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# Weekend

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The craft  
of couture

Showcasing luxury  
Irish fashion







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As Haute Couture Week begins in Paris tomorrow, Carolyn Moore meets the Irish designers bringing the craft of couture back to Ireland

# The look of the Irish

**"I** don't believe in being one of those people who say 'I'm not doing it' until they've tried it. Everything that's happened in the last 100 years is proof of what we're capable of. It's not about the craft and tradition of couture but about the craftsmanship. When Haute Couture Week begins in Paris tomorrow, the designers of Dior, Chanel and the houses which have earned the designation haute couture will announce the work of talented people from Ireland - the seamstresses and artisans who give women's fashion its true meaning into the creation of a single garment.

Having witnessed the painstaking production of a piece of bespoke fabric in a Parisian atelier, I can't help but think of the work of Irish designers. It's a beautiful world, but only one of a few kinds of work that designers are doing. The craft and tradition of couture has been lost to these shores.

For Eddie Sheehy, head of the Council of Irish Fashion Designers, couture is "the most advanced way to do the fashion business". But, you can't have a fashion show in the absence of Irish fashion. When John Galiano created his signature pleated leather-hair tulle, it marked the beginning of a new era when European fashion began using Irish fabrics and the Irish Haute Couture Group was established. Our most famous couturier, Peter O'Brien, started his career as a designer at Dior, Givenchy, and Rochas, and now a select few are leading Irish couture to the big time again.

Through investment pieces or sales to a lifetime lease, the wedding gown Irish customers are discovering the realisation of a dream. The designer's like Tristram and Dolores Grandbois who produce both ready-to-wear and couture lines - are pushing the creative fashion couture offers.

Both these couture gowns, which are expensive, are difficult to look for. Grandbois has the fittings on Dublin and Kerry for both her 2012 and couture lines, and Kuttuk describes his as "divinely inspired RTW pieces in 'haute couture'".

For designer Jon Kelly, haute couture is the name of the game. At this level, "everything is by hand". "In appearance, haute couture are fully hand - they don't call to it," he says, "but we can do it" - and tailored pieces come with designs like hand-stitched lace, in his showrooms. Larkin reveals used by Chanel of advantage from their couture collection, Lorraine in Paris. He will be about one piece of Lorraine lace in order for a single, hand-tailored, 18-weight silk.

With crystals and some Irish occasions are among the complete list, regularly. "You might get a wedding gown, but you might get a whole lot of other things. It's a whole new way of thinking." In the last two years, I've shown in London, New York, Derry, Belfast, Dublin, he tells me. "I feel like a prophet, overlooking people in the art of haute couture. It is, quite simply, the ultimate."



Cover look: Sophie wears a couture gown and fur collar, priced to order, by Vinit Kuttuk.



Couture bridal gowns, priced to order, by Delphine Grandbois for House of Delphine Couture (houseofdelphine.com). Sophie wears Thalia dress, glasses by Vinit Kuttuk, and earrings (€20, Azure). Emma wears Christiana dress with Colia bracelet (worn as Chaker, €135, Azure).



Emma wears 3D embellished dress, priced to order, by Helen Cody, Lorna pumps (now €199, Fitzpatrick's Shoes), velvet headpiece by Laura Kinsella (€150, Mado), Celia bracelet (€135), and Angelo earrings (€36, Azure).

■ Photography: Miki Barlok  
■ Production and styling: Carolyn Moore  
■ Hair: Sabrina Hill, Kopper Hair Salon  
■ Makeup: Monika Sobala  
■ Models: Emma and Sophie at

Lockdown: Models  
■ Photographed at Glenville Park, Cork. Glenville Park is available for weddings, events, and wedding photography, with B&B and wedding catering accommodation.  
■ See [glenvillepark.com](http://glenvillepark.com)

