



Rhode Island Mother-Daughter Team Marks Five Years of Private Bridal Shopping as Appointment-Only Model Gains Industry Traction

March 09, 2026

EAST GREENWICH, RI - March 09, 2026 - PRESSADVANTAGE -

East Greenwich boutique owners reflect on shifting bride expectations and the growing demand for personalized wedding dress experiences.

When Kate Spinella and her daughter Francesca Micheletti opened Ivory, A Bridal Boutique in June 2020, the timing seemed challenging. The wedding industry had come to a near standstill, and uncertainty loomed over small retailers nationwide. Five years later, the mother-daughter team has built a thriving bridal business that reflects a broader shift in how modern brides approach wedding dress shopping.

The bridal boutique, located at 5600 Post Road in East Greenwich, operates exclusively by appointment. What began as a necessity during the early days of the pandemic has become a defining feature that aligns with evolving consumer preferences across the bridal retail sector. According to The Knot 2024 Real Weddings Study, couples are spending more time researching and planning their weddings than in previous

years, with many prioritizing quality experiences over volume-driven shopping.

Francesca Micheletti, who handles day-to-day styling and operations, noted that brides arriving at the boutique often express relief at the private setting. The appointment-only model allows each bride dedicated time with a stylist, access to the full showroom, and space to make decisions without external pressure. Industry analysts have observed similar patterns at bridal retailers across the country, where private shopping experiences have moved from luxury offering to standard expectation.

The decision to open a bridal boutique was years in the making for the Spinella-Micheletti family. Francesca developed an interest in bridal fashion while planning her own wedding in 2019, and Kate brought decades of business experience to the partnership. The combination of personal passion and professional expertise shaped their approach to customer service and inventory curation.

Ivory, A Bridal Boutique carries a curated selection of designer wedding gowns, bridesmaid dresses, and mother of the bride dresses. The owners deliberately maintain a focused inventory rather than stocking hundreds of gowns, a strategy that reflects changing retail dynamics in the bridal industry. Research from the National Bridal Retailers Association indicates that boutiques with carefully edited collections often report higher customer satisfaction scores compared to larger-volume competitors.

Beyond wedding dress sales, the boutique offers in-house alterations, bridal accessories, and wedding dress preservation services. This full-service model addresses a documented pain point for many brides, who historically have coordinated between multiple vendors for different aspects of their bridal attire. Having alterations performed on-site allows the boutique team to maintain quality control and streamline the fitting process for customers.

The East Greenwich location serves brides from throughout Rhode Island, including Providence, Warwick, Cranston, and Newport. The boutique has also attracted customers from Eastern Connecticut, the South Coast of Massachusetts, and the greater Boston area. This regional draw reflects both the limited number of appointment-only bridal boutiques in Southern New England and the willingness of modern brides to travel for specialized shopping experiences.

Kate Spinella emphasized that the mother-daughter dynamic influences how the team interacts with clients. Many appointments include mothers, grandmothers, and other family members, and the owners understand the multi-generational nature of wedding dress shopping. This perspective informed their decision to stock mother of the bride dresses alongside bridal gowns, allowing families to shop together in a single location.

The bridal industry has experienced significant fluctuation since 2020. Following widespread wedding postponements during the pandemic, retailers faced a surge in demand through 2022 and 2023 as delayed

ceremonies took place alongside newly engaged couples entering the market. Industry data suggests the market has since stabilized, with consumer behavior settling into new patterns that favor personalized service and curated product selection.

Ivory, A Bridal Boutique has adapted to these shifts by maintaining flexibility in appointment scheduling and continuing to invest in staff training and product knowledge. Each stylist receives extensive education on the gowns in inventory, including construction details, designer backgrounds, and fit considerations for different body types.

For Francesca Micheletti, the five-year milestone represents validation of the original vision she shared with her mother. Opening a bridal boutique during one of the most uncertain periods in recent retail history required both optimism and pragmatism. The sustained growth of the business suggests that their emphasis on private appointments, curated inventory, and comprehensive services resonates with today's brides.

The boutique continues to operate by appointment only, with availability throughout the week. Prospective brides can schedule consultations through the Ivory, A Bridal Boutique website or by phone. The team welcomes both brides at the beginning of their search and those who have visited other retailers and seek a more focused environment.

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Ivory, A Bridal Boutique

Ivory, A Bridal Boutique, East Greenwich, RI's dreamy bridal shop, offering personalized appointments, curated wedding, mother-of-the-bride, & accessories, with attentive, intimate service.

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