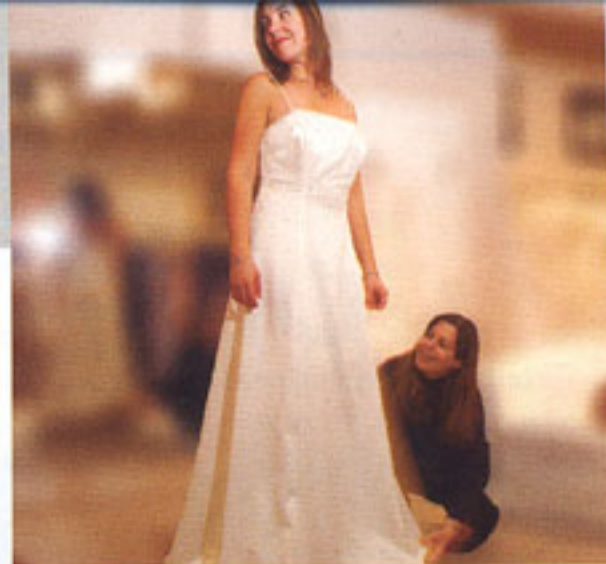


BLUSHING BRIDE

CONSIGNMENT BOUTIQUE CARRIES
HIGH-END GOWNS AT LOW-END PRICES



Blush is located at
185 Herman Melville Ave.
in Newport News.
Call 757-595-7797
for an appointment or
check it out at
www.blushgowns.com.

Want a couture gown without the cost? Try consignment. Vera Wang, Priscilla of Boston, Amsale ... when perusing the racks at Blush boutique in Newport News, you will most likely forget you are in a consignment shop. Some of the biggest names in bridal are there for the choosing—at up to half off the retail price.

Blush is the brainchild of recent bride Holly Yaskowsky. After her 2003 wedding, she wanted to recoup some of the money she spent on her designer gown, but she had a hard time finding a place to resell it. The rest, they say, is history. With a little research and support from her new husband, Yaskowsky opened Blush in the new Port Warwick development of Newport News in January 2005.

The store offers women a place to resell bridal, mother of the bride, bridesmaid and even prom dresses that are less than five years old. Depending on the gown's condition, prices are set at 25 to 50 percent of the original retail price. The consignor then earns a percentage of the sale. For those looking to buy, Blush has gowns for every budget, from \$200 to \$2,000. The shop also offers a full line of veils, headpieces, jewelry and accessories.

Yaskowsky says her biggest challenge is educating customers about consignment. "Consignment gowns are not necessarily used," she says. "In fact, about half of the 250 gowns we have in stock are new." And Yaskowsky constantly works to find the latest bridal styles. By building relationships with vendors across the country, including designer boutiques in California and Washington D.C., Blush is able to acquire sample dresses, overstocks and discontinued dresses at reduced prices.

Brides are encouraged to make an appointment so Yaskowsky can offer them private, personalized service in her "upscale boutique setting." "You don't need to pay full price for designer gowns anymore," Yaskowsky says, "and once you visit Blush, you won't want to."

—Shelley Rafferty