The Mother (-in-Law) Lode

Planning a wedding? Sometimes his mother knows best.

Photographs by KATHRYN HURNI

The last thing a bride needs three weeks before her wedding day is an unfinished, not even assembled dress. But on a Thursday afternoon in late May, Anika Proskurowski, a wispy blond with a killer tan, is handling precisely that situation with considerable aplomb. “It’s so pretty,” she says of the swatch of ruched lace that, once stitched up, will eventually be the bodice. As for the muslin column currently stubbing for the skirt, a little more vision is required. “This is going to be lace and silk tulle, but not poufy,” she says with a smile. “I can’t even imagine what it’s going to look like, but I love the top.”

At a moment when most brides would be slipping into psychosis, such a sunny disposition is suspect. But when your future mother-in-law is the delinquent designer in question, it’s wise to keep the bitchery at bay. On June 16 Proskurowski, a teacher at Manhattan’s Buckley School, wed Kenneth Natori, the only child of lingerie, home and, in this case, bridal designer Josie Natori.

“It’s coming to life,” says Natori, as she flutters about her Madison Avenue headquarters, surveying the length of the bodice and adjusting its cowl back. “I said, ‘No poufy.’ She didn’t want poufy.”

For all her effervescent poise, Proskurowski admits that the dress and its production delays have made for a mild case of anxiety. “I have friends who are getting married, and in the bridal business, you have to buy your dress so far in advance,” she says, the various components of her gown spread out in front of her. “They were like, ‘We got our dresses.’ And their weddings aren’t until after mine!”
It seems Natori's ideas have genuinely become the bride's ideas.