

Inside the extravagant weddings of the very wealthy

The average Australian wedding now costs \$65,000, according to recent studies... but these are certainly not your average weddings. For some, no expense is spared on the most important day of their lives - and what most couples spend on the whole day will barely cover the cost of groom's tuxedo. Where the budget for flowers alone is \$1 million, brides buy multiple designers gowns to change into throughout the day, and the cakes are so enormous the bride and groom have to climb a ladder to cut them. As a former wedding planner and now editor of Australian online weddings publisher Wedded Wonderland, Wendy El Khoury has witnessed some of the most extravagant nuptials in the world.



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Inside the weddings of the mega wealthy: The average Australian wedding may cost \$65,000, but that is loose change for these couples

With exclusive wedding stylists, florists, and designers in her little black book, she is also privy to the decadent and, at times, diva demands of the world's wealthiest brides. 'From Arabian Royalty, Hollywood starlets, to Asian tycoons, weddings are big business and no expense is spared,' El Khoury told Daily Mail Australia. 'Diamond-encrusted favours and florals that have the same price tag as an inner-city apartment, we've seen it all. As the mega-rich try to outdo each other, their requests can become more and more outlandish. 'There's been requests for a monkey ring bearer and a baby elephant at the reception and we've had wedding gowns that weigh upwards of 30 kilograms,' she said. 'It's now normal for a bride to have two designer dresses for her wedding. Whether they're from Steven Khalil or J'Aton, brides have one gown for the ceremony and one for the reception.'



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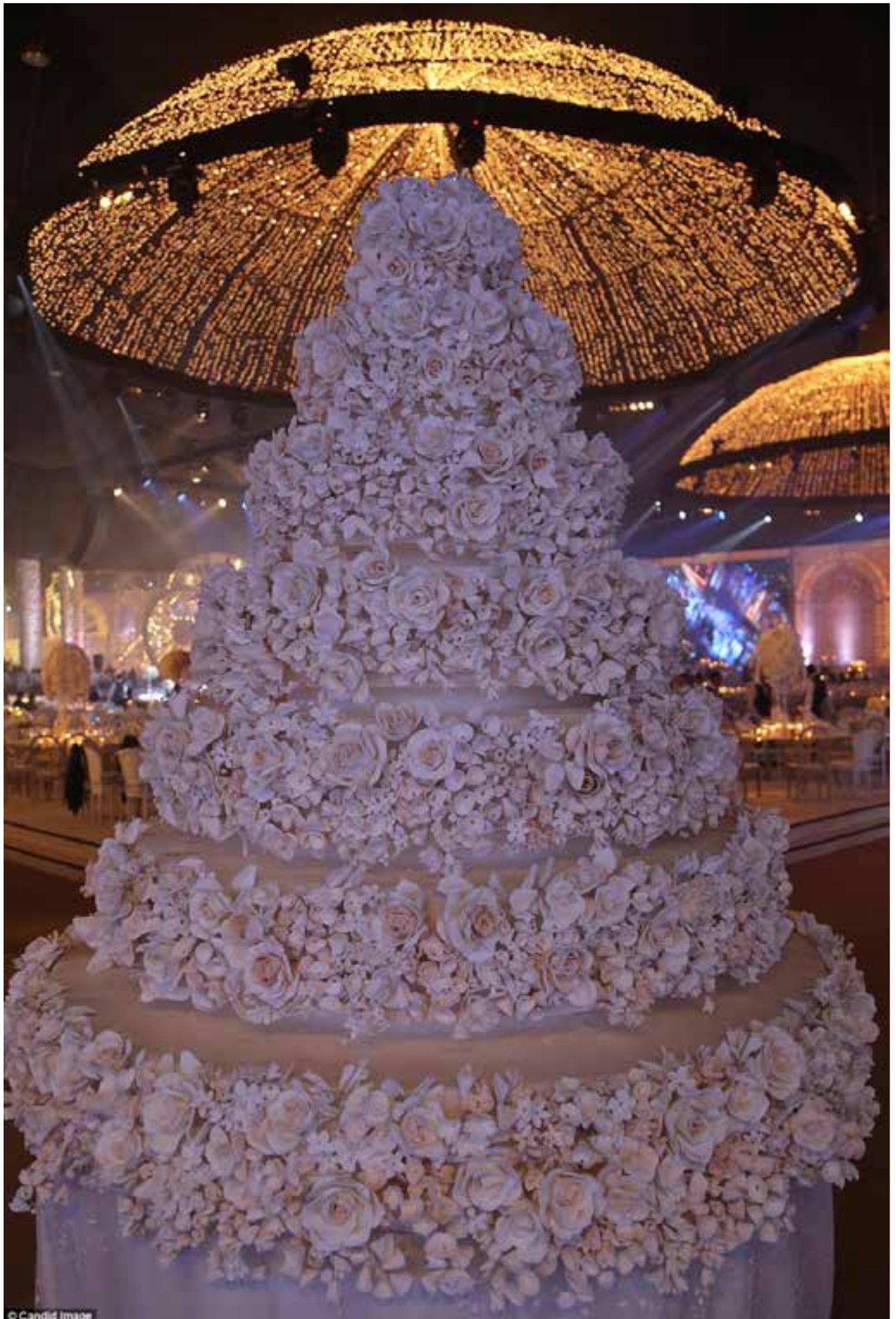
Wendy El Khoury of Wedded Wonderland has seen some of the most opulent nuptials around the world, where flower budgets are \$1 million and the bride chooses from five couture wedding gowns

But two is only the norm. Wendy knows of a bride in Nigeria who requested no less than five couture Elie Saab gowns to choose from on her big day.'Celebrity florist, Karen Tran, styled a wedding for Vietnamese royalty where the budget for flowers was \$1 million,' Wendy revealed. [Wedded Wonderland](#) have featured some of the most opulent weddings around the world, from a 1,000-guest reception in Beirut to a Beverly Hills party where the bride's favourite flowers were flown in from Holland. Here, they share with FEMAIL some of their most memorable. ALI AND LANA, BEIRUT 'From Lana's Elie Saab Couture gown to the phenomenal Louis Vuitton-inspired floral Ferris wheels which towered inside their reception venue, this wedding was jaw-dropping.' The couple exchanged their vows at the bride's parents' house in the South of Lebanon, before making a grand entrance to their reception, which was held at BIEL – one of Beirut's biggest venue halls. 'Adorned from top to bottom with real, white orchids on all four walls, LED lights and plasma screens, the reception was transformed into a romantic fairytale for their 1,060 guests.'



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Ali and Lana invited more than 1,000 of their nearest and dearest to their Beirut wedding



© Candid Image

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An enormous seven-tier wedding cake was the centre-piece for their fairytale nuptials



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Floor to ceiling walls adorned with real orchids and giant plasma screens projecting throughout the reception

LARINA AND BEN, NEW YORK 'Held in a grand New York space filled with high ceilings, trompe l'oeil paintings, gilt-edged mouldings and antique chandeliers, Larina and Ben's big day was a celebration attended by 170 of their closest friends and family.' Dressed in a couture Inbal Dror gown and Jimmy Choo shoes, Larina had 10 bridesmaids by her side.' The reception was an opulently styled with resplendent table settings, gold-gilded crockery, antique lace linens and spectacular arrangements of white, cream and pale pink roses.'



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Larina and Ben's New York wedding was elegant and filled with white and pink florals



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Larina and her 10 bridesmaids enjoyed premium champagne ahead of the ceremony



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The blonde bombshell bride was dressed in a couture Inbal Dror gown and Jimmy Choo shoes



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The couple wed in a grand city venue with high ceilings, trompe l'oeil paintings, gilt-edged mouldings and antique chandeliers

SANDY AND ROD, SYDNEY 'Sandy and Rod entrusted renowned Australian stylist, Jason James Design to provide the creative direction for this spectacular wedding. Held at Sydney University, the reception came complete with a custom designed 12-metre truss structure positioned over the bridal table featuring cascading ferns, roses in oranges, pinks and reds and hydrangea accents.'A mass of green trees created a rain forest effect at the back of the venue and terracotta hexagonal tiles, hand-painted table numbers and hand-written tags in custom calligraphy were attached to pears adorning the tables.'The wedding cake consisted of three bespoke hand-painted cakes, each embellished with individual gold leaf geometric shapes.'



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Sandy and Rod were wed at the University of Sydney in a stunning setting created by Jason James

Design



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Above the bridal table hung a custom designed 12-metre truss structure positioned over the bridal table featuring cascading ferns, roses in oranges, pinks and reds and hydrangea accents

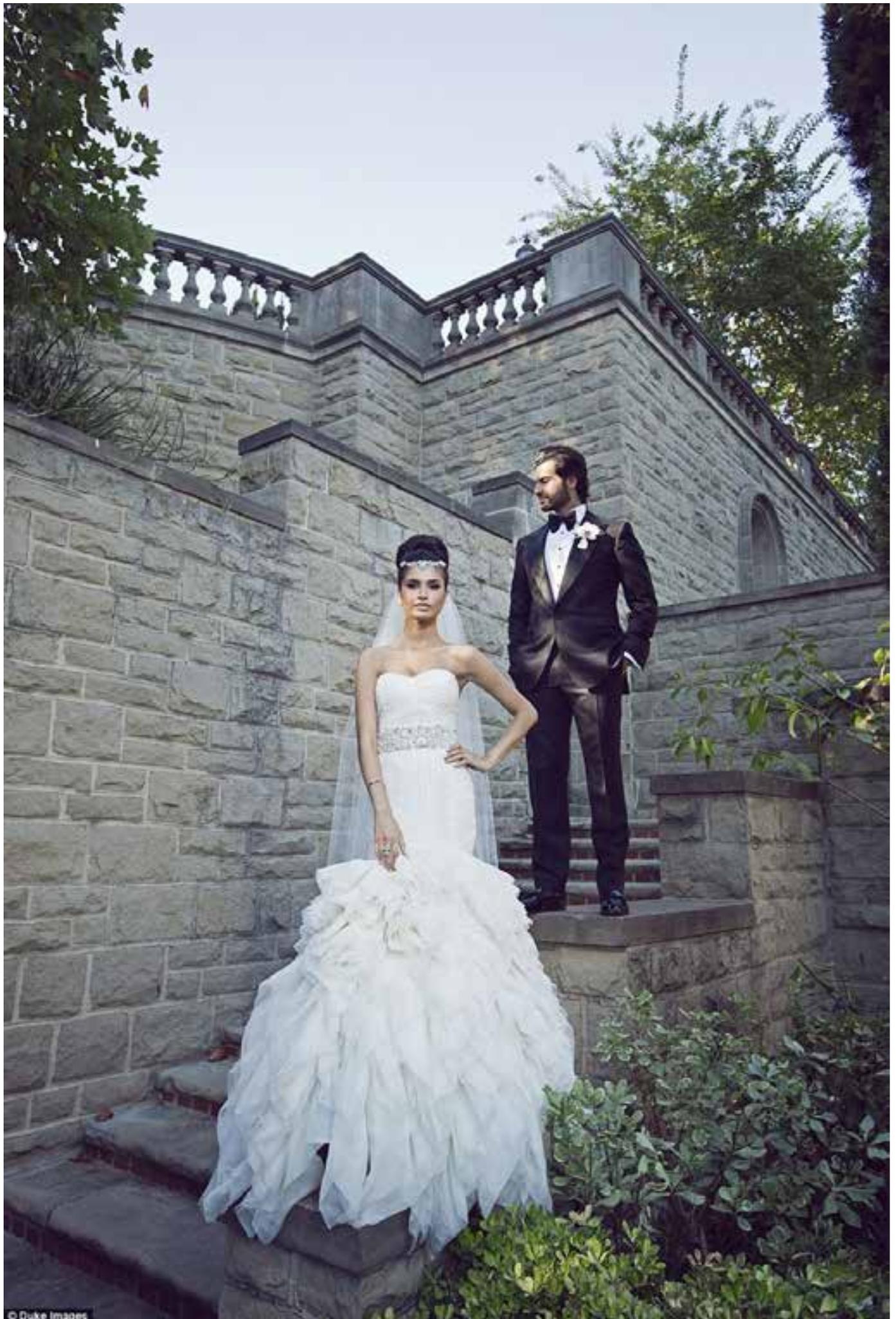


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The wedding cake consisted of three bespoke hand-painted cakes, each embellished with individual gold leaf geometric shapes

NADIA AND SAM, BEVERLY HILLS 'Dream bride Nadia, married her prince charming Sam in Beverly Hills, California, in a wedding fit for a princess. Her exquisite fishtail gown by Rita Vinieris, featured a layered organza skirt and detailed embellished belt and her jewellery was by Cartier.'The ceremony took place in the garden of the Greystone Mansion and was followed by a rooftop reception at The London Hotel in West Hollywood. Guests dined beneath the twinkling stars and were spoilt with sweeping views of the entire city.'Nadia had a love of peonies, however at the time of the wedding, peonies weren't in season, so the florist ended up flying thousands of peonies from Holland.'



© Duke Images

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For Nadia and Sam's Beverly Hills wedding, thousands of the bride's favourite peonies, which were out of season, were flown in from Holland



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The reception had a view of the LA skyline from the rooftop at The London Hotel in West Hollywood



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The wedding cake was a glamorous gold art deco design

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The top five mistakes brides are making in 2015, according to experts

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Contouring disasters, sheer horror gowns, skipping social media, and floral fiascos: The top mistakes brides are making in 2015, according to the experts

- **Bridal expert has identified five top mistakes brides are making in 2015**
- **They include ignoring internet advice and buying sexy wedding gowns**
- **Brides are also contouring too much and not negotiating prices**
- **Guests are also being ignored when it comes to styling practicality**

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38shares Planning a wedding can be a daunting prospect. And between the thousands of magazines on newsstands, Pinterest inspiration, celebrity trends, and endless advice from friends and family, the happy couple can soon become overwhelmed. With all this information and inspiration overload, brides can easily end up not enjoying their big day, thanks to overly styled receptions, a failed attempt at mimicking their favourite celebrity's look, and even overpaying.



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When planning a wedding, brides can easily become overwhelmed by the overload of inspiration and information available

Founder of bridal destination Wedded Wonderland, Wendy El-Khoury, has seen it all. Here, she identifies the top five mistakes brides are making in 2015 for FEMAIL. FORGETTING SOCIAL MEDIA



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There's an app for that: 'Although magazines are a great way to get a feel for the market, they aren't the only way to get inspiration. 'Don't underestimate the power of the internet'

'The first thing a girl does after she's received her engagement ring is spend a small fortune on wedding magazines,' Ms El-Khoury told Daily Mail Australia.'Although magazines are a great way to get a feel for the market, they aren't the only way to get inspiration. 'Don't underestimate the power of the internet – not only is it an endless source of wedding whim, but it's free and you get access to the latest trends far before your mag-reading friends!'OPTING FOR SEXY OVER PRACTICALITY



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'If you've had to get a full wax, you've gone too far': Brides can be sexy, but the recent red carpet trend for sheer sees some taking it too far - pictured, do's (left) and don'ts (right) at Bridal Fashion Week Australia

'In 2015, we have seen many brides taking red carpet fashion literally, walking down the aisle in next to nothing and incorporating the sheer lace trend into their gowns distastefully,' Ms El-Khoury said. 'The best example is of the sheer trend that saw Beyoncé and J Lo displaying their lady bits at the Met Gala.' Bridal fashion can be sexy (think: J'Aton, Alin Le' Kal and Inbal Dror), but if you've had to get a full body wax to fit into your gown, it's a definite sign you've gone too far. **TOO MUCH CONTOUR**



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Contouring craze: Brides usually up the glam for their wedding, but can quickly go over the top when trying to mimic celebrity looks, like the Kardashians' heavy-handed contouring (right)

'Over the past year, celebrities have gone crazy for contouring, but although this look works a treat for professional photographs, it's not a great option for real life,' Ms El-Khoury said. The Kardashians are well-known for their contouring, with Kim and Kylie often stepping out with overly chiseled jaw-lines and noses. This look often changes their look significantly, and a bride's wedding day makeup should

accurately reflect her face and style accurately, not make her look as though she's about to star in a professional photo shoot. ASSUMING YOU CAN'T BARTER



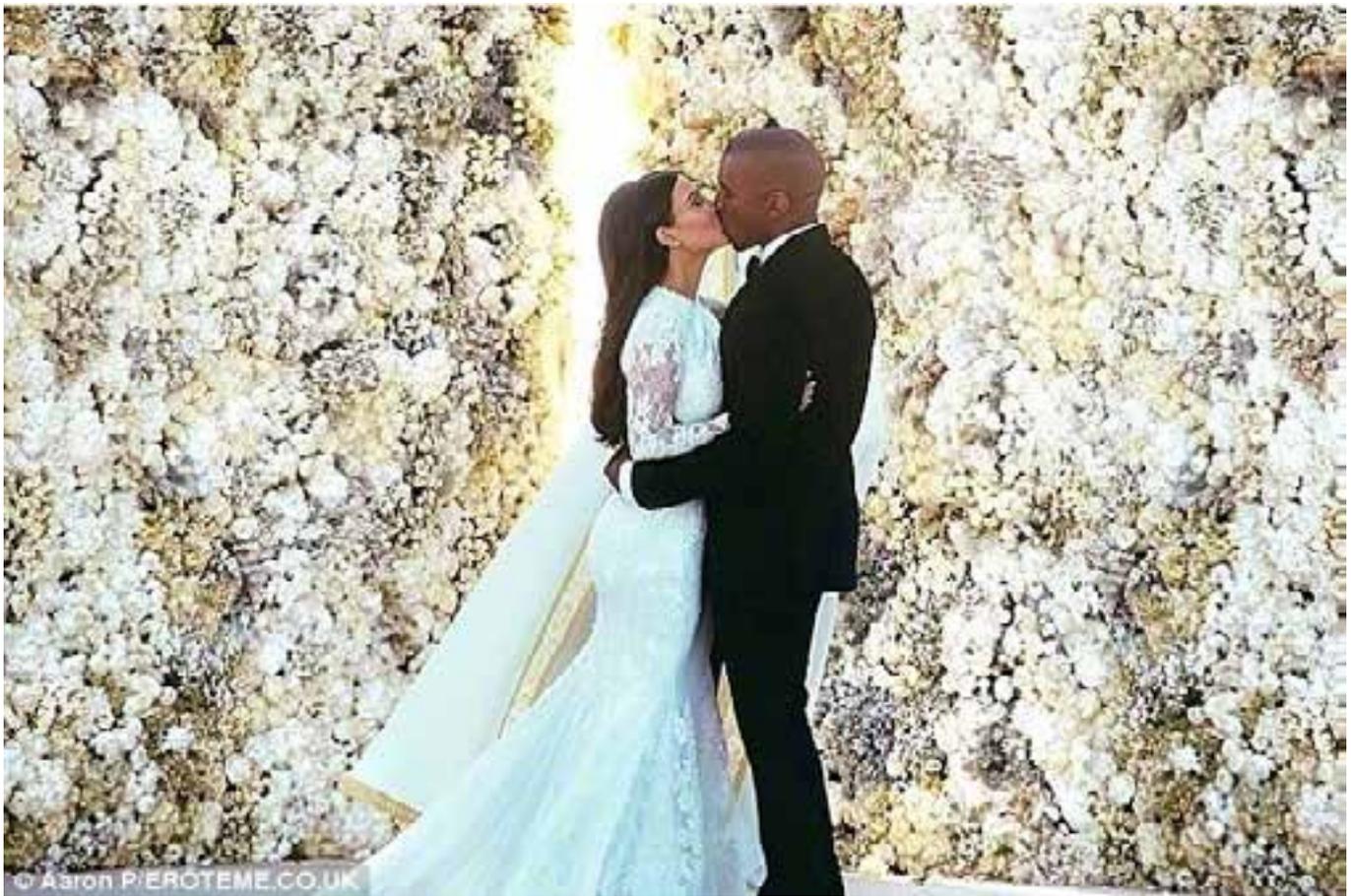
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Bridal bartering: Weddings are expensive but brides should never be afraid to negotiate a good price

The bride getting stressed: How to handle a Bridezilla

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0%00:00PlayMuteFullscreenNeed Text'Just because you're surrounded by champagne and chandeliers, as opposed to markets and gozleme stands, it doesn't mean you can't negotiate a bargain. 'Discounts can be made on everything from the dress to the catering, especially if you're open to combining packages, like booking your Kitchen Tea and reception at the same venue,' Ms El-Khoury told Daily Mail Australia. EXCESSIVE STYLING



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Styling can turn your wedding into a magical affair - as long as it does not interfere with the guests' experience

'Brides need to be mindful of the guest experience when choosing styling options. Want a gigantic cherry blossom tree in the middle of reception? That's great, but don't block the view of your guests. 'Keep table décor low, so that conversation isn't jointed. 'The best piece of advice is from the queen of styler herself, Coco Chanel. When you've finished styling the reception, take a step back and remove one of the styling elements – this can take your wedding from OTT to tasteful. [Wedded Wonderland](#) is Australia's most luxurious online and social media destination for wedding inspiration. Setting the trends in the market, Wedded Wonderland host events, seminars and workshops, bringing the pages of its fairy-tale world to life for both the consumer and the industry.

- An earlier version of this article included images provided which were intended to reflect guidance, or 'do's', for brides. These have now been replaced and we apologise for any misunderstanding.

Read more: