



Hear from the biz

INTRODUCING OUR 2025 JUDGING PANEL

The Bridal Buyer Awards

Every submission to the Bridal Buyer Awards is evaluated by a hand-picked panel of respected industry leaders, representing the full breadth of the bridal sphere.

From trailblazing retailers and renowned editors to seasoned strategists and creative consultants, our 2025 judging panel is made up of a wealth of experience. Each judge was selected not only for their professional achievements, but for their understanding of what makes excellence in our industry.

Independence, integrity and impartiality are at the heart of our judging process. Our panel approaches every entry with an open mind and a critical eye, ensuring that decisions are made based on merit alone.

Arca-Marie

ANNA-MARIE DESOUZA EDITOR OF BRIDAL BUYER MAGAZINE

Andrew Goodacre

CEO of the British Independent Retail Association

Andrew is the Chief Executive Officer of the British Independent Retail Association (BIRA). Andrew has devoted his career to strengthening Britain's high streets and the communities they support. Since taking over BIRA's leadership in 2018, Andrew has expanded membership by nearly a third, by ensuring the needs of independent retailers are heard by government decision makers. Prior to leading BIRA, Andrew spent many years in the hospitality industry, which helped to reinforce his belief of the importance of local high streets to the fabric of local communities.

Judging: *Retailer Categories*



Anna-Marie DeSouza

Editor of Bridal Buyer Magazine



Anna-Marie is the editor of Bridal Buyer Magazine, a role she has held since 2017.

With over 20 years of experience in journalism and design, she is passionate about independent shops and the bridal retail community. Anna-Marie brings a wealth of industry knowledge and a keen eye for trends to her work, making Bridal Buyer a leading voice in the sector.

Judging: Supplier/Retailer Categories

Angel Sinclair

CEO & Founder, Models of Diversity

Angel Sinclair is a former model and activist who founded the charity Models of Diversity over 16 years ago. Motivated by the lack of true representation in fashion, Angel created MOD to campaign for real diversity across fashion, beauty and media industries. Under her leadership, MOD has broken new ground with inclusive fashion weeks, pioneering plus-size catwalk shows and powerful campaigns, including promoting the body neutrality movement and a landmark billboard campaign for models with disabilities in central London. Angel continues to drive a fashion industry that celebrates all forms of beauty.

Judging: Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion Category



Anneliese Ward

Owner of Chameleon Bridal





Anneliese Ward is the owner of Chameleon, an award-winning bridal boutique based in Dorset that she has grown over the past nine years into a thriving business with three locations and a team of 11. Formerly a litigation lawyer for 14 years, Anneliese brings a sharp eye for detail to the bridal world. She also sits on the committee of the Retail Bridalwear Association (RBA), helping to support and shape standards within the industry.

Judging: Supplier Categories

Caroline Arthur

Sustainability Advocate, Bridal Designer and Author

Caroline has been a couture bridal gown designer and dressmaker for over 20 years. She regularly collaborates with fashion colleges to help run sustainable projects and encourage students to take a zero-waste approach to their work. Last year she published Relovable, a book about what to do with your old wedding dress - the publication encourages rewear, reuse and creative alterations.

Judging:Sustainability Category



Caroline Nelson

Luxury PR Consultant



With over 15 years of experience in the fashion industry, Caroline brings deep expertise in brand messaging across womenswear, bridal, childrenswear and accessories. She began her career representing world-leading international brands at renowned luxury PR agencies, working with clients including Roberto Cavalli, Nina Ricci, SEA NY, Vanessa Bruno, Coach and Globetrotter. In 2020, Caroline launched her own consultancy, providing strategic support in brand development, positioning and public relations for clients such as Smythson, Halfpenny London, Kindred of Ireland, HERD and more.

Judging: Supplier Categories

Holly Adams

Social & Influencer Marketing Specialist

With over eight years of experience in social media, Holly currently leads influencer strategies at Born Social for globally recognised brands including Elizabeth Arden, Calzedonia, Intimissimi and Danone. Her role bridges creative strategy and talent partnerships, ensuring authentic, impactful campaigns. Alongside this, she brings a strong background in content strategy and platform expertise. She is excited to be part of the Bridal Buyer Awards judging panel for a second year running, offering a critical eye on how boutiques are leveraging social to drive community, commerce and brand distinction.

Judging: Social Media Category



Jessica Okotan

Luxury Wedding Planner





With a decade of experience as Managing Director of Halfpenny London, one of the UK's most esteemed luxury bridal brands, Jessica has an unparalleled eye for elegance, craftsmanship and timeless design. Under her leadership, the brand flourished, becoming synonymous with sophistication and bespoke bridalwear, adored by discerning clients worldwide. Now, Jessica embarks on an exciting new chapter as a luxury wedding planner, bringing the same dedication to excellence, creativity and meticulous attention to detail to curating unforgettable weddings that reflect each couple's unique vision.

Judging:

Sustainability, Diversity and Customer Service Categories

Joanna Southwell

Bridal Business Strategist

Joanna Southwell is a leading bridal fashion stylist and business strategist, known for elevating brands through editorial direction and commercial insight. She works internationally with designers, retailers and creatives across the luxury wedding industry. Throughout her career, she has created, managed and styled photo shoots for some of the best emerging and well-established bridal brands both in the UK and internationally. Her work has been featured in Tatler, Sheerluxe, Green Wedding Shoes, The Metro, Bridal Buyer and many more.

Judging: *Retailer Categories*



Julia Smith

Wedding Media & Events Expert



Julia Smith of UNVEILED Group is a highly respected bridal media and events expert and mentor, specialising in both digital and print marketing. Julia founded multi awardwinning online platform Loved Up North in 2010 and added glossy consumer bridal title UNVEILED Magazine to the portfolio in 2015.

Julia and her team now produce the company's online and print content for both products alongside managing The Love Shows (consumer wedding shows), the Loved Up Club wedding supplier community and UNVEILED Creative Agency.

Judging: Retailer Categories



Karen Bell

Founder and Editor of Belle Bridal Magazine

Founder and Editor of Belle Bridal Magazine, Karen Bell, has experience spanning almost 20 years in bridal fashion, in both the digital and print arenas. Her extensive styling repertoire includes her working and consulting for some of the biggest brands in bridal fashion today.

Judging: Supplier/Retailer Categories



Kat Williams

Editor of Rock n Roll Bride and Content Creator





Kat Williams is the founder and editor of Rock n Roll Bride and Amazon #1 bestselling author of Rock n Roll Bride: The Ultimate Guide for Alternative Brides published in January 2019 by Ryland, Peters and Small. Launched in 2007 as a blog while Kat was planning her own wedding and working as a full time TV producer, Rock n Roll Bride came about because she became jaded by the limited offerings of the UK wedding industry. The website spawned a bimonthly print magazine in 2015, which is now one of the very few remaining print bridal magazines in the UK, shipped all over the world to thousands of loyal subscribers.

Judging: Sustainability and Inclusion Categories

Madeline Castagnera-Bond

Sustainable Wedding Dress Designer

Madeline is the sustainable wedding dress designer behind The Sustainable Bride - a business built around the classic adage reduce, reuse, recycle. She specialises in reworked heirloom dresses with expertise in working with vintage bridal and sustainable fabrics.

Judging: Sustainability Category



Megan Garmers

Business Consultant and Sales Strategist



Megan is a business consultant and sales/marketing strategist with experience spanning more than two decades. She is passionate about de-mystifying tech solutions, such as social media, automation and AI, and helping businesses do more with less to increase revenue, impact and engagement. Her experience and network in the wedding, beauty and fashion industries, along with the business world, provide a unique blend of understanding what content and platforms resonate with audiences for effective marketing strategies.

Judging: Retailer Categories



Nicola Garton

Owner of The Wedding Shop

Nicola Garton, owner of The Wedding Shop in Colchester, Essex, transformed her parents' 1980-founded boutique into one of the UK's largest, most successful high-end luxury bridal stores. Renowned for exceptional service, she has earned awards and created unforgettable experiences for countless brides through her visionary leadership.

Judging: Supplier Categories



Peta Hunt

Freelance Fashion Stylist





Peta Hunt has had a long career as a freelance fashion stylist, working internationally with great photographers, designers, styling shows and campaigns, as varied as from Versace to Clothes Show Live. She then entered into the wonderful world of weddings in 1997, starting as Fashion Director on You & Your Wedding and ending up as Editor at Large. She is now enjoying life styling and acting as a consultant for several clients.

Judging: Supplier Categories

Sarah Morton

Public Relations Professional

Sarah Morton is a luxury fashion and lifestyle Public Relations Professional, with over 20 years experience working with luxury designers and brands. Sarah heads up the PR for Savannah Miller Bridal securing editorial coverage, managing events and partnerships and placing bespoke bride weddings across British and International media.

Judging: Supplier Categories



Sarah Tippett

Founder of Bridal Editor & Freelance Writer



With over a decade of experience in the wedding industry (with a background in bridal magazines), Sarah Tippett is the founder behind Bridal Editor, a fashion-led bridal site and digital space built for the cool bride to thrive (celebrated for its iconic pink Instagram feed). Alongside this she runs Bridal Editor Business, working closely with boutiques and brands on their social media and copywriting, amongst other creative services.

Judging: Supplier Categories



Sophie Cooke

Social Media Strategist, Girl Friday Social

Sophie Cooke is a social media strategist with a wedding-industry past and a deep love for scroll-stopping storytelling. After running a successful bridal accessories brand (complete with Vogue features and a House of Fraser deal), she swapped crystals for content and now helps creative businesses show up online in a way that actually works. She's grown audiences for Rock n Roll Bride and Photography Farm, created sell-out launches and firmly believes you don't need to point or dance to be good at Instagram - unless you want to, of course.

Judging: Social Media Category



Zoe Burke

Wedding Expert & Editor of Hitched



Zoe Burke is the editor of Hitched and a leading UK wedding expert with over 13 years in the industry. Formerly the digital editor at Bridal Buyer, she's well versed in all sides of the wedding industry. In her capacity as the UK's leading wedding expert, she's been featured across major media outlets including the BBC, Sky News, The Guardian, Stylist and The New York Times.

Judging: Retailer Categories



Judging Categories

Bridalwear Retailer of the Year (All)

Andrew Goodacre, Anna Marie DeSouza, Julia Smith, Joanna Southwell, Megan Garmers & Zoe Burke

New Bridalwear Retailer of the Year

Andrew Goodacre, Anna Marie DeSouza, Julia Smith, Joanna Southwell, Megan Garmers & Zoe Burke

Longstanding Bridalwear Retailer of the Year

Andrew Goodacre, Anna Marie DeSouza, Julia Smith, Joanna Southwell, Megan Garmers & Zoe Burke

Customer Service of the Year (Retailer)

Andrew Goodacre, Anna Marie DeSouza, Jessica Okotan, Julia Smith, Joanna Southwell, Megan Garmers & Zoe Burke

Best Use of Social Media (Retailer)

Andrew Goodacre, Anna Marie DeSouza, Holly Adams, Julia Smith, Joanna Southwell, Megan Garmers, Sophie Cooke & Zoe Burke

Team of the Year (Retailer)

Andrew Goodacre, Anna Marie DeSouza, Julia Smith, Joanna Southwell, Megan Garmers & Zoe Burke

Bridalwear Supplier of the Year (UK)

Anneleise Ward, Caroline Nelson, Karen Bell, Nicola Garton, Peta Hunt, Sarah Morton & Sarah Tippett

Bridalwear Supplier of the Year (International)

Anneleise Ward, Caroline Nelson, Karen Bell, Nicola Garton, Peta Hunt, Sarah Morton & Sarah Tippett

Prom Supplier of the Year

Anneleise Ward, Caroline Nelson, Karen Bell, Nicola Garton, Peta Hunt, Sarah Morton & Sarah Tippett

Accessories Supplier of the Year

Anneleise Ward, Caroline Nelson, Karen Bell, Nicola Garton, Peta Hunt, Sarah Morton & Sarah Tippett

Customer Service of the Year (Supplier)

Anneleise Ward, Caroline Nelson, Jessica Okotan, Karen Bell, Nicola Garton, Peta Hunt, Sarah Morton & Sarah Tippett

Sustainability Award (Supplier & Retailer)

Anneleise Ward, Caroline Arthur, Caroline Nelson, Jessica Okotan, Karen Bell, Kat Williams, Madeline Castagnera-Bond, Nicola Garton, Peta Hunt, Sarah Morton, Sarah Tippett

Inclusion and Diversity Award (Supplier & Retailer)

Angel Sinclair, Anneleise Ward, Caroline Nelson, Jessica Okotan, Karen Bell, Kat Williams, Nicola Garton, Peta Hunt, Sarah Morton & Sarah Tippett



BRIDAI AWARDS

15TH SEPTEMBER 2025

