

## Hosting a MOGSouth or GatorMOG Event

**MOGSouth**, the 'Morgan Owners Group - South' is a group of Morgan car owners mainly from the Southeastern United States and East Coast. The organization formally came into being in 1975 with the first MOGSouth Meet in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in 1976. MOGSouth celebrated its 40th anniversary at a meet in Aiken, South Carolina in 2015. In 2007 the MOGSouth club expanded when the Morgan Owners Group of Florida, **GatorMOG**, joined MOGSouth as a 'Chapter'.



MOGSouth is a very loose organization without a formal management structure. This is to say that volunteers are responsible for making everything happen. MOGSouth typically has two annual meets, one in the Spring and one in the Fall (imaginatively named the **MOGSouth Spring Meet** and **MOGSouth Fall Meet**) as well as an annual **MOGSouth Holiday Party**. All meets and parties are 'hosted' by a volunteer member of the group.



MOGSouth was founded on this principle of 'hosting'. The Founders did not want a bunch of bylaws and rules and regulations; nor did they not want officers or other yearly responsibilities.

The Spring and Fall Meets typically include Friday and Saturday activities. Friday is usually arrival day and Saturday is full of event activities. Sunday is usually the day folks travel home. This is not cast in stone however it supports folks that are still working.

Past meets and parties have been held at (or near) member's houses as well as in hotels or bed and breakfast. (The use of hotels and B&Bs is more popular now that the club has grown to a more substantial size.) In addition to the MOGSouth Meets, there are a few **MOGSouth Noggins** each year.

**GatorMOG** doesn't host meets, per se, but it does have a few '**Noggins**' during the year. These are usually specific to Florida Morgan Owners, held in Florida locales, but really anyone is welcome.

A 'Noggin', by our definition (and mostly all other British car clubs) is a just a short gathering of Morgan folks, with or without cars, at a pub, restaurant or other locale. Fundamentally, it is just a little less structured, or shorter, than the bigger meets. Maybe just a Saturday afternoon / evening. Formally, the definition of a Noggin is as shown below.

*(**'Noggin'** Definition – A small quantity of alcoholic drink, typically a quarter of a pint. 'I imagine you all go round to the pub afterwards for a quick noggin and a chat')*.

→ So there are **MOGSouth Meets** and **MOGSouth Noggins**, as well as Florida based **GatorMOG Noggins** on the calendar.

Each one of these events typically needs a volunteer to host. Someone to plan and make all the arrangements (with help of course.) This document is intended to provide any MOGSouth / GatorMOG member with some idea of what is involved in hosting an event and provide some answers to common questions related to planning the thing. It tries to encapsulate a number of 'lessons learned' and 'best practices' to ease the burden of volunteering as an event host. Please keep in mind that these 'lessons learned' and 'best practices' may or may not work for you and your particular situation. They are generic in nature so use your best judgement when making decisions about your specific event.

Planning an event will typically require identification of a **location** for the event, determining the **timing** or when the event will be held and **planning out the meals and activities** that will occur over the course of the event. If an overnight event is anticipated, some sort of **lodging** will be necessary and it is usually left up to the volunteer host to select a hotel, B&B or the like and negotiate a group rate.

→ **When in doubt, talk with someone else.** There are any number of folks within MOGSouth and GatorMOG experienced at planning these sorts of events. I know they will be more than happy to help you.

## Location

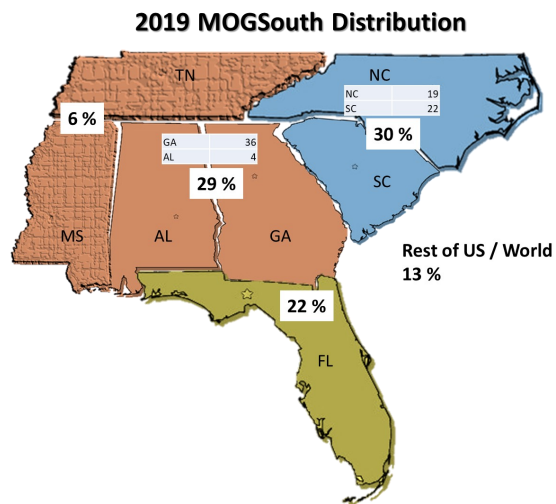
The location is are dependent on the volunteers who decide to host the event. **Any locale within the MOGSouth region is viable.**

Consideration must be given to the location's past history as a site for MOGSouth events. We don't want to go to the same

location time and time again. The reason is simple, folks will choose not to participate as they have 'been there, done that.' A location that hasn't been used for a meet in some time will appeal to a greater crowd.

Another important consideration is general accessibility to a large number of MOGSouth members. Having a meet at one corner of the MOGSouth region is likely to limit the number of folks that will attend as it may become a 'bridge to far,' e.g. prohibitively difficult to get there, or just too far (or expensive) to travel.

These more 'remote' locations should be considered out of the norm and only used on an infrequent basis. They shouldn't be totally discarded however. We try to have meet locations that are convenient to all our members. Some of our best meets have occurred at 'remote' locations. For example, MOGSouth has been west to Jackson Mississippi on several occasions, as well as south of Orlando Florida on several occasions. Use the graphic to better understand the MOGSouth membership geographic distribution.



## Timing

Like the location of the event, the timing of the event is also up to the volunteers who decide to host the event. Selecting the timing of any MOGSouth event is always a challenge and we try very hard to deconflict the event with other things on the MOGSouth Calendar. Timing is also dependent on availability of affordable lodging, typical weather, other significant events at the desired location, etc. The best reference is the posted MOGSouth web site calendar. Look on the calendar to see what events are already scheduled and try to find dates that won't interfere.

The Calendar is very dense and it really is impossible to de-conflict all the events with every other event. So don't get overly concerned. There will be always be conflicts and they cannot be avoided.

MOGSouth	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Spring Meet	17-May	16-May	22-May	22-Apr	21-Apr	29-Mar	3-May	15-Apr	22-Apr	29-Apr	17-May
Fall Meet	17-Oct	10-Oct	6-Nov	21-Oct	29-Sep	21-Sep	1-Nov	15-Oct	16-Sep	15-Sep	14-Sep

The dates of the past **MOGSouth Spring Meets** and **MOGSouth Fall Meets** are shown in the table.

This should give you an idea of the general timing in the year that the MOGSouth meets are scheduled. Again, nothing is cast in stone and variations of these time frames are always possible. MOGSouth and/or GatorMOG Noggins can be scheduled anytime.

Only the **MOGSouth Holiday Party** timing is fixed each year and it is always the **1st Saturday in December**.

## Lodging

When looking for a hotel or lodging for the group, estimate the number of couples expected to participate. We typically expect around 20 couples for a normal MOGSouth meet. So getting a hotel to block some 20 rooms for a period of time leading up to the event is appropriate. Perhaps 7-10 couples can be expected for a GatorMOG Noggins. Sometimes we get more, sometimes less.

Participation levels depends on any number of things. Certainly the location of the event, the activities of the event, the timing of the event, the costs, etc. The more unique and special the event, the greater the participation is likely to be. If you think you'll get more participation, ask to block more rooms.

**Locate a hotel that is convenient to the event and is reasonably priced** (prices will vary due to the location of the event, the location of the hotel, economic inflation over time, etc.) Anything too cheap (~\$75 a night) will likely be insufficient for the MOGSouth / GatorMOG crowd, but anything too expensive may keep some attendees from coming. A room rate around ~\$145 (As of Jan 2019) a night is appropriate (before taxes.) Given our location, with all the tourist sites, we do run into 'high season' room rates. This higher lodging cost needs to be taken into consideration when determining the overall timing and duration of the event. Sometimes it just can't be helped. But keep in mind, the higher the costs, the likelihood of lower attendance.

Many hotels are likely to give a group a lower room rate (or other amenities) to entice the group due to stay at their specific hotel. They want the business!! Simply get the hotel to commit to holding a block of rooms for the Morgan group at an appropriate group room rate and then we will communicate to the membership, via email or the web site, the selected hotel, the rate and ask the membership to make their own reservations (and pay) for their own rooms.

→ **The host need not provide the hotel with any financial commitment to hold the rooms for the group. Don't pay them or sign anything that financially commits you or the club to the hotel.**

Hotels typically will hold a block of rooms for some period of time without any financial agreements. If the rooms are not reserved by members of the group within the allotted time frame, the hotel will sell the rooms to who ever they can.

One of the best ways to determine who is coming to your event is to ask the hotel for a listing of who has reserved rooms. You will want to ask for that report every week or so to see how the attendee list is growing. Usually they will give you names, sometimes just numbers but that will help you plan knowing the general size of the group.

**Hotels that provide free breakfast seem to more appealing and convenient** than those that require we all go somewhere else for breakfast (unless Breakfast is a part of the itinerary.) Organizing the group to go out to some breakfast spot is usually painful.

It is also recommended that the hotel or lodging location have its own bar and/or restaurant, unless it is adjacent to other bars and/or restaurants. (Someplace that is in walking distance.) We want to be sure we don't have folks out on the roads, in their Morgans, in unfamiliar places at night. And, we certainly don't want any drinking and driving.

→ **It is best to just assume folks will want to drink, so find a hotel with a bar or is within walking distance of one.**

**Hotels with secure, enclosed parking are preferred** to ones with open parking on a busy street. But, I have never heard of a problem so don't sweat a less than optimum parking arrangement. Consider trailer parking if necessary. Folks are getting older and may not want to drive to the event location.

MOGSouth likes to have a gathering place, **the Hospitality Room**, open to the attendees during the event. This room is typically a location within the meet hotel that MOGSouth folks can gather, catch up or chat about things, and partake of the MOGSouth provided beer, wine, chips, nuts, etc.

**We usually ask the Hotel to provide us with a spot for this Hospitality Room gratis, e.g. free of charge.** We rarely will pay the hotel for this extra meeting room or gathering spot. Again, the hotel sees this as an enticement and uses it to capture our business. If one hotel is reluctant to provide us a room, tell them that their competitor is offering this to us, and question why they cannot.

In any situation, in order for us to **bring in our own beer and wine, the hotel has to allow outside food and alcohol** to be consumed in the hotel. There are sometimes legalities that preclude this. This is rare however.

→ **Stay out of the money loop! We don't want you to ever have to commit your own funds or those of the Club during the planning of any event. Only on rare occasions should you need to make a deposit to hold a restaurant or a meeting room, etc.**

Make sure you will be reimbursed by the attendees or the club for any money you spend 'out of pocket.' FYI, MOGSouth budgets money to pay for the beer, wine, etc., required to stock the **Hospitality Room**. Other incidental expenses can usually be accommodated, but it's best to ask first. A weekend meet will usually result in costs for the hospitality room that are around 450\$-700\$. MOGSouth may also pay for other expenses, such as transportation, bar tenders, etc. Just make sure you have alerted the Club treasurer and have concurrence that the expense can be paid by the Club. MOGSouth is not in the money making business and the Club finances are meant to go back into the Club events. So, don't be afraid to ask about expenses, MOGSouth will likely reimburse you. We don't want you to have to pay 'out of your pocket' for anything. This is where your membership dues goes!

→ **Never fear! You will recoup any money you spend.**

There are instances that we choose a hotel that doesn't fully meet our needs in this area. We have had instances where the hotel doesn't allow outside food and alcohol due to local laws or regulations. In this case the hotel's integral bar became our meeting spot. On one occasion there was no room inside that would work, so we took over an outside patio with seating and a fire pit. Another option is to get a suite or other large hotel room and turn the 'living room' half into the 'Hospitality Room'. All of these are viable options and should be considered, if necessary.

# Dining

Dining can be challenge depending on the size of the group.

## Breakfasts

Breakfasts are best if they are provided by the hotel and if at all possible, free of charge (e.g. included with the hotel room rates.) If the hotel has a kitchen and restaurant that serves breakfast, and charges those dining, that is fine as well.

## Lunch

Lunch is usually out and about somewhere and at times a reservation or arrangements with a restaurant will be necessary. Box lunches and BBQs have worked in the past. So they may also be viable. It is also recommended that a lunch spot be selected that can address the size of the crowd and allow each of the attendees to select their own meals from the restaurant's menu and pay individually for what they eat/drink. Again, this keeps you out of the money loop.

It is recommended that you find a large enough location, perhaps a 'sports bar,' that has a pretty extensive menu. That way every one is likely to find something they like. If the restaurant is too specific, problems might arise. For example, you identify a 'seafood only restaurant' as the place to go, some folks may not be happy. They may not like seafood, or have allergies to seafood, etc. This applies to dinners as well. Also, there are folks with dietary restrictions (salt free, Gluten free or Vegan, etc.) that should not be discounted without consideration. It is best to select a restaurant that is prepared for these sorts of restrictions (most larger establishments are these days.)

## Dinner

Usually on the day of arrival, since folks will arrive at different times, dinner can be informal. Perhaps just some local restaurants serving dinner (either at the hotel or in the vicinity) can be recommended. No collective dinner needs to be arranged. The host just needs to let folks know where they can go to eat. Folks can figure out where they want to go, who they want to go with, and when. (This assumes folks are generally arriving in the evening before dinner. If they are arriving earlier in the day, some consideration for lunch or dinner may be necessary.)

Usually there is a more formal group meal on Saturday or the last evening of the event. This meal is at a restaurant selected by the host and a time for the meal is worked into the day's itinerary. The time and number of folks anticipated is negotiated ahead of time with the restaurant manager. It is usually problematic just to show up with 40 folks and hope to get fed quickly.

It is also recommended that each of the attendees select their own meals from the restaurant's menu and pay individually for what they eat/drink. Again, this keeps you out of the money loop. Sometimes the restaurant will want to limit the menu for larger groups or offer a meal at some fixed price. This can work but it is best to stay clear, if at all possible. It is usually too difficult to try to select a menu that everyone will like, one that addresses everyone's unique medical dietary requirements and meets every one's individual budget, etc. It is best to let them pick from the menu and pay individually .

# Hospitality Room

Keeping the **Hospitality Room**, open and stocked, is usually the biggest single effort required of the host. Stocking the room with beer, wine, sodas, waters, ice, chips & dip, etc. is the initial challenge. The quantities of the various items stocked is a function of the anticipated head count. From experience, the MOGSouth membership used to be beer drinkers however their tastes have changed. Now it is mostly wine. (No hard liquor should be offered.) Chips and nuts are standard, but you can do what you feel is appropriate. The host provides the necessary ice coolers or the throw away Styrofoam coolers can be purchased at the local Walmart or grocery store. Ice is typically purchased as well, unless provided by the hotel. The room used for the **Hospitality Room** is ideally provided by the hotel at no cost to the club. Only on rare occasions will the club pay for a room. The availability of a free room is sometimes used as a bargaining chip, e.g. to pit one hotel against others competing for our business.

It is appropriate to publish or communicate where the **Hospitality Room** is and when it is open. This information can be provided to the registration desk and perhaps they can communicate it as the folks arrive. Or a sign left on the registration desk will work.

The **Hospitality Room** is usually open to the club members the afternoon of arrival, as well as before and after any formal dinners. For example, assuming a Friday afternoon arrival, the Hospitality Room should be open around 3pm until 9pm. Then again on

Saturday before (~4 - 6 PM) and after (~8 - 10 PM) any formal meals. There will be times that certain things in the **Hospitality Room** will run out and have to be restocked. Be prepared for a wine/beer run sometime during the event! FYI, the Club will reimburse the host for reasonable expenses, so save the receipts!

## Activities

The bulk of the event's **activities** will occur on Saturday. This is typically where the imagination of the host comes in. The event activities are also what draws the participants to the specific event. Typically the planned activities involve the cars in some way. (We are a car club of course.) They most certainly involve some of those things that are special about the location of the event. It is the volunteer host that is most knowledgeable of the location and is best to decide what is appropriate for the club and what isn't. Sifting through all the opportunities is usually the biggest challenge. Use your best judgement and select a collection of things that can be accomplished within the allotted time frame, and try to chose **activities** that will appeal to both sexes. A day of rummaging through auto parts may be appealing to some, but not all. If both sexes are not addressed, we risk losing some folks.

A meet's **activities** can start as early as necessary. However be cognizant that some folks use these events as vacations and don't want to get up at the crack of dawn. Neither will they want marathon drives. We have had drives just for the sake of driving and drives to get us to other places, e.g. museums, etc. Both are acceptable however, but do be considerate of drive durations.

Some cars are not all that well maintained and folks need a bathroom break every now and again. When selecting routes it is best to avoid the high speed motorways. Some folks don't want to risk their cars on the highways nor do they really enjoy high speed driving. Keep in mind the Plus 8s and Roadsters need to play nicely with the older 4/4s and Plus 4s.

## The MOGSouth Holiday Party

Most of the information about Lodging / Dining / Hospitality Rooms, as provided for a basic Fall or Spring Meet, apply to the Holiday Party, but not all. The number of rooms typically blocked is higher than for a normal meet. More folks tend to come to the Holiday Parties so some **25** rooms should be blocked for two nights, Friday and Saturday nights. The Holiday Party is always the first **Saturday** of December.

The location of the Holiday Party, to some degree, dictates the need for **Morgan specific parking**. If in the mountains of North Carolina with the potential for snow, most folks will likely arrive in their tin tops. If the Holiday Party is further south, or if more moderate weather is anticipated, more Morgans are likely.

Folks will typically drive to the host hotel / location of the party on Friday, arriving in the afternoon. They will arrive and look to find old friends to reconnect with. This means the **Hospitality Room** should be available on Friday afternoon/evening for a few hours. MOGSouth can usually help with any costs incurred with having a Hospitality Room, but be sure to discuss with the MOGSouth Treasurer to know your budget for the weekend. Dinner on Friday is typically left up to the individuals.

Saturday is usually a low key sort of day. Activities are less structured and have included viewing the local holiday parade, shopping in the local town's antique shops and/or boutiques, viewing art galleries, touring historic sites, visiting an motorcycle museum, etc. It just sort of depends on what might be available at the chosen location and on the 1st of December. The **Hospitality Room** is typically opened an hour or so in the late afternoon, on Saturday, just prior to dinner. Folks will clean up for the Holiday Banquet Dinner and head to the Hospitality Suite for a beer or glass of wine before heading over to the dinner.

The Holiday Party is also the most likely candidate for a silent auction. Folks typically drive tin tops that have the requisite space needed for additional, to-be-donated auction items. Having a Silent Auction will be decided by the host, but should one be included, make sure there is sufficient space to layout the auctioned items and have some sort of paper form and pencil/pen to be used to document the various bids for each item. Also allow time and include a Silent Auction item on the Holiday Party itinerary.

A **Cash Bar**, open for an hour or so prior to dinner, is appropriate at the Dinner / Banquet location. Most folks will want a cocktail prior to dinner. If a dedicated Cash Bar is not available or appropriate, the folks can gather in the hotel's bar prior to the dinner. It is nice to have some sort of bar available during dinner, as well. After dinner folks head back to the Hospitality Room. MOGSouth can usually help with any costs incurred with having a Cash Bar (e.g. Bar Tender, etc.) Sometimes it just makes more sense to use the Hotel's fixed bar. Your choice, but be sure to understand the financials and then discuss with the MOGSouth treasurer, before any commitments.

The Holiday Party typically has a more **formal buffet or banquet dinner**. This can be catered, provided by the Lodging Hotel or provided in any other way that makes sense. In the past, MOGSouth had its Holiday Parties at members homes, with attending members bringing a favored covered dish or some such, but the Club just got too big to continue this practice. Now the Holiday Parties attract a good crowd and we usually have 65 - 70 folks for dinner. The prices for dinner have had to escalate with time but are usually in the \$35 - \$45 per person range (as of 2018). You don't want to go too cheap or the dinner will be suspect, or go too expensive and drive some folks away.

The Holiday Party typically includes a few minutes of MOGSouth business. The **Mother Courage Award** is presented and other items of interest are usually discussed after folks have eaten their main course, perhaps during the Banquet's coffee and dessert course. There is nothing dictating this order of events, so do what makes sense to you.

## Communication to the Membership

It is best to accomplish much of the event planning early. Locking in the location, dates and lodging well ahead of time is a good thing. This allows folks to block out those dates on their individual calendars, de-conflict any personal schedules, etc. Notifying folks at the last minute, risks a loss of participation. It is good to communicate a general itinerary early to entice folks to participate. There are two primary methods used to communicate the details of any event. First is the MOGSouth web site, [www.mogsouth.com](http://www.mogsouth.com), and the second is broadcast emails. Provide Mark or Stacey with details and they will effect the communications.

On the Web Site, each event will be added to the calendar and a separate 'Upcoming Event' web page will be created. That way when a new update related to the specific event is posted to the web site an individual email will be sent to each club member. In addition, a broadcast email will be sent to those folks listed on the latest version of the club membership listing.

Once the **location** and **dates** are communicated, the lodging arrangements must be distributed to the membership so that they can make there hotel reservations, if appropriate. Folks need to know **what hotel** to call, at **what phone number** or if a **internet link** is provided, they need to know the URL. They also need to know the **name of the Group** under which the discounted rooms are being held. After these details have been communicated a more detailed itinerary should be distributed.

## Final Thoughts

One of the most significant things about MOGSouth, something that differentiates us from other clubs, is the loose management style and our bent towards the '**volunteer**'. The **volunteer** is paramount to MOGSouth's future success. Perhaps we are all simply individualists and don't like to be dictated to. We don't need some elected official to tell us what to do. This sort of structure breeds expectations and results in politics and cliques. Things we definitely don't need.

We all have our own ideas about how things should be run, so the **volunteer** concept is the perfect tenet for us to embrace.

We, here in MOGSouth, have a tremendously rich region of scenic roads, special sites, historic artifacts, interesting places, etc. I doubt we will ever see everything worth seeing in the MOGSouth / GatorMOG region. Hell, most of us don't even know where all of the good stuff is! However, it is the local folks, that are knee deep in these areas, that know each of these areas best and are certainly the most qualified to show the club all these wonders. Just **volunteer** to host the club in your area and we will come.

In the past the club has relied on a number of long-term members to host events time and time again.) It isn't really fair to them nor is it in the best interest of the club to always go to the same people. (I know some of you have volunteered to host the club a few too many times.) We need new places to go and different things to do.

There are lots of new MOGSouth / GatorMOG members that have yet to get involved. Don't think that inexperience is a good reason to remain quiet. We need and want new ideas and new ways of doing things. And, there are no judgements made or measurements used to gage success. Getting involved will certainly allow you to meet some more folks in the club and this can only be a good thing. And the only way to get rid of those thoughts of inexperience is to 'do it' and gain the experience. Come to think of it there really are no downsides to volunteering. → **It is all good, so raise your hand!**