

TYING *the* KNOT

THE DOMINION
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 Bridal, PRIVE by Jasmine Bridal, Moonlight Bridal, Calla Blanche, Adrianna Papell, Bill Levkoff, Christina Wu, Jade Couture, Jovani, Tarik Ediz, Alberto

Makali, Nicole Bakti, Mon Cheri, Ecru Style, Buki, Lilla P, White Warren, Joseph Ribkoff, Anidene, Mary Frances, David Tuter Embellish, Zenzi, 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-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 &

Franc or online at www.coniandfranc.net. 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.


TWEET @DominionPostWV



On the cover:

Hailey Geiger wears a Calle Blanche embroidered and embellished gown with ostrich feathers scattered at the gown hem and train. Crystaled veiling and headpiece by Mystic 31.


William Wotring/
The Dominion Post



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Symone Lane rests on a sofa in The Hotel Morgan Breezeway, wearing an asymmetrical-style gown featured in the Madi Lane Collection. The draped jersey, one-shoulder gown with chapel train is accented by pastel blue elbow-length gloves.

William Wotring/The Dominion Post



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Models show off a variety of gowns available at Coni & Franc.

William Wotring/The Dominion Post

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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.

William Wotring/
The Dominion Post



Rebekah Rose wears Cecil by Pronovias. The lace, off-the-shoulder, bell sleeve, column gown also has a sheer net lace-embellished train.

William Wotring/The Dominion Post



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Symone Lane wears a Tarik Ediz bias-cut silk charmeuse column gown, embellished with 3-D golden leaves and ivory silk charmeuse flowers on flesh-colored net bodice and plunging back. A Paradox Pink shoe with crystal detail sits on the dressing table. Her fresh floral bouquet reflected in the mirror is by Coombs Florist.

William Wotring/The Dominion Post



Rebekah Rose models a sparkle black taffeta gown by Tarik Ediz with over-the-elbow black matte satin gloves. The portrait collar and cinched-waist gown features a wrap skirt revealing a slit to allow movement. Dramatic brides wear black with style.

William Wotring/The Dominion Post



Hailey Geiger wears a sculpted off-the-shoulder, long sleeved, silk faille A-line gown with pearls covering the entire piece, by Nicole. William Wotring/The Dominion Post



Gabriella Johnson wears a La Perla art deco-inspired patterned lace full length gown with detachable off-the-shoulder straps. William Wotring/The Dominion Post

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Symone Lane is lovely in a Tarik Ediz off-the-shoulder puff sleeve lace gown with hydrangea motif design on the skirt and train. Her bouquet is by Coombs Florist.

William Wotring/
The Dominion Post



Rebekah Rose wears a strapless, multi-layered net confection from La Perla. It has a warm underlining that comes through the ball-gown skirt in a soft rose. The moonstone and crystal headwrap and earrings are by Mystic 31.



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Penny Cross, Owner





Abby Myers lounges in a fitted gown featuring a separate slip with lace overlay and crystal belting. On her shoulders is a Fabulous Furs lush fur-like wrap. Her "Happily Ever After" clutch is by Mary Francis.
William Wotring/
The Dominion Post



Symone Lane wears a sparkling informal dress by Stella Evening Gowns.
William Wotring/The Dominion Post

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Symone Lane wears a satin and clipped net, fit-and-flair Calle Blanche gown, giving the rumba skirt and train a flip and spin.
William Wotring/The Dominion Post



Gabriella Johnson wears a Princess Grace-inspired Pronovias gown of high-necked lace with buttons at the neck, cap sleeves and sweeping ball gown skirt. Earrings, headpiece and veiling by Mystic 31. Red rose bouquet and scattered petals created by Coombs Florist. William Wotring/The Dominion Post



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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