



# First Comes Love, *Then Comes Marriage?*

Everywhere we turn, it seems there's another celebrity couple announcing a baby is on the way. Matthew McConaughey and Camila Alves, Mary Lynn Rajskub and Matthew Rolph, and Minnie Driver and her unnamed boyfriend all are expecting babies later this year. Another thing they have in common? None are married.

But these couples aren't the first to travel this road. Unwed celebrities have been celebrating impending parenthood for years. Katie Holmes and Tom Cruise waited until after daughter Suri's birth in 2006 to tie the knot, and Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt—now expecting their second and third (twins!) children together—have yet to trade “I do’s.”

In fact, there are couples who never swap wedding vows. Actress Helen Hunt started dating boyfriend Matthew Carnahan in 2001, and they welcomed a daughter in 2004. Almost four years later, they remain together but unmarried. Likewise, actors Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn have been together for 25 years, and share one son together (in addition to three children born of previous marriages). Although the subject has come up, the couple still has not wed. “It’s not as if we didn’t talk about it,” Russell told CBS News in 2005. “We talked about it a lot. And the bottom line of it was, neither one of us really cared. In that regard, Goldie and I don’t have much truck with society. We live outside of society to a large degree.”

However, there are those who do head to the altar while waiting for baby’s arrival. For example, actress Jessica Alba and producer Cash Warren exchanged vows at a Beverly Hills courthouse about a month before Alba gave birth, actors Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck married six months prior to daughter Violet’s appearance, and actress Gwyneth Paltrow and Coldplay lead singer Chris Martin wed five months before daughter Apple joined the family.

So is this sequence of events Hollywood’s latest trend? While a great majority would like to say yes, the truth may be that today’s stars are simply getting more attention for the national status quo. According to the National Vital Statistics Reports issued Dec. 5, 2007, more than 1.5 million U.S. babies were born to unwed mothers, up 4 percent from 2004. In fact, between 2002 and 2005, the number of infants born to unmarried women rose 12 percent.

Why the increase? Reasons include couples postponing marriage, choosing to live together instead, and women opting for single parenthood rather than waiting for the right guy to come along. In addition, there are many men and women skipping the walk down the aisle after a previous marriage failed.



Actress Angelina Jolie (left), with partner Brad Pitt, wore a mocha Reem Acra caftan while pregnant at the Cannes Film Festival. Reem Acra’s empire waist wedding gowns (above) are ideal for pregnant brides.

That certainly holds true for actress Halle Berry, who recently welcomed a new daughter with her boyfriend, model Gabriel Aubry.

When asked by *People* magazine if she intended to marry Aubry, Berry replied, “I will never, never get married again. Actually, it’s just that now I’ve come to a place where I think two people can share their lives without the ring, without the piece of paper.”

Berry is not alone. Actress Poppy Montgomery and her boyfriend, actor Adam Kaufman, have yet to wed, even though their son was born in December. In an interview with *TV Guide*, Montgomery did say that Kaufman wanted to make their union legal. However, she wasn’t rushing to get a marriage license. “It’s something we’ll probably get around to doing for the sake of the baby, but right now I’m just focusing on getting him out safely,” she said.

According to a 2007 study by the Pew Research Center, this attitude toward marriage is becoming more prevalent across the United States, especially with younger adults, who “attach far less moral stigma than do their elders to out-of-wedlock births and cohabitation without marriage.”

However, when taking a global view, the United States still lags behind European countries in adopting a “marriage is not a necessity” approach. As stated in the National Marriage Project’s “The State of Our Unions: 2007,” approximately 10 percent of American couples are living together without marriage, compared to almost one-third in Sweden. Furthermore, according to France’s National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies, 50.5 percent of all children born in 2006 were born out of wedlock.

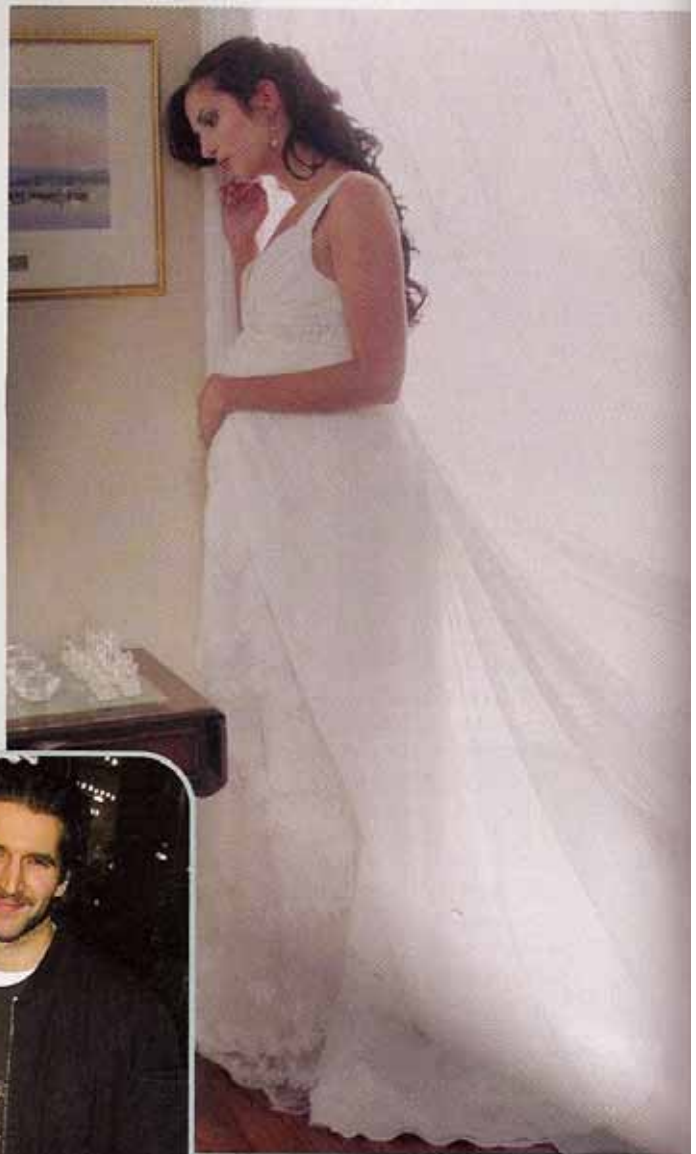
So the question is, is the general population following Hollywood’s lead or vice versa? Although there is no clear proof for either case, it may be safe to say a little bit of both. As David Popenoe writes in “The State of Our Unions: 2007,” “Marriage rates have been dropping and cohabitation and out-of-wedlock birth rates have been rising, thanks in large part to the growing influence of secular individualism in all modern cultures.”

Given this information, is it correct to say that marriage is an endangered species? According to the Pew report, not necessarily. “Even though a decreasing percentage of the adult population is married, most unmarried adults say they want to marry,” it states.

And, if you are like those celebrities who decide to marry while pregnant, you, too, can shine with a pregnancy glow at your wedding. While we all can’t have Heidi Klum’s custom-designed dress by Vera Wang or Amanda Peet’s custom Oscar de la Renta wedding gown, there are many more options available today than ever before.

Designers such as Reem Acra and Sarah Houston offer a line of maternity wedding gowns, and Kleinfeld Bridal boasts the largest selection of wedding gowns in the world. Pregnant brides also can find a variety of gowns designed just for them through Motherhood Maternity and MaternityBride.com. Styles include empire-waist, princess and A-line dresses.

“Many women celebrate their wedding day when they are expecting,” said Rebecca Matthias, president and chief cre-



Actress Amanda Peet (left) wore a custom Oscar de la Renta gown when she wed screenwriter David Benioff while four months pregnant. If you can’t afford a custom designer gown, get the next best thing. Sarah Houston designs dresses specifically with a pregnant bride’s growing shape in mind (above).

ative officer of A Pea in the Pod, Mimi Maternity and Motherhood Maternity. “Even celebrities have made getting married while expecting a trend. In the past, these women rarely wanted to be photographed with a baby bump. Now they feel confident and proud to show off their bellies, even in a wedding dress. They look fabulous! It has really changed the industry, and it’s changed how women think about themselves.”

As with all nuptials, your wedding should be about you and your fiancé, so make it the event that you always have dreamed of through the years. In your case, you have the added pleasure of sharing this momentous occasion with your unborn child. Just like the stars, you can have a beautiful wedding that celebrates the love between two people and the child who is on the way. Make it a memory all three of you can share for many years to come. —Karon Warren