YOUR BOUQUET SITS FRONT AND CENTER AS YOU MAKE YOUR BRIDAL DEBUT. CREATE A SPOTLIGHT-WORTHY DESIGN WITH HELP FROM THE COUNTRY’S LEADING WEDDING FLORISTS.

Lilies, roses or orchids. Hand-tied, loose or natural. Ribbon wrapped, accented with heirlooms or stems on display. These choices are on the short list of what top florists are delivering for sensational spring and summer bridal bouquets. So where’s a bride to start planning her own picture-perfect bouquet? Right here, of course! We’re breaking down the hottest bouquet trends for 2011, pointing you toward fabulous flower choices and unveiling totally original bouquet ideas.
WHITE WEDDING
“We’re seeing two big color trends,” says Casey Sparks, co-owner with Dode Martin (a Texan!) of Martin-Roberts Design, with locations in Kauai, Hawaii and in San Francisco—a nationally lauded floral firm whose celebrity clientele includes Céline Dion and Elton John. “There’s been a huge resurgence of whites and also of more natural colors, because brides really want bouquets that feel and look more organic.” And with an average of 30 to 50 weddings per month on the company’s schedule, Sparks should know. The designer notes that Martin-Roberts accents pristine white bouquets with natural grasses and mosses in shades of green.

One of the beautiful things about all-white bouquets is that they work well for both traditional and modern weddings. Lisa Tran of Houston’s Blooming Gallery suggests white mini calla lilies for a contemporary bridal bouquet. For a traditional all-white bouquet that’s timeless and romantic, Carl Schwartz of Carl Alan Floral Design in Philadelphia (celebrity clients include Fergie, Lady Gaga and former first lady Laura Bush) prefers “beautiful ivory and white flowers with a sheer ribbon to wrap the stems.”

NOW HUE THIS
While white is white-hot, color isn’t totally out—though there is a push for more unique color combinations, the pros say. Instead of blending two or three wedding colors, brides are beginning to focus on subtly different shades of a single hue for their bouquets. Daniela Isabella Ferdico Faget, owner and creative director of Seattle’s Bella Signature Design, has been recognized nationally for her floral designs. She likes to work with analogous colors—colors that are next to each other on the color wheel. “I prefer the flow of one color into the next, versus a stronger contrast. A soft raspberry hue paired with fuchsia and accented with eggplant is stunning,” she says. Even after its third year leading the color pack, purple is still the most popular request she receives for colored bouquets, especially in weddings where the focus is largely on the flowers.

When brides do use color in their bouquets, more is more. Instead of pink and gray, now brides are choosing palettes of ballet pink, antique pink and rose paired with dove gray, cement and slate. Blends of vintage-inspired colors, like cream, eggshell, beige, caramel and “tea-stained” shades are replacing pastels in 2011.

SOMETHING OLD
“Stephanotis is a very traditional flower,” says Tran. She adds that nearly every bouquet in the 1930s through 1950s was made of these delicate white flowers. This simple, fragrant genus of flowering plant can be dressed up with pearl pins inserted in the middle of each bloom. When Jessica Simpson married Nick Lachey, she chose this traditional style and carried a bouquet made of 500 stephanotis blossoms with pearl centers. These gleaming centers and the star shape of the stephanotis are a perfect complement to a lace-embellished gown.

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tossing out tried-and-true standbys, such as tight roses and trendy add-ons of crystal embellishments. Instead, the hottest flower choices for modern bridal bouquets are lush peonies and loose, feathery rose hybrids. “Peonies are always popular choices, but we’re really loving the David Austin roses,” says Sparks, noting that the texture of these roses and the way they open make them a perfect complement or even replacement for peonies, which are limited to pink, white and fuchsia, and are prohibitively expensive when not in season (which is pretty much any month that is not May or June). David Austin roses, on the other hand, come in intriguing shades, including peach and lavender, and are in flower for eight to nine months a year.

TRY OUT TEXTURE
Faget is a fan of David Austin roses as well, because they’re more dramatic and evocative than traditional roses: “That ruffled, petaled look is so romantic,” she raves. The textured look of these roses also lends volume and interest to the bouquet—something that florists are really focusing on this year. For Faget, this texture can also come from the addition of berries, unusual grasses, herbs, succulents and foliage.

Now that the trend toward rhinestones is receding, Sparks’ brides are using white ostrich feathers with white peonies to give their bouquets a fluffy, vintage-inspired feel. Rebekah Graves of Houston’s Dream Bouquet agrees that texture is a big component of bridal bouquets. Her brides favor using a variety of flowers with various sizes of petals, like hydrangeas mixed with roses.

Traditional bridal bouquets with a mix of flowers like roses, hydrangea and orchids are extremely textural, notes Ben Shamooelian of Houston’s Village Flowery, who says these types of bouquets are among brides’ favorites. Structure is also an important element of the contemporary bouquets he creates using calla lilies, orchids, tulips and dahlias.

“Layers also make a huge statement in regard to contemporary designs,” says Darryl Murchison of Houston floral and event design firm Darryl & Co. He recommends blooms like phalaenopsis orchids and lady slippers, and likes extending the texture to the handle by using a custom wire design or beaded grip.
Dream Bouquet
Wedding & Event Florist  Rebekah Graves
8723 Knight Road  610 South Loop East  Houston, TX 77054
713.383.6900  www.dreambouquet.net
LET LOOSE
Hand-tied bouquets remain the most popular choice for both brides and bridesmaids, but they’re not quite as formal as in years past. “Brides want a loose, natural feel to their bouquets,” says Graves.

“There’s more looseness in bouquets now,” agrees Tran. She explains that these bouquets are no longer ball-shaped, but they’re not wild looking, either. “They use small flowers like freesia or small orchids, and are tied a bit looser.”

Traditionally, the stems of hand-tied bouquets are bound with ribbon, but Sparks prefers using unexpected materials to add another layer of dimension to the bridal bouquet. Some ideas include grass handles, wrapping the stems with twigs or bamboo, incorporating shells as beading around the handle, tying with raffia and creating wraps out of leaves.

HERE COMES THE GROOM
Masculine flowers like calla lilies and orchids are more popular than roses for boutonnieres, says Tran. Nontraditional elements, like the berries, small greenery and the grass she uses, are a great option for the groom who doesn’t want flashy floral on his lapel.

Instead of wrapping a boutonniere with green design tape, Schwartz recommends using different colors of wire for an interesting effect that draws attention to this often forgotten part of the floral design.

The brides Sparks works with in Hawaii often choose orchids for the groom’s boutonniere. Orchids are a great choice for mainland grooms, too, because they’re so resilient. “So much happens during the wedding day, by the end of the day orchids simply hold up the best,” the florist notes, suggesting cymbidium orchids as a particularly elegant and hearty choice. “Adding raffia, leaves, grass—those are the things that end up taking a great flower and making it wonderful,” says Sparks.

Above all, boutonnieres should be elegant and look as if the gentleman has simply plucked a bloom for his buttonhole, says Lewis Miller of New York’s Lewis Miller Design. “We recommend against a boutonniere at all if a pocket square is being worn. It’s too much clutter! A well-maintained groom with a perfectly tailored suit certainly doesn’t need a distraction.”

BRIDESMAID BLOOMS
“Brides should figure out their own bouquet first and everything else falls into place,” says Sparks, adding that more often than not, his bridesmaids end up carrying smaller versions of a bride’s bouquet. Tran agrees, saying she always does something more extravagant for the bride, and a little less for the bridesmaids. For example, if she uses green cymbidium orchids for the bride, she switches to green hydrangeas for the maids.

Bridesmaids’ bouquets are also highly dependent on the bridesmaid dresses. Their bouquets should be done in a color that doesn’t match...
their dress exactly to help the flowers stand out. This makes for much better photographs, too.

Bridesmaids have been wearing dissimilar bridesmaid dresses for many years, and now this trend is transferring to the flowers they carry. By creating the same bouquet in four or five different hues, Faget puts a distinct floral signature in each bridesmaid’s hands.

GO GREEN
White may continue to be the popular color choice for spring and summer, but brides are also requesting more and more green—in the way their flowers are grown, that is. Kim Foren of Geranium Lake Flowers in Portland is a leader in sustainable and eco-friendly arrangements. “Brides are asking about Fair Trade roses, locally grown flowers, reusable containers, live options and repurposing wedding décor and flowers after the wedding is over,” she says. Also, she notes that brides frequently ask her to pick up flowers after a wedding and bring them to hospitals, convalescent homes or homeless shelters in honor of the bride or groom’s family.

FORGET FLOWERS?
A bouquet without flowers? It’s not as strange as it may sound! “Succulent bouquets have become very popular,” says Shamooelian, who recently designed a bouquet with succulents, craspedia, white button mums, green moss and driftwood accents. He’s also had requests for fruit, dried wheat and even small photos.

“Succulents have been huge,” agrees Faget, who recently did a beautiful organic yet modern wedding featuring a lot of succulents and unusual textures. Some of her other unusual bouquet ideas include plants, berries, and non-organic elements like vintage brooches, crystal drawer pulls and antique buttons. Candy bouquets, feathers, newspaper-flower bouquets, vegetables, birch bark, copper wire and vintage ribbons are unique ideas Foren uses for bouquets and boutonnieres. And you can really let your light shine by using small lanterns in your bouquet—a technique that Murchison employs with minimal floral accents.

DEFINE YOUR STYLE
“It’s important to pick a color scheme, look and style to set the right tone for the wedding,” says Shamooelian. This tone will become the basis for selecting centerpieces and overall design elements.

Bring pictures of floral arrangements and other elements—landscapes, gowns, even homes—that resonate with you. Finally, rely on your florist to suggest flowers that work well together. “Colors and styles should represent the bride, not just the trends,” Shamooelian says.

Choose something you love, regardless of what’s popular. You’ll feel confident with your choices, and proud to carry what will likely be the most significant floral arrangement of your life.