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## Lafayette Bridal Shop is Making Special Dreams Come True

By Diane Claytor



From left, Lace and Bustle "momager" Liliam Hernandez and daughter, owner Victoria Hansen, get a dress ready for display at their Lafayette shop. Photo provided

store.

"A wedding dress is probably one of the most personal and emotional purchases a woman makes," Hansen said. "And yet I found a real lack of bridal shops making that experience personal or special."

Hansen loved her job but the concept of opening a bridal shop remained in the back of her mind. "I'm so glad I did it that way," Hansen stated. "I learned so much in my retail career and believe it gave me the solid foundation needed to open my own store."

She knew Lafayette, with its quaint yet stylish vibe, was the place she wanted to be. Racks after racks of wedding dresses can be both daunting and overwhelming, Hansen said, and her vision was to make the experience enjoyable, personal and comfortable.

"Shopping for a wedding dress should be a fun, happy time," she said. Lace and Bustle is "dedicated

It's likely that every little girl - and for that matter, every big girl - has, at some time, dreamt of walking down the aisle dressed in a beautiful white, flowy gown. She may not be able to envision a partner, or a location, but, oh, that dress. Its look may change over the years, but the long white wedding gown continues to be part of the fantasy.

Victoria Hansen, owner of Lace and Bustle bridal shop, is fulfilling those dreams right here in Lafayette. It used to be that Lamorinda brides had to drive miles and miles in search of that perfect wedding gown. But almost a year ago, Hansen opened her elegant, intimate bridal boutique and has been bringing happiness to brides ever since. Just walking in the store brings joy. It smells good. The crystal chandeliers, calming paint color, antique furniture, displays of vintage jewelry and beautiful gowns hanging along the wall indicate a special experience is about to begin. And when Hansen, with her pure enthusiasm for what she does, offers to help, it's easy to understand why Lace and Bustle has already provided that perfect look to hundreds of brides. And now, women are coming from as far away as Seattle to view this incredible selection.

A graduate of Saint Mary's College, Hansen spent 10 years in the retail industry as both a sportswear buyer and marketing analyst. Six years ago, when, newly engaged herself, Hansen began searching for her own wedding dress, she found the experience less than satisfying. It was then she began considering the idea of opening her own bridal

to making shopping for your wedding dress as beautiful and memorable as the dress itself."

Hansen currently works with five wedding gown designers and has an inventory of approximately 50 different dresses. This number is expected to grow.

"Our focus is to be a modern classic store, offering brides that timeless style," she said. She carries the latest collections of each designer and moves out styles that are not as strong. "It's important that we keep unique and fresh styles for our brides." She's also aware that not every young woman wears a size 2 and tries to offer a sampling of dresses for all different body types.

With her mother Liliam Hernandez as her main helper, Hansen's goal is to make the entire dress-buying process as exciting and stress-free as possible. "We are really trying to redefine the wedding dress shopping experience," she explained. "We take the time to sit down and hear what each bride is envisioning for her special day. Then we help them find the absolute perfect dress. I strive to make sure we're there to give them peace of mind. These young women have so much going on. We want to make sure we're giving them the best experience, best quality gown and best service throughout the whole process."

Hansen has partnered with Lafayette's Creative Alterations and accompanies each bride to her first fitting to "make sure she's well taken care of," Hansen said. And when the dress goes home, Hansen sends each bride off with a personalized engraved wooden hanger featuring the bride's name, "something they can use for their wedding pictures," she said.

Lace and Bustle also carries beautiful, timeless accessories for the bride's special day - jewelry, veils, sashes. "We've had brides who have purchased their dress elsewhere but come in for that one final perfect touch," Hansen said. One bride recently wrote that "Victoria walked me through how I could transform my dress - with a belt, a veil, and added rhinestone buttons - to make it truly mine."

"Each bride becomes like family to me," Hansen said. And the brides feel it. One Yelp reviewer wrote, "Victoria and her mother made the experience...as perfect as you could possibly imagine. I felt special, beautiful, and truly cared about..." Another said, simply, "Lace and Bustle made my dream come true."

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