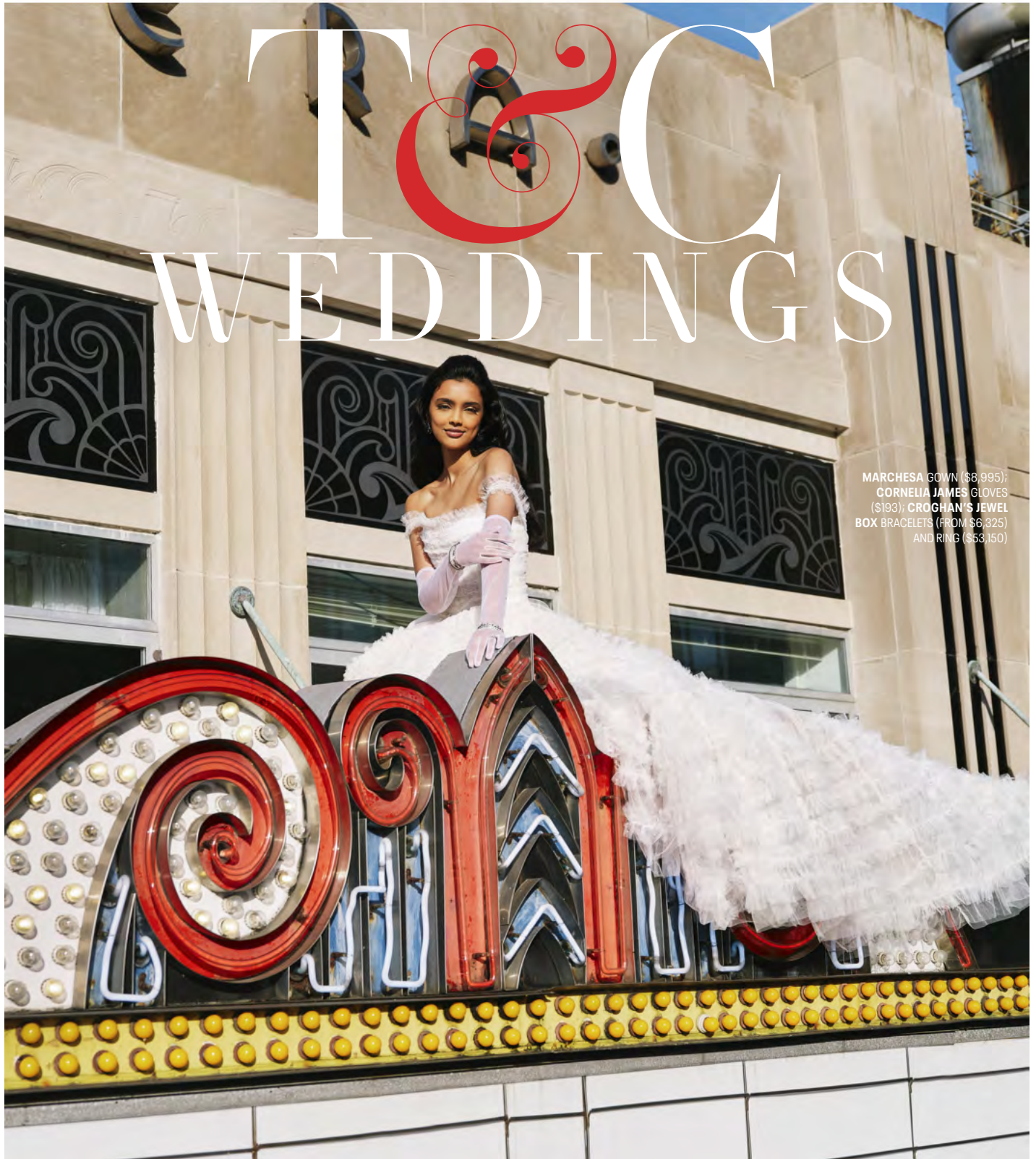


T&C WEDDINGS



MARCHESA GOWN (\$8,995);
CORNELIA JAMES GLOVES
(\$193); CROGHAN'S JEWEL
BOX BRACELETS (FROM \$6,325)
AND RING (\$53,150)

Right Place, *Right Time*

*The perfect wedding locale naturally exudes romance, character, and charm.
Leave the rest to us.* PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILIO MADRID STYLED BY MARYKATE BOYLAN



THE RIGHTEOUS GEMSTONES

From rehearsal dinner to farewell brunch, a weekend wedding requires a suite of jewels. Whenever possible shop local—and turn it into a stylish occasion.

CHANEL JACKET, SKIRT (\$3,900), AND HANDBAG (\$5,300); **MAISON MICHEL** BERET WITH VEIL (\$684); **CROGHAN'S JEWEL BOX ELIZABETH LOCKE** EARRINGS (\$7,450); **CROGHAN'S JEWEL BOX** NECKLACE (\$9,675), BRACELETS (FROM \$6,500), AND RING (\$83,100)

LOCATION: CROGHAN'S JEWEL BOX

Bed, Bath & Betrayal

Wedding registries let the world know what we want. But who exactly are they telling? BY MATTIE KAHN

Your Cuisinart doesn't impress Jung Lee. The impresario behind Fête, a full service event planning and design production firm in New York, has been executing customized bashes for such clients as Joseph Altuzarra and Jann Wenner since 2002. You can't miss a Fête production: Invitations are hand-addressed, and no two seating charts are alike. Lee takes immense pride in her work, which is what made the sometimes lackluster registries of Lee's clients that much more grating.

The care she pours into commissioning one-of-a-kind seashell-and-driftwood-encrusted chuppahs just to find an Oxo peeler on someone's Zola? It kills her. Her clients have rented out museums and had rose gardens planted to line their aisles, but even the most well-heeled among them seem unable to resist the pleasures of a big box store scanner gun. "I've seen people put shower curtains on their registries!" Lee says. "Or a vacuum cleaner! I'm like, 'For real?'"

Lee at least can claim a professional interest in appraising registries. The rest of us have no such cover. I have browsed the registries of Bravo TV stars and TikTok influencers. I have Googled the registries of people I haven't seen since high school. If I've read your *New York Times* wedding announcement, chances are I've done some sleuthing and found your registry—to look at salt and pepper mills, to find out whether I think a bride who got married at the Plaza has taste or just a good planner, to assess whether I too need Schott Zwiesel glassware (I do).

Natalia Barber, 21, has also made a habit of looking up the registries of the semi-famous. She was charmed to find that her local weatherman registered for the same casserole dishes that her mom owns. Ashley Niedringhaus, 35, takes an anthropological view. How else can she find out whose "table settings scream college dorm" or which acquaintances are *rich*? When *New York Times* columnist David Brooks married in 2017, Deadspin



MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION
BALMACAAN (\$8,990) AND
BUCKET BAG (\$1,090); ROGER
VIVIER PUMPS (\$2,095);
GIGI BURRIS MILLINERY
BOW (\$365); WE DREAM IN
COLOUR EARRINGS (\$135);
CROGHAN'S JEWEL BOX
RING (\$18,750)

unearthed his Zola profile. He had registered for measuring cups. At the time, he was 55. Page Six reported that Paris Hilton registered for \$60,000 worth of merchandise for her 2021 wedding; E! aggregated her picks.

When Arielle Patrick planned her own wedding in 2021, she went analog. To access her selections at Bergdorf Goodman, guests had to call the store's wedding honcho, Ellen Klein, and either make an appointment to see the pieces in person or request a PDF via email. Patrick acknowledges that some found it frustrating, but she was resolute: "That was not something I was willing to sacrifice." She didn't like the idea that perfect strangers would be able to see inside her dining room with a simple Google search.

These are new problems, but our interest in other people's stuff is a time-honored tradition. Wedding registries are at once utilitarian, aspirational, passive-aggressive, and transactional. The lists are a window into desires and tax brackets, and they include not just sheets or glassware but also, in one in memorable case, a Tesla. The results are an odd combination of intimate and shameless. Registries are an answer to the question, "What is the most expensive thing we can pass off as an investment in our shared future?"

The precise moment the wedding registry was invented is a subject of debate, although most histories credit the retailers for it. In the 1910s and '20s, wedding guests gave the standard presents—silver, dishes, linen—but with no one keeping track of who had purchased what, couples were getting multiples of the same items. To streamline the process, department stores invited brides to keep standardized inventories so that no bride received a glut of fish forks on her doorstep.

Over time weddings came to be understood as personal expressions of couples' love. The gifts that accompanied them had to match. During the Cold War registries went from being a perk of department store shopping to a widespread norm, which served both the practical and political needs of the nation. These were the 1950s: Self-sufficient nuclear families with modern appliances, Wedgwood china, and true blue American values were a national imperative.

In 2022 couples register not just for \$490 four-wick Le Labo candles but for home renovations. Online platforms like Zola and the Knot let users list no-limit "funds" next to their preferred stand mixers, replacing the envelope-of-cash-at-the-wedding handoff with a frictionless alternative. One benefit of the new way is that it lets loved ones feel that their gift is contributing to something more substantial than an extravagant Seamless balance. The caveat? Retailers don't have ethics clauses.

One New Yorker recalls a friend who registered at a now defunct department store, returned the gifts for store credit, and spent the lump sum on new clothes. It was a brilliant gambit—and a bit of a scam. Lee does not approve. In 2018 she launched Slowdance—an online platform that helps couples curate registry selections befitting the Fête name. Lee received cash at her own wedding in lieu of gifts, something she regrets. "It went to taxis," she says. She is a diehard advocate of traditional registries, even as an increasing number of couples reject pewter picture frames in favor of open-ended asks. A recent Zola account I perused included discrete funds for a Peloton, a couch, a rug, a Bluetooth car receiver, and...IVF.

Patrick wishes people would leave a little more to the imagination. "I'd rather write a check," she says, "and not ask what it's for."

"A lot of things we do in all kinds of spaces are about broadcasting who we are to others," says Samuel D. Gosling, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Registries in particular combine people's ideas about themselves with their projections about their future lives. A set of champagne coupes is a signal. "Yes, we're going to need a dozen champagne glasses, because we are going to be sitting on the veranda, sipping champagne, aren't we, darling?" Gosling imagines.

A few months ago I decided to browse Lee's Slowdance registries. I admired decanters and salad plates. I did a sociological assessment of the glassware preferences of men named Ben. Lee's picks are—true to form—a beautiful mix of the sublime and the practical. There are \$20 tea light holders. There are also \$125 tissue box covers and decorative planters that retail for \$1,200. It was around midnight when I came across the profile of someone I'd known since middle school. We had lost touch; she once dated someone I had a terrible crush on.

I pounced, feeling the thrill that Gosling was describing—the exquisite pleasure of unexpected social intel. Her Instagram is private, but details of her wedding were scattered around the internet like breadcrumbs. I devoured them. I decided her husband seemed nice. I texted six people, appraising her choices. On the one hand I was incredulous: How had this woman, who liked to match her Longchamp tote to her tank top, become the kind of discerning bride who seeks out a platform like Slowdance? On the other hand, I wrote to a friend, "those black dinner plates? Ew." T&C



SNARK-FREE, GUARANTEED

There's no escaping gossipy guests. Show them something worth talking about.

<p>MATOUK CLASSIC CHAIN BATH TOWEL WITH 2006 MONOGRAM (\$108), MATOUK.COM</p>	<p>SAINT-LOUIS MANHATTAN COCKTAIL SHAKER (\$675), BERGDORFGOODMAN.COM</p>	<p>RW GUILD CHAMPAGNE SAUCER BY HARUYA HIROSHIMA (\$180), RWGUILD.COM</p>	<p>WEDGWOOD X SHEILA BRIDGES HARLEM TOILE CHINA (FROM \$100), BLOOMINGDALES.COM</p>	<p>SLOWDANCE BY JUNG LEE PERPLEX CANDLEHOLDER (\$76), SLOWDANCE.COM</p>
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THE ICING ON TOP

A destination rich in architectural landmarks provides ample opportunities for a dramatic wedding portrait. So does this Giambattista Valli gown, from the maison's debut bridal collection.

GIAMBATTISTA VALLI LOVE COLLECTION DRESS AND VEIL;
CROGHAN'S JEWEL BOX MAZZA NECKLACE (\$7,135);
CROGHAN'S JEWEL BOX RING (\$18,750)

LOCATION: WENTWORTH MANSION

CHRISTOPHER KANE
BRIDAL DRESS (\$2,495)
AND VEIL (\$995)



The Veil Whisperer

Has the secret to upgrading a wedding's trickiest accessory been in front of your eyes all along? BY MATTIE KAHN

Batman has the Batsuit; Wonder Woman has those cuffs. But Alison Miller doesn't need superheroes to demonstrate that costumes have transformative properties—she sees it at her atelier almost every day. Comic book characters have their uniforms; Miller's brides have veils.

Since 2012 Miller has been designing couture veils through her New York-based

label Monvieve. Produced in Italian mills, her pieces are made out of the finest French lace and Italian tulle as gossamer-thin and diaphanous as Kate Moss in 1993. Once upon a time Miller designed separates, but that company shuttered in 2008. Bridal accessories were a pivot, then a calling. Today she creates wedding veils, headpieces, and jeweled headbands, as well as one-off bespoke

gowns for clients as far-flung as Dubai and Hong Kong.

I found Miller the way most of her clients do: I was in a moment of desperation and I got some help from Instagram. I'd seen her work tagged in the photos of a model-slash-DJ who wore a cathedral-length Monvieve veil to her own three-gown wedding extravaganza. I didn't have three outfits, but I did have a veil, and it needed work. Both my aunt and mother had worn it at their weddings, and I wanted to use it too, not least because my beloved late grandmother had picked it out. The veil was beautiful, but it was shorter than I wanted, and it was missing the essential blusher (the sheet of tulle that some brides wear over their faces), which I needed to fulfill traditional Jewish ritual. Miller was unfazed. Monvieve oozes romance and Old World tradition, but Miller herself has a surgeon's affect. You trust her to operate.

Within a week I was in her Midtown showroom and she was running a palm over the tulle in question. Taking stock of the lace, the dozen or so delicate seed pearls embroidered into it, and the worse-for-wear seams, Miller laid out her plan: salvage as much of the trim as possible, ditch the unexceptional tulle, and create a new, modern heirloom.

Keepers of a tradition of Italian craftsmanship that Miller prizes, the women who staff her workshop would consult with Miller on each snip. The merging of past and present would be so harmonious, Miller promised, that I wouldn't even be able to see the literal seams.

Just after Europe's August vacation time, Miller shipped the veil off to Turin. The signore tinkered with it for months, giving it a nickname, as they do most of their custom pieces. Miller told me it was christened "the Grazia," a nod to the iconic veil that Grace Kelly wore in 1956. "I know that 10 generations from now, this veil is going to feel just as fresh and just as purposeful," Miller said as she calculated the precise length that it would extend behind me.

The pandemic has caused weddings to be not just postponed but reconfigured. Still, Miller has found that even for brides who have scaled back, veils are still almost talismanic. "To see a beautiful bride, a bride in love, that's what makes her beautiful. Then put on a gorgeous veil? You're giving people something they're desperate for," Miller says. "It's so far beyond a moment of normalcy. It's a profound moment of beauty. It's the best we have as human beings. And we've been starved of it." T&C



PLEASE RSVP

Alfresco affairs have their appeal, but consider the merits of a venue with centuries-old charisma, exquisite period detail, and, most important, protection from the elements.

MONIQUE LHUILLIER JACKET (\$2,500), GOWN (\$8,900), AND CUMMERBUND (\$495); **RITIQUE** EARRINGS (\$4,690)

LOCATION: WENTWORTH MANSION

**THE
DESTINATION**

If the concept of Southern charm can be encapsulated in a single place, it would be Charleston. But the 352-year-old South Carolina city is far more than just pretty pastel mansions and quaint cobblestone alleys. It's a town that has reckoned with a painful history and emerged better than ever. As for the greatest hits—they remain just that. There are fabulous hotels for guest lists of any size, from the 21-room Wentworth Mansion to the sprawling Charleston Place, which will soon undergo a phased \$100 million revamp. And the food! Whether it's oysters at 167 Raw or French classics at the new Brasserie La Banque, the Charleston dining scene is one guests will remember forever.

OSCAR DE LA RENTA DRESS (\$5,990); MONVIEVE VEIL (\$2,150); CROGHAN'S JEWEL BOX BRACELET (\$3,450) AND RING (\$59,000). FOR DETAILS SEE PAGE 127

Hair and makeup by Alexa Rodulfo for T3 Micro and La Mer @ EsteeLauder. Model: Monica Tomas at Wilhelmina. Casting by Steven Brown. Production support provided by Explore Charleston

WITH THANKS TO: THE CHARLESTON PLACE HOTEL, PATRICIA AITSCHUL, AND M. DUMAS AND SONS



CAN YOU HEAR HISTORY?

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 107] center for art, culture, and tourism, but the current chapter in the Blue House's saga has its roots in a tragedy from three decades ago at the cable car station next door. On June 1, 1990, a hauling cable broke, and one cable car slammed into the side of the station while the other one was torn apart. "I looked up and saw people falling on the rooftops and onto the ground," says Nino. Nineteen people died, many of them children.

The cable car station was permanently shut, but today a new terminal is being built. It will serve as a hub for a service that will link the city center with Mtatsminda Park, which towers 2,500 feet above the capital, and carry up to 1,100 passengers per hour.

The family worries about the crowds the cable car will bring, but a much more pressing concern is the construction, which has already begun. "The whole house began to shake," Dato says of the drilling, which was just a few yards from his studio window. "I felt the rumbling vibrating through my bones and thought it was an earthquake."

The family has petitioned the city to halt construction until the house's foundation can be stabilized. "I fought to save every small part of this house," says Nino, who oversaw the hand restoration of its intricate wood and plaster carvings. "I don't see it as my own house," she says. "I want to preserve it for future generations."

The Blue House was once again at the center of the action this past February. When Russia embarked on its invasion of Ukraine, thousands of Georgians protested against the war in the city's Liberty Square and nearby on Rustaveli Avenue. Many of those who gathered had lived through Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia—which Russia justified then (as it is doing now in Ukraine) by claiming national security risks. For the family inside the Blue House, both the danger posed by the construction and the escalating political situation feel familiar. "For me, my house is like my country," Eliso tells me. "When intruders attack from the border, you have to defend yourself, your family." **T&C**



THE VANISHING

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 117] leaped out of a blue van that had been pre-positioned on the left side of the road. One of them jerked Denis out of the driver's seat and shoved him into the van. Four other assailants emerged from the truck and jumped into Empain's car, two in front, two in back. One of the men grabbed the baron, slapped duct tape onto his mouth, and pulled a black hood over his head. Empain felt the touch of steel on his skin and heard a metallic click as his assailant handcuffed him. Someone shoved him onto the floor of the car and put a gun to his temple.

"Do what we tell you or we'll blow your brains out," said a gruff voice.

Meanwhile, the van containing Jean Denis was abandoned near the Arc de Triomphe. Roughed up and dazed, and with a broken rib, Denis was able to wriggle free from his bindings and tumble out of the van. A passing motorist drove him to a nearby police station to report the kidnapping. The desk sergeant called the police prefect, who immediately informed Interior Minister Christian Bonnet. The minister ordered the police to hold back the news until roadblocks could be set up around Paris. Checkpoints were put in place throughout the capital, causing horrific traffic jams but failing to net the kidnapers.

In the Elysée Palace, Giscard d'Estaing was furious. Empain could be a prickly character to deal with, but he was the head of one of France's flagship industrial groups, with a monopoly on nuclear plant construction and tens of thousands of jobs under his command. In an unprecedented move, Giscard immediately formed a crisis cell to ride herd on the case and give him daily briefings. It was a matter of national security.

Giscard's orders to the police were clear: Nab the kidnapers before any harm came to Empain. For the moment, though, there were no clues as to who was responsible or what their motives might be. Within hours the police had recovered the baron's abandoned Peugeot and the two vehicles used by the kidnapers, but there was not the slightest trace of a fingerprint. The men behind the kidnapping were obviously professionals. **T&C**

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