



Southern Living and the Personal Wedding

By Alexandra McKay, Morven Park Events Coordinator

I have squealed with excitement on more occasions than I can remember—when I saw Robert Duvall in a Middleburg coffee shop; when the horse on which I had placed a one-dollar bet won the Gold Cup; when I finally perfected a baked French baguette (I burned a lot of bread and killed a lot of yeast in the process).

However, I have been rendered silent only twice. The first time was in high school when I had the opportunity to meet Justices Ginsburg and O'Connor. When I was introduced to them, all I could do was stare as if they were masterpieces at the National Gallery. The second time was last fall when *Southern Living* magazine informed us that Morven Park would be listed as a top wedding venue in an upcoming issue.

I have been a devotee of *Southern Living* since I could read. All my knowledge about caring for heirloom hydrangeas, baking biscuits that complement fried chicken, and the best ways to wear a scarf in one's hair, came from *Southern Living*. Once I regained the power of speech, I had to immediately share the news with my colleagues, friends and family. One of my nearest and dearest friends laughed when I told her and said, "Of course Morven Park is in *Southern Living*! The site is gorgeous and you, my dear, are a walking *Southern Living* issue!"

In honor of *Southern Living's* recognition of Morven Park, I'd like to share a few ideas for personalizing your wedding from some of the wonderful magazines and blogs in which Morven Park has been featured.

Southern Living

If, like me, you have been devoted to Southern Living longer than you have been devoted to the love of your life, then you are likely going to want to commemorate your union in the most personal way possible—monogramming.

First, a quick primer on wedding monogram protocol. It is considered poor taste to use your joint monogram before you say, "I do." Prior to your nuptials, you should use either the bride's maiden monogram or just the couple's first initials. After the ceremony (assuming the bride is changing her name), the joint monogram etiquette is still ladies first, then the joint last name followed by the gentleman's first initial. For example, Westmoreland and Marguerite Davis would have used "M&W" before the ceremony, and "mDw" afterwards.

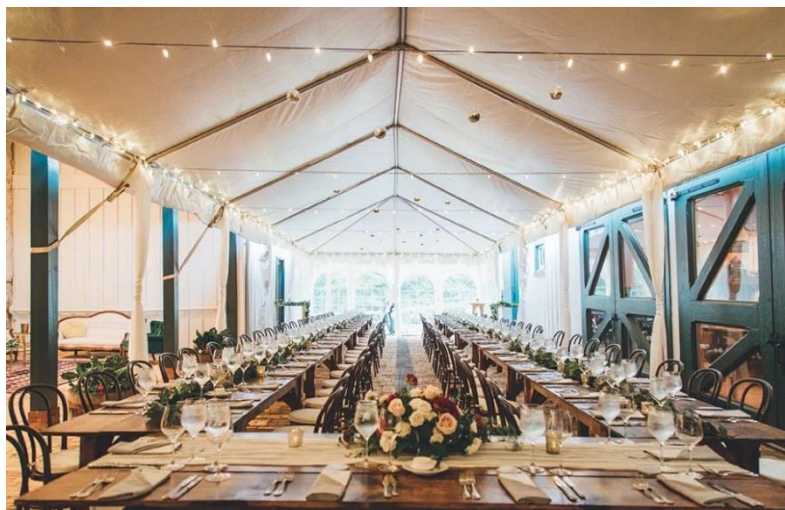
Now the question of what to monogram. An old saying advises, "If it's not moving, monogram it!" While you may not want to go to that extreme, before your ceremony you can use your monogram as a logo or a seal on your save-the-date cards, invitations, ceremony programs, and welcome bags. Your joint monogram can be used on the seating chart, escort cards, place cards, menu cards, or written with icing on the cake (which is the best medium for writing anything, after all). Monogramming provides charming personal wedding décor and souvenirs for your guests.

Washingtonian

Another high-pitched squeal moment for me (and I do apologize to the dogs who walk through Morven Park) was when we learned that *Washingtonian* magazine would be featuring a wedding held at Morven Park. *Washingtonian* is devoted to the region's residents and offers great ideas on how to create a wedding in which your guests can experience some of the distinctive offerings of our area.



Per their suggestion, start with your vendors. Local vendors know where to find all the best stuff! Morven Park's Preferred Caterers source local ingredients that support our agricultural community. Buttercups Floral Designs, a Morven Park Preferred Vendor, specializes in seasonal, local florals. Our Preferred Photography



*Reception set-up for the wedding featured in Washingtonian
Credit: Bow Tie Photo*

Vendors will know all the beautiful secluded spots for your engagement and wedding photos. Jenny's Hair Salon understands this area's crazy weather and will know how to ensure that your updo stays up. And Morven Park's Preferred Wedding Planners know everyone else from calligraphers to personalized cookie bakers.

Style Me Pretty

Style Me Pretty (SMP) has also featured Morven Park as an enchanting wedding location. The great secret of a SMP wedding is to personalize with color. The SMP website allows you to select a preferred color and browse through wedding photos with that color scheme to find inspiration for your own special day.

Rather than selecting a favorite color, you may want to select one or more colors that have significance to you as a couple. Did you share your first kiss under Independence Day fireworks? Consider using true navy and cherry red (a patriotic red, white, and blue scheme might be a bit much). How about your joint love of French country cooking? Powder blue and sunshine yellow create that provincial flair that you are looking for (so does the Morven Park Coach House venue). Do the two of you spend your weekends going to antique shops and auctions looking for mid-century décor? Then maybe gala pink and a hip green. (Hint: Peruse the color samples at a paint store to find your colors.)

Look Beyond the Typical

Lastly, find inspiration in other non-wedding resources. *Architectural Digest* can help define your style (Frank Lloyd Wright or Frank Gehry). Find a poem to read at your ceremony hidden in the pages of *The New Yorker*. *Dwell* will make the minimalist feel less lonely while *Elle Decor* will do the same for the maximalist.

The important thing to remember is to make your wedding personal, not trendy. Forty years from now, your grandchildren are going to love the stories of your "beach colors" wedding (because that's where you fell in love) better than an explanation of "Well, blush was the color that was in style that year."