

Ivory tulle sculpted strapless gown with draped bodice and shirred skirt, with black beaded grosgrain and organza ribbon sash with brooch details from Watters Brides



says Jassir.

"It's one of the most beautiful fabrics, because it moves with the body," she says. "However, chiffon is also one of the hardest fabrics to work with because it's so delicate and fragile."

A fabric can make a specific silhouette sing. Elnora suggests buying a sheath in chiffon or allover lace for a romantic effect. Body-conscious styles, such as the mermaid silhouette, take to silk taffeta, Shoji says, while he prefers to use silk crepe or embroidered lace in his slip gowns.

Designers also love to manipulate and modify fabrics. Paige says she isn't afraid to meld unconventional combinations out of contrasting fabrics, such as pairing those known for structure with their lightweight counterparts.

"A soft silhouette can be toughened up by an origami-inspired taffeta flower just as a tailored fit-to-flare can be charmed by a trickling petal arrangement."

At Watters, fabrics are getting makeovers. The spring line includes a v-neck gown in hammered silk charmeuse, a silk mousseline gown in a textured chiffon and a separates ensemble with a skirt crafted from washed silk organza.

"It's about creating fabrics that are formal, yet not fussy," says Maria Prince, vice president at Dallas-based Watters. "These fabrics provide a beautiful relaxed feel that's not stiff and invites movement and ability to mold and shape the bride."

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