



Interview of Aimee Flynn and Yvette Navarro from The Parlour at Manns Chapel by Dogwood Studio

Interview Held on April 20, 2021

Jennifer: Today I am pleased to be speaking with Aimee Flynn and Yvette Navarro from The Parlour at Manns Chapel. The Parlour is based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and is an all female founded company. The vintage chapel hosts a variety of events.

I'm wondering Aimee and Yvette, if you could tell me a little bit more about the type of events that you host?

Aimee: Hi, Jennifer

We believe big in “Love Big, Celebrate Small”, so all of our events are creative and a little bit different from other venues. So, we host creative weddings, workshops, we do a lot of retreats, and we LOVE chef dinners, and a lot of wellness events as well.

Jennifer: Perfect! The next question is, What steps have you taken to reopen safely?

Yvette: Yes, we have done quite a few things to get ready to welcome guests back safely to the chapel. The big one is that we just recently created a new outdoor area because a lot of people will probably want to have most of their events outside. We have this garden area that we have extended and renovated, and it is simply beautiful now during this time of year (spring). Besides that, we have been following all of the governor's mandates on gathering restrictions and making sure that whoever has an event coming up is aware of where we are with that. We've done a lot of things inside the building: put signage up and put all of the necessary sanitizing stations. We've talked to our cleaning crew and have new procedures for cleaning now. There have been a lot of changes in that regard and making sure that we know that our guests feel comfortable and safe when they come and have their event here.

We are so big on the intimate event – we are the one specialized intimate event in town. We are taking this time to inspire people to start celebrating small, having an intimate guest list, and being focused on the people who



are closest to them rather than having a big crowd for the sake of an audience. That makes for a more meaningful event out here, which has been really nice.

Jennifer: Sounds very nice! For our event, we have a certain limit to the number of people who can go in and need to wear a mask into the space and when leaving their mat (can be maskless while on mat). That is very helpful to the community to feel safe, and I appreciate all your efforts.

Yvette: It is important that the community still gets to enjoy this space and it is important for us to still have people here while we are expanding it. Everybody has been really open to the changes and accepting of any rules or mandates. We have been creative about our approach. It is going quite well.

Jennifer: Wonderful! I am glad to hear it. And I see that you are an all-female founded company. What does that mean for you and for the community?

Yvette: That actually means a lot to us. We are in a building and restored a building that was built in 1887, and because of that, it has two front doors: one that was intended for men, and one that was intended for women, and they are right next to each other. For us to see that everyday and know that now it is owned by women, we team up with female-founded companies, from floral designers to planners, chefs, and a lot of our staff. It is really important for the community to see female leadership, especially in an historic building like this one. So yes, to us, it is really important everyday.

Jennifer: That is a very interesting story! I didn't know we had any historic buildings with two separate entrances like that.

Yvette: So they share sort of a staircase, but there are definitely two ways to get to each door. It's just incredible that there ever was a time like that. And now women are making big decisions here and impacting lives and doing what women and moms do. We really love it.

Jennifer: That's wonderful! I'm so glad there is an organization like yours to help women see that they can succeed in what they want to do and their vision.



Yvette: We always say it is important for our daughters to see us not only be female founders and owners but also to see us work hard, get sweaty, and do all the hard things. It is important to expose them to that.

Jennifer: Wonderful. As you know, Dogwood Studio is a yoga and meditation focused organization. How does yoga fit in with your company's vision and goals?

Yvette: The space is spiritual in nature because it is a chapel. It has a feeling of good energy. We also believe in going things authentically and with a lot of thoughtfulness. So that type of class – yoga, of all the wellness classes, fits in so beautifully in this space. I felt that when people take a yoga class in here, they are really able to meditate, be calm, and just BE. We have experience ourselves taking a couple of yoga classes in here and were really happy to feel that when we took those classes because we knew that our guests were having that same experience.

Jennifer: I'm very glad that you were able to have that experience in your chapel. It sounds like such a wonderful fit between the visions. Finding that peace, finding that center.

Yvette: We find that there is something special about doing something in a space you don't expect. So our chef dinners in the chapel are always such a hit because it's such an unexpected location, and the same goes for wellness and yoga. When you get a little white chapel and take that time to step away from the outside world and its busy-ness. It's pretty impactful that way.

Jennifer: That's wonderful. I can't wait to come visit you. I'm finding my peace envisioning it in my mind. Is there anything else we should know?

Yvette: I think that's it! I think it is just keeping hope up right now. We are staying really focused on the "Love Big, Celebrate Small" mindset that it is ok to come together, doing it safely, not staying apart too much, and staying centered amidst all the madness right now. This building has been a really great place, a beacon for people – and for us, really.

Aimee: We are also really excited to have Dogwood Studio start their classes here soon. We are hoping that people will show up for that.



Yvette: Dogwood Studio coming is a real sign of things improving. Having that mission here in our space is definitely a sign that things are opening up, and people are going to come back together again.

Jennifer: Absolutely. That light at the end of the tunnel, that hope, that reconnecting that we all want so much.

Yvette: Yes, for sure.

Jennifer: Aimee and Yvette, it has been a pleasure speaking with you.

Yvette: Thank you, Jennifer. It has been so nice talking with you. We are really looking forward to this partnership.

Jennifer: And we as well.