

southern SOIREE

A Low Country wedding doesn't have to mean Southern-belle ballgowns. Welcome to the new South, where fall's hottest trends include dresses with a hint of color, vintage details, fab headpieces and bold boleros.

PHOTOGRAPHY *by* SHANNON GREER
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THE KISSING GATE

On Alise: Gown, \$1,900, Signature Justin Alexander. Earrings, \$225, Cheryl King Couture. On Shaun: Suit, \$349.99, Sean John. Shirt, \$49.99, Modena. Tie, \$19.99, Joseph Feiss. Pocket square, \$6.99, and cuff links, \$29.99, Men's Wearhouse. Look provided by Men's Wearhouse. Ring, model's own.





BLUSHING AT THE OYSTER HOUSE

On Alise: Gown, \$4,500, Sarah Jassir. Bolero, \$159, Alfred Angelo. Earrings, \$39,600, Jennifer Meyer Jewelry. Sash, \$150, Nina Bridal.

HOLD YOUR HORSES *(opposite)*

On Alise: Gown, \$1,430, Nicole Miller. Earrings, \$10,000, Jennifer Meyer Jewelry. Cocktail ring, \$295, Misa Jewelry. Wedding band, \$2,775, Sylvie Collection.
On Shaun: Suit, \$1,375, and shirt, \$175, Black Fleece by Brooks Brothers. Tie, \$105, Thomas Pink. Shoes, \$110, Clarks.





A TOUCH OF SPARKLE
On Alise: Gown, \$1,795, Nicole Miller. Headpiece, \$1,095, Maria Elena. Earrings, \$1,950, David Yurman. Necklace, \$600, Cheryl King Couture.

GLAMOUR AT THE GAZEBO (opposite)
On Alise: Gown, \$3,275, Vineyard by Priscilla of Boston. Veil, \$170, The Feathered Head. Earrings, \$380, and bracelet, \$560, Miriam Haskell. Cocktail ring, \$5,149, Limite. **On Shaun:** Shirt, \$69.50, vest, \$49.98, and pants, \$69.50, Perry Ellis. Tie, \$19.99, JF J. Ferrar, available at JCPenney. Shoes, \$198, The Frye Company. Ring, model's own.



STEPPING OUT ON THE MAIN-HOUSE LAWN

On Alise: Gown, \$1,800, Steven Birnbaum Collection. Belt, \$705, Maria Elena. Shoes, \$99, Nina. Ring, \$3,470, Kirk Kara.
On Shaun: Shirt, \$69.99, Pronto Uomo. Suit pants, \$299.99, Mark Ecko. Look provided by Men's Wearhouse. Tie, \$105, Thomas Pink. Shoes, \$175, Bed Stu.

SOUTHERN ELEGANCE AT THE CLUBHOUSE (opposite)

On Alise: Gown and bolero, \$6,450, Legends by Romona Keveza. Headband, \$200, Tigertilly. Earrings, \$65, ABS by Allen Schwartz. Bouquet, price on request, Garden on the Square. **On Shaun:** Tuxedo coat, \$329.99, and pants, \$119.99, Jones New York. Shirt, \$39.99, Joseph Feiss. Look provided by Men's Wearhouse. Tie, \$34.50, Perry Ellis. Shoes, \$69, G.H. Bass & Co.





From left: Kick back in rocking chairs on the expansive plantation-style porch of the four-bedroom Cherry Hill House; the front lawn of the Main House offers a picture-perfect backdrop for a ceremony and reception.

From left: Sharing old-fashioned sodas at the marina. **On Alise:** Gown, \$699, Alfred Angelo. Veil, \$480, Cheryl King Couture. Earrings, \$64, ABS by Allen Schwartz. Cocktail ring, \$225, Blue Candy. Wedding band, \$2,775, Sylvie Collection. **On Shaun:** Jacket, \$165, and pants, \$69.50, Perry Ellis. Shirt, \$165, Black Fleece by Brooks Brothers. Tie, \$19.99, Stafford Essentials, available at JCPenney. Ring, model's own. The elegant Clubhouse houses the plantation's signature restaurant.

the ford plantation, georgia

Looking for a wedding locale with a unique pedigree? This estate, built by industrialist Henry Ford (yes, as in Ford Motor Co.), has hosted parties for Vanderbilts and Rockefellers. Now couples love it for the gorgeous Low Country landscape (think photo ops with 100-year-old oak trees shrouded in Spanish moss). Add authentic Southern charm and easy access to nearby Savannah, just 18 miles away, and you have plenty to please guests too.

WHERE TO STAY With 1,800 acres, the **Ford Plantation** offers more than enough room for events, photo ops and exploration. (A fun way to tour the vast grounds is via golf cart, provided by the plantation after you check in.) Although today it's mostly a private residential community, it has 11 houses and cottages, as well as the circa-1936 **Main House**, available for rental use by visitors.

To see how Ford himself lived, book a room in last; the five-bedroom mansion was his personal winter retreat. Each bedroom is equipped with a four-poster bed, sitting area and iPod docking station. Your group can reserve all the bedrooms, but be prepared to

socialize; the main areas of the house — formal living room, kitchen, library, pool — are always open to plantation residents. (It basically serves as a gathering spot for the community, with breakfast served in the mornings and special happenings like happy hours and wine tastings taking place in the evenings.)

If you're looking for more privacy, snag one of the rental properties, like the four-bedroom **Cherry Hill House**, ideal for family groups. These accommodations come with full kitchens and cookware; stock up on groceries at one of the nearby supermarkets, and you can cook for yourselves.

SHANNON GREER (1), DIANE RICE (3)

WHERE TO WED Looking for a soiree backdrop straight out of *Gone with the Wind*? Then the Main House is the place. Say I do on one of the grand lawns: The front features a charming fountain, a wrought-iron gate and a gazebo, while the back overlooks the Ogeechee River. Host an alfresco cocktail hour poolside before moving to an elegant tented reception on the lawn. (The venue requires you to hire a wedding planner, who can arrange all the necessary rentals.) Get your guests in the Southern spirit with a traditional oyster roast or barbecue in the great outdoors at the **Oyster House**, followed by marshmallow roasting around the fire pit. Hold a formal rehearsal dinner at the **Clubhouse**, where the weekly changing menu features ingredients plucked directly from chef Juan Carlos Rodriguez's onsite farm. (Plus the double spiral staircases are prime for photos.)

WHAT TO DO Winding through the property is the Ogeechee River, perfect for water activities like fishing, boating and kayaking. The marina, housing boats from fishing trawlers to megayachts, is another popular gathering spot thanks to the country store (with a vintage soda machine!), bait shop, and screened-in porch with a flat-screen TV and DVD player. Golf is top-notch in these parts, so arrange a scramble on the Pete Dye-designed course, which wraps around the property's

freshwater lakes and rice fields. Feel like horseback riding? The full-service equestrian center can accommodate riders of all levels. Treat yourself and your 'maids to a day of pampering at the onsite spa (once Henry Ford's carriage house), or grab bikes from the Main House to cruise the property. A group outing to Savannah is a must; hire **Old Savannah Tours** to provide round-trip transportation plus a tour of the city for your crew. The company even has air-conditioned, highway-approved trolleys for a bona fide Southern experience.

WHERE TO EAT Only members and rental guests are allowed to dine at the Clubhouse, which embraces the farm-to-table movement with just-picked produce from the chef's own garden. The restaurant features a seasonal menu that changes weekly and includes fresh seafood and Southern staples (we loved the avocado-and-crab salad and fried green tomatoes). For lunch, nibble on sandwiches, wraps or the catch of the day at poolside **Lake Dye Grill**. If you're up for a short drive, **Fish Tales** and **Marker 107** both offer waterfront dining and savory seafood. The former is a jeans-and-T-shirts eatery serving up peel-and-eat shrimp and a Low Country boil; the latter is a bit fancier and features crab cakes, fresh fish and grilled steaks. — *Rebecca Kinnear*