

BIG DAY DRESSING

NOT SURE WHAT TO WEAR TO THE WEDDING? **GEMMA SOAMES** GIVES YOU SIX PAGES OF SOLUTIONS FOR GUESTS OF ALL AGES **STYLING NATALIE HARTLEY**

Forget the semantics of harem trousers, how to do 1980s, or where on Mars to find the perfect white shirt – Style's Wardrobe Mistress receives more questions about what to wear to a wedding than any other fashion conundrum.

And it's no wonder. Weddings are *the* sartorial minefield. They demand that you navigate an impossible route, one through unknown rules and changeable weather, by way of churches and discos, from day to night, past too-fashion and too-frumpy to comfortable, appropriate and looking good. And then, when you've managed all that, another one crops up two weeks later and you have to start all over again.

If there is a key to success, it is in sticking to what is right for you. There is something about being in the presence of white tulle that can make us lurch towards a whole new world of wrong, one in which yellow and asymmetric hems become good ideas – when what you should be doing, whatever the occasion, is dressing in your personal style.

There are many more dos than don'ts. Do make an effort. Do make sure you're warm. For those occasions that require multiple versions of your look (you know the ones, church, then drinks, then dinner, then luau), it's all about layering – a church-friendly jacket over a sparkly party dress will cater for both ends of the day. The rulebook of wedding don'ts is pretty much chuck-outable these days. If your accessories are bright, you *can* pull off black. Hats aren't just for grans (see Luella for the youthful way), long dresses are workable and elegant, and minis can be suitable (short and slutty are not the same thing).

Over the next six pages, we show the clothes and accessories we think will help you look good, whether you're a guest or the mother of the bride, in a quintessential English church or larking it on a beach in Ibiza. These are clothes that should work well beyond the reception – weddings are expensive enough without requiring a whole new wardrobe every time. And that, as the sixth invitation pops onto your doormat this week, has to be a good thing. ▶



Above Flower-detail top £70, by Selected Femme, from House of Fraser. **Pleated skirt** £395, by John Rocha; 020 7495 2233. **Silk headpiece** £189, by Gina Foster; 020 7565 2211. **Lace gloves** £35, from Cornelia James; cornellajames.com. **Aqua fishnets** £5, by Pamela Mann; mytights.com. **Beaded Happis shoes** £210, from Kurt Geiger. **Right Strapless dress** £35, from H&M Divided. **Jacket** £99, from Karen Millen. **Rings** £12 each, from Accessorize. **Lace gloves** £8, from Beyond Retro. **Bermondsey platforms with netting**, £220, by Fashionistas, from Kurt Geiger