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PREPARING FOR PROM 2015

An inside look at the biggest night of the year

Written by Tassie Hewitt | Photography by Anetrius Wallace

From the pre-prom dinner, hair and makeup, flowers, photographer, limo rental, and that perfect gown or tux, prom preparations can get pricey. But stay calm - it's just prom. Here are a few ways to keep the once-in-a-lifetime night to celebrate high school affordable, fun, and memorable.



Carly Owen and
Crystal Rogeri



Garrett Winkelmann, John Marquez,
Blaine Gerick, and Blake Howell



Gabriel Lombard and
Nicole Phillips

Asking with Style

Gone are the days of simply picking up the phone and asking someone out. Katy teens are coming up with creative ways to get that date. "Every day he did a letter of the word prom," says Zilah Miller, whose daughter, Caraline, a senior at Morton Ranch High School, was asked last year. On Monday, her date gave her peanuts; on Tuesday, a rose; on Wednesday, Oreos; and on Thursday, M&Ms. After a full week of hints, on Friday he went to school with a poster asking her to go to prom.

It all starts with a simple request, or not. "My son was a baseball player at Faith West Academy," says photographer, Fatima Donaldson, whose son invited a girl he like to watch his game, and put up a sign on the field asking her to prom. "During the seventh inning stretch, he presented her with flowers and asked her to be his date."

Going with a Group

Although one of the biggest worries about prom may be getting a date, many teens do not let that stop them from attending. Girls may choose to do the inviting or go with a group of friends. "Don't feel like you have to have a date or that it has to be someone you're in love with," says Miller, whose daughter attended prom with a best friend. "Have a girls' night out. But don't miss out."

"It's not so much a boy asks a girl," agrees Donaldson, whose daughter, Brooke, is a senior at Seven Lakes High School. "Everyone wants to go to prom, so you just find friends who are going, and nobody is anybody's date. It seems like more kids feel that even if they're not asked, there's still an opportunity for them to be a part of the prom experience."

The Stress of the Dress

A huge expense of prom is shopping for that special dress. Girls and their moms have the challenge of finding the perfect dress that not only fits but meets the dress code as well.

"The designers want to make things very sexy and risqué, and we're still working with high school kids," says Donaldson, who started looking for a prom dress for her daughter in February. "There's a fine line for what is appropriate and not appropriate." They found that two-piece midriff top full-length gowns are popular this year, as well as low, open-back dresses that can cost anywhere from \$80 to \$800. Add to the price of the gown the expense of getting hair and makeup done, and don't forget the manicures and pedicures.

"I think girls need to think outside the box," says Miller, whose daughter found a vintage 1970s dress at a Katy antique store for prom last year. "Think eclectic. Be different. You don't have to spend hundreds of dollars on a dress that you're only going to wear once."

Some girls are choosing to borrow a dress from a friend, or rent a dress for a fraction of the cost, just as their date may rent a tux for the evening. "I highly recommend that parents create a budget," says Donaldson who has loaned her own ball gowns to her daughter's friends. "There's a lot of affordable options out there, and people really don't need to spend an arm and a leg on everything."

Safety in Numbers

There is good news for parents who can anticipate prom costing hundreds of dollars for tickets, photos, dinner, a limo, flowers, and after parties. "I think that's why the larger group option has become more popular," says Donaldson. The cost of a limo is cut dramatically when split by 10 people, and many restaurants offer special prom menus for large groups. "It makes it a lot more affordable," she says. Groups of friends often meet at scenic locations before dinner so parents have the opportunity to take photos. "Pictures are mandatory for moms," says Miller who likes to share the images on social media. "Facebook is very important. I love to brag on it."

Many parents prefer their teens go in a group for other reasons as well. "To me, there's safety in numbers," says Miller, whose daughter checked with her by text messaging throughout the night. "It's just being considerate. Let me know you're safe so I can sleep. Don't let me wonder where you are."

Many Katy schools offer Project Prom activities at locations such as Dave and Buster's and Main Event, so teens have a safe place to go after the dance. "It's a lock-in after prom," says Donaldson. "Parents and community volunteers create an environment so kids can continue their prom festivities overnight in a safe place." There are ways to ensure the safety of your child who chooses to go to private after parties, as well. "Find out who the parents, talk to them, and get to know them," advises Donaldson. "I'd rather be safe than sorry."

A Rite of Passage

Despite the months of preparation, prom moms promise it is all worth it at the end of the night. "Everything like this is just another happy memory," says Miller. "I want her to come home like she did last year - tired but happy. Excited, but sad that it's over." For many parents, prom is much more than a dance. It is a rite of passage. "It's a bittersweet experience, because everybody looks beautiful, and everyone's so excited," says Donaldson. "Prom is an iconic milestone. That part is sweet. The bitter part is that you know high school and childhood are ending and adulthood is just a couple of months away." **KM**

TASSIE HEWITT is a freelance writer and three-time prom mom who barely escaped being dateless to her own prom over 30 years ago, and is still grateful to the nice boy who had the courage to ask.



Tricky Prom Situations

Parents, be ready with your calm response and plan of action, in case you hear...

- Nobody is going to ask me to prom!
- My prom date changed his mind and doesn't want to go!
- My prom group uninvited me!
- I got invited to an overnighter in Galveston.
- My group is getting a hotel suite.
- (Girl's name here) has the same dress!
- They won't let me into prom because my dress is too risqué.

Austin Gongora and
Cameron Cade

PROM WEAR TRENDS 2015



COLOR CRYSTALS

Black gowns with sparkly crystals or color accents are a huge trend this year

CRYSTAL ROGERI



FAIRY TALE WOW GOWNS

Hot for 2015 are romantic, princess gowns in pretty colors like red, yellow, or blue

WHITNEY WILLIFORD



LIGHT OR WHITE

Champagne, nude, and white are popular prom gown colors for 2015

MEREDITH MCWHIRTER



BLACK & WHITE IS BACK

This high contrast color combo look will be hugely popular for 2015 as well as black with a pop of bold color

CHARLI GRANATO



VINTAGE GLAM

This old-style Hollywood glam look will be a favorite at proms this season

ANN MARIE DENSON



DRAMATIC ROMANCE

Blending dark, exotic looks with romantic styles will also be popular this year

NICOLE PHILLIPS



SEQUINS GALORE

The dramatic, show-stopping, neck to ankle sequins are making a big come back for 2015

CAMERON CADE



SHORT & SASSY

The less formal, fun, and playful short dress with a touch of sparkle never goes out of style

SKYLAR VICKERY



TWO COLOR SLIM FIT

This bold two-color, slim fit red carpet look is growing in popularity for prom as well

GARRETT WINKELMANN



COUNTRY CLUB PREP

One trend this year will be a stylish color suit as a casual alternative to a tux

BLAINE GERICK



COLOR COORDINATED

Still trending this year, is using colors from your date's gown for tux accessories

KIRBY STOCKARD

MORE 2015 GOWN TRENDS

- Lace or lace over color
- Metallics like slate or bronze
- Vintage '80s and '90s looks
- Low back, dramatic features
- Gowns with mesh illusions

Special thanks to local students and prom models from Taylor High School's Prom Extravaganza event