

# Brides

**YOUR  
DAY,  
YOUR  
WAY!**

**289  
DRESSES,  
FLOWERS,  
CAKES,  
IDEAS**

**you can't find  
anywhere else**

**slash your  
budget  
in half!**

*they won't  
notice a thing*

**perfect  
hairstyles  
you can  
do yourself  
(really!)**

**10 secrets  
every bride  
needs  
to know**

**SHOPPING GUIDE**

**have a blast  
trying on  
dresses**

*plan a girls'  
day out  
near you!*

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# on Location

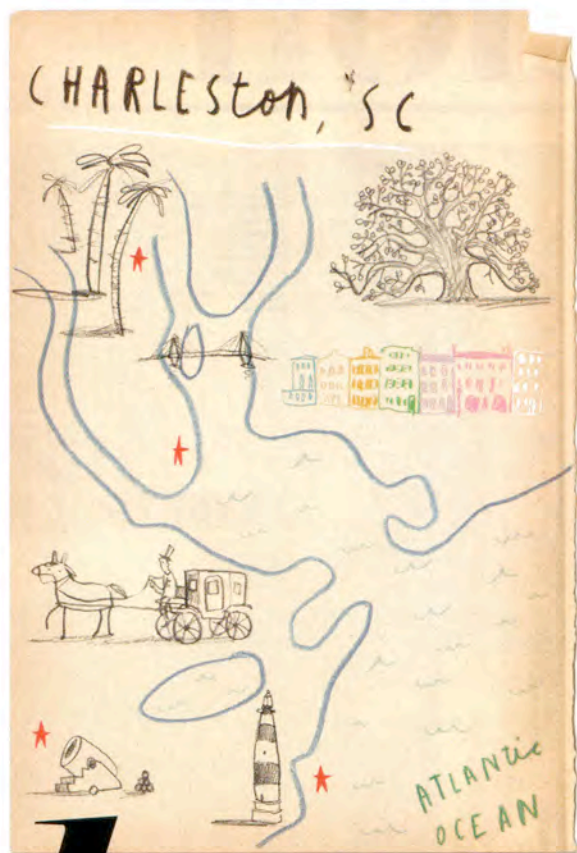


The people and places  
you need to know  
to plan a wedding in  
**Charleston**



BY SANDY LANG  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER FRANK EDWARDS





**b**lame it on the oak trees and jasmine-perfumed air. For more than three centuries, couples have found romance in this elegant seaside darling of the South. Charleston is filled with secret gardens, cocktail parties on piazzas, and horse-drawn carriages that trot past historic town houses on cobblestone streets. The young and hip flock here for art and fashion, and the food scene is as hot as a bonfire on Folly Beach. Here's our comprehensive guide for modern-day belles from near and far.

« PREVIOUS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Charleston's Waterfront Park on the Cooper River; blazers and bow ties at Ben Silver; the storefront of Modern Trousseau; historic White Point Garden; a textured bouquet by Gathering Floral & Event Design; browsing wedding gowns at Maddison Row; a just-finished cake by Ashley Bakery; the spiral staircase at Lowndes Grove Plantation.

## VENUES

**Lowndes Grove Plantation** If you love the idea of a plantation but don't want to venture far from the city, check out the circa-1786 manor house and gated grounds of these tucked-away 14 acres on the Ashley River—the sunset views are beyond. [pphgcharleston.com](http://pphgcharleston.com)

**Sewee Preserve** Eco-chic couples will love the forest landscapes, saltwater dock, and charming lake house with a massive fireplace—no extra fee for chance wildlife sightings of wading herons or osprey flying overhead. [seewepreserve.net](http://seewepreserve.net)

**Historic Rice Mill Building** Book this 1800s rice-mill-turned-riverfront-venue and guests can revel in the city's rich culinary history (fresh shrimp and rice, anyone?) while yachts cruise past on the Ashley River. [goodfoodcatering.net](http://goodfoodcatering.net)

**Founders Hall at Charles Towne Landing** The sleek lines and modern architecture of Founders Hall are a cool surprise at this treasured historic site, where English colonists aboard the *Carolina* first stepped ashore. Floor-to-ceiling windows fill the spacious Great Hall with soft, natural light, while the wood-burning fireplace on the patio is perfect for cozy gatherings and mingling. [foundershallcharleston.com](http://foundershallcharleston.com)

**Gibbes Museum of Art** Steps from Charleston's French Quarter art galleries, you can say "I do" surrounded by the largest

art collection in the city, which includes works by American artists like Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Afterward, amaze guests with a celebration in the shady courtyard, filled with lovely magnolia and crepe myrtle trees. [gibbesmuseum.org](http://gibbesmuseum.org)

**Magnolia Plantation & Gardens** This sprawling 500-acre property offers several indoor and outdoor options, each prettier than the next. Our best advice: Hold your ceremony amid centuries-old live oaks with a charming white footbridge in the background, followed by cocktails and dinner on the 20-foot-wide wrap-around veranda. [magnoliaplantation.com](http://magnoliaplantation.com)

**William Aiken House** The sunflower yellow 1810 mansion occupies the corner of a trend-setting block on historic King Street. Couples can exchange vows by the reflection pool, then dine and dance in the original second-story ballroom. [pphgcharleston.com](http://pphgcharleston.com)



FROM TOP A sugar dahlia-adorned confection by Wedding Cakes by Jim Smeal; the Long White Bridge at Magnolia Plantation & Gardens.



## DRESSES

**Maddison Row** While searching for a wedding dress with her daughters, Brenda Spadoni-Urquhart ended up purchasing this boutique, now outfitted with turquoise walls and styles by Monique Lhuillier, Vera Wang, and Carolina Herrera. [maddisonrow.com](http://maddisonrow.com)

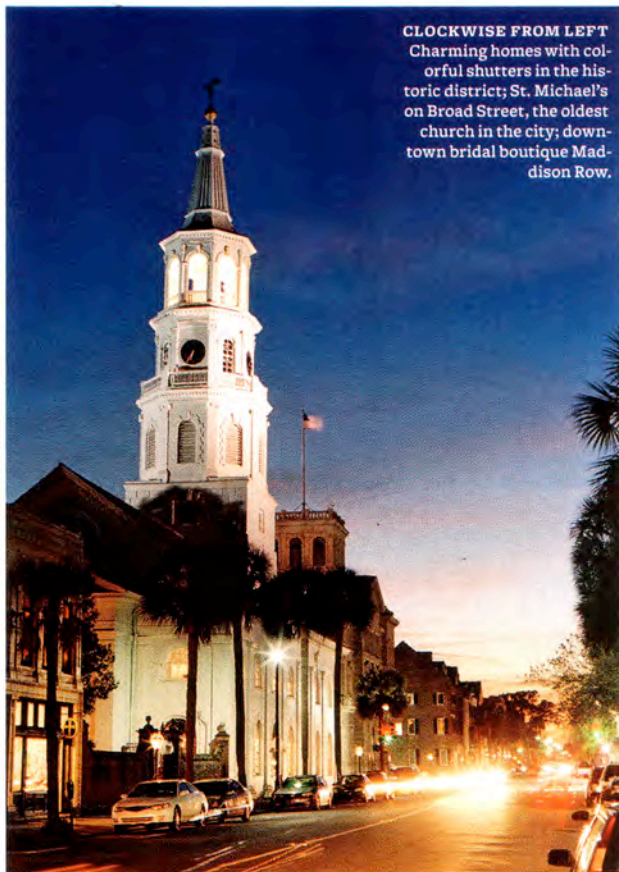
**Gown Boutique of Charleston** This gleaming salon features one of the largest gown collections in the state—everything from Junko Yoshioka and Amy Kuschel to the well-priced Wtoo. [gownboutiqueofcharleston.com](http://gownboutiqueofcharleston.com)

**Modern Trousseau** Elegant silk brocade and French-lace gowns designed by Australian-born Callie Tein are made in the U.S. for this shop overlooking a gorgeous courtyard on upper King Street. [moderntrousseausc.com](http://moderntrousseausc.com)

**LulaKate** Charleston fashionistas first fell for local designer Katherine Mullins McDonald's ready-to-wear tops and skirts; now they swoon for her wedding gowns and bridesmaids' dresses in silk, satin, and cotton seersucker. [lulakate.com](http://lulakate.com)

## FLOWERS

**Gathering Floral & Event Design** Heather Barrie is known for her romantic style (bouquets of poppies and cattleya orchids) and magical settings (crystal-adorned chandeliers, reception tents decorated with hanging parasols). [gatheringevents.com](http://gatheringevents.com)



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT** Charming homes with colorful shutters in the historic district; St. Michael's on Broad Street, the oldest church in the city; downtown bridal boutique Maddison Row.



**Blossoms Events** When a wedding requires the total transformation of an ordinary space, planners enlist this top-notch team of florists, carpenters, and seamstresses to design the entire space, from a custom drink bar to a tent swathed in your favorite color of fabric. [blossomsevents.com](http://blossomsevents.com)

**Charleston Stems** Anne Bowen makes bold statements with blooms—bouquets of pink peonies and vases of bright cymbidium orchids submerged in water. [charlestonstems.com](http://charlestonstems.com)

## CAKES

**Ashley Bakery** This family-owned bakery is known for its whimsical cakes, all done with a precise, deft hand—bold fondant cutouts, delicate piped lace, and cascades of fondant bows. [ashleybakery.com](http://ashleybakery.com)

**Wedding Cakes by Jim Smeal** Jim Smeal is an industry legend—an artist who creates cakes that look woven in sweetgrass or are adorned with sugar peonies you'll swear are real. [weddingcakesbyjimsmeal.com](http://weddingcakesbyjimsmeal.com)

**Sugar Bakeshop** Topped with sugared berries, candied lemons, or flowers, these old-fashioned cakes, pies, and tarts look perfect on vintage cake stands. [sugarbake.com](http://sugarbake.com)

**WildFlour Pastry** Lauren Mitterer and her team whip up traditional tiered wedding cakes and homey southern favorites (red velvet, hummingbird) in their Spring Street bakery—also a local favorite for sticky buns. [wildflourpastrycharleston.com](http://wildflourpastrycharleston.com)



## PREPPY ATTIRE

In Charleston, real men wear bow ties and blazers of gingham, madras, and especially seersucker. Our preppy primer for the groom starts here:

### BEN SILVER

Linen shirts in pastel pink and yellow, tailored blue blazers (with prep-school or college insignias on the buttons!). [bensilver.com](http://bensilver.com)

### HIGH COTTON TIES

Bow ties and cummerbunds in seersucker, houndstooth, and tattersall plaid. [highcottonties.com](http://highcottonties.com)

### BILLY REID

Natty skinny ties and vintage tie bars. [billyreid.com](http://billyreid.com)

### BARRY BEAUX

Bow ties (which come with helpful knot-tying instructions), cummerbunds, and gingham pocket squares. [barrybeaux.com](http://barrybeaux.com)

### M. DUMAS & SONS

Bow ties, pants and shorts in sherbet colors, and plenty of history (the shop was established on King Street in 1917). 843-723-8603



Charleston is chock-full of enterprising artisans—here are our favorite locally made gifts to give as wedding favors or add to welcome baskets.



### SWEETEETH CHOCOLATE

Port wine-caramel and peanut butter-chipotle chocolate bars. From \$5 each; [sweetteethchocolate.com](http://sweetteethchocolate.com).



### REWINED

Soy-wax candles in fragrances like Champagne and Pinot Noir, hand-poured into repurposed wine bottles. \$27 each; [riwinedcandles.com](http://riwinedcandles.com).



### CHARLESTON TEA PLANTATION

Loose-leaf teas in varieties like Rockville Raspberry and Plantation Peach, grown on nearby Wadmalaw Island. \$10 each; [charlestonteaplantation.com](http://charlestonteaplantation.com).



### PALMETTO BREWING CO.

Lagers and ales handcrafted in downtown Charleston. \$9 for a six-pack; [palmettobrewingco.com](http://palmettobrewingco.com).

## PLANNERS

**Ooh Events!** Brides can choose from antique farm tables, milk-glass vessels in every color, vintage china, and tons more at this full-service event-planning, floral, and rental company. [shopoutofhand.com](http://shopoutofhand.com)

**Kristin Newman Designs** Lowcountry brides wanting an elegant southern affair should look to this well-established planner. Brainstorming sessions take place in her new design studio in the up-and-coming NoMo (north of Morrison) neighborhood. [kristinnewmandesigns.com](http://kristinnewmandesigns.com)

**Tara Guérard Soirée** Raising the bar yet again, Soirée event designers provide everything from custom invitations to a new iPad app that allows brides to share timelines, contracts, color swatches, and photos. [taraguérardsoiree.com](http://taraguérardsoiree.com)

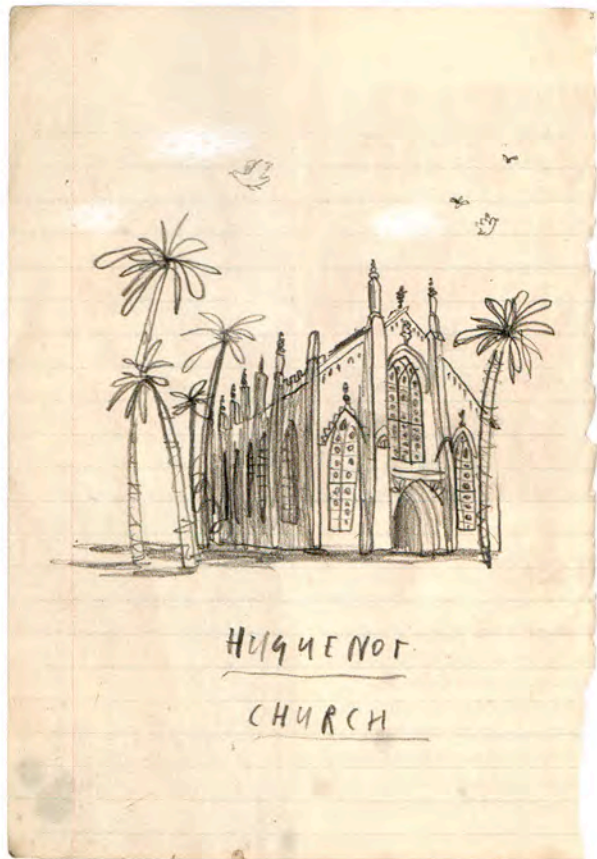
**Calder Clark Designs** “Southern without the saccharine” is the self-proclaimed style of this wedding-planning and design house, which aims for a timeless, fresh atmosphere and is renowned for its resourceful use of everything from design-forward textiles to retro furnishings and dishware. [calderclark.com](http://calderclark.com)

## PHOTOGRAPHERS

**Virgil Bunao Photography** Island weddings in the South are a specialty of this photographer, who also loves documenting celebrations in his Charleston hometown, where he shoots primarily with film. [virgilbunao.com](http://virgilbunao.com)

**Gayle Brooker Photography** Gayle Brooker earned an M.F.A. in photography, assisted top New York City pros, and taught at the College of Charleston before opening her photography business. [gaylebrooker.com](http://gaylebrooker.com)

**Corbin Gurkin Photography** Corbin Gurkin has shot weddings all over the world—from Thailand to Tuscany—but happens to call Charleston home. [corbingurkin.com](http://corbingurkin.com)



**Hyer Images** Rachel and Billy Hyer have a knack for capturing beautiful, poignant moments in their images; they’re also known for their modern editing and post-processing techniques. [hyerimages.com](http://hyerimages.com)

## CATERERS

**Cru Catering** Paris-trained chef-owner John Zucker of the popular Cru Café designs every wedding menu from scratch to showcase regional bounty like local collards in a crispy wonton wrapper and a portable version of chicken and waffles (in a cone!). [cru catering.com](http://cru catering.com)

**Newton Farms Catering** Charleston’s local grocery also has a foodie side: Newton Farms is the gourmet arm of the iconic Piggly Wiggly stores, offering everything from hand-rolled sushi to Thai chicken-satay skewers. [newtonfarmscatering.com](http://newtonfarmscatering.com)

**Caviar & Bananas** Couples can book off-site catering or a private party right inside this gourmet market and café on

George Street, which offers a thrilling array of pâtés, truffles, homemade fruit jams, duck confit, mac and cheese, and more. [caviarandbananas.com](http://caviarandbananas.com)

**Food for the Southern Soul** Any Lowcountry celebration worth its sea salt features local seafood and barbecue, and Jimmy Hagood’s versions of both are famous. Think creek-side shrimp boils, oyster roasts, and gourmet barbecue picnics under the oaks. [foodforthesouthern soul.com](http://foodforthesouthern soul.com)



Florist Heather Barrie of Gathering Floral & Event Design