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Why Groom Accessories Outshine the Suit on Your Wedding Day

Our Friends · Monday, August 31st, 2026

Nobody leaves a wedding saying, “Did you see the cut of his lapels?” They talk about the look. The moment. The thing that made the groom look like himself instead of a rental ad. And nine times out of ten, that thing is a three-inch piece of fabric knotted at his collar, not the \$800 suit underneath it.

Grooms spend the majority of their wedding fashion budget on the suit. That’s almost always the wrong priority. The suit sets the stage. Accessories tell the story. If you’re getting married and you haven’t thought carefully about every detail from the collar down, you’re leaving the most memorable part of your look to chance.

The Suit Is Just Background

Think about every wedding photo you’ve actually remembered. What stood out? A perfectly tailored charcoal jacket? Almost certainly not. What you remember is a groom in a burgundy velvet bow tie with matching pocket square, or someone wearing floral suspenders that somehow pulled the whole ceremony palette together. The suit is the canvas. Nobody hangs a canvas.

This isn’t just a style opinion; it’s how photographs work. A suit blends into a frame. Accessories pull the eye. Photographers know this. Stylists know this. The groom who spends four weekends choosing between slate and charcoal often spends about 20 minutes on the items that will define every portrait hanging on his wall for the next 30 years. The good news is that accessories are also where your budget goes furthest. A \$40 bow tie in a bold print does more visual work than a \$200 suit upgrade no one can name.

Four Centuries of Groom Style, Compressed

Bow ties have a rich history dating back to the 17th century, originating from the cravat worn by Croatian mercenaries and evolving into a staple of men’s formal wear by the 19th century. That’s not a footnote; that’s staying power. Very few fashion items survive four centuries of trend cycles.

The tuxedo and black bow tie combination, which became known as “black tie” attire, quickly outmoded the tailcoat and white bow tie as the primary formal outfit for men, a fashion change that has yet to be overturned to this day. What that tells you is that the bow tie isn’t a novelty. It’s the single most durable piece of men’s formal fashion ever designed. Yet most grooms treat it like a checkbox. Black bow tie, done. That’s like choosing the default ringtone on a phone you’re going to carry for the rest of your life.

According to the Neckwear Association of America, as reported by The Wall Street Journal, bow ties represent just three percent of the roughly 100 million ties sold each year in the United States, with most worn as part of formal wear for white-tie and black-tie occasions. Three percent. Which means wearing a bow tie already sets you apart from 97 out of every 100 men who put on a tie. At a wedding, that specificity reads as intention. And intention is exactly what a groom's look should communicate.

You can verify that historical context via the [Wikipedia entry on bow tie wearers](#), which traces the accessory's cultural significance from its military origins through its adoption as the defining feature of black-tie dress.

The Market Is Already Betting on Personalization

The wedding industry has noticed what the most stylish grooms figured out years ago. The global wedding wear market was estimated at \$82.42 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach \$109.93 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 13.5%. A chunk of that growth isn't brides adding more lace to their gowns. The male segment of the wedding wear market is expected to grow at the fastest compound annual growth rate over the forecast period. Grooms are buying in, literally.

Grand View Research's 2025 wedding wear report, available at [grandviewresearch.com](https://www.grandviewresearch.com), tracks this shift in detail. The underlying driver is personalization. Couples planning weddings today don't want off-the-rack moments. They want looks that photograph as intentional, coordinated, and theirs.

Eco-friendly materials like linen, cotton, and recycled fabrics are growing in demand; geometric prints, floral patterns, and abstract designs are trending for 2024 through 2025, and personalized pieces featuring initials or unique designs are on the rise. All three of those currents run directly through accessories, not suits.

The Accessories That Actually Do the Work

The global wedding wear market is driven by approximately 40 million weddings conducted worldwide every year, according to a 2026 analysis by Business Research Insights, and every single one of those grooms has to decide what to put at his collar. [businessresearchinsights.com](https://www.businessresearchinsights.com) tracks those volume figures across more than 40 countries.

Here's a practical framework for thinking about it. Call it the 3 Ps Test: does this accessory show Personality, does it carry a visible Pattern or texture the camera will catch, and does it tie the Palette of the whole wedding together? If a piece hits all three, buy it. If it hits two, it's still worth considering. If it hits one or none, it's filler; skip it.

Bow ties and pocket squares do more heavy lifting than any other item in the groom's wardrobe because they sit closest to the face in every portrait, they come in enough variety to hit all three Ps simultaneously, and they're easy to coordinate across a groomsmen party without making everyone look like a uniform. [Wedding Accessories](#) from handmade makers are worth seeking out specifically because the prints and fabric choices tend to be bolder and more individual than anything found in a department store.

Suspenders add a third dimension, literally, by adding depth and movement to an outfit that would

otherwise read as flat in photos. Bolo ties split the difference between formal and expressive in a way that works exceptionally well for outdoor and destination weddings. None of these things are expensive decisions. All of them are high-impact ones.

Accessory	Best Wedding Setting	Visual Impact in Photos	Coordination Ease
Bow Tie (solid)	Black tie, ballroom	High — close to face	Very easy across a party
Bow Tie (floral/print)	Garden, outdoor, casual formal	Very high — draws the eye	Moderate — choose one anchor color
Suspenders	Rustic, barn, vintage	High — adds dimension	Easy — match to bow tie
Bolo Tie	Western, outdoor, destination	Medium-high — distinctive silhouette	Easy — works as a solo statement
Pocket Square	Any	Medium — adds polish	Very easy — use as a palette bridge

How to Build the Look Without Overcomplicating It

Start with one bold piece and build outward from there. Most grooms who end up with a look they love made the bow tie or the suspenders their anchor decision, then chose a suit that didn't compete with it. That's the opposite of how most people approach it, but it works better almost every time.

Four steps that hold up:

1. Pick your one statement piece first. Bold print bow tie, textured suspenders, or a distinctive bolo tie. One item gets to be the focal point.
2. Pull your suit color from within the statement piece's palette, not the other way around. Navy suit because the floral bow tie has navy in it, not a navy bow tie to match the suit you already bought.
3. Coordinate your groomsmen at a lower intensity. If you're wearing a floral bow tie, they might wear a solid from the same color family. The groom stands out, the party still reads as a group.
4. Don't match everything. A pocket square that exactly matches a bow tie looks like a set bought from an airport kiosk. Let them rhyme, not echo.

The groom who thinks about accessories last usually ends up with a wedding photo that could belong to anyone. The groom who starts there ends up with a portrait that looks like a decision. There's a real difference between the two, and the people in the room will feel it even if they can't name why. Your suit will fade into the background of every memory from that day. What you put on your collar will not. Choose accordingly.

Photo: Scott Webb via Pexels

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