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PHOTOS COURTESY OF MISSY MCLAMB PHOTOGRAPHERS

▲ Wedding designer Sikky Rogers used Eric Winkenwerder of Wink Lighting and florist Pat McCall of the Blossom Shop for this September 2003 reception at the Charlotte Country Club.

◀ Bridesmaids at this July 2004 wedding reception hold bouquets by Elizabeth House Flowers at the Charlotte City Club.



DO'S AND DON'TS

Here are wedding designer Sikky Rogers' tips that any bride can benefit from no matter what her budget:

DO

- Put a budget together of the absolute maximum amount you can spend on your wedding.
- Think about colors you like. Clip pictures to show your likes and dislikes.
- Start your guest list. Expect the number of guests to be the same as the number of invitations you send out. If you want 250 people, have a list for 250 invitations.
- Find your wedding dress early. A year is great, nine months is OK, six months is doable but can be a problem. Because of alterations, try to buy your dress close to the wedding location.
- Put in place all your vendors as soon as you get engaged.

DON'T

- Forget that the ceremony is the most important part. Everything else will fall into place.
- Try to resolve all of the details at one time. Take each one and make a decision and then move on to the next one. A wedding and reception are overwhelming if you try to work on everything at once.
- Think that planning your wedding will be like a fairy tale. It is stressful and hard work.
- Listen to too many opinions from other people. It will only confuse you and make you stressed. This is your wedding. Listen to your inner self.
- Expect perfection. Allow the event to take on a life of its own as it happens.
- Ever plan an outside wedding or reception without a rain plan. Your day will be ruined and all the money you spent will be for nothing. Don't believe the Farmer's Almanac.
- Think you'll have time the last week to do anything. People will call and visit. Your entire week will be full of things that are not on your calendar. Be ready two weeks in advance.

SHE WEDS luxury WITH tradition

Designer Sikky Rogers ensures Charlotte's brides' Big Day exudes elegance and grace

BY OLIVIA FORTSON
ofortson@charlotteobserver.com

Charlotte native Sikky Rogers is charming, smart, elegant and calm. Those qualities – especially being calm – have made her one of Charlotte's top wedding designers.

She doesn't advertise her business, Entertain The Idea, which she started almost 20 years ago. Her clients come to her by word of mouth. They're mainly Old Charlotte families who had elegant weddings themselves and want the same for their children.

Rogers, who is in her early 60s, will not name names. ("If I wrote a book, I'd have to leave town," she jokes.) She will say the amount her clients spend on a wedding ranges from \$50,000 to \$700,000.

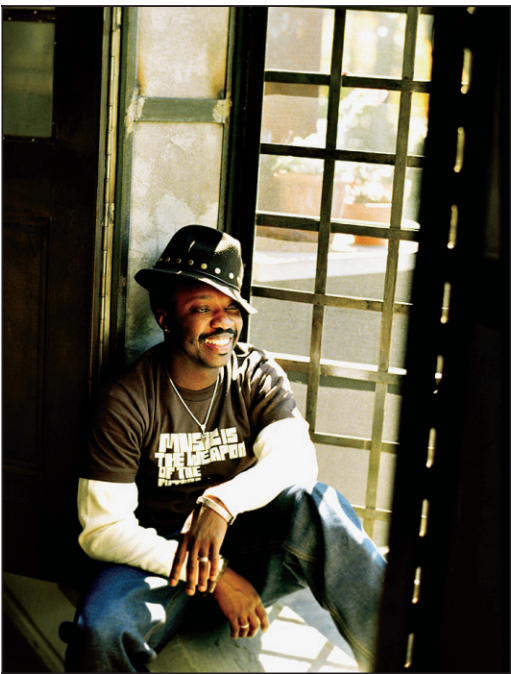
We talked with Rogers about her advice for brides, how weddings have changed since she's been in the business, and the elements that set a Southern wedding apart from those she's done in other parts of the country.

Q. Why can't you mention names?

"Because of my clients, I have to go underground more than a normal person. They live to keep their lives personal. Some of my clients could be in magazines; their weddings are very special. But they don't want to be in magazines."

Q. Why did you decide to become a wedding designer?

"My daughter was married in 1988 and I spent a year of my life doing her wedding.



JIVE RECORDS PHOTO

5 Questions for Anthony Hamilton

Everything about singer Anthony Hamilton is distinctive, from his scratchy and insistent voice to his around-the-way-boy look. The Charlotte native, who recently released "Ain't Nobody Worryin'," said his image is a nod to his Southern roots. — TONYA JAMESON

I once saw you buying a hat in Boris & Natasha. Where else do you shop in Charlotte? "I like SouthPark a lot because they have the nice stores that remind me of the fashions I see in other cities. I like Central Avenue – Reggae Central."

You've got the flyest hats. Where do you buy them? Various stores: Dillard's in SouthPark, Block (a New York-based designer), thrift stores. "It don't have to be new; I'll wash them out."

On an earlier album, you had a choir-boy image and were real clean-cut. Now, you're rockin' the soul man feel. How did you develop your personal style? "I stopped letting the label 'image' me. I started wanting the Southern flair, the guy next door. Wanting to feel that allowed me put on my trucker hat."

How does your style reflect your music? "It's a common outfit to listen to."

Is Grand Marnier and Heineken still your favorite drink? "It used to be. We (he and his wife) like to have a couple glasses of wine. Every now and then I'll have a Grand Marnier and Heineken."

TONGUE-IN-CHEEK BOOKS

It's never too early to make baby useful

BY PAMELA SITT
Seattle Times

Sure, your little angel can "turn over." But wouldn't you rather baby made you a martini?

Because it's never too early to start teaching children things, a San Francisco-based mom has created a series of tongue-in-cheek baby books with titles like "Baby, Make Me Breakfast" and "Baby, Mix Me A Drink."

The colorful board books offer simple, visual instructions for making toast and eggs and mixing basic cocktails.

"I know there are a lot of parents who just find parenting really funny, which I do," said author and illustrator Lisa Brown, 33. "The board books my son was reading, he just liked the shapes and colors. So I thought, might as well have something parents can enjoy looking at, too."

Brown is working on the next two books in her "Baby, Be Of Use" series: "Baby, Fix My Car" and "Baby, Do My Banking" – "because I hate standing in line at the bank."

The books are \$9, available at <http://store.mcsweneys.net> and at Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com.



SHE WEDS
luxury
WITH
tradition



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MISSY MCLAMB PHOTOGRAPHERS

The bride and groom at this wedding met and lived in New York, so they commissioned an art installation by New York artist Steve Keene for their nontraditional reception at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte in April 2005. Carolina Party Plus did the tent and rentals. John Lupton and Rodney Boone of Elements did the tent decoration.

Designer from 1E

The night of the wedding there was no one to help with anything. I spent all night running around. I didn't even get to enjoy it and I was exhausted for three weeks after it was all over. At that time, corporations began hiring event planners, and my daughter thought I would be great at that, but I didn't want to work for anyone. I was a founding partner in The Buttercup (an upscale stationery and gift store in Myers Park) so I had a sense of what it took to run a business." Rogers loves starting new businesses, and she's recently opened another event planning company, Rogers & Gala, with Angela Gala.

Q. Have you made mistakes?
"I do something wrong at every wedding, but I don't do the same wrong thing each time. There are so many people involved it's impossible to control everything. If anyone tells you they don't make mistakes, they're fudging. What I try to do is handle them before they become major. Cakes have fallen off platforms. Cakes have melted. I tell my brides that if something goes wrong, laugh and hold your head high."

Q. How do you keep coming up with new ideas?
"I have probably 100 wedding and design books. And I'm always reading magazines. If I get one idea out of them, I'm ahead of the game. I don't know anybody who can sit there and come up with new ideas every day. You have to get them from somewhere. You can't sit back and be lazy."

Q. What do you do when you first meet with a bride?
"I ask, 'What have you always dreamed your wedding would look like?' I listen and interpret their vision. I give them wedding books and magazines to research and tag pages that will give me a visual picture of what they like. I then start putting together a design that will represent their individuality."

Q. What's the best advice you give your brides?
"The bride is trying to please her mother, father, fiancé and mother-in-law, plus she's working and maybe buying a new home. Usually they have a couple of meltdowns. I tell them it's not a fantasy, it's a lot of hard work. They have to figure out what's important to them and then negotiate. I want my client to have a beautiful and ex-



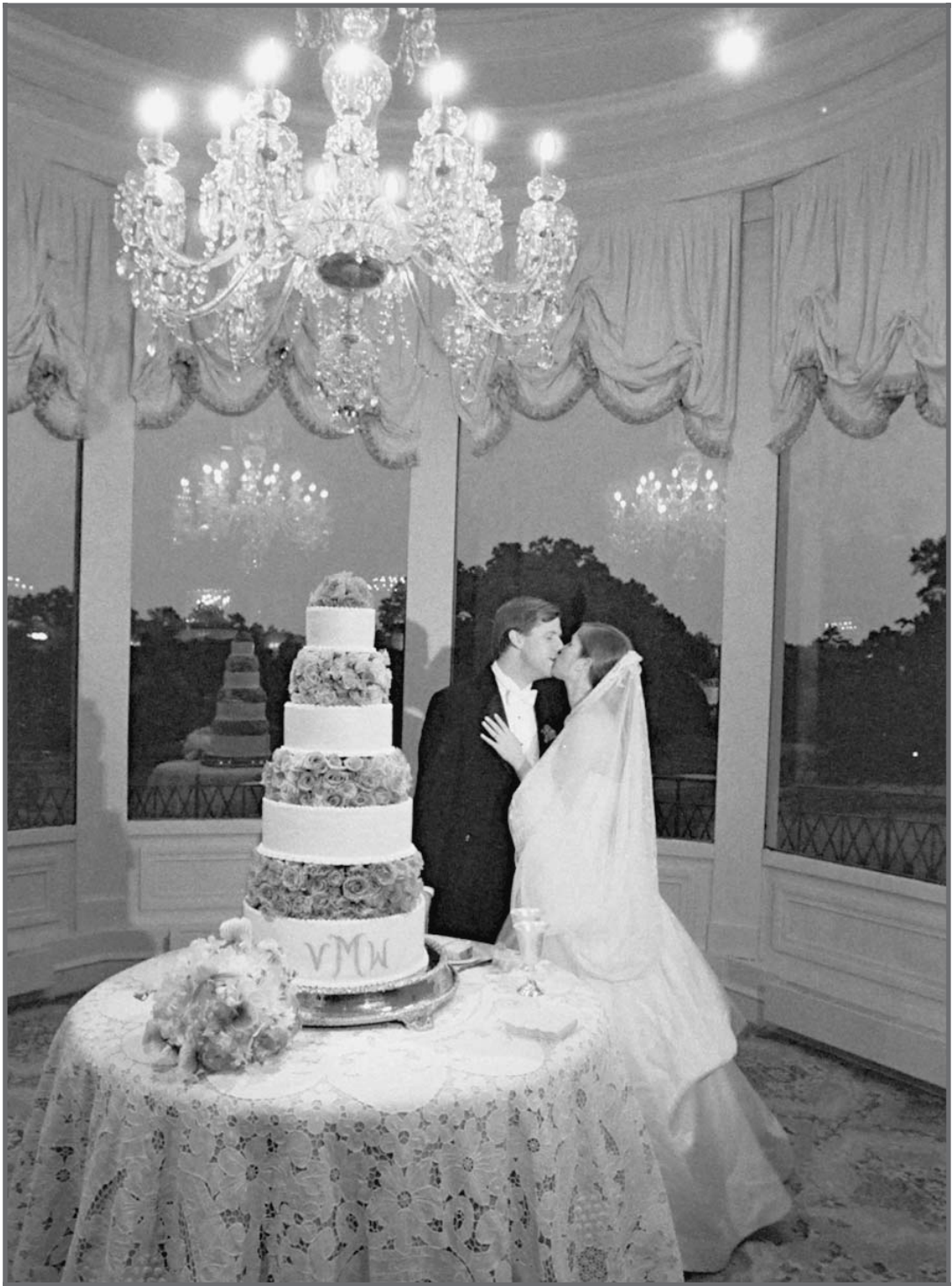
MORE INFORMATION

- Entertain The Idea, (704) 376-9046; www.sikkyrogers.com
- Rogers & Gala, (704) 375-9431; www.rogersandgala.com

citing reception, but I never want them to lose sight of the most important part of their wedding day: the religious ceremony and their lifetime commitment to each other."

Q. Any advice for when brides and their mothers don't agree?
"Your mother can be very helpful because she's lived longer, entertained more and has more experience. Unless you and your fiancé are paying for the wedding, you need to listen and be respectful. Stand up for what's important to you, but let some things go."

Q. How have weddings changed since you first started in the business?
"Weddings are not as traditional. The younger the couple, the more they want their wedding to be different. Photography has changed. Now it's more of a documentary or journalistic approach to the wedding. Lighting has added a whole new element to the industry. When I started, you put a couple of candles on a table and that was it. Now you can turn a room lilac or



▲ This May 2004 reception at the Charlotte Country Club is the epitome of an elegant Southern-style wedding with its mix of romance and tradition. The cake is by Kathy Allen of Cakes of Distinction and was decorated with real roses by Cecil Shearin and David Wynn of Elizabeth House Flowers.

◀ A flower girl walks down the aisle of Belk Chapel on the campus of Queens University of Charlotte for this July 2004 wedding. Cecil Shearin and David Wynn of Elizabeth House Flowers did the flowers.

VENDORS

Sikky Rogers attributes much of her success to working with outstanding vendors. Here are some of her favorites:

- Addressing invitations:** Jane Evans, (704) 552-6022.
- Cakes:** Cake Expressions by Lisa (Lisa Toohey), (704) 560-2013, www.cake-expressions.com; and Cakes of Distinction (Kathy Allen), (704) 552-9898.
- Catering:** Porcupine Provisions, (704) 376-4010; and The Side Porch (704) 451-7073; www.sideporch.com.
- Flowers:** Blossom Shop, (704) 376-3526, www.blossomshopflorist.com; Blue Thistle Flowers, (704) 844-8181; Elizabeth House Flowers, (704) 342-3919.
- Invitations:** The Buttercup, (704) 333-0544; Arzberger Buening Stationers, (704) 333-7532.
- Lighting:** Wink Lighting (Eric Winkenwerder), (704) 408-3517.
- Linens:** Carolina Party Plus, (704) 523-9300, www.carolinapartyplus.com; Party Tables out of Durham (919) 596-3521.
- Photography:** Missy McLamb Photography, (919) 755-1117, www.missymclamb.com; Tommy McCart, (704) 372-3213, www.tommy McCartphotography.com.
- Rentals:** Carolina Party Plus (Scott Fletcher), (704) 523-9300, www.carolinapartyplus.com; Creative Solutions (Brad Thomas out of Belmont), (704) 825-8701.
- Tent Decor and Flowers:** Elements (John Lupton and Rodney Boone), (704) 377-3433.
- Transportation:** Trolleys of the Carolinas (Trolleys Inc.), (800) 230-8857, www.trolleysinc.com.
- Music:** Ted Hall at East Coast Entertainment, (704) 339-0100.
- Wedding dresses:** Nitsa's, (704) 940-1999, www.nitsas.com.

pink if you want to, or you can project snowflakes onto walls so it looks like it's snowing. Cakes used to be a basket weave design with fresh flowers. Now they're an art form."

Q. What's the difference between Southern weddings and weddings you've done in other parts of the country?
"I think the South is the last place where we have tradition and romance. In New York, they're more glitzy. I did one in Aspen (Colo.) that I'd describe as natural elegance. Here, the parents will go to an extent to have understated elegance. I tell them understated elegance costs more – a whole lot more. Most everywhere else, there's a seated dinner at the wedding. We do stations or a buffet. I like that because the night

before you do a seated dinner. If you do stations at the wedding, it's more interactive and exciting. You meet more people and have more fun than if you're sitting at the same table the whole time."

Q. What was your wedding like?
"I was married in 1962 (to Tom Rogers Jr.) over Thanksgiving weekend at Myers Park Methodist Church. We had a huge dinner dance the night before at the Charlotte City Club. I had 12 bridesmaids, which I think broke a record at the time. I had a beautiful wedding dress and cake, but not an elaborate reception. We had mints, nuts and little tea sandwiches in the church's fellowship hall. I thought it was the most beautiful wedding in the whole world."

BOOKS SHOWCASE TRENDY SHOPS WORLDWIDE

Take retail therapy on the road

BY TRACY ACHOR HAYES
Dallas Morning News

You don't have to be planning a trip to enjoy a flip through "Cool Shops" (\$16.95 each, Te Neues), a series of small-scale soft-covers showcasing cutting-edge shops in eight international cities – Paris, New York, London, Milan and, new this fall, Barcelona, Berlin, Munich and Los Angeles.

Each book opens with a brief introduction (in German, English, French, Spanish and Italian) of the spotlighted city, followed by appetite-whetting photos of 30 or so mostly indie boutiques specializing in everything from shoes to skateboards, books to wine.

Text is minimal: a just-the-facts listing of designer, address, phone, Web site, hours and a one- or two-line description of each spot's products or special features.

Price range is the most obvious omission, but given that we'll probably never visit Iguapop Gallery or Biosca y Botey, it's a minor quibble.

A companion series, "Cool Restaurants," throws the spotlight on chic eateries from Shanghai to Rome.



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