

## GUIDE BOOK

## BOUTIQUES FOR BRIDES OF ALL STRIPES

*The question has been popped and eternal love declared. Now it's wedding-dress time. Bay Area brides will find several new bridal shops on the scene — each with a personality and dress collection all its own. We rounded up our favorites as well as a couple of options for non-dress-wearing brides. And we didn't forget the bridesmaids, either.*

— Gail Goldberg



Anthropologie & Co.

## BHLDN

Wedding-centric brand BHLDN (pronounced “beholden,”) hit the Bay Area last fall as part of Anthropologie & Co.'s splashy debut in Walnut Creek and Palo Alto. The 20,000-square-foot concept store has a fairytale-chic vibe and houses the entire Anthropologie family under one roof: Anthro, garden-focused Terrain and BHLDN. With its own dedicated boutique, BHLDN helps brides focus on the all-important business at hand: finding The Dress.

Ornate chandeliers, comfortable sitting areas and oversize dressing rooms are noteworthy, but the real showstoppers are the mannequins preening in their camera-ready gowns. Racks of white dresses are ripe for trying on and come in myriad styles suitable for both traditional and non-traditional brides. Nearby, colorful bridesmaid dresses and boho separates mingle while displays full of delicate bridal jewelry, accessories, wedding gifts and decor round out the mix. Brides are encouraged to book gown and/or bridesmaids appointments. Prices: \$250-\$3,900 (wedding gowns); \$250-\$350 (bridesmaid dresses).

1149 South Main St., Walnut Creek; (925) 932-0112, <http://www.bhldn.com/>  
180 El Camino Real, Ste. 1301 (Stanford Shopping Center), Palo Alto; (650) 566-1225.

## Emily Meyer and Kipper Clothiers

Because frilly princess gowns and slinky sheaths are not the stuff of everyone's dream wedding, increasing numbers of women are walking down the aisle in beautifully tailored suits and tuxedos. That's where San Francisco's Emily Meyer and Kipper Clothiers come in.

Designer Emily Meyer specializes in bespoke suiting for women. Many of her clients are getting hitched and want something truly special. Meyer is big on giving them what they want and big on outside-the-wedding-box thinking: “Your tuxedo doesn't have to be black — it could be midnight navy or ivory,” she says. “And don't give up on an outfit change! You can switch out your jacket for the reception to a bold color or print, or velvet.” The whole custom-suit process requires three in-person appointments and takes about 10 to 12 weeks. Meyer is happy to meet clients in their homes or offices, or in her Cow Hollow studio. Prices: Suits start at \$1,503 and tuxedos start at \$1,878.

2860 Laguna St., S.F., (415) 215-0185; [emilymeyer.com](http://emilymeyer.com).

Kipper Clothiers founders Erin Berg and Kyle Moshrefi started their company (in 2013) to bring impeccable, hand-tailored custom suits to everyone, regardless of gender identity, size, sexual preference, ZIP code, you name it. Indeed, perfectly fitting suits are the name of the game here: Every client has 36 separate body measurements taken, and the expert tailors don't mess around. While styles tend to skew more masculine, the fine selection of fabrics, linings and buttons ensure an individual look on wedding day, or any day. Allow six to eight weeks from consultation to suit delivery. Prices: Suits start at \$1,150.

78 Gough St., S.F.; (415) 890-4431; <http://www.kipperclothiers.biz/>



Emily Meyer

## THE LOOKER

## JEWELRY MAKER'S DAZZLING TWIST ON TRADITION

By Anh-Minh Le

When Bridget King got married 19 years ago, her wedding-day sparklers came courtesy of her mother. “I wore really big jewelry that I never wore again,” she says of the Art Deco-inspired pieces.

Fortunately, King's namesake jewelry collection can save brides-to-be from a similar fate. The Atherton designer describes her creations as “classic with a twist.” Thanks to her impeccable eye and

## Shop

[www.bridgetkingjewelry.com](http://www.bridgetkingjewelry.com)

talents, traditional materials — such as gold, diamonds and pearls — feel decidedly fresh, with clean and contemporary silhouettes.

Style and practicality go hand in hand; the latter bears out in her reversible earrings as well as designs meant to be worn alone or layered with others. Before a concept goes to market, King typically dons the prototypes as a test.

Is it comfortable? Does it hang or lie properly? Can it be dressed up or down?

On a recent morning, King settles into a seat on the patio of the Rosewood Sand Hill, a long gold chain draped around her neck with an array of her own charms dangling from it. Her ears are adorned with not-yet-released climber-style designs. She opens a box with a cadre of rings, earrings, bracelets and necklaces — all twinkling in the sunlight.

**Diamond stick earrings:** With a nearly 2½-inch drop, this diamond-encrusted linear pair (\$3,950) is ideal for brides who “don't want to be trendy,” King says. “They're elegant and classic.” Like many of her other designs, these come in white, yellow or rose gold versions.

## Sliced diamond earrings:

King offers two designs centered around sliced diamonds — an irregularly shaped stone (\$5,500), or a hexagon (\$6,200). The organic cross-section is balanced with the refinement of pavé diamonds. The former element has inclusions, making them each as unique as the bride herself.

**Bridget King**, right, conceives every item in her fine jewelry collection, such as the charms, above, and sliced diamond earrings in a hexagon shape, below.

Bridget King photos



Advertising Feature

# THE FINDS

## The Outnet

Meet the perfect match for brides who prefer to find their designer I-do ensembles online. With a clean design and well-edited mix of dresses, the Outnet's recently refreshed Wedding Boutique is easy to navigate. A few of the top-tier designer labels hanging on its virtual racks include Oscar de la Renta, Jason Wu, Stella McCartney, Anna Sui and Chloé. And just like the nonmatrimonial styles on the website, bridal gowns and gear are significantly discounted; 50 percent off original prices, anyone?

Bridesmaids and wedding guests can get into the discount-designer act with similarly curated sections of dresses appropriate for black-tie affairs to country retreats. "We offer a 360-degree approach to weddings ... the boutique is aimed to inspire our customer and features content from industry experts across the globe," says chief merchant Shira Suveyke. Prices: Wedding dresses range from \$150-\$3,600; <http://theoutnet.com>.



The Outnet



Alex Montalvo

## Alt.Brides

A year-and-a-half ago, sisters Marisa Montalvo and Kristin Whitlock got the wheels rolling on Alt.Brides with a mobile bridal truck, naturally. Fast-forward to today and the boutique is on firm ground, settling into its 6-month-old permanent space in Lower Nob Hill. Light-filled and cozy, the studio feels like the living room of your chickest friend. That is, if she happens to house curated racks of ethereal, edgy and elegant wedding dresses.

The nontraditional gowns, separates, jumpsuits and accessories are the creations of independent and up-and-coming designers from around the globe, such as Donatelle Godart, Nevenka and Rebecca Schoneveld. Along with not selling styles that "hundreds of other brides are wearing," Alt.Brides is laser-focused on the individual. "We only book one appointment at a time in order to give each bride a personalized experience and our undivided attention," says Marisa Montalvo. "We want the bride and her squad to have fun." Prices: \$995-\$4,200.

709 Hyde St., S.F.; (415) 316-8062, [www.altbrides.com](http://www.altbrides.com).

## Weddington Way

This online wedding-party boutique's tagline says it all: "Friends don't let friends wear ugly bridesmaid dresses." Acquired by Gap Inc. six months ago, Weddington Way remains true to founder-CEO Ilana Stern's mission to provide the best bridesmaid dress-shopping experience anywhere. The key to the company's success? Its virtual showroom where the bride together with bridesmaids — no doubt living in far-flung places, with different body types and various opinions — shop the brand's exclusive and extensive collection of dresses. Choosing colors, fabrics and styles is all part of the inclusive experience.

Now San Franciscans can shop Weddington Way offline, too: Banana Republic's Union Square flagship plays host to the company's first shop. Currently there's no end date in sight; other cities, including Dallas, Atlanta and New York, are scheduled to launch their own shop-within-a-shop later this month. (Appointments and walk-ins are welcome.) Prices: \$129-\$200.

256 Grant Ave., S.F.; (415) 788-3087, [www.weddingtonway.com](http://www.weddingtonway.com).



Weddington Way / Banana Republic

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The Southern California native's career dates back to her college years at UCLA. "I went to a department store, saw some jewelry for \$40, and thought, 'I could make that!'" she recalls.

She began frequenting bead stores and selling her wares at local boutiques. Then, at the suggestion of a friend, she went to the California Market Center in the hope of lining up more wholesale business. A buyer ordered 100 pairs of earrings, which King rushed to produce overnight.

After college, she worked as a fashion designer in New York City for a few years before moving to Hong Kong for her husband's job. It was there that she took up jewelry design again, launching Bridget King Jewelry in 2003. Over the years, the line has evolved — from sterling silver, gold-filled wire and semi-precious stones to a more luxe palette of materials.

About four years ago, King and her husband — by now parents to a son and a daughter — returned to the U.S. and settled on the Peninsula. With both her kids in high school, and the construction of their house complete, King decided to refocus on her fine jewelry. She conceives every item in the collection, which is manufactured in Hong Kong by a small team of artisans that she trained.

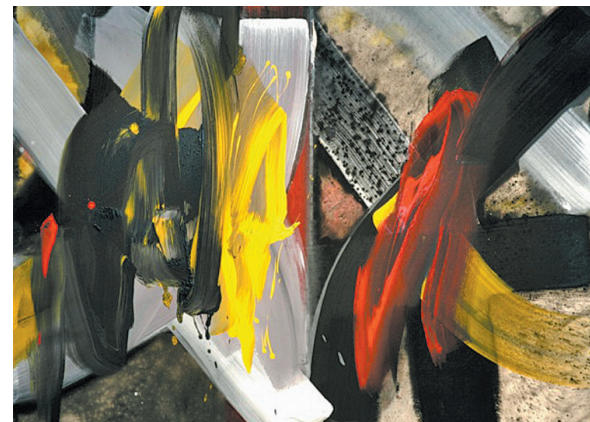
Her daughter, Audrey, is the inspiration for a new series that will bow this fall. Its three earrings and necklace are composed of delicate double lines of diamonds. King surprised her daughter with them for her high school graduation last month.

Although conjured with a teenager in mind, King envisions that the understated yet chic style of the Audrey designs will endure — much like the rest of her trove. When it comes to jewelry for brides and bridal parties, her philosophy is simple: "You don't want to look back in 20 years at your wedding photos and say, 'What the heck was I thinking?'"

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**Charm necklaces:** While most of King's creations are done in gold, her charm necklaces are also available in sterling silver. A silver letter is \$90, and an 18-inch silver necklace is \$80. The assortment of charms — among them, trinkets in the shape of lightning bolts and dog bones, and bars that can be personalized with names and words — are made with and without diamonds. A gold letter, bedecked with diamonds, is \$780.



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