

Bridal

SHOWCASE

FEBRUARY 16, 2020



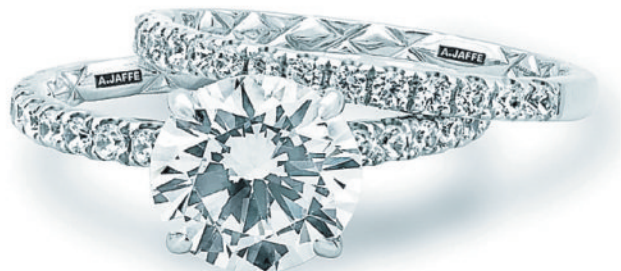
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ON THE COVER:

Area jewelers are finding that some couples are turning away from the traditional diamond solitaire, looking to tell their story with an engagement ring that is more personalized. ADOBE STOCK.

VENUES

Here's how to prep for a home wedding

By Jenna Schuster
HomeAdvisor

Hosting your wedding at home — whether it's your own home or that of a family member or friend — is an appealing option.

Not only does it cut down on costs, but it also allows for a truly personalized event and an intimate gathering for guests.

Of course, this kind of wedding requires some significant prep work on the home front. And the more consideration you give to things like home repairs and extra bathrooms, the less stressful your planning will be.

Here are some ways to prepare your house for such a celebration:

Spruce up your landscape: If you're hosting a backyard wedding, the first thing on your list should be landscaping. Hire a landscaping professional to visit your home, identify issues such as a sloped yard, uneven ground or unattractive gardening and come up with solutions. If you'd like your flowers to be in bloom for your nuptials, consult with your professional to find bulbs that bloom in that season. And as the wedding date approaches, turn off your sprinklers a

few days ahead of time to avoid muddy ground.

Make important home repairs: You want your home to be at its absolute best for the big day. So take the opportunity to hire a handyman and fix what's broken around the house. Things such as creaky doors, chipped paint and dripping faucets not only detract from the beauty of your home, but they're also some of the easiest and most affordable repairs to make. It could take as little as a day to make these quick upgrades, and they will be well worth addressing before you host guests.

Rent a backup generator: Even a small home wedding will put strain on your electrical system. Most residential systems are built to sustain a single family, not 40 of your closest friends. To avoid a power outage or circuit breaker trip, rent a backup generator for your big day. This way, you can plug in curling irons, hire a DJ and put up extra lights without a hitch. Consider consulting with a professional electrician to make sure everything will go smoothly.

Hire a cleaning service: Cleaning is the last thing you want to be doing the week of your wedding. Invest in a cleaning



DREAMSTIME

Getting married at home is a great way to have the low-key wedding of your dreams, but there are some important things to consider.

service to take care of the hassle for you so you can focus on more important things such as decorating and coordinating with caterers. Treat yourself and book an additional cleaning for the day after your wedding so you don't have to spend your honeymoon scrubbing the floors.

Get bonus bathrooms: Like your electrical system, your bathroom was probably not built to handle a rush of people. Rent a port-a-potty to spare your plumbing and prevent a long bathroom line. If you're worried about the look of your portable toilet, spend a little extra and get a cottage-style Pretty Potty. Pretty Potties come in many different styles and offer more amenities than a regular port-a-potty. If you have the resources, you might consider having a half bath installed in your home instead. Your guests will thank you.

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GIFTING

Sipping gifts that may impress

StatePoint

Whether celebrating a wedding, birthday, retirement or other gift-giving occasion, for a sure-fire win, turn to gifts that one can sip — those are the best kinds of gifts, after all, giving recipients a chance to kick their feet up and relax with a delicious beverage after a hard day — something everyone deserves.

From fine bourbon to sweet moonshine, the gift of a bottle is a gift that keeps on giving with every pour.

Check out these gift ideas offering bragging rights to their proud recipients from CaskCartel.com, an online spirits marketplace specializing in limited releases, new arrivals and allocated and other hard-to-find spirited beverages.

Toast your honorees in per-

son, or use doorstep delivery to ship them something to sip on if you can only be there in spirit:

A one-of-a-kind: A complex marriage of 8-, 11- and 13-year-old whiskeys, the Blood Oath Kentucky Straight Bourbon 2019 Pact No. 5 is a rare dram that will never again be made. With dark fruit notes, brown sugar and a touch of orange zest on the nose, and sugar cane and dark chocolate notes on the palate, this sipper offers a lingering finish, accented by notes of honey.

A pack of moonshine: For authentic, barn-house moonshine, the Sugarlands Mini Jar Gift Sampling Set offers five classic spirits hailing straight from Tennessee. Delicious on their own or in refreshing summer cocktails, flavors might include American Peach, Dynamite Cinnamon or Rye Apple. Cheers to

Discovery Channel's hit series "Moonshiners" for making this available to you.

An everyday sipper: With the woody, smoky tones you might expect, followed by an exceptionally smooth finish with undertones of oak and mild spice, the award-winning 100-proof David Nicholson Reserve Bourbon Whiskey may just become your gift recipient's everyday drink of choice. If he or she drinks bourbon, look no further, this is the one.

Sweet celebration: Designed to symbolize both celebration and shared happiness, the Suntory Hibiki Harmony Limited Edition is a precise blend of malt and grain whiskeys. Featuring a honey-like sweetness on the palate, and hints of rose and lychee on the nose, this Japanese-based whisky is an orchestra of flavors and aro-

mas. Featured is this 2018 Limited Edition, which celebrates their 30th anniversary, this is a must-have collector's item for any serious Japanese whisky drinker.

Heavy metal whiskey: For heavy metal fans, the unconventional and those who embrace creative passion, consider Blackened, the collaborative effort of Metallica and the late Master Distiller, Dave Pickerell. This blend of hand-selected whiskeys from across North America is finished in brandy casks and a proprietary sonic-enhancement process called Black Noise, which uses batch-specific Metallica playlists (selected and arranged by the band members themselves) to extract additional flavor and wood characteristics from the brandy barrels. Predominately bourbon, its



ADOBE STOCK

From fine bourbon to sweet moonshine, the wedding gift of a bottle keeps on giving with every pour.

sweetness pairs nicely with the savory spice offered by its high rye composition.

Summer sipper: For a lighter, crisper take on the Hendrick's house style, Hendrick's Midsummer Solstice is a small batch, limited edition deeply floral gin, with an unmistakable cucumber and rose finish: a good choice for those who brunch or enjoy

summer sipping.

In tribute: A tribute to soldiers who fought the Taliban on horseback, Horse Soldier Straight Bourbon has a robust and powerful flavor and a long, crisp finish. Though meant to be enjoyed neat or on ice, this bold American spirit also makes a fine choice for a Sazerac, Old Fashioned or Manhattan.

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VENUES

More couples saying 'I do' to barn weddings

By **Samantha Ickes**

The Independent (Massillon, Ohio)

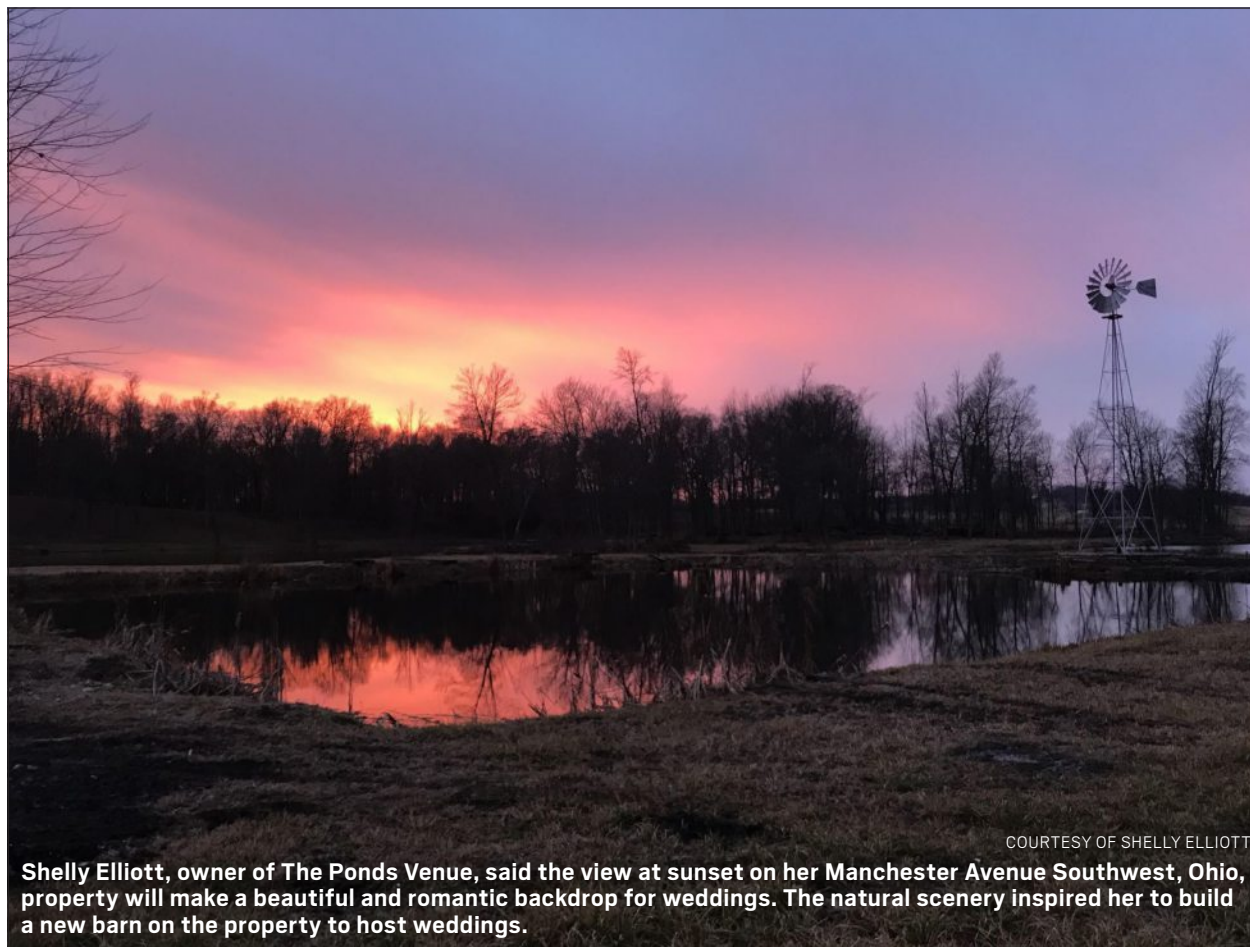
SUGAR CREEK TOWNSHIP, OHIO

» In the fall of 2016, Shelly Elliott witnessed her two sons say their "I dos" in their separate weddings a month apart.

Over the next year, she attended at least four more weddings when her friends' children got married.

Watching the ceremonies, each at a different location, sparked an idea.

Last March, Elliott and her family began transforming



Shelly Elliott, owner of The Ponds Venue, said the view at sunset on her Manchester Avenue Southwest, Ohio, property will make a beautiful and romantic backdrop for weddings. The natural scenery inspired her to build a new barn on the property to host weddings.

COURTESY OF SHELLY ELLIOTT



INDEONLINE.COM/KEVIN WHITLOCK

Shelly Elliott, owner of The Ponds Venue in Sugar Creek Township, Ohio, talks about the wedding facility her family is building on 19 acres they own outside of Beach City, Ohio, that previously was used for recreational purposes such as fishing and camping.

a portion of wooded acreage just outside of the Beach City, Ohio village limits into a new wedding venue.

The Elliots had owned 19 acres along Manchester Avenue Southwest for at least 10 years and had used it for recreational purposes such as fishing and bonfires.

The draw, Shelly Elliott said,

is the view, especially at sunset.

According to The Knot's 2017 wedding study, more couples are choosing to hold their wedding ceremonies and receptions at venues such as farms, barns and ranches. A 2009 survey showed that 2% of couples who responded opted for the more rustic settings; by 2017, the number grew to 15%.

With the popularity of rustic weddings on the rise, Elliott figures more barn venues will be needed to meet the demand for unique and simple settings.

"It's not a fad; it's not going anywhere," Elliott said.

Growing trend

Dayna Yurkovich, of Event Day Marketing, has coordinated the Belden Village Bridal Show in Jackson Township, Ohio for the last five years, though the marketing agency has been operating the show for more than 20 years, she said.

Each year, the show brings multiple venue owners for brides to meet with. This year, the Jan. 18 event offered three wedding barns, including The Barn at Sugar Creek in Tuscarawas County, Century Farms in Carrollton and Pine View Acres in Lawrence Township.

"We've seen more venues pop up," Yurkovich said. "They do seem to fill up their wedding dates pretty quickly. The trend still seems to be going

strong with what we see brides wanting and liking."

There are a number of wedding barns in the Stark County, Ohio, area, Yurkovich said, adding each has something different to offer couples.

Though Yurkovich said she doesn't meet with brides personally and typically works behind the scenes with vendors, she often hears engaged couples searching for rustic, outdoor venues.

Some, like The Barn at Sugar Creek and Nickajack Farms, offer renovated old barns. Others, such as Elliott's up and coming venue, are new builds designed to look like barns.

Three years ago, Nickajack Farms decided to stop boarding horses on the Lawrence Township, Ohio, farm, which had opened up a barn on the property.

When the renovations began, said owner Debbie Sebolt, a wedding barn had not been in mind.

The remodeling was originally intended to create office space, a gift shop and class-

rooms, she said.

Nickajack Farms is both a working and an agritourism farm where community events, such as the annual Fall Festival, are conducted, and schools or groups can tour the farm and learn about agriculture.

As the project got underway, however, people began asking if weddings could be held there, Sebolt said. After so many inquires, Sebolt figured it was worth considering as a business venture.

"It's the romantic, rustic feel that people are looking for," Sebolt said. "It just kind of happened, which is really fun."

Now, The Mane Barn is open to weddings year-round, Sebolt said, adding 55 weddings already are booked for 2020.

Like Sebolt, Jacob Fehr hadn't expected to get into the wedding business.

He and his wife, Esta, host a variety of events annually in the Barn at Sugar Creek, including graduation parties, corporate events, local charity fundraisers and at least 15

weddings per year.

The Barn at Sugar Creek opened its doors in 2015 after the 1840s barn was renovated to include new concrete and flooring. The barn was operational for decades and before any work began, Fehr said, manure had to be hauled out.

Brides today, however, wouldn't know the difference.

"The barn is in good shape, and I had a lot of people walk in there and say we ought to turn it into a wedding barn," Fehr said. "The barn is unique."

New ventures

During each of the weddings Elliott attended, she took mental notes as to what she liked and did not like about the venues she visited.

She plans to only host Saturday weddings, and she will allow the newlyweds or their family to return the next day to clean up, rather than doing it the night of the wedding.

"I took all those ideas and made our venue around it," Elliott said.

She hopes to have the wedding barn ready by July and has four bookings in September and October.

For those who want to have a ceremony and reception in the same location, Elliott plans to have log benches crafted to place on a flat section of land in front of a windmill seated between two ponds.

"It's a nice view, and it's out in the country, which goes with the popular rustic theme," Elliott said.

The Elliots broke ground on the venture in November, and the shell of the barn is standing. Elliott's husband, who has experience as a contractor, and her sons are heading up construction.

The wedding barn has been named The Ponds Venue because there are four ponds on the 19 acres, Elliott explained, noting her family has always referred to a visit there as going "to the ponds."

Anyone interested in learning more about The Ponds Venue can contact Elliott at 330-224-8491.

"It's just a beautiful piece of land, and we didn't want to keep it all to ourselves," Elliott said. "We wanted to share it, and this was a good way to do that."

WEDDING BANDS

Diamonds are (not always) forever

Alternative engagement rings popular with some couples, but traditions die hard

By **Marylouise Sholly**
Reading Eagle correspondent

A diamond may be forever. But so are sapphires and rubies.

Area jewelers are finding that some young couples are turning away from the traditional diamond solitaire, looking to tell their story with an engagement ring that is

more personalized, either by using a stone other than a diamond or having their ring custom-made.

On the other hand, (the left one, that is), the traditional solitaire diamond will never go out of style, and some couples absolutely prefer a traditional ring.

"We do a lot of sapphires, such as blue and pink sapphires," said Cynthia Lis, who,



BILL UHRICH - READING EAGLE

John Lis holds sapphire engagement rings at Wm. H. Diller Jewelers, West Reading.

with husband, John Lis, own Wm H. Diller Jewelers in West Reading.

Diamonds earned the reputation of being the engagement stone of choice because they are nearly indestructible, and therefore can last forever: a fitting analogy for a rock-solid marriage.

But while all gemstones are sparkly and beautiful, not all have the strength of the diamond, and some don't even come near.

"You have to be careful when you're going with an alternative engagement ring," Lis said. "If you're going to be using it hard and heavy, depending on what you do, a softer stone such as morganite will chip or break."

Customers occasionally ask for birthstones for their engagement rings, Lis said.

But a gemstone like an amethyst — for those brides born in February — is relatively "soft," so it will scratch easily.

For couples just starting out, saving money may also be a consideration before buying their ring.

"We do a lot of blue sapphires, and that takes the price point of a ring and drops it dramatically," Lis said.

Budget challenge

A one-carat sapphire may range in price from \$1,800 to \$1,900, while a one-carat diamond of good cut and clarity may present a budget challenge at a price of \$5,000 to \$6,000.

But a strong, nearly indestructible diamond might be just what a bride needs.

"With some of their choices, I try to explain that it's a beautiful stone, but needs to be stronger on the scale and may not be suitable for everyday wear," Lis said. "A lot of women don't take off their engagement ring when they shower, play sports, garden, sew or anything else, and they might need a stronger stone."

While not everybody asks for ethically sourced stones — those mined un-

der fair-labor practices — nearly every responsible jeweler sells only those diamonds that can be authenticated.

"You won't have an issue with diamonds not coming from an ethically sourced mine," Lis said.

The Kimberly Process is an internationally used way to track diamonds to certify where they were mined.

"As jewelers, we have policies in place to make sure people are getting diamonds that followed the Kimberly Process," Lis said.

Lab-created diamonds are another option and have found their way to Berks

County, Lis said.

"It is a real diamond, but came from a lab instead of a mine," Lis said. "It is an alternative and it is slightly less expensive."

"But Berks County people still prefer that traditional, mined diamond, although it (a lab-grown diamond) may become more popular in the future," Lis said.

Custom-made rings are another service they offer, Lis said.

"We do custom rings all the time, but I still sell mostly the traditional diamond," Lis said.

Diamonds come in other colors, such as yellow, blue or brown, known as the chocolate diamond. If customers want another color for their ring, they may be able to keep their diamond and get color, too, Lis said.

Small percentage

At Gipprich Jewelers in Shillington, owner Richard Gipprich said he's finding only a small percentage of customers who ask for an alternative stone for their engagement ring.

"People are mostly buying the micro-pave engagement and wedding rings," Gipprich said. "The ring has a small circle of 'pave' diamonds around the center stone and is done in white gold, and that's what people want," Gipprich said.

According to DMIA, the Diamond Gurus, pave diamond rings "are rings with accent diamonds in a row or multiple rows around a band, forming a sparkling pattern."

Occasionally a customer will ask for a stone with color, either to match their birthstone, the stone of the month they're getting married or it could just be a favorite color, Gipprich said.

One of Gipprich's sisters, Peggy, has an emerald engagement ring, he said.

Gipprich and sister Amy Gipprich are third-generation owners of the business.



BILL UHRICH - READING EAGLE

The price range for a one-carat sapphire engagement ring is \$1,800 to \$1,900, while a one-carat diamond could go for \$5,000 to \$6,000.



BILL UHRICH - READING EAGLE

A yellow sapphire engagement ring is complemented by a diamond wedding band at Wm. H. Diller Jewelers, West Reading.

Gipprich Jewelers was founded in 1945 by their grandfather, Walter Gipprich.

The store passed into the hands of Richard's father, also named Walter, until Richard and sister Amy purchased the store.

Along with their beauty and strength, diamonds also owe their popularity to a well-run marketing campaign.

"By coming up with 'A Diamond is Forever,' and tying it into engagements, the DeBeers Co. did a great job of marketing, a stupendous job," Gipprich said. "DeBeers is the world's largest diamond syndicate, and that campaign was so popular that, when you plan on getting engaged, you think 'a diamond is forever.'"

If couples want a custom design, they'll need a jeweler who uses a computer-aided design system, or CAD.

"Anything's possible now if you're a jeweler with a CAD system," Gipprich said. "You can sit down and design it on the computer, then 3D print it and cast it."

Engagement rings have changed over time, Gipprich said, explaining that they used to be much simpler.

"They were not as elaborate as they are today; sometimes they were just a simple gold band," Gipprich said.

Today, the engagement ring is the centerpiece of the happy event; made to be shown, admired and maybe even envied. Diamond rings can range in price from \$1,500 to \$30,000, Gipprich said.

"Part of the engagement will include a diamond and, in time, that diamond will become a family heirloom," Gipprich said. "It's a timeless tradition that carries on today."

Want something unique

Owner Caroline Hill of Van Scoy Jewelers in Wyomissing said she's been seeing more young couples in the past year who want something unique for their engagement ring.

She recently made a couple's dream come true with a blue topaz engagement ring.

"We have to explain to everybody that nothing is as hard as a diamond: It doesn't get damaged as easily as other gemstones can," Hill said.

"Depending on how rough the person is, it could be all scratched within a year," Hill said. "We just want to make sure our customers know about the durability of a diamond."

Rubies and sapphires come closest to diamonds on the hardness scale, so they might be better picks for those young couples looking for something different.

Van Scoy Jewelers has been in business for 42 years and has their own in-house jeweler, ready to do customizing for customers.

By mid-May, the Wyomissing business plans to relocate to 1121 Penn Ave. in Wyomissing.

Most of her customers continue to prefer the single diamond, or a diamond with a smaller diamond on either side, Hill said.

If the couple met in July, they might want a ruby — July's birthstone — on either side of the diamond, Hill said.

Perhaps they want hidden features, such as a quote or initials that only the bride and groom know are there.

Blending different metals, such as combining rose gold and white gold, is also becoming popular, Hill said.

About one-fourth of the customers who come to Van Scoy say they are looking for something unique, something they won't see other brides-to-be wearing, Hill said.

"Even if they like the traditional look, they want to add something different to make it their own," Hill said. "A custom-made ring may cost more, but it will be unique to you."

Contact *Marylouise Sholly*:
specialsections@readingeagle.com.



BILL UHRICH - READING EAGLE

A pink sapphire engagement ring is complemented by a diamond setting and band at Wm. H. Diller Jewelers, West Reading.



BILL UHRICH - READING EAGLE

A blue sapphire engagement ring is complemented by a diamond wedding band at Wm. H. Diller Jewelers.

VENUES

Not all surf, sand

Virginia destination weddings offer unique experiences for nature lovers, history buffs and craft beer fans

By Michael C. Upton
Reading Eagle correspondent

Destination weddings have been a popular idea for a long time. For most, the idea of a destination wedding conjures the idea of exotic locations of surf and sand.

ers, and naturally, weddings. Two destinations — one in the east and the other in the west — offer unique experiences steeped in tradition and allow for the entire family and wedding party to be included in the special day, or days.

a mountain wedding — complete with horseback rides, on-site room for the entire bridal party and proximity to adventurous hikes — should be a consideration for the outdoor-loving bride and groom-to-be.

The drive to Four



SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE — MICHAEL C. UPTON

Owner Dwight Wood talks with a guest during a ceremony at Four Winds at North Mountain in Swoope, Va., in 2019.

But extensive travel is not always on a wedding party's ideal to-do list, and the idea of being far from home may be the last thing a bride and groom want on their wedding day.

For those couples minding their travel budget, there is a state south of the Mason-Dixon Line which has embraced the idea of love. Virginia is for lov-

Four Winds

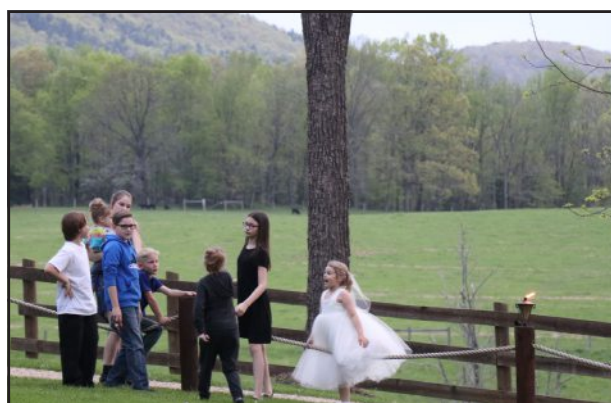
In Virginia's western Augusta County, a short drive from the quaint city of Staunton, Four Winds at North Mountain is bordered by the George Washington National Forest on the sunny side of Elliott Knob as it rises 4,463 feet above sea level. This idyllic location for

Winds, 709 N. Mountain Road, Swoope, Va., minutes from Interstate 81, leads visitors through scenic rolling hills to the active horse ranch. The location is also home to North Mountain Outfitter, the retirement goal of former law enforcement captain Dwight Wood, who spends his days leading visitors on horseback rides around



COURTESY OF MATT SCHMACHTENBERG

The Mill at Fine Creek, 30 miles west of Richmond, Va., had its busiest year in 2019 by hosting 111 weddings.



SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE — MICHAEL C. UPTON

Children take time to enjoy a more casual moment of the day's festivities at Four Winds at North Mountain.

the property and into the national forest.

"He leases thousands of acres of the forest for horseback trail rides," said Jennifer Lee, Wood's daughter and owner-operator of Four Winds. "Dad's just really good at showing people a good time. We get a lot of repeat business."

Wood has been operating trail rides for 20 years. In 2007, Wood and Lee built a bunkhouse for guests who were coming from out of town. Then, people started getting engaged on the rides.

"Weddings were never really part of the plan,

but we had enough people ask that we decided to go for it," Lee said. "We've been booked every year since 2014."

Four Winds' wedding season, which is primarily April through November, consists of approximately 15 weddings.

"That's a lot for us, because we really focus on hospitality," Lee said, who also never books more than one wedding on a weekend.

The 4,000-square-foot bunkhouse sleeps 12 people in four bedrooms with three baths, enough space for an average-sized wedding party or the families of

the bride and groom.

"It's a communal setting, which is indicative of the western style we have mimicked," Lee said.

Lee offers a vendor list for local caterers, florists and wedding services, and the facility is open for whatever or whoever a bride may wish to include in her special day. Four Winds capacity is 200 people, and of course horses can be incorporated into weddings

"They show up in the field," Lee said of the 20 horses kept at the property. "They are interested. They are so docile, and they want to see what is going on; they've been known to get in wedding pictures.

"We had a bride and groom who wanted to ride into their reception on horseback. It was amazing."

The Mill at Fine Creek

The Mill at Fine Creek, 2434 Robert E. Lee Road in Powhatan, Va., a wedding venue 30 miles west of Richmond, is a small town in itself. Literally. According to co-owner

Mark Benusa, the history of Fine Creek dates to a tract of land once owned by Thomas Jefferson's grandfather and a grist mill built in 1735.

"There are still remnants of a house occupied by Thomas Jefferson's father up in the woods, but that was part of what was a whole village," Benusa said.

The beautiful part of this venue, besides its historic significance and photo-worthy backdrop of man-meets-nature, is a wedding party can have the whole village, re-envisioned, to themselves.

"We wanted to be more than a place guests blow in and blow out of for a wedding," Benusa said. "We want people to spend time here."

Part of the 10-acre site of today, the ruins of the grist mill, which operated until the mid-1930s and survived intact un-

til the late '60s, serve as a picturesque backdrop for a wedding ceremony. The two-story stone walls, built from granite mined from Fine Creek, are the only parts of the original structure to survive. The original hamlet also consisted of several homes, a general store, a post office, a cheese factory and a school.

"There's little bits and pieces of the (former) village here, and we wanted to bring that back," Benusa said.

After opening 15 years ago, Benusa, building around the ruins in what is now designated the Fine Creek Mills Historic District, has constructed an elegant, full-service event building; a post office gift shop; 13 cottages, the largest being three bedrooms; and a brewery: Fine Creek Brewing. The 3-barrell micro-brewery focuses on creative craft

brews such as Tricknology IPA, a less-hazy New England IPA.

"We didn't open a brewery as an add-on to the wedding venue, but it is an amenity to an already existing business," Benusa said, who is an avid beer fan and wanted to create a true destination brewery.

By hosting 111 weddings, 2019 was the Mill's busiest year, but every year they break 100. Most of their guests come from the Washington area, but the site draws couples from Pennsylvania, the Carolinas and as far away as Europe.

"We have couples who the first time they get here is the wedding," Benusa said. "A lot of people do their research online."

Contact Michael C. Upton: specialsections@readingeagle.com.

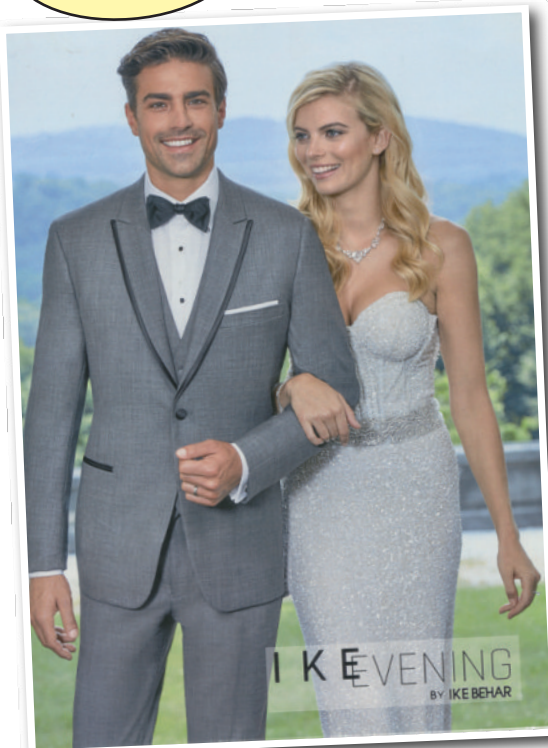


SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE — MICHAEL C. UPTON

Ruins of a circa-1735 grist mill strike a unique setting for weddings at The Mill at Fine Creek. Owners have built a full-service facility beside the ruins to accommodate any wedding needs.

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DRESS

Bride wears grandmother's 1956 wedding dress; story goes viral

By Allison Murray

The (Racine, Wis.) JournalTimes

RACINE COUNTY, WIS. » “When I saw her coming down the aisle, it gave me tears,” said 86-year-old Shirley Ekstrand as she watched her 25-year-old granddaughter, Christina Moffett, walk down the aisle in her wedding dress.

Moffett, who works as a speech pathologist at the Racine County Opportunity Center's Birth to Three program, chose to wear Ekstrand's 64-year-old wedding dress to her own wedding in October 2019.

Since then, her story has gotten national attention after she posted it on social media.

“When I put it on, I just knew,” Moffett said. “We had a little tea party at my grandma's house with my mom, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, some of my close friends and my grandma. I tried on my mother and mother-in-law's dresses and they were nice but they weren't for me.”

Ekstrand, born and raised in Waukegan, Ill., had bought the dress for \$100 at Holleb's bridal department in Kenosha, Wis., which closed in 1995.

“I was coming up the stairs and I saw it on a mannequin and I thought: ‘That's the dress I want,’” said Ekstrand, who got married in the dress in 1956.

Fell in love

Both Moffett and Ekstrand fell in love with the dress's embroidery and neckline.

“We're quite a bit alike,” said Ekstrand, which explains the two's similar taste. Ekstrand was full of joy when Moffett chose her wedding dress to wear. “She was very honored that I chose to use it,” Moffett said.

The wedding dress stayed in a box in a storage room in Ekstrand's house before it was brought back to life for Moffett's wedding day.

“It was really hot in the store room and my veil melted but the dress stayed

in perfect condition,” said Ekstrand.

Only one alteration was made to the dress to get the perfect fit for Moffett's big day.

Moffett, a Kenosha native, had posted a side-by-side photo of her and her grandma in the wedding dress on Reddit, a social media app, and the post quickly went viral. Moffett got attention from multiple news media sources, including TODAY.

Moffett married her husband Alexander at Missio Dei Fellowship in Kenosha. The couple graduated from Christian Life School, Moffett in 2012 and her husband in 2009. They



COURTESY OF CHRISTINA MOFFETT

The wedding dress stayed in a box in a storage room in Ekstrand's house before it was brought back to life for Moffett's wedding day. Ekstrand's wedding, left, and the same dress for Moffett.

knew each other through music and drama and got engaged in 2018.

“It just exploded,” said

Moffett when talking about her Reddit post. “It was very shocking but it was really cool.”

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