

# AMAZING GRACE

## Camilleri Paris Mode Bridal

SACHA STAPLES speaks to the graceful mother-daughter duo, ROSEMARY and MARA CAMILLERI, behind the bridal department at Malta's finest bridal gown and gift institution, Camilleri Paris Mode. Photography by Jonathan Borg

As I slide the heavy glass door of Camilleri Paris Mode's Rabat workshop, I feel as though – for a moment – reality is suspended. The oversized staircase ascending into the shop is my passage down the rabbit hole into the dream world that the Camilleri clan has created.

From every vantage point there is a vignette of treasures to behold – an assortment of malachite dishes and trays, a gilt chandelier in the shape of a hot air balloon, the lush fabrics, the ornate furniture and even the handmade chocolates from Italy (brought in once a year, just before Christmas) tempt my interest. One of my favourite collections – the Sid Dickens Memory Blocks – are hung in elegant groupings along the jewel-toned walls.

I am here for an appointment with the mother-daughter Camilleri team to discuss all things bridal. Both Rosemary and her daughter, Mara, possess that effortless style, elegance and grace that we tend to associate with film actresses of the 1950s and 60s. They describe their work with passion and precision, while they brew me a cup of Fortnum & Mason tea, which emerges from a robin egg blue-coloured box. At Camilleri Paris Mode, the beauty is in the details.

The company has been part of the local

bridal industry for many decades, but began importing ready-to-wear gowns fourteen years ago. Jesús Peiró was their first collection and they have since expanded to include an impressive repertoire of approximately 130 gowns each season, and designers Vera Wang, Jenny Packham, Tony Ward, Cymbeline and Monique Lhuillier.

Not only is Camilleri's collection exclusive to the shop (you will not find these designers anywhere else in Malta), but they maintain a strict policy to only order one dress in each style. In other words, you will never have to worry about another bride wearing your dress.

The Camilleri Paris Mode brand has an impeccable reputation for excellent quality and service. The name has also become

*“From bridal gowns starting at €900, to fabrics and wedding gifts, there is something for everyone's budget”*

synonymous with luxury home decor, bridal dresses and accessories, fabrics and more. Rosemary and Mara are quick to point out, however, that their stock includes a range of products at every price point. From bridal gowns starting at €900, to fabrics and wedding gifts, there is something for everyone's budget (such as beautiful tableware collections, starting at only €7 per plate). “When we are choosing the dresses for

the upcoming season,” says Rosemary, “we take as much care in ordering the €900 dresses as we do with the €10,000 dresses. We want all of our brides to look and feel beautiful, and to fulfil their dreams.”

Rosemary has been working with the company for eight years. After raising her trio of daughters into womanhood, she decided to focus her talents and energies into the company. Mara tells me that at the heart of Camilleri Paris Mode is family. “We are a diverse company – from



take her place in the company. Rosemary tells me, with a pinch of motherly pride, that Mara follows in her father's footsteps with her flawless work ethic.

This work ethic is evident in the strength of the company's gift lists and home accessories stock, which Mara has worked to strengthen in the last decade. And there is no doubt that she has succeeded. Camilleri Paris Mode is arguably an industry leader for gift registries, and Mara credits the company's success to their keen attention to detail. “There is no room for error when it comes to gift lists,” Mara explains.

Couples who live together before marriage – or couples on their second marriage – should not be deterred from creating a gift registry, says Mara, since wedding presents serve as special

mementos of the wedding and are to be cherished forever.

But, perhaps the greatest pleasure of both Mara and Rosemary's jobs are the relationships that develop organically with their clients. “Usually, I meet a client with my mum when they are selecting their dress. The dress is a very personal experience – there are always tears (even we cry sometimes). Then, we begin selecting the couple's gift list, and end up speaking on the phone nearly every day. Often we are invited to the wedding and then we see them at home for deliveries and installations. Then, they are having a baby and, all of a sudden, you find that you have been a part of so many important milestones in their new life together. It is an honour,” Mara concludes with utter sincerity. 📍