

Beloved by Casablanca

# DESTINATION DESIGNS

We take a look at some of the very best gowns  
for brides marrying overseas...

Abella by  
Allure Bridals

Cizzy Bridal



Elbeth Gillis

**T**here's no doubt 2020 has been a tough year for the bridal industry, but – fortunately – couples are still planning to get married. In fact, a recent survey by Confetti magazine found that nine out of 10 couples are not cancelling their plans, while over 92% of those planning a destination wedding are still hoping to say 'I do' overseas in the near future.

Destination weddings have become increasingly popular in recent years so – as demand increases – it's vital that retailers have suitable gowns to offer their brides in store. And fortunately, the latest collections are filled with plenty of options that are perfect for a sun-soaked affair.

In previous seasons we've seen a gorgeous selection of destination wedding dresses that have fully embraced bohemian styling – and this year, the look has been reinvented with designers delivering a fresh take on the laid-back, free-spirited style. Big

international brands such as Allure Bridals, Casablanca Bridal and Rosa Clará all have a brilliant selection of dresses that could work for an overseas wedding, while British label Ivory & Co's latest collection was specifically designed with destination dos in mind.

"Working solely with silk, the dresses in our Wild at Heart collection are perfect for destination weddings as natural fibres allow the skin to breathe," explains the label's designer, Sarah Bussey. "Many of our pieces have a soft internal construction, making them really comfortable to wear and easy to transport, but are big on feminine styling with dramatic details like feature trains, illusion bodices and hand beading."

This year, it seems bridal fashion is all about refined drama, with modern gowns featuring unique details – and destination dresses are no exception. "Brides are wanting something timeless and indicative of their personal style but also something unique and standout," says Tim Dunbar of Allure Bridals. "Whether it's statement sleeves, beadwork and glitter, ►



Rosa Clará



Ivory & Co



Zavana Bridal

or gauzy illusion detailing, brides marrying overseas are looking to find their perfect dress with all the details they love.”

“Brides planning these weddings definitely still want wow factor,” agrees Sarah. “Illusion effects are really big right now, while plunging necklines and low backs are also really popular. Floral Fever is our bestselling destination wedding dress and it features a low-cut neckline with a dramatic skirt in rose covered lightweight silk.”

But while there’s plenty of choice when it comes to this season’s trends, there are still practicalities to take into account when suggesting suitable dresses.

“Most importantly, retailers need to have options that will be a good fit for the environment of their bride’s wedding,” says Casablanca Bridal’s Marketing Manager, Melissa Theophilus. “If it’s a beach wedding, it’s best to have dresses that aren’t too voluminous and ones that can easily flow while she’s walking down the aisle. As for fabrics, consider materials that aren’t easily wrinkled or can easily be steamed – fabrics with a stretch component like stretch chiffon or crepe

and laces are always a safe bet.”

For customers jetting to far-flung locations, stocking dresses that will keep them cool is also a prerequisite. Floaty gowns are always a top choice for beach weddings thanks to their lightweight designs, while mermaid, sheath or soft A-line options consistently prove favourites with modern brides.

“Destination weddings tend to be slightly more relaxed, so also consider dresses that aren’t too formal – think beautiful chiffon or tulle styles that will move softly in the breeze,” says South African designer, Elbeth Gillis. “Keep the choices you offer light, romantic and on the more casual side – and make sure you have suitable shoe suggestions to match.”

And finally, don’t forget the option to customise the gowns you stock, too. With modern brides seeking one-of-a-kind looks for their special day, many designers are happy to deliver custom and bespoke options. Whether it’s altering a neckline, removing sleeves or creating a lightweight version, there are plenty of ways to ensure brides leave your store happy, having found the dress of their dreams. ■