

Motley's CREW

WEDDING PLANNER GETS HELP WITH HER OWN

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OVER the past six years, event planner Sheila Motley estimates she's planned 60 weddings. Getting to know a bride's taste is a challenge for a planner, so Motley's particularly looking forward to a wedding this September in which she and the bride are already perfectly in synch. That's because she *is* the bride.

"I'm not afraid to experiment," says Motley, a formal professional equestrian who says her wedding will reflect her and fiancé Dan Boyle's taste for comfortable, casual elegance.

While Motley says her wedding planning experience gave her plenty of ideas, she brushes aside the notion that planning her own event has been a piece of cake. In fact, she took the same advice she gives brides: use a wedding planner. In Motley's case, that planner is her Event Company colleague Jessica Sheffield.

"When we first got engaged, I had some ideas of what I wanted to do, and I took on making those decisions on my own," says Motley, who soon became overwhelmed by the logistics of juggling her own wedding plans with those of her clients. "Quickly thereafter, I gave Jessica a phone call," she laughs.

Although the two are colleagues and friends, planning Motley's big day is strictly business for Jessica.

"When we have our meetings, I'm just another client in the office," says Motley, who blogs about her own wedding planning at theeventco.com.

Both, however, joke that it may be hard for Motley to actually yield control on the big day.

"We talked about getting her a white headset," laughs Sheffield.

"I'll be interested to see how much I can let go," Motley muses.

So what does a wedding planner plan for her own date with destiny?

DATE: September 13, 2008 at 6:30pm

LOCATION: Highground, Motley's parents' Keswick farm

DRESS: Trumpet style duchess satin dress by Monique Lhuillier

BRIDESMAIDS: Four, in long chocolate-brown dresses by Jim Hjelm

COLOR SCHEME: Mostly white, with chocolate-brown and gray accents

FOOD: Catering by The Event Company. "More of a cocktail event," says Motley,

who aims for "low key but very fun. We're not sitting for dinner, we're having food stations."

SPECIAL TOUCH: "Both of my dogs—a shih tzu and a corgi—are going to be in the ceremony. I'll walk down the aisle with one of them with my dad, and my mom will walk down with the other."

HONEYMOON: One week in Turks and Caicos, leaving Tuesday after the wedding ■

