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BLOG

Meet a Wedding Vendor in New York, NY: Designer Loft

Updated on [Aug 8 2016](#) by [Jessica](#)



Today's wedding vendor interview is with Liz Sellassie, owner of NYC bridal boutique [Designer Loft](#)

Tell us a bit about yourself and your company.

We started Designer Loft 15 years ago. I was an unhappy lawyer invited by a bridal designer to start a bridal collective. Eventually you have to do something you love to find your ultimate success. We wanted to create a space different from the other salons with a comfortable livingroom feel and non-threatening. From the start, we allowed photos, carried larger sizes, and attempted a welcoming, non-threatening environment.



How did you get into the business?

I was invited to start this business by an amazingly talented bridal designer. Second career for me . Huge risk. Small loan from a dear friend and first collections loaned to us to get the doors opened. This store was opened by love and we have been incredibly lucky with designers, press and most of all our amazing clients over the years.

What's your favorite part of the job?

Finding the dream dress for someone who totally doesn't expect to find it. Transforming a bride into a beauty she was not even aware she possessed. Also bonding with the families of brides. Second favorite part of job selecting next seasons gowns. A little like Christmas for me. The hunt for something unique and beautiful that my brides will love.



If you could pick one unique product or service offering, which would be your favorite, and why?

I love doing custom build ups. It is a great deal of work but the end results are so worth it. Ultimately, we usually create a gown even lovelier than the one we started with. It is tricky work making it all seem seamless and like the designer's initial vision rather than something re-engineered. The clients are always so grateful because every bride wants to feel beautiful on this day no matter what the religious or cultural requirements dictate.



What's the biggest lesson you've learned, and would pass along to others just getting started in your field?

The bridal industry is much more crowded now than when we started fifteen years ago. I suppose my truest lesson is to listen to your clients. Do not just buy what you like. Get feedback and consider what the clients are searching for and whether what you have to offer is correct for your client base. Also always be flexible and willing to change course if what you have selected is not working. Lastly find what defines you- which style or styles that you want to represent your store.



What are your hobbies or non-work-related activities?

I love to read. Mostly history books or historical novels. My father was a historian. I also love to travel and discover new cultures. I never do guided tours. I always plan the trips myself and stumble upon hidden jewels in the most obscure places. I am myself Ethiopian and even visiting home can be like going to another planet if you venture 20 minutes outside any capital city.



Any great stories from working with a client?

I have had so many interesting, beautiful, intelligent clients that I could easily write a book on this topic. We are very fortunate in NY city that we get clients of all ages as young as 18 and some octogenarians. We also see clients from all over the world from Australia, Brazil, Nigeria, Europe, Egypt, Canada, China, Korea, etc. One of my favorite brides was actually an American who had reconnected with her first love Highschool sweetheart. They had both gone to different colleges, married, had children and actually lived on different coasts. Then reconnected 40 years later and were still as madly in love as when they were teens. It was a really beautiful story of life, resilience and love.



What makes you different from others in your field?

We try to take a friendly, open approach to bridal. The shop is beautiful but friendly. You can touch our gowns, they are not hidden away. We allow photos. We have a range of sizes. We gladly have customers of all persuasions. We cater to a wide range of budgets. We want the shop to feel like a comfortable living room. We want all women to feel beautiful when they shop here.



What tips or advice can you give to couples who are in the midst of planning their big day?

I think the most important advice is to try to enjoy it. Don't get so nervous about all the big decisions. Realize that you are entering a room where everyone loves you and is cheering for you. And lastly – delegate! This is the time to call in some favours and reach out to your siblings, cousins and best friends. A wedding is too much work for one person- it takes a team. So reach out to others for help so that you can enjoy the experience.



Wonderful, thanks Liz! For more information about [Designer Loft](#), please visit their WeddingLovely Vendor Guide profile or head straight to their website designerloftnyc.com