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Attending a wedding this winter? Here's what you need to know

We chatted with two local stylists to find out the best ways to stay warm without compromising your elegant look at this season's affairs in NoVA.

By **Jess Feldman** | December 12, 2019 at 3:26 pm

Finding the right outfit for a wedding is challenging in and of itself, as no guest wants to be uncomfortable throughout the night, outshine the bride or even stand out for being too underdressed. When you add a cool breeze and chilly temperatures to the mix, curating the perfect ensemble becomes even more complicated.

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This winter, don't let the cold air stop you from enjoying a special moment with friends and family. Whether you're the bride, in the wedding party or a guest watching from the aisles, this expert advice from NoVA-based Lauren Rothman of [Styleauteur](#) and Lani Inlander of [Real Life Style](#) will have you looking and feeling your best at this year's celebrations of love.

For the Bride

If you do choose to plan a wedding at a time of year when the weather might not agree with you, it's best to add a winter element that ties the entire event—and your outfit—together.

“What I tell most of my brides who choose to get married when it's cold is that you really want to have fun with winter-themed accessories both with the look and the actual event itself,” says Rothman. “Maybe you choose to arrive in a horse and buggy, then add a big fur wrap to wear during that entrance.”

Planning in advance for all aspects of the ceremony are key and, according to Inlander, there are many questions brides should ask themselves prior to the day of the event to ensure their outfit is entirely bulletproof for what's to come.

“Will they be coming in or going out of the venue in front of their guests? Will it be cold enough to need a coat or cape match their dress, even inside?”

While adding a shrug, classic pashmina or elegant light jacket can add a nice touch to the gown, Rothman recommends removable sleeves as the better addition.

“Nine times out of 10, you're adrenaline will be pumping and you won't need a coat,” Rothman explains. “Depending on your reception or event venue, if you really feel like at the beginning that you are dressing for the colder weather, you might want to consider a dress with sleeves or one that allows for removable sleeves. For the party, you can remove it and go strapless or even have a second, similar dress on-hand.”

For the Guests

Invest in a Long-Sleeved Dress

“A key asset is a long-sleeved cocktail dress,” says Inlander. “Yes, long-sleeved dresses have been having a moment for the last few years, but I’ve made sure to always have at least one in my closet for a decade.”

Rothman adds that if you are going to don a long-sleeved dress rather than a strappy or strapless formal gown, make sure the sleeves are fitted, creating a more modern look.

The Shoes Make a Difference

When it comes to appropriate footwear for a wedding, it’s important that you are as comfortable as you are stylish, while also remembering that the weather will have an effect on your outfit choice.

“The No. 1 faux pas I see at winter weddings is open-toe shoes. Here in Northern Virginia, winter is winter,” says Rothman. “Guests often say because it’s a dressy event, they want to wear open-toe sandals or strappy heels—that is not the answer. You can be chic in the winter with a closed-toe heel.”

Plus, if you want to add an extra detail to a neutral-colored gown, Rothman suggests wearing a metallic heel, whether in silver, bronze or gold.

When the special event is nearing, be sure to consider the grounds of the space and whether or not extreme weather conditions will have an effect, ultimately changing your choice of shoe. “If it will be wet and slushy outside, you don’t want to wear your good satin shoes outside,” says Inlander. “Have a cute pair of rain flats (my favorites are from [Oka B!](#)) to wear to and from the event, and leave them in the coat check while you wear your pretty evening shoes.”

Add Texture With a Second Layer and Accessories

“One should have an assortment of evening jackets, capes and shrugs—whether satin, leather, cashmere, fur or faux—to keep them warm,” says Inlander. “I never send a client off to an event without an option for a topper ... these can become the star of the show, if you play it right. Keep your eye out for special, versatile pieces you can wear for years.”

According to Rothman, fleece is really in right now and one can incorporate it into an evening look with a delicate, teddy-bear-style jacket.

In addition to a topper of some sort, Rothman suggests playing with accessories, ranging from jewelry to shoes.

“Shoes should be treated as the exclamation point for the outfit, and then when you add a nice, elegant envelope clutch to it, it all ties together,” says Rothman. “We are also seeing a lot of hair pieces these days, whether it’s a dressy headband or embellished bobby pins, so that’s something to consider.”

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