

REBECCA BRODнан AND TAYLOR SMITH, *October 1, 2011*

A Letter Perfect Day

New Orleans flair meets Sea Island's coastal charm at this sophisticated and personalized Southern wedding.

| *By Karina Timmel* |
| *Photography by Laura Negri Childers* |

Rebecca Brodnan wasn't sure about Taylor Smith at first. Set up by mutual friends in Atlanta who knew a great match when they saw one, the would-be couple went on about five dates before Brodnan fully understood Smith, a director of acquisitions and development at Tishman Speyer. "He fit in with everyone," says Brodnan, a public relations manager for Neiman Marcus. "And family is very important to him, just like me."

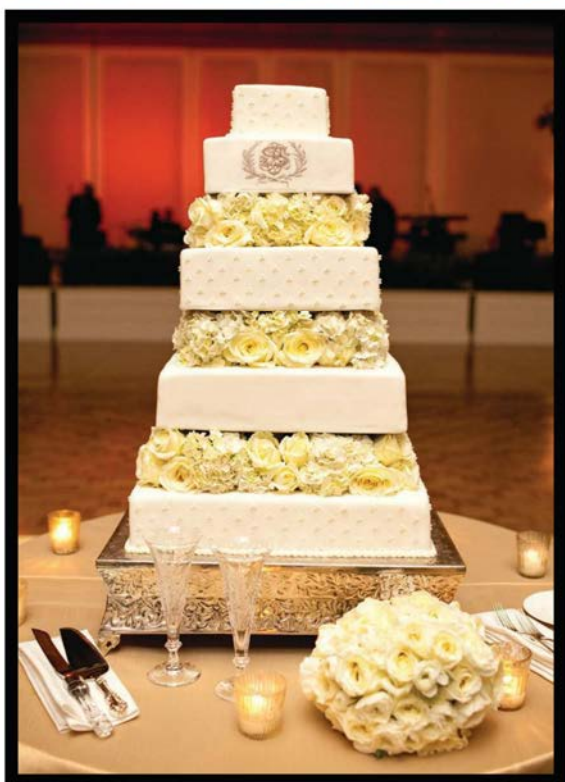
The couple said "I love you" for the first time in Sea Island, Ga., while on vacation with Brodnan's family. "I probably went down there

more than 25 times with my family growing up, and now we go pretty much every summer. It's also where my grandparents celebrated their 50-year anniversary," she says. All of which made it the most perfect, meaningful place for the couple to get married.

"There is something magical about Sea Island, when you cross over the bridge and see The Cloister for the first time. The architecture and natural surroundings are surreal in their beauty and perfection," says Laura Negri Childers, owner and photographer of Laura Negri Photography.



Clockwise from top left: Guests enjoy sunset cocktails at The Cloister; the bride's Christian Louboutin shoes signed by her bridal party; welcome bags emblazoned with the couple's cipher; a customized get-away golf cart awaits the newlyweds; a cipher-crested cake by Sea Island Company; the bride descending the historic hotel's grand staircase



Family and hometown traditions were a top priority in their wedding. Brodnan paid tribute to her mother and grandmother by having pieces of their wedding dresses—along with their initials and wedding dates—cut out and sewn inside her Monique Lhuillier gown.

Brodnan's mother and she shared a unique vision for the incredibly personalized 375-person event, and worked closely with the coordinators at Sea Island Resort to execute it. "Every detail of the rustic-elegant wedding was a statement of Rebecca and Taylor as a couple," explains Sea Island Company Wedding Manager Amanda Gould.

In a nod to the groom's hometown, a New Orleans artist created a custom cipher bearing the couple's initials. It appeared throughout the wedding on everything from the glass coaster and cookie favors (the latter donated by Neiman Marcus) to the big burlap welcome bags and the bride and groom's chair covers. The bride also gifted Smith with custom-made, monogrammed velvet dress shoes to go with his tux.

In lieu of the New Orleans' second line tradition, a gospel choir sang "This Little Light of Mine" at the service and through the cocktail hour. The choir then led a sunset procession along a pathway by Black Banks River—lit with hurricane lanterns and chandeliers that hung from trees—to the reception ballroom.

The black-tie event was swathed in muted tones of white, creams and greens. The florals were a breathtaking combination of soft, romantic hydrangeas, garden roses and peonies set on mismatched rustic farm-wood tables and rough-textured linens. "It had a *Great Gatsby* feel to it," Brodnan says.

The groom's cake was a red velvet-flavored football helmet, an ode to Smith's football days at both Princeton and New Orleans' Newman High School, where he played alongside Peyton and Eli Manning. As fireworks entertained guests, the "afterglow" menu offered beignets (alongside decadent sliders and cones of French fries).

"Every detail went off without a hitch. I totally let go of the planner in me and we danced the whole time," Brodnan says. ■

[*The List*]

- Ceremony**
Wesley United Methodist Church
- Reception**
The Cloister Ballroom
- Coordinator**
Amanda Gould from Sea Island Company
- Bridal Gown**
Monique Lhuillier from Neiman Marcus Downtown Bridal Salon (Dallas) and Rafael Cennamo
- Makeup**
Stephanie Adams
- Hair**
Mallory Joris
- Bridesmaids' Dresses**
Melissa Sweet for Priscilla of Boston
- Groom's Tuxedo**
George Bass in New Orleans
- Tuxedo Shoes**
Stubbs & Wootton
- Invitations**
William Arthur; Calligraphy by Gina Dunlap Emmet
- Calligraphy**
Calligraphy
- Catering, Florals, Linens, Cake**
Sea Island Company
- Band**
Liquid Pleasure from East Coast Entertainment
- Gospel Group**
Fellowship Concert Choir
- Cipher**
Custom-created by Alexa Pulitzer