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## **Bouquets with bling**

By Alicia Chapman

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Flowers have traditionally been the star of bridal bouquets, but a budding celebrity is giving brides some sparkling new choices.

Like country singer Miranda Lambert, more brides are choosing bouquets made of brooches for their walk down the aisle.

Wedding and special event designer Kay Wilson of Albany was already adding gems to the bridal bouquets she made and sold. She would even occasionally add a brooch to the handle of the bouquet.

Then she came across brooch bouquets in one of her Web searches for the next big bridal trend.

"I thought it was very unique and wanted to offer it to my clients," she said.

Now, when brides come to Wilson's studio for consultations, she displays a brooch bouquet among the examples of her work that include traditional flower bouquets and arrangements that mix flowers with brooches.

Most brides are still unaware of the trend, Wilson said, and some aren't ready for or comfortable with something so unique.

"I give them the option, and they meet in the middle," she said.

Julie Vevaney works at Antiques 101 and Collectibles in Rogers and got curious when she saw an increase in the number of young women asking for brooches.

Vevaney asked what they wanted the brooches for, Googled brooch bouquets and discovered the trend.

Lorinda Judge Ims, owner of The Vintage Jewelry Collection in Osseo, has had brides asking for brooches for their bouquets since February.

"With Miranda Lambert carrying (a brooch bouquet), it has really raised interest," she said.

Judge Ims carries an example in her store so brides can see one in person.

One of the appeals of the brooch bouquet is that it won't wilt, fade or die. It is also something the bride will always have as a wedding keepsake to display.

And the trend is very green – repurposing items.

"I think one of the appeals is it is unique," Judge Ims said. "It's a conversational piece and something that is

long-term and will last."

Vevaney has attended weddings where the bride carried a brooch bouquet, and she describes it as stunning.

After she started to make the bouquets, her daughter, who will be married in August, wanted to use a brooch bouquet for her own wedding. Her daughter is using purples to match her color scheme.

As with a traditional flower bouquet, brides can use any color in their brooch arrangements. Judge Ims said some of the most popular colors are clear or white brooches.

Wilson said she has seen beach-themed brooch bouquets and military-themed bouquets in red, white and blue.

To get the brooches for the bouquet, some brides, such as country star Lambert, have asked their bridal shower guests to bring brooches that they can use in their bouquet.

"I think it's great to have something from each person to put into your bouquet," Wilson said.

Otherwise, great places to find brooches are vintage jewelry shops, antique shops, eBay, garage sales and auctions.

Another appeal is being able to incorporate a family heirloom into the bouquet.

Earrings, pins, pearl necklaces, rosaries, buttons and other jewelry also can be used in the bouquet to add variety in size and for brides to get the unique look that they want.

The number of brooches needed depend on the size of the bouquet the bride wants.

Wilson recommends 50 to 60 brooches to make a 6 1/2-inch wide bouquet.

After finding all the brooches, brides can bring their assortment to someone like Wilson or Vevaney who will create the bouquet for them, or can find a how-to video on youtube.com.

And for brides who don't want to search for all the brooches themselves, Wilson has a variety of them at her studio in color schemes, ready to be used for a new bouquet.

Vevaney also sells pre-made brooch bouquets out of Antiques 101 and Collectibles, and occasionally posts her creations on craigslist.org.

Wilson sells bouquets on her etsy.com shop called Kurio Gems Bridal Designs. Her shop can be found at [www.kuriogem.etsy.com](http://www.kuriogem.etsy.com).

And like the traditional flower bouquets, price ranges depend on whether the bride provides the brooches, the number of brooches, size of the bouquet and possibly the types of brooches and materials used. The cost also can rise when the bride commissions a bouquet from a designer.

Bouquets can cost from a few hundred dollars to about a thousand dollars. Brides who choose to take on the task themselves will only have to pay the price of the brooches, but will have to consider the time it may take to put it together.

Brooch bouquets can be made by wiring the jewelry together, or by using a hot glue gun. Putting together the arrangement can take three to 10 hours.

A bride must also remember that the larger the bouquet and the more brooches and collectibles, the heavier the bouquet will be. Wilson said one of her bouquets weighed in at 2 pounds, but the bouquet didn't seem to weigh that much and wasn't bulky to carry.