

BY LINDSAY HUNTER  
MAJOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
GEORGINA PRESTON

A PERSONAL  TRAVEL DIARY

## THE WELBOURNE INN

**A**S AN INTERIOR DESIGNER, I am fortunate enough to have the opportunity to bring a client's dream to life by incorporating their life as an equestrian with the modern comforts of home. I love the search for the perfect piece of furniture or accessory—it makes me feel like a museum curator pulling together one-of-a-kind treasures to create a cohesive collection that tells a story. For almost as long as I've been an interior designer, I have wanted my own shop to showcase a collection of my favorite treasures. I am inspired by the elegance and history of equestrian culture, particularly British, and I designed Modern Equestrian Shop so enthusiasts could create the equestrian look in their own homes. From equestrian artwork to cozy cashmere tartan blankets and saddle leather boxes with brass stirrup buckles, these items are meant to complement an equestrian's collection of tack and treasures from the barn to create a



EQUESTRIAN STARS ALIGNED IN VIRGINIA HUNT COUNTRY

cohesive equestrian aesthetic in the home.

As I was searching for the perfect equestrian art prints while redecorating my equestrian bedroom, I came across four vintage prints from Hart Equestrian that stopped me in my tracks. Hart Equestrian, a name that combines Christine Parrish's two passions—horses and art, is a collection of luxury equestrian home décor inspired by the personal aesthetic she wanted for her own home. She has a passion for uniting equestrian creatives, sharing the work of artists, past and present, and sharing treasures from the past, giving a second life to pieces that may have been lost to history. After posting photos of the final installation of the vintage prints in my home, Christine responded with gratitude, and a friendship began.

Christine and I both expressed an interest in doing a joint photoshoot since our products worked so well together. When Christine announced that she had arranged





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for renowned British equestrian photographer Georgina Preston to come to Middleburg, Virginia, for a month to do photoshoots and had also planned a luncheon event for equestrian business owners where Georgina would be the Guest of Honor; it was an opportunity I couldn't refuse.

**L**isa Harris, the owner and jewelry designer of Savenac 1821, would also be attending this event. Inspired by her grandmother's classic equestrian style and her Virginia horse farm, Savenac, built in 1821, Lisa designs luxury pieces intended to be family heirlooms for the next generation of equestrians. Lisa worked in the fashion and jewelry business for many years, but it wasn't until she reconnected with riding that she decided to create a collection of luxury equestrian jewelry.

Upon discovering that Savenac 1821, Hart Equestrian, Modern Equestrian Shop, and Georgina Preston would all be in Middleburg simultaneously, it was clear that the stars were aligned for us to collaborate on a photoshoot. While discussing



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possible venues, Lisa suggested the Welbourne Inn, a historic home now a bed and breakfast, which she had seen in the April 2019 issue of *Equestrian Living*.

We needed an exceptional equestrian property to showcase our products in a setting that exuded character and a classic equestrian lifestyle, and the Welbourne Inn was just the right vibe. As I drove through the stone gates of Welbourne and down the long gravel driveway, I immediately felt like I had journeyed back in time. Built in 1775,

the Welbourne was purchased in 1830 and has been in the family for eight generations. The innkeeper explained that it was the home of her great-great-grandfather, Richard Henry Dulany, who in 1840 founded the Piedmont Fox Hounds, the oldest fox hunting club in the nation, and in 1853 founded the nation's oldest horse show, the Upperville Colt and Horse Show. The inn has hosted guests such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Wolfe, and even Jackie Kennedy while she was fox hunting. The home is furnished with original antiques, art, and enchanting treasures, like a living museum.



**W**hile scouting out the rooms, we were immediately drawn to the rich, red walls of the Library, its shelves of old books, a green leather sofa from the early 1900s, layered antique rugs, and the morning light streaming in through the sheer drapery. Georgina declared that the light chose that room, so we set up in the Library, adjacent to the guest room where F. Scott Fitzgerald had stayed.

As fortune would have it, Georgina's close friend, artist Madeleine de St. Pierre Bunbury, had accompanied her on the trip from England, and Georgina persuaded her to model for us. We knew of her accomplished work as a painter, but we had no idea she would show up in breeches and boots weathered from the previous day's hunt: a Martha Sitwell tweed coat with ruffled shoulders and gold buttons and absolutely blow us away with her natural talent. She settled right into the green leather sofa in the Library as though it was her own home, surrounded by Modern Equestrian Shop's cashmere blankets and leather decor, Savenac 1821's fine jewelry, and Hart Equestrian's



artwork. Madeleine's soft blonde curls were styled in such a fashion that had someone told me we had been transported back to the 1940s, I could have believed them. I wonder, could F. Scott Fitzgerald have taken a seat on this very sofa and picked up a book before heading off to his guest suite?

While we broke for lunch, beautiful classical music mysteriously filled the house. We found Madeleine in the Music room playing Chopin's Nocturne Opus 9 No. 2 on an antique piano, and it was

clear that her talent knows no boundaries. My favorite room in the house was the Green Hall, part of the "New Wing," as the family fondly calls it, as it was part of an addition in 1870. The green paint color is unique to the home and was the perfect backdrop for our shoot.

That day was perfectly magical and surreal. Although Modern Equestrian Shop, Hart Equestrian, and Savenac 1821 have different points of view and unique personalities, Georgina seamlessly captured the essence of all three businesses. She told the story of our three lives serendipitously connected in the heart of hunt country. It was an unforgettable day and an experience I'll always treasure.

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