



# Buyer beware

Counterfeit websites are on the rise **BY SAM POLLARI**

The proliferation of counterfeit websites affects everybody in this industry. The biggest victim is the consumer, but it also affects the manufacturer, retailer, sales representative, advertising media and, in fact, basically everyone involved in our industry. We all have a vested interest in controlling the expanding business in selling counterfeit fashion.

Virtually every consumer publication in the industry as well as industry web portals has committed massive support to educate and protect the consumer.

Know this for sure: most designers have some of their images stolen and copied (in an inferior way in both fabric and workmanship) and then the prices are quoted much lower than the usual retail price. It seems like a bargain until the fashion piece arrives.

A week doesn't go by that we don't have a consumer looking for a bridal or evening gown at the last

minute because they have been disappointed and disillusioned with their online purchase from those counterfeit sites from China.

The industry, represented by ABPIA, has recently filed in a New York court against over 50 named online counterfeiters and piracy websites.

The complaint that was filed was a suit on behalf of over 20 of the top manufacturers including *Maggie Sottero*, *Mon Cheri*, *Mori Lee* and *Essence of Australia* just to name four.

If you or a friend buy a dress online from other than the authorized retailer that represents that designer, you risk your money as well as your dreams. Chances are these Chinese sites will be out of business sooner than you think.

There is only one way to guarantee you will get the gown you want, in the fabric you want, and in the detailed workmanship you want. There is, in fact, only one way to be

sure you will get your gown on time.

Shop in a brick and mortar store where you can touch and try on the gowns before you buy and where you can do business face to face with experienced personnel.

Remember that there is no place where you can lodge a complaint. There is no place where you can return your apparel. In fact, in total, there is no recourse for you at all once your money is sent overseas.



Sam and Rachelle of Amanda-Lina's

THE ART OF WEDDINGS