

By Debra Prinzing

Molly & Myrtle florals are displayed on a "pedestal" of vintage encyclopedias, adding detail and character to an event.  
© Molly & Myrtle Photography

# Renew, Reuse and Repurpose

One designer's vintage and retro collections underscore her sustainable brand in the wedding marketplace.

By Debra Prinzing

**A**my Beausir owns Molly & Myrtle, an Indianapolis, Ind.-based urban flower farm and design studio filled with curated wedding supplies to help couples go green. She began the local floral enterprise eight years ago as a farmers' market vendor selling garden-inspired bouquets; now everything she grows supplies her weekly deliveries and wedding and event customers.

Establishing relationships with small and large business owners comes naturally to Beausir, a former marketing director at the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce. When she personally delivers weekly flowers, she stops to visit with customers at locations including a 13-room boutique hotel, an all-organic restaurant, an artisan icy pop shop, an international brand retail store and a senior living facility.

Wedding and event bookings balance weekly and corporate deliveries, allowing Beausir to incorporate her love of antiques. "I have always appreciated the character and the stories behind different objects that mean something," she

says. "I was in an antique business while at the same time starting my micro-urban flower farm – and the two interests came together so beautifully."

Admittedly, the Indianapolis metro region is home to established rental companies and warehouses filled with vintage inventory. Beausir often collaborates with them for larger-volume needs, but she views Molly & Myrtle's custom styling services and prop rentals as a way to keep things exclusive for her floral customers. "This provides my couples with some really nice details and touches, and it saves them the hassle of running around to handle rentals themselves," Beausir explains.

The inventory mix spans a number of decades. "We have midcentury modern and retro; we have classic items," she says. Her collections come from fellow antiques dealers and pickers or friends clearing out their attics and basements. Products such as original Muncie, Ind.-made blue Ball jars in many sizes, vintage suitcases, *Encyclopedia Britannica* sets,



(This image) Molly & Myrtle florals are displayed on a "pedestal" of vintage encyclopedias, adding detail and character to an event.  
© Molly & Myrtle Photography

(Left) A vintage suitcase is used to collect cards and gifts.  
© Danielle Harris

(Bottom Left) A resized ladder, paint chips and all, now serves as a seating chart stand.  
© Molly & Myrtle Photography



are my world, my true)  
and its you are whatever a  
moon has always meant and  
whatever a sun will always  
sing is you  
here is the deepest secret  
nobody knows (here is the



For a styled shoot at Industry, an event space in downtown Indianapolis, Amy Beausir commissioned a calligraphy artist to hand-letter an E.E. Cummings' love poem as a wedding backdrop. "Paper is just another eco-friendly element that's easy to install," she notes. The lanterns are about 50 years old and were a gift from another antiques dealer.

Images (c) Love Project

accent tables, upholstered seating, mirrors, trays, ladders and windows compose some of Molly & Myrtle's inventory.

Beausir ensures that the flowers and styling reflect the personality of each ceremony. "When I start talking with my couples, I ask them where they shop. Do they shop for their home at Target? Do they go to West Elm or Pottery Barn? It helps me get to know their style, not only for choosing flowers and a design aesthetic but also to get a feeling for the ceremony and what they'll be comfortable with as far as a reception experience."

Beausir has a unique arrangement with The Historic Ambassador House and Heritage Gardens, a historic six-bedroom Greek Revival home for which she is a preferred vendor. On the *National Register of Historic Places*, the property is owned by the city of Fishers, Ind.

"They did not have the budget to be able to furnish the house that they rented for weddings, so I literally have my furnishings and items in each room, which I can take in and out," Beausir explains. "They also have a beautiful old stone barn, and I'm able to store some of my inventory there."

She loves helping couples avoid the cookie-cutter wedding experience and believes recycling items from the past is an elegant way to personalize a ceremony. "Many of today's couples are not only socially conscious but also interested in sustainability and lightening the waste their weddings produce. Our rental program is a revenue source for Molly & Myrtle, but it also lowers the environmental impact of weddings. It creates a sense of style and is definitely a reflection of our brand."



(This image) Through research, Amy suspects that "Louise," her sage green bistro table, was likely built in Michigan where similar iron garden furniture was manufactured in the 1940s and '50s. It now doubles as the cake table.

© Life by Alex photographs.

(Right) A mirror serves as a display tray for reception cookies.

© Life by Alex photographs.

(Below) Amy Beausir (center) delivers a bridal bouquet to a client designed with her custom-grown flowers.



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## Renting Vintage

Here are some of Amy Beausir's tips for incorporating prop rentals into your floral business:

- Keep a standard rental rate sheet that includes replacement value if an item is damaged or broken.
- Be willing to deviate from standard rental pricing. "We will bundle things together for a flat fee. And I always include use of a vintage suitcase as a card box with each wedding."
- Charge for delivery and setup as well as break down. "Your labor and time are worth as much as each farm table you're renting," she says.
- Form relationships with people who hand-letter on reclaimed rental pieces, such as mirrors, windows and doors. This is another service to offer clients who want to personalize seating charts and menus. ■



# Real Weddings with Sinclair & Moore

An innovative workshop approach gives aspiring and seasoned floral designers next-level professional experience.

Photography by **O'Malley Photographers**

**S**inclair & Moore is known for planning, production and floral design of incredibly elegant weddings and events for clients in the Seattle area, where the studio is based, and in destinations around the globe. In addition to producing luxury weddings and events, founder and creative director **Steve Moore** and co-owner and coordination advisor **Jamie Sinclair Moore** offer a number of floral design workshops each year, including “The Art of Floral Design” and “The Elements of Event Design.” The “Real Wedding Workshop” is one of their most popular, quickly filling with students eager for a behind-the-scenes experience to learn the Sinclair & Moore process and gain hands-on skills while producing and designing an actual wedding.

Steve leads the workshops with a highly personal approach, including teaching elements of event design and the studio’s signature floral aesthetic. Last November, I joined a “Real Wedding Workshop” as a guest. I wanted to know

how and why Sinclair & Moore takes on the added stress of teaching students while also producing an actual wedding. One motivation, according to Steve, is to create a meaningful and beautiful experience for a couple who may not otherwise be able to afford a full-scale ceremony. Student tuition helps fund the cost of the wedding flowers while the arrangements and bouquets made during the workshop are used to decorate the entire wedding. “We use tuition funds to decorate the ceremony and reception, rent nicer linens and contribute to all of the other design elements that make it a signature Sinclair & Moore wedding,” Steve explains.

**Scott O'Malley**, of **O'Malley Photographers**, documented the workshop sessions and photographed the final ceremony.

Day one began with design instruction encouraging beginners and more experienced florists to play with an abundance of lush blooms and foliage choices. Steve set the ground rules: “Have fun. Remove the pressure of perfection,



Steve Moore teaching



See more of this story and the full video on our website: <https://qrs.ly/2lac8oa>

but also be teachable.” He encouraged everyone to make connections with fellow attendees who came from across the U.S. and Canada and as far away as Panama and Australia. Friendships were nurtured further at a workshop dinner, which the Moores hosted at their home.

Wedding production began on day two, as Steve and his team led students in designing centerpieces, bouquets and other ceremony flowers. Throughout the busy process, Steve stopped to address questions or discuss his favorite ribbon vendor and vessel choices. He shared his thoughts on business strategy, branding and social media. Before the day’s end, he also revealed some of Sinclair & Moore’s core values, such as “Choose kindness, even when it will not be rewarded,” “See the needs of the people around you” and “Have grace with yourself and with others.”

Early on day three, the wedding day, the group gathered at a downtown Seattle hotel for move-in and setup. They also

designed on-site pieces, including larger arrangements and the floral arch.

During the recap with Steve, they marveled at what a group of 15 individuals created together as a team. “What attracted me to the workshop was a chance to participate in an upscale wedding, as well as learn some practical techniques that Steve has developed in his successful career,” says floral designer **Clara Putlitz of Beyond the Garden Gate**, in Grants Pass, Ore. “The workshop represented an opportunity for me to expand my horizons and get out of my comfort zone. Steve is such a good example of a professional who knows how to lead, inspire and mentor others, and he does it with such ease.” ■

#### DETAILS

Sinclair & Moore: [sinclairandmoore.com](http://sinclairandmoore.com), @sinclairandmoore, #sinclairandmooreworkshop





# Storied Weddings

The why and how of event design with Aleah and Nick Valley.

Photography by **O'Malley Photographers**

**T**o wedding and event producers Nick and Aleah Valley, the title of their new book *Storied Weddings* (Gibbs Smith, 2018) means a wedding that tells not only the story of the couple it's celebrating but also one that becomes a fond memory for others and transports guests to a moment in time that perfectly captures happiness and joy. "A storied wedding is a gathering created with the perfect mix of ingredients that represents the couple," they write in the introduction.

Since producing their own wedding and forming Seattle-based **Valley & Company Events** in 2003, the duo has specialized in planning, designing and creating floral and décor that is both "elevated and fun" for the couples who hire them. After bringing their magic to hundreds of ceremonies, the Valleys collaborated on *Storied Weddings* to document their approach and philosophy. Featured here are images by their frequent collaborators and the book's photographers, **Scott and Ashlee O'Malley of O'Malley Photographers**. We spoke with Aleah Valley about *Storied Weddings* and her special passion for floral design.

**SFJ:** *What inspired **Storied Weddings**, and who is your audience?*

**AV:** Our audience is very much any couple who is getting married, but also we wrote the book to speak to the wedding community. We hope a photographer can pick this up and glean photo tips or that a venue can find creative ideas for presentation or that a florist will see the beautiful entry piece that means “silver tree” because that’s the family name, or the fun olive oil entry station that might inspire anyone throwing a party or entertaining.

**SFJ:** *How do you and Nick balance responsibilities for Valley & Company?*

**AV:** We fell into our roles very early on, and it serves our clients well because they have two approaches and two sides of logistics and creativity. Nick is very much fueled by the celebratory aspect and what our clients and their guests are experiencing, and I am, as well, but the floral story is very much my passion.

**SFJ:** *What does an initial Valley & Company consultation look like?*

**AV:** There’s always a “why” behind the designs, and we want our couples to think deeper than the pink peonies on their Pinterest board. I want to know “Why do you love pink peonies? Do they grow in your grandma’s garden, or were they given to you on your first date?” This book encourages people to think about the “why” and incorporate it into their big day. Often when a couple comes to us, they have a date or a date range in mind. We like to have an understanding of their vision even before we find a venue. We ask them to describe the feeling they want their guests to experience upon arrival. We ask, “When you close your eyes, are you walking through a vineyard? Are you on the beach?” That helps us gain a sense of place.

**SFJ:** *How do you manage the process and planning?*

**AV:** Nick and I both attend pretty much every single meeting together, so we’re both at tastings, giving our notes on presentation and flavor or wine and cocktail pairings. We both lend suggestions during the photography planning. I think vendors feel like we really listen to them. We try to provide a fun, lighthearted approach both when we’re producing and on the actual wedding day.

**SFJ:** *Aleah, since you take the lead on floral design, could you share your philosophy?*

**AV:** I think it’s important when designing and creating floral pieces that it all ties together; it’s not just about making a beautiful centerpiece; rather, it’s about the meaning of the elements that go into it. I always like to know what a bride’s favorite flowers are because that helps determine when the wedding could take place. As a floral designer, I believe every element should be pulled from the setting and relate to the couple. For example, for Allie and Collins’ winery wedding, we clipped the greens that were growing on the property to incorporate with white and green flowers. For Mollie and Aaron’s wedding, we cut apples from the family orchard for the centerpieces.

**SFJ:** *Is there a Valley & Company “look”?*

**AV:** If all of our weddings looked the same, we feel that we would be doing a disservice to the couple. Our style is very much “understated elegance,” and we believe that creating a timeless quality is where we shine. ■

#### **DETAILS**

Valley & Company Events: [valleyandco.com](http://valleyandco.com),  
[@valleyandco](https://www.instagram.com/valleyandco)



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