brooches and

pearl "arm jewellery" instead of sleeves.

Barge dismisses the notion of a sexy slip dress to walk down the aisle. "This is a much more refined type of sexy," she believes. "And I think a bride should look like a lady and not a red carpet star."

After all, she adds, "Your wedding photo will be on your mother's mantel for 50 years. Every time you look at it you don't want to be thinking, 'What was I thinking?'"

For more information, see www.whitetoronto.com or call 416-849-9196.

WHITE AND WHITER: Ron White is gearing up for next week's official Canadian launch of Nuala footwear, a collaboration between Puma and yoga enthusiast Christy Turlington. The sleek sport shoes feature strategically aligned magnetic inserts to aid circulation and clear energy blockages.

Styles include a snazzy silver lace-up and a minimalist leather and silk slip-on with elasticized fastening system. Prices range from \$180 to \$250.

The event will also give White the opportunity to mark The Foot Shoppe's rebranding. His four GTA-area stores are now called Ron White — The Foot Shoppe and have been updated with chocolate brown and cream decor. White's name has also been applied to the banner of his three Mephisto stores.

And why shouldn't "Ron White" be front and centre? The 36-year-old Winnipeg native has set himself apart from other shoe retailers by insisting that designer shoes have comfort features like extra cushioning, rounded toes and flexible soles.



VINCE TALOTTA PHOTOS/TORONTO STAR



Margaret Wesetuik shows off a vintage pullover, above, by British design legend Zandra Rhodes. The magenta-haired designer, left, poses with fan Catherine Nugent during a speaking engagement at the Royal Ontario Museum.

He also urges Mephisto, Geox and other comfort brands to try trendier styling. It's about time someone did.

WHITE OUT: There's not much white in **Zandra Rhodes's** sphere, except perhaps the blinding streak she leaves behind her as she exits the room. The legendary, magenta-haired

British designer was in Toronto earlier this month to speak to costume enthusiasts at the Royal Ontario Museum.

By her side were several frothy, beaded frocks on loan from **Grace Mirabella**, **Catherine Nugent** and **Malka Green**, who had worn her Rhodes in 1973. Green recently hunted Rhodes down and commissioned her to

make a mother-of-the-bride dress for her daughter's wedding.

Rhodes creations were also in the audience, with Holt Renfrew's **Margaret Wesetuik** in a pullover she bought 25 years ago when she was selling the collection at Creeds.

Ottawa designer **Paddy Mann** was swathed in a signed Rhodes shawl with spice-toned Egyptian motif. "I bought it in 1988 at Harrods," Mann recalls. "I saw it draped on the ceiling and I said to the saleswoman, 'I'll have that scarf, please.' She said, 'Do you have any idea how much that costs?' And I replied, 'I don't particularly care!'"