Post Post

March 28, 2021

Synonymous with Morgantown: Coni & Franc, Hotel Morgan give local glam

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

COVID-19 made changes for everyone in 2020, and brides were not excluded. With hopes for a more normal 2021 on the horizon, The Dominion Post decided to continue with a decades-old tradition of publishing a Wedding Planner.

This year, we brought models from Coni & Franc to the newly remodeled Hotel Morgan for a special photo shoot in February.

For more than 38 years, Morgantown couple Connie and Frank Merandi have dressed brides and their attendants in the finest gowns.

Coni & Franc is a full-service boutique offering everything from bridal gowns and jumpsuits to lingerie.

Connie Merandi said Coni & Franc purchases clothing lines customers won't see at any other shop in West Virginia.

According to the website, designers the boutique carries include Pronovias, Nicole Espose, Madi Lane, Jasmine light Bridal, Calla Blanche, Adrianna Papell, Bill Levkoff, Christina Wu, Jade Couture, Jovani, Tarik Ediz, Alberto Makali, Nicole Bakti, Mon Cheri, Ecru Franc or online at www.coniandfranc.net. Style, Buki, Lilla P, White Warren, Joseph Ribkoff, Anidene, Mary Frances, David Tutera Embellish, Zenzii, Sondra Roberts and Susan Shaw Jewelry

"We have clients who have been with us since the beginning," she has said. "We have four generations that come in. We have people from children to elegant ladies in their 90s. We dress them all."

The couple attended West Virginia University. Connie received her bachelor's degree in fashion merchandising and design with a minor in business. Frank graduated with a bachelor's in marketing and business.

"When we met, we decided we wanted to start either a restaurant or a clothing boutique, whichever came first." Merandi said for a previous article. "The clothing (opportunity) came first."

Shortly after the store opened in 1983, the two were married.

Store hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Bridal, PRIVE by Jasmine Bridal, Moon-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday by appointment.

> Coni & Frank is at 422 High St., Morgantown. Follow it on Facebook at Coni &

Appointments can be made on the webpage or by calling 304-292-1111.

The landmark Hotel Morgan is open for business, and was the perfect backdrop for this year's Wedding Planner bridal shoot.

The 96-year-old structure is almost a completely different place from less than two years ago, when it was purchased in November 2019 by the Thrash Group of Hattiesburg, Miss. It's the first property in West Virginia for Thrash Group, which is known for its mixed-use projects across the country.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be part of the community," Robert Mickey, the hotel's general manager, has said.

"The old girl is looking pretty good," Karen Forsythe, the hotel's director of sales, said in a previous interview.

Of special interest to many brides will be the 3,600-square-foot ballroom being renovated on the hotel's top floor. It will include an inside bar and covered outdoor bar with four bathrooms. Forsythe said that space will be used as a wedding venue and should be ready by late summer or early fall.

It's been dubbed the Monarch Ballroom, and Forsythe said she's already gotten inquiries about renting it.

There is a two-story, 3,200-square-foot ballroom on the first floor, complete with a fireplace.

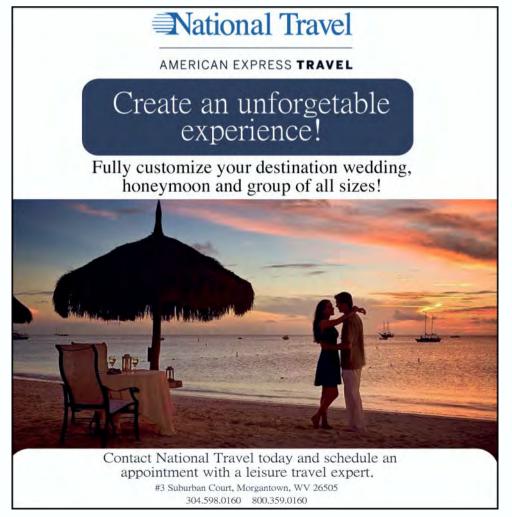
Hotel Morgan is at 127 High St., in downtown Morgantown. Find it online at www.hotelmorgan.com. Contact staff via phone or email at 304-292-8200 or info@ hotelmorgan.com.

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On the cover: Hailev Geiger wears a Calle Blanche embroidered and embellished gown with ostrich feathers scattered at the gown hem and train. Crystaled veiling and headpiece by

William Wotring/ The Dominion Post





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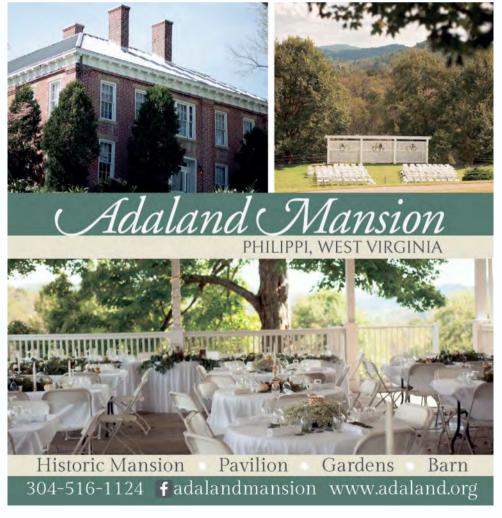
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Gabriella
Johnson wears
a Tarik Ediz
informal crepe
gown with
cutout designs
on the
romantic lace
sleeves
accented by
feminine
bows.
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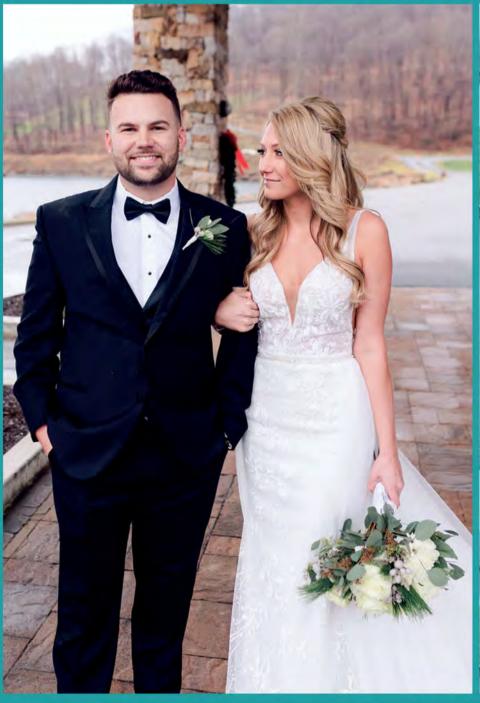




Hailey Geiger twirls in The Hotel Morgan marble-floored ballroom, wearing a Calla Blanche off-the-shoulder bridal gown with softly flowing floral embroidered skirt. William Wotring/The Dominion Post

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