

SOUTHERN DISTINCTION

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LOCAL MAGAZINE UPC

Jill Bosher

Featuring the Artist

CATHY LITTLE



I seemed destined to be an artist from an early age. My grandmother was a watercolor artist, seamstress, and gardener. She, along with Mama and Nana, raised us four grandchildren to use our hands. We didn't have a Hobby Lobby around the corner back then. Who knew you could make glue from flour and water? We learned how to feel the craft and not rush the process. We colored, crocheted, made string art, pressed flowers, and worked on embroidery among other things: all good traits for a Southern girl to have. Creating came naturally to me; to make something and give it away was a pleasure I truly enjoyed. I coined my own word: a heartist, one who creates from the heart.

During high school, I thought at one time about choosing art as a career, but I decided to study science instead. It was my father who was adamant about our education. "Learn all you can," he would say. "No one can take knowledge away from you." After I began my college courses at Auburn University, lost in a sea of freshmen classes of 500 students, I figured out quickly that science was not going to be for me. My roommate encouraged me to change my major to fine art. She said, "I think you are very creative. You should study art!" Thanks, Ann Marie, you set me back on a course for a lifelong love of the arts.

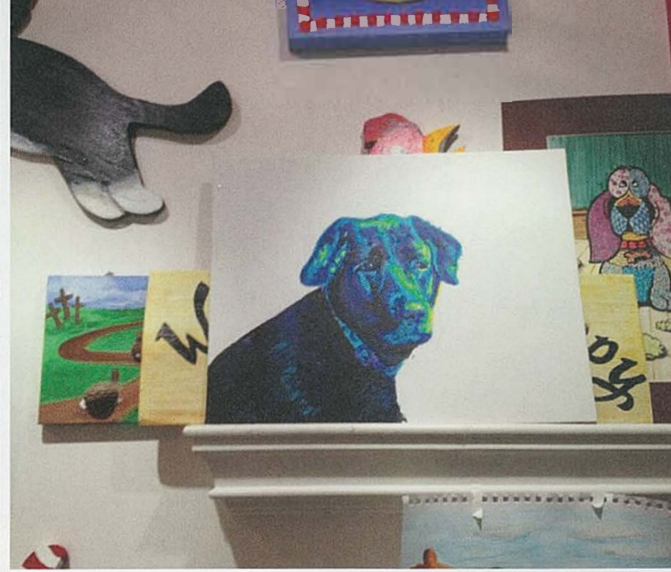
My first job after graduation was in the graphics department of Quantrell Mullens & Associates, an interior design firm in Atlanta. Being surrounded with a creative force of interior space planners, architects and designers began to shape my future. The exposure to and support of many strong independent women in the industry gave me the confidence to create my own entrepreneurial ventures: freelancing graphic design, marketing, and running my own art studio. At one time, I was a festival artist, attending art shows across the region. I accumulated my own set of awards and ribbons in best of show.

When I decided to renovate the original home on our farm in Hall County into a wedding venue, all the skills I had accumulated over the years mingled to create something truly special. At The Farmhouse at 30542, you really get the feel that an artist has pulled together the space. I designed custom glass windows, upcycled swings, and took into account the play of light and shadows the barn makes as I transformed the space. I like to think of The Farmhouse at 30542 as a living canvas, ready for brides to make it their own for their special day and capture the memories through photography.

Owning a wedding venue required new skill sets for me, including how to keep up with numerous details to track, forms to process and schedules to manage. This is not really







how one would describe the life of an artist. My challenge was: how do I keep this fresh and not lose the artist within?

Well, years of teaching sketchbook journaling classes had left me with many pieces of original art. I decided to develop a wedding planner to help brides who book our venue. It was not a bad marketing idea, either. In this wedding planner, not only do we feature our venue through photography, but I have also included my watercolor journal pages: many colorful, upbeat, positive pages to encourage brides to unwind and destress as they plan their weddings. Every year, we have a new set of brides to book and we have new planners to give to them.

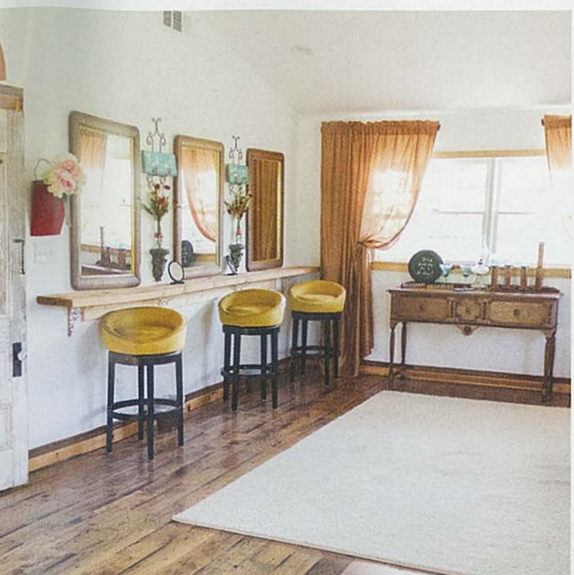
Because being creative leads to more inventiveness, my wedding planners inspired two other books, a day planner and a how-to on art journaling, which I self-published through Blurb. They are available online at <http://www.blurb.com/user/littlecatty>.

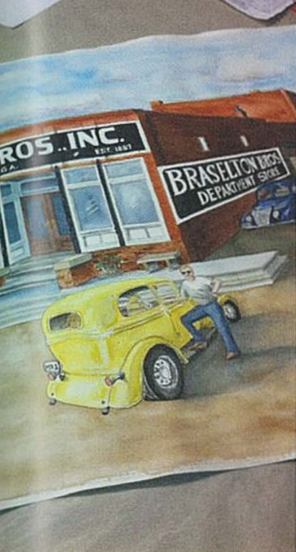
Sketchbook journaling, like art journaling, allows you a place to preserve your thoughts and ideas through painting and drawing. In 2011 I participated in my first sketchbook project with the Brooklyn Art Library. For \$25, any doodler,

student, parent, graphic designer, architect or would-be artist with an idea can fill a 32-page sketchbook and add it to the library's collection. Since I had already begun to keep a watercolor travel journal, this was right up my alley. Not everyone chooses to have their art digitized, but many do; there are over 20,000 complete and digitally scanned sketchbooks that anyone can view from their site, and thousands of sketchbooks (more like 40,000) available to view at the physical library in New York. The Sketchbook Project is a great resource for any artist and has other challenges in which artists can participate on its website: <https://www.sketchbookproject.com/challenges>.

My digital Sketchbooks with the Brooklyn Art Library can be found at these links: <https://www.sketchbookproject.com/library/983>, <https://www.sketchbookproject.com/library/10799>.

As it turned out, in developing The Farmhouse at 30542, I developed my personal brand. As a fine artist, I have explored many media, and watercolor and art sketchbooks are just some of many facets of my inner artist. I have also introduced handmade pottery into the venue. We have a station here where we create





two custom hearts with the couple's initials. On their wedding day, they take the hearts, tied together with string, and tie them onto our own version of "love locks," tying their love together at The Farmhouse. The couples love this idea. Throughout the Farmhouse you can find more handmade pottery plates and even order a custom one for gift.

In terms of bringing art to our guests, I host a pottery party for bridal parties to create wedding take-away gifts. "Many hands make light work" was another of Mama's sayings. Being from the South, I am sure there are others reading this that have heard that one too. After one pottery party where twelve friends came over and each made ten small pots, one guest told us, "We had the best time making little pots for our daughter's wedding."

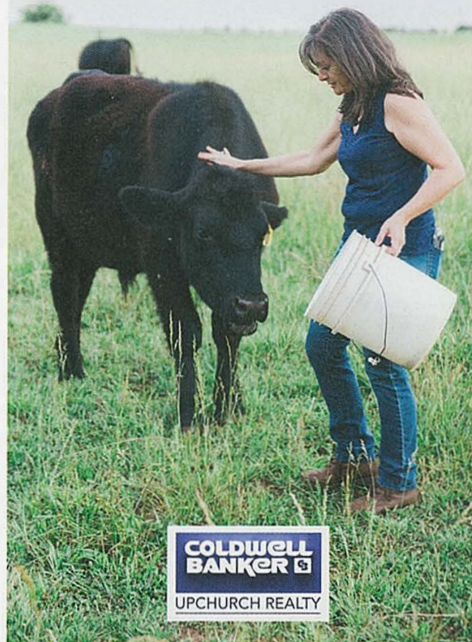
After a pottery party, I fire the pots in my kiln. Then they are ready to glaze, which can be another night of fun with friends. After a second firing, all the pots are glazed in different colors and ready to pair with tiny succulents which are placed inside. Guests are always excited to select which one to take home after the wedding reception.

At The Farmhouse at 30542, I am staying true to my art heritage. More branding ideas have yet to ripen. Time changes and people will expect to see different ideas. What a wonderful profession I chose to be able to just wipe the canvas and create something new.



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