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Vera Inspired

 By [Gena Ng](#) and [Susan Ferroa](#)
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The iconic fashion designer opened her first bridal store on Madison Avenue in New York in 1990. (Photo: Vera Wang)

Vera Wang. Just the name conjures flutters of silk, clouds of lace, and dresses moulded — not cut — for women.

Wang's meteoric rise in the fashion industry began when she took up a summer internship at Yves Saint Laurent at the age of 20. After a 16-year high-flying career at American Vogue as fashion editor and stylist, she became design director at Ralph Lauren, and in 1990 opened her first bridal store.

"I opened my first store for wedding gowns at the storied Carlyle Hotel on Madison Avenue in New York," said Wang, all the while "designing my first bespoke couture cocktail and evening gown collections as well".

While brides all know Vera Wang, the native New Yorker also designs for the everyday. The 2000 launch of her highly-acclaimed ready-to-wear collection won the attention of The Council of Fashion Designers of America who named her "Womenswear Designer of the Year" in 2005.

Style and luxury are trademark Wang even in her ready-to-wear collections that include 'Simply Vera' and the affordable bridal line 'White by Vera Wang'. All bear her signature layering, intricate draping, and attention to detail.

But when it comes to inspiration, Wang revealed in an email interview with Premier that there are many branches that reach out to the iconic fashion designer.

"My inspiration comes from many sources...film, art, literature, music, history, geography, different cultures, different eras...the past, the present, even the future. It can also be seriously influenced by what I am doing in ready-to-wear, technically and artistically," she said.



Vera Wang's first bridal boutique at The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore. (Photo: Vera Wang)

Presently, Wang has stores in Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore. Despite the cultural difference between East and West, when it comes to dressing brides, Wang believes the notes are similar.

"There are not that many stylistic differences between brides, as our collections encompass such a vast library of dresses which vary from extremely structured, to very flou, to very elaborate and sometimes, quite minimalist.

"It depends on the season and the collection. Perhaps, the biggest difference is in proportion, as Asian brides are more petite in bone structure."

The Vera Wang brand has expanded beyond clothes to fragrance, jewellery, eyewear, shoes, and the home fashion industry such as The Vera Wang China and Crystal Collection.

But when asked of her future plans, Wang responded with a look to the East.

"My next business strategy will involve Asia with a ready-to-wear collection, something I have longed for all these years."

Could Singapore be her next base, after her flagship store that opened on December 19 at The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands? There's no telling, although she admits to having a soft spot for the little island.

"I have always adored Singapore and we had a long standing boutique here before," she said, while adding that "given our strategy to become an important bridal presence in the Far East, this seemed like the perfect moment and synergistic opportunity with our other stores, to open a new Vera Wang flagship".

Wang's special link to Singapore is her father, who incidentally didn't think his daughter would make it in the fashion business, insisting that she pursue law at Yale after college instead of going to a design school. But after years of resistance, when she least expected it, the nudge into the world of bridal fashion came from her father.

"My father C.C. Wang (Cheng Ching Wang) was born in China and emigrated to the US after World War 2. However, after attending MIT graduate school, he formed a partnership with his classmates and returned to Asia for business, keeping his primary residence in New York as a US citizen.

"That company was a trading company that eventually had offices all over Asia. They also founded an oil refinery named Singapore Petroleum Company (SPC)."

Wang went on to reveal: "I have travelled to Singapore with my father and I always adored it. The climate, the safety, the cleanliness, the elegance. It is a jewel of a country. It is so wonderful to have a new store there."


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