

Life Savvy Shopper

PROM ON A BUDGET



Left to right: Anecia Caldwell, Caitlin Kremp, Tazmen Yates, Savannah Clements, Erin Hoagland, Kierra Bailey and Victoria Hawkins.

ROB OSTERMAIER/DAILY PRESS PHOTOS



Nicole Paitsel
Savvy Shopper

How to find the dream dress for less

From the mouths of pre-prom princesses: As long as it's cute, it can be cheap. We invited a group of girls from high schools in Hampton to model a few prom dresses and participate in a photo shoot. They didn't know where the dresses were from, or how much they cost, but they liked them.

"I'm still looking for a dress, and I'm going to have to check out this store," Caitlin Kremp, a senior at Phoebus High School, said as she surveyed the room.

She had no idea that the dresses had come from a local consignment store

and that most had been worn by another glam girl at least once before. And when the girls found out, it didn't change their minds about the quality of the formalwear:

"As long as it's cute, I'll wear it," said Savannah Clements, a junior at Kecoughtan High School.

Now, you may have to clip out this article to prove to your daughter that other girls actually said these things. Here's a sample of what they chose to model and how much it cost.

Tazmen Yates, senior at Phoebus High School

She chose to model two dresses, a short blue silky number with beadwork around the halter neckline (\$59 at Blush Bridal Consignment Boutique in Newport News) and a more grown-up black beaded gown with the popular cut-out feature in the midsection (\$79 at Blush). The dress she says she wants is a combination of the two—short with beading but black or purple.

Kierra Bailey, senior at Hampton High School

Kierra chose a one-shoulder green chiffon gown (\$79 at Blush) that resembled the one she ordered from the Internet, she said. One-shoulder is a popular look this year, seeing as many celebrities have sported the style at recent awards shows. She also modeled a shorter red dress that grew on her as she flounced around the photo shoot (\$139 at Blush).

Victoria Hawkins, senior at Hampton High School

Victoria spent more than \$500 on her actual gown, and she was the most reluctant to settle on a lower budget for prom. But she looked very happy with her silky long red gown that was punctuated by a mostly open back (\$139 at Blush). Backless gowns are another hot trend this year, the girls say.

TAZMEN YATES
DRESS: \$79



Where to shop

Blush Bridal Consignment Boutique: Port Warwick, 185 Herman Melville Ave., Newport News. 595-7797.

A Barefoot Bride: 118 E. Mellen St., Hampton. 788-8812.

Act II: Hilton Village, 10253 Warwick Blvd., Newport News. 595-0507.

Simply Chic: 11710 Jefferson Ave., Newport News. 240-5900.

The Wardrobe: 1915 Pocohantas Trail, Williamsburg. 220-0778.

Good as New: 1213 George Washington Memorial Highway, Yorktown. 595-2955.

SAVANNAH CLEMENTS
DRESS: \$129



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KIERRA BAILEY
DRESS: \$79



Savannah Clements, junior at Kecoughtan High School

Savannah chose a strapless red gown that sparkled with rhinestone embellishments (\$129 at Blush). She is all about the glitter and said she would be quite happy wearing the consignment gown, though she spent \$300 on the gown she will wear to prom.

Caitlin Kremp, senior at Phoebus High School Caitlin chose a long grey gown with beading on the top and a scarf that she chose to leave in the dressing room (\$199 at Blush). Long gowns rule this year, both the prom-goers and retailers say.

Erin Hoagland, junior at Kecoughtan High School Erin took two dresses with her to try on and ultimately chose to model the full-skirted yellow gown, but mostly because it fit better (\$59 at Blush). Her first choice was a floor-length gown covered in navy blue sequins (\$129 at Blush). It would have made the photo shoot as someone's favorite if it was in the right size.

Anecia Caldwell, senior at Bethel High School

Anecia immediately went for a short gown with a black lace overlay (\$69 at Blush). She was happy with the fitted middle and full skirt and even asked where the dress came from because she hadn't chosen her prom gown yet.

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