

A photograph of two women standing outdoors. The woman on the left is wearing a white, sleeveless, high-necked dress with a keyhole cutout at the bust and a white watch on her left wrist. She is looking towards the woman on the right. The woman on the right is wearing a sleeveless dress with a bold, abstract pattern of overlapping circles in shades of blue and white. She is wearing sunglasses and has her hand on the arm of the woman in white. The background consists of lush green foliage.

VENI VIDI VICI

Meet Ronald Joyce's pride and joy, the award-winning designer Veni Infantino, who conquers the market and creates the trends with every new collection

Where did you train and did you always want to be a designer?

As a young girl I always wanted to be a designer. A teacher at school spotted my talent and put me forward for an interview at the London College of Fashion where I ended up doing my degree in Fashion.

Who did you first work for?

Ellis Bridal came to the presentation at my university's graduation fashion show. They offered me a position!

Which silhouettes work best with different figures and height types?

I find that an A-line always works the best. It makes you look slimmer, taller and is the easiest for fittings.

What are your favourite fabrics?

I like working with different kinds of lace. It hides undesirable features really well! I also like working with a stretch crepe fabric for someone who has an amazing figure.

If you were getting married tomorrow, what would you wear?

I would wear a fitted halter-neck dress, with a sleeve and a lace fishtail.

What did you think of Meghan's choice of dress?

I did like her gown, but I think a dress like that needs to be much more fitted than it was.

What would you have created had you been asked to design her dress?

To be honest I'd have designed something very similar to her Stella McCartney evening dress. I would have given her the same shape, made the dress in lace and given her a sleeve. We have a dress that matches this in the new Ronald Joyce Collection.

Any famous women you'd love to design for and why?

Audrey Hepburn and Grace Kelly. I adore their look and shape. I love what they used to wear – it embodies my own sense of style and fashion tastes.

Tell us about the new collection that you will be showing at Harrogate?

We've included a wide variety of lace and introduced shapes for everyone, from halter-neck gowns to full A-lines. There are many dresses that can change colour – they have two sets of lining, so you can remove the top layer and change the colour of the underneath. This allows the bride to have a different look for the evening.

We've introduced colours such as blush, charcoal and various shades of golds, and a range of fabrics that includes soft chiffons and crepes. Detail is a real focus giving individual personality to every dress and to both the front and the back. In the Victoria Jane collection we've opted for a more of a destination look, which is really modern and less formal.

Do you start off with an idea/theme when you begin each collection?

I close my eyes and I imagine the bride I'm designing for. I consider her shape, her features, her age and then I consider the fabric. I do an extensive amount of research and analyse the various trends that stand out in the market, not only within the couture arena, but also on a commercial level. After around a month of research, I sit down and begin sketching.

What are the biggest changes you have seen in brides over the years?

The shape of women and their desire for sexier dresses. We've had an increased demand for more revealing styles – for plunging necklines and backs that are almost entirely bare.

And in mums?

The mums have become much younger and far more fashionable! Even if a mother of the bride is not physically young, their attitude towards fashion is certainly younger.

What do you feel is the biggest threat to bridal today?

Most definitely online selling. The fluctuation of the pound is making our dresses more expensive and

obviously there is big competition in pricing. It is vital that our retailers give their customers the best experience possible rather than simply the opportunity to buy.

And the greatest opportunity?

It's an ideal time for designers to be more daring. It's all about providing something that the online stores and outlets can't offer. I think the days of playing safe are gone. The message today is 'the bolder, the better'.

There is concern for the growth of multiples – do you think they will take over?

It is a concern. However, we are more focused on giving our customers and brides a more personalised buying experience. I specifically like to keep to the integrity of the design, fit, finish and overall quality of the product ensuring a much more couture feel.

Three pieces of advice please, to retailers in the current climate?

It's all about giving your bride an experience. The dress she buys is a dress she will remember for the rest of her life; she will not make this decision lightly. Also: product knowledge. Confirm that your staff are well-trained and equipped with the right knowledge to ensure that the bride picks the perfect dress. Sell them a dress that looks amazing on them so that you will get repeat business. Finally, at the shows, retailers should buy pieces that are different – I think it's time for the bridal world to step it up and come out with pieces that are unusual and fabulous.

What did it feel like whenever you won an award?

It is such an incredible feeling and to know that your work has been recognised by the industry is remarkable. Even to be in the final three is so surreal, and so rewarding.

*44 (0)1636 593483
enquiries@ronaldjoyce.com
ronaldjoyce.com/en