

I Do's, Durham Style

8 trends for your big day in the Bull City

 by Jenna Parks

MY MOTHER FOUNDED SOUTHERN BRIDE & GROOM MAGAZINE 30 YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS a toddler, so I grew up surrounded by weddings. Yet this early exposure did not leave me fantasizing about my own walk down the aisle. Maybe that is because the “elegant” weddings of that era were all alike and akin to the early '90s movie, “Father of the Bride”: Pepto-Bismol pink-centric color palettes, roses tightly wound with ribbon and brides in puffy sleeves, hoop skirts and big bouffants.

Weddings today have diverged from the one-style and protocol-fits-all mentality. Each wedding has its own fingerprint: The unique mark of two personalities who are uniting in love. Their story – what brought them together, where they’ve traveled, the local places and products they love, their favorite foods or restaurants, their individual family histories and the values that they hold dear – is told through every detail from the wedding invitations to the favors.

And in a deliciously diverse city like Durham, rich with culture, brimming with amazing chefs, artists and creatives, it makes sense that our local weddings are following suit. I’m not just blowing smoke when I say our humble city is producing celebrations of love on par with Metropolitan trendsetters. ►

Duke Chapel is a majestic Gothic cathedral that puts Durham weddings on the national map. Couples camp out a full year in advance of their desired wedding month to secure their date, as the chapel books by a first-come, first-served policy for Duke University students and alumni. This lovely bride is wearing a gown from Durham’s local high-fashion bridal salon, Tre Bella Bridal.



The author

*is the co-publisher
of Southern Bride
& Groom magazine.*





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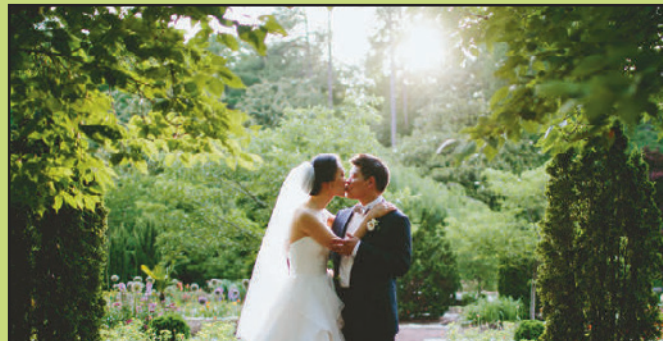
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AND THEN THERE'S DUKE

Durham attracts folks from far and near, thanks to our top-notch universities and the available careers in medicine, **RTP** and now a thriving tech start-up sector. Among many new and longtime Durhamites, a traditional favorite venue is the beloved **Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club** and now its new, upscale, on-campus contemporary, the **JB Duke Hotel**, opening in January. (Pictured above is an artist's rendering of the JB Duke Hotel's 5,450-square-foot ballroom.)



PHOTO BY JOE PAYNE PHOTOGRAPHY

THE ART OF MARRIAGE ▲▲

21c Museum Hotel has quickly become a point of pride for Durham locals since opening in 2015. It's a favorite place to bring out-of-town guests. We pop in for midnight meanderings through the galleries. We all take Instagram snaps of the Durham map table with our happy hour cocktails. But did you know it happens to be one of the most special event spaces in town? The galleries change out every few months and the next exhibit is always a surprise, yet guaranteed to offer up fantastically dramatic wedding photos. Meanwhile, the handsome, wood-paneled, marble-floored ballroom with its three-stories-high ceiling embodies classic historic elegance. ►



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▲ LIGHT THE WAY

▲ With the help of event designer **Grace Leisure Events**, this couple took the expansive, upscale warehouse space of **The Rickhouse** and gave the room a homey ambiance with vintage furniture from **ThemeWorks** and Edison bulb lighting fixtures from **Get Lit Special Event Lighting**.



PHOTO BY KATHERINE MILLES JONES PHOTOGRAPHY



This autumn wedding in **Bay 7** at **American Tobacco Campus** was designed by **Gather Together Events** and themed “light of the world” as a testament to the couple’s Christian faith. The room glowed with candlelit tables and “stars” above. The twinkle lights and draping were by **Get Lit Special Event Lighting**. Other notable members of the design team included **Party Reflections** and **Tre Bella Flowers**.



PHOTO BY SOUTHERN LOVE STUDIOS

▲ **The Cookery's** outdoor patio transformed into an elegant, up-fitted cocktail lounge
 ▲ at this wedding designed by **Chad Biggs Event Planning & Design.** ►

(NOT YOUR GRANDMA'S) CHANDELIERS



PHOTO BY CASEY ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY

- ▲ Elaborate florals are not necessary with a few table lanterns and chandeliers from Get Lit Special Event Lighting hanging from the rafters at this **Doris Duke Center** “garden party” wedding at **Sarah P. Duke Gardens**.



PHOTO BY KRISTAL KAST PHOTOGRAPHY

This Get Lit Special Event Lighting chandelier is decorated with greenery and blooms designed by Gather Together Events and Tre Bella Flowers, making an incredible aerial centerpiece at The Cookery.

GET THE HANG OF IT



PHOTO BY THEO MILO PHOTOGRAPHY

For a different perspective, wedding consultant **A Southern Soiree** created a custom escort card rack on a Get Lit chandelier.



PHOTO BY RENEE SPRINK PHOTOGRAPHY

Presentation is everything! **Donovan's Dish** excels in this department, as evidenced by this suspended table display.



PHOTO BY RILEY MACLEAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Tabletop centerpieces will certainly never go out of style, but for extra impact, Grace Leisure Events and Tre Bella Flowers designed a hanging garden above The Rickhouse dance floor. ►



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PHOTO BY BRONWYN DUFFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY

▲ THE LOCAL TOUCH

Sally Oakley Wedding and Events helped one of her couples plan a Durham-themed wedding, even sourcing local blooms from **Pine State Flowers**. Local flowers are a rising trend that we are overjoyed to see. The wild mix of seasonal flowers lends itself to the loose and unstructured style that is so popular right now.

Southern hospitality is tangible, and we adore the art of gift giving. A wedding is an opportunity to show love to your friends and to local creative craftspeople at the same time with your gifts and favors. This gift basket is hand-curated by **Memento & Muse** and includes a host of Durham goodies, like an air plant from **The Zen Succulent**, stationery from **Sage Paper Co.** and a downtown map.



- ▼ No one is suggesting that you skip the cake, but adding extra treats – who doesn't like pie? – is never frowned upon. Ice cream, for example, is scooped out in presentations ranging from self-serve bars to old-time Popsicle trucks.



PHOTO BY ROBIN LIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Cider fever is sweeping the nation, and true to form, our foodie town is on top of the trend. While **Bull City Ciderworks** is still on the move to its new location on **South Roxboro Street**, **Black Twig Cider House** can recommend the best N.C. flavors to pair with your reception fare. ►►



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Hand-written or painted signage is a wonderful touch that can cross over various styles with choice of font and style of sketch. Signage is used to welcome guests, notate the bar menu or simply as an artistic display, such as this one by **Marika Wendelken** on The Cookery's in-house chalk wall. ►



PHOTO BY CAROLYN SCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY

A small flower arrangement goes a long way when placed in a standout container like these geometric shaped terrariums used in a design by **Eclectic Sage**.



PHOTO BY RILEY MACLEAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Bull City Cigars will come to your wedding to roll the good stuff while you watch the technique. Fair warning: Your guests might spend a good portion of the evening puffing away.

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GO OUT WITH A BANG ▼

Have fun with your exit! **Amanda Scott** of **A Swanky Affair** event planning tells us this couple paid tribute to the groom's New Orleans family ties with a first-line exit from their Rickhouse wedding, led by a local brass band.



PHOTO BY CAROLYN SCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY

Southern Bride & Groom magazine is a trusted wedding guide, offering a curated collection of top resources and local planning tips. The 30th Anniversary Edition releases in late December 2016, so look for it around town over the holidays. A full list of venues, storefronts, wedding shows and other locations where you can pick up your free copy can be found at **SouthernBrideandGroom.com**.

▲ HUMAN ELEMENT

It's a scientific fact that the more elegant the food presentation, the better it tastes. Local performance arts group **Elevate** specializes in weddings and events, and their live hors d'oeuvres stations, like this one with bites prepared by Donovan's Dish, will leave guests talking. 🐮



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