

The Singles Table: A Labor of Love

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By [Jessica Hunter](#)

When a blushing bride finds *the* dress I sincerely doubt she thinks too much about the laborious process it took to attain a finished product. She slips into the gown and falls in love forgetting all other dresses before it. She commits to it. In fact she designs the biggest day of her life around it and oftentimes spends a small fortune to acquire it. All in all, a wedding dress is a pretty big deal. Little does the bride know that from a designer's perspective it is much like a child, no really...stay with me on this one.

From the moment a pencil touches paper to begin the sketch of a gown the designer is with child. The sketch springs to life and takes on a personality of its own, one that is different than that of any other gown. It has needs, be it a touch of tulle here a dash of draping there - many sleepless nights are spent worrying about its well-being. When the gown is finished the designer shows pride, much like that of a parent. In fact, that is exactly how Jeanne Hankerson, the designer behind [SJ Couture Bridal](#), describes it- 'giving birth to her creation' even going so far as to name each dress appropriately according to its personality.

During New York Fashion Week I had the privilege of visiting her workshop in the heart of the Garment District to see where all of the magic happens. I was lucky enough get a sneak peek of one of her designs in the final stages of production, it was a lovely classic floor length gown with a ribbon detail in back that reminded me of ballet slippers. Stunning.

Jeanne's gowns are manufactured in New York which requires many trips to NYC (about once every couple of months), otherwise everything else is done via phone communication. This can be a very tricky task because fabrics and lace can really inspire the direction of her design, and so sending her designs off for production can feel like an eternity, much like sending a child off to college. All that a designer can do is hope that the sample comes back as the masterpiece she had worked towards and imagined. Once the dress is ready it faces the ultimate test...the Bride.

I just barely started to imagine what it would be like to go Wedding Dress shopping. After seeing movies like Bridesmaids, and Bride Wars...'you don't alter Vera to fit you, you alter yourself to fit Vera,' I'm kind of scared to. All the stress of finding the dress...I mean c'mon, I just found the guy and now you want a dress too? Yikes! All I can hope for is that I don't face as many awkward dress encounters as I have dating encounters, otherwise the bridal boutiques are going to need to keep their bars fully stocked!

Jessica Hunter is the blogger known as [Chic & Disheveled](#) and is an AZ Foothills Contributing Writer for AZ Foothills Magazine. Find her on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) @chicdisheveled.