

# Southern Charm

Artist Sally King Benedict is a Matchbook girl through and through. She was a self-proclaimed history dork in college and now spends her days painting in her sun-filled Charleston studio. This spring she and her husband George are moving to Atlanta in time for the arrival of their first baby. We asked the delightful young painter for her thoughts on artistic inspiration, maternity chic, and what she loves about the South.

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*Pardon our stating the obvious, but you have killer maternity style. What advice do you have for the stylish mommy-to-be?*

It's kind of counter-intuitive, but the tighter the better! It's such a fun time to show off your little bump. I have short shift dresses in my closet that I used to think I had to be in great shape to wear and now I can wear them with confidence! I don't want to dress completely differently from how I normally would, so I'm pulling out my maxi dresses and making it work!

*If you've got it, flaunt it! Do you like getting dressed up or is your style more laid back?*

I always try to have one good quality piece mixed with whatever is most comfortable. I'm always looking to Celine and Chloe for inspiration—my style can be very nude on nude on white on nude. I like to have special occasions where I can really have fun and get dolled up, but I don't do it on a daily basis—that's just the nature of what I do.

*What are some of your favorite fashion haunts in Charleston?*

Hampden Clothing—they're so sweet. And

Pearl is great. And I always go to Cynthia Rowley for something fun for an art event. They're my go-to for something a little more funky! And then I always go vintage shopping when I'm out of town. I'm in New York three times a year and I have lots of cute and stylish friends there who keep me on top of my game!

*You were raised in Atlanta, moved to Charleston to attend college, and now plan to move back to your hometown in May. What do you love most about both cities?*

Charleston is just so quaint; I love the size of it and the fact that you can walk everywhere. Everyone here is young; Charleston has become this little southeastern mecca for creative businesses. Moving to Atlanta will be a new chapter. There's so much we're going to miss, but it's time to try something new. And we're really excited to be closer to my family!

*Just in time for your new baby!*

Yes! Having a baby with my mom there...I can't think of anything better. They're going to be such great grand parents. Plus, we love the





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food and art scene in Atlanta. A lot of my good friends are in the restaurant business or into organic farming and I love to be part of that culture. Being a bigger city, Atlanta has a great art scene, which is definitely stimulating for me.

*Speaking of the art scene, we are absolutely enamored with your work! Tell us about some of your creative influences.*

Helen Frankenthaler, Philip Guston, Pablo Picasso, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, all the color field painters...oh, and photography! Massimo Vitali, I just absolutely love him. Photography is definitely starting to influence me a lot more. Then I'm inspired by blogs—all the inspiration boards, the fashion!—and textiles and travel. We've traveled to Florence (I was a total Renaissance art history dork in college!) and Mexico. There are so many sides of inspiration for me: happy tropical places, girly francophilia, '70s rock and roll, and a preppy side. I wish I could be in all of those places at once. That's why my art can be all over the place!

*That just means you're multi-faceted! What is*





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A photograph of an artist's studio. In the background, a white door is visible on the left. The floor is made of dark wood. Several pieces of artwork are scattered around: one large abstract painting with vibrant colors (blue, orange, green, yellow) is leaning against a wall; another abstract painting with warm tones (yellow, orange, black) is leaning against a wall on the right; and several smaller paintings and sketches are on the floor. A white rolling cart with a tray of brushes and a bottle of paint is in the foreground. A large, semi-transparent blue circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text. There are also smaller, semi-transparent teal and orange circles in the lower-left and lower-center areas.

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## Sally's Matchbook Questionnaire

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TEA OR COFFEE?	<i>Tea</i>
I COLLECT...	<i>objects d'art</i>
FAVORITE CITY?	<i>New York</i>
SPRING OR FALL?	<i>Fall</i>
BLOOM OF CHOICE?	<i>Garden Roses &amp; Succulents</i>
STYLE ICON?	<i>Lauren Hutton</i>
FRAGRANCE?	<i>Hermes: Un Jardin Sur Le Toit</i>
LINENS?	<i>White cocktail, Turkish bath, D.Porthault bed</i>
CHINA PATTERN?	<i>Anything blue &amp; white</i>
I'M LUSTING AFTER...	<i>a fabulous fireplace</i>
MOST PRIZED POSESSION?	<i>The ring my husband got me in Florence to celebrate our first baby due in July!</i>
GIRL CRUSH?	<i>Ann Mashburn</i>
BOY CRUSH?	<i>Sid Mashburn</i>
ON WEEKENDS...	<i>Sleeping in, going to the beach, getting creative in the kitchen rather than the studio...staying up late.</i>



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*your proudest moment as an artist?*

I'm most proud when I'm by myself in my studio and I finish something that I really love. If I spend money to frame something, that's a proud moment. It means I'm committing to keeping it, and I don't keep a lot of things!

*I love that! Are you able to paint every day?*

My typical day starts with sleeping in a little, answering emails with a cup of tea, wearing my robe, and loving life. My studio is walking distance, but I always drive because it seems I'm constantly lugging things around. Then from there it's pretty unplanned. I listen to music

and I'm usually working on a couple paintings in the same room. I sit and stare at them a lot, prop them up on the mantel, and live with them for a little. I'll go meet my husband for lunch, then I'll read a little...I'm running in and out all day!

*They do say variety is the spice of life. Are you mostly painting for clients or for yourself?*

It's all about balance. Sometimes I'll have clients who fell in love with a piece that sold two years ago. I want them to have a piece they love, but it's hard to go back to that place! But it's really fun to see the finished product; it makes it feel like

a team effort. It's important for me to do my own work in addition to commissions or else I'd lose my ammunition, my creative direction. Working for myself is more freeing, more loose.

*Last, but not least... this issue is Matchbook's field guide to spring. What do you love about this season?*

Definitely the wardrobe change! The weather in Charleston is just insanely beautiful. It's boating weather! And we go to the beach all the time. The start of the year is always tough for me—spring is like pulling off the bandaid!

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