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New York

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TONY DEAL Designer spotlight

Say "I do" to the modern, affordable dresses by these locally produced bridal lines, then shop with our TONY discounts. By **Melody Serafino**



Carol Hannah Whitfield of Carol Hannah
(carol-hannah.com)

Who she is: The *Project Runway* season six contestant began sewing at the age of seven, and designed her first wedding dress in high school. "There are some things that you can be taught and some things you just have a gut feeling for," says the South Carolina native, who never went to school for fashion design. After creating a ready-to-wear women's collection in 2009, Whitfield switched gears to debut her whimsical bridal collection in April 2010. Today, her dresses are made in the Garment District.

About the line: "A lot of fashion is about the push and pull between the

art and commercial sides of it," notes Whitfield. "The bridal industry tends to be easier in that way—you have a bit of a larger budget." Whitfield uses silks, chiffon and satin, and hand-makes feminine embellishments like flowers and draping to create bohemian bridesmaid dresses (\$160–\$285) and bridal gowns (\$895–\$4,225). The latter assortment caters to nontraditional brides, with raw-edged hems, oversize bows and short, playful styles. Whitfield also offers custom commissions for brides-to-be (starting at \$4,000). "It's always bothered me that fashion can be so detrimental to the audience it pursues," admits Whitfield, who donates 5 percent of her profits to charities that help girls with self-esteem issues, like Restore NYC (restorenyc.org).

Where to buy: Mention TONY at the Carol Hannah showroom (355 W 39th St between Ninth and Tenth Aves; 212-564-8014, carol-hannah.com) for 15 percent off all orders through July 16.



▲ Chalmers Street gown, \$2,733 (normally \$3,215)

▲ Hasell Street gown, \$2,380 (normally \$2,800)

▲ Rutledge Avenue gown, \$2,401 (normally \$2,825)

Shopping



▲ Pershing strapless grosgrain dress with bow, \$468 (normally \$520)

▲ Dia strapless silk-cotton gown with square tulle overlay, \$801 (normally \$890)

▲ Ellis V-neck cap-sleeve grosgrain dress, \$448 (normally \$498)

Saukok Tiampo of 57Grand
(57grand.com)

Who she is: Tiampo was planning her own wedding when she was confronted with an age-old dilemma: She couldn't find bridesmaid dresses that met both her style and her bridal party's budgets. It was at that moment that the Harvard grad decided to quit her managing-director position on Wall Street and enroll in design classes at FIT. In November 2009, Tiampo teamed up with friend and luxury-shoe designer Carmen Ho to launch 57Grand, which began as a collection of bridesmaid dresses that melds uptown refinement with downtown edge. In April, the pair extended that aesthetic by adding bridal gowns to the mix.

About the line: Inspired by the art, architecture and people of New York City, Tiampo's modern bridal gowns (\$495–\$1,250) and



chic, versatile bridesmaid dresses (\$155–\$285) are named for local landmarks and streets, and are made in the Garment District. Tiampo prides herself on personal service. "I like to see the dresses on women because it helps me make design choices," she admits. Though Tiampo's bridal selection features understated one-strap silk-cotton dresses with chiffon or tulle overlays, we're fond of the retro, girly, cocktail-length frocks with ruffles and rhinestone buttons.

Where to buy: Mention TONY at the 57Grand showroom (250 W 39th St between Seventh and Eighth Aves, eighth floor; 212-302-1604, 57grand.com) for 10 percent off all orders through July 16.