

Veil

Photos Provided, Courtesy of "Old Wide Awake Plantation"
The "Old Wide Awake Plantation" in nearby Hollywood, S.C. has become one of the top-named wedding venues in the nation, as named by top wedding sites and critics. The site is a former waterfront store, and quickly rose to fame as a wedding spot in 1999, when Hollywood actress Reese Witherspoon married fellow actor Ryan Phillippe.

The Press and Standard

6 Top Reasons to Get a Custom Made Engagement Ring



Now that you've decided you are ready to propose to that special someone, the exciting and daunting part begins: engagement ring shopping! With so many options out there, from your classic brick and mortar to your online store, this process can seem very challenging.

Many people may think they are limited to what's on display in a store, but that certainly isn't the case. You no longer have to be a celebrity or have a 6 figure budget to have a gorgeous custom made engagement ring created for you and your fiancé.

There are many affordable and easy-to-work-with designers out there for you to choose from, and we are here to help you realize why you should consider going this custom made engagement ring route!

Take a look at our 6 top reasons below.

You Can Get Exactly What You Want!

Perhaps the biggest reason for purchasing a custom made engagement ring is the fact that you are able to get exactly what you want. While there are many pre-made designs out there, sometimes they just don't feel right.

When going the custom route, you are able to choose all components, from the exact metal, setting design, side stones, and center stone that you want. You get to decide the thickness and shape of your band, as well as all other design features, without having it dictated for you through a ready-made engagement ring.

What if you both want to be a part of the process of creating the engagement ring?

Many modern couples want to be a part of creating the engagement ring together, but they often still want an element of a surprise. Going the custom way allows you

to both be involved with the designer, giving all your thoughts and feedback, but perhaps letting some bits and pieces be a surprise in the end. On the other hand, if you were to go the traditional route of buying a pre-made ring, it's hard for you both to be involved while still maintaining some level of surprise.

You Can Get Creative

Part of the custom process is allowing your personality and story as a couple to shine through with your engagement ring. The designer gets to listen to what you want and learn a bit about you and your story. They are then able to bring some of those aspects into your ring, creating something truly special.

Because you are so closely involved in the creation of the ring, you can add elements to your ring that represent who you are as a couple. There are many ways to do this:

- Add an engraving of a quote, word or symbol that means something to the both of you
- Use recycled materials in your ring, such as a treasured gemstone or gold from a special piece of jewelry
- Pick a gemstone that holds meaning for you both
- Add something to the ring from a special moment in your lives, for example, a tiny pebble from where you proposed
- Choose a unique design
- There are many ways to bring your ring alive as a representation of your love. And with a bespoke experience, you can get as creative as you want.

You Are Working With An Expert

When you are working with someone to create a custom engagement ring, you are truly working with an expert. Likely it will be a designer or even the craftsman who

will make your ring (if you are going with a handmade ring). These people have specialized skills that are perhaps different from that of a salesperson selling a ready-made ring. They have likely created custom made rings before, allowing them to provide expert opinions and insight on what you are hoping to create. When creating something custom, you are alleviating some of the pressure of choosing the perfect ring, as you have an expert who can guide you through the entire process.

Additionally, working with a dedicated designer should give you some peace of mind, as you are able to reach out and ask questions, knowing this person knows who you are and what you want. It can be hard to find that at a retail store that deals with so many people daily. You aren't just working with a designer, but will a collaborator. Your input matters, so be sure to go into it with as many ideas as possible!

Get The Most Out Of Your Budget

One of the most important aspects of engagement ring shopping is to know and stick to your budget. When shopping for ready-made rings, it can be limiting, as your only options are what the retailer has already made. Depending on your budget, you might only have so many rings to choose from.

When creating a custom engagement ring, you are able to decide what aspects you want to spend more money on and what you'd like to save on. This allows you to get the most out of your budget, while also creating something specific to you as a couple.

Additionally, when creating something custom, you are often able to bring in your own materials. Perhaps you have a family heirloom or gemstone you want included in the ring design. In this way, you may be able to keep your costs down while still getting a fabulous ring.

Creating Something Unique

There is nothing worse than getting an engagement ring and going to show it off to some friends, only to realize that someone has the exact same ring as you! While there are many beautiful pre-made styles to choose from, you'll still often see the same ones over and over again.

Your future fiancé is one of a kind and the engagement ring certainly should be the same! You are quite possibly making the most important commitment of your life, and your ring should reflect that decision. Putting in the effort to create something unique and personal will go a long way with your future fiancé!

Creating A Custom Engagement Ring Is Fun!

Many people feel that engagement ring shopping is a total nightmare, and while it sometimes can be, it really does not have to be as awful as you think. When creating something custom, you get to re-live all the reasons why you have chosen to spend your life with this person. It is exciting to try to create a ring that symbolizes the special love and bond you have with your future fiancé!

And finally....

There are many reasons for why one should create a custom engagement ring, but the main thing to consider is that whatever you choose, it should be about you as a couple. You are about to start on the most exciting adventure of your life, and your ring is just the beginning. If creating something completely personal and unique to you as a couple sounds appealing, we hope you find the best designer to create this special ring for you!

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WEDDING TRENDS

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way weddings are planned. It is also creating new wedding trends. According to Kim Forrest, who wrote an article in Wedding Wire, here are the top wedding trends we can expect for 2021.

Wedding Trend: Using Technology to Add Guests

Amid the pandemic, brides and grooms are having to take a second look at their wedding guest lists and the size of their wedding parties. This year, couples are expected to keep their in-person guest lists tight, while using technology to let others see the wedding ceremony.

“A livestream isn’t just a nice-to-have extra, but an important part of every wedding—and guests are having their own ‘watch parties!’” said Erica Gordon, of Elite Events. “Couples are creating private Facebook groups and websites where guests can interact with one another before and during the ceremony. We’re even pre-shipping out swag boxes for guests to enjoy the watch party!”

Wedding Trend: Getting Married During the Week

Most local venues, throughout the Lowcountry, now offer heavy discounts to couples who plan their big day during the week, or even on a Sunday.

Historic venues in Charleston, like the Historic Rice Mill and even Bed and Breakfasts, offer deep discounts for Sunday weddings and week day weddings.

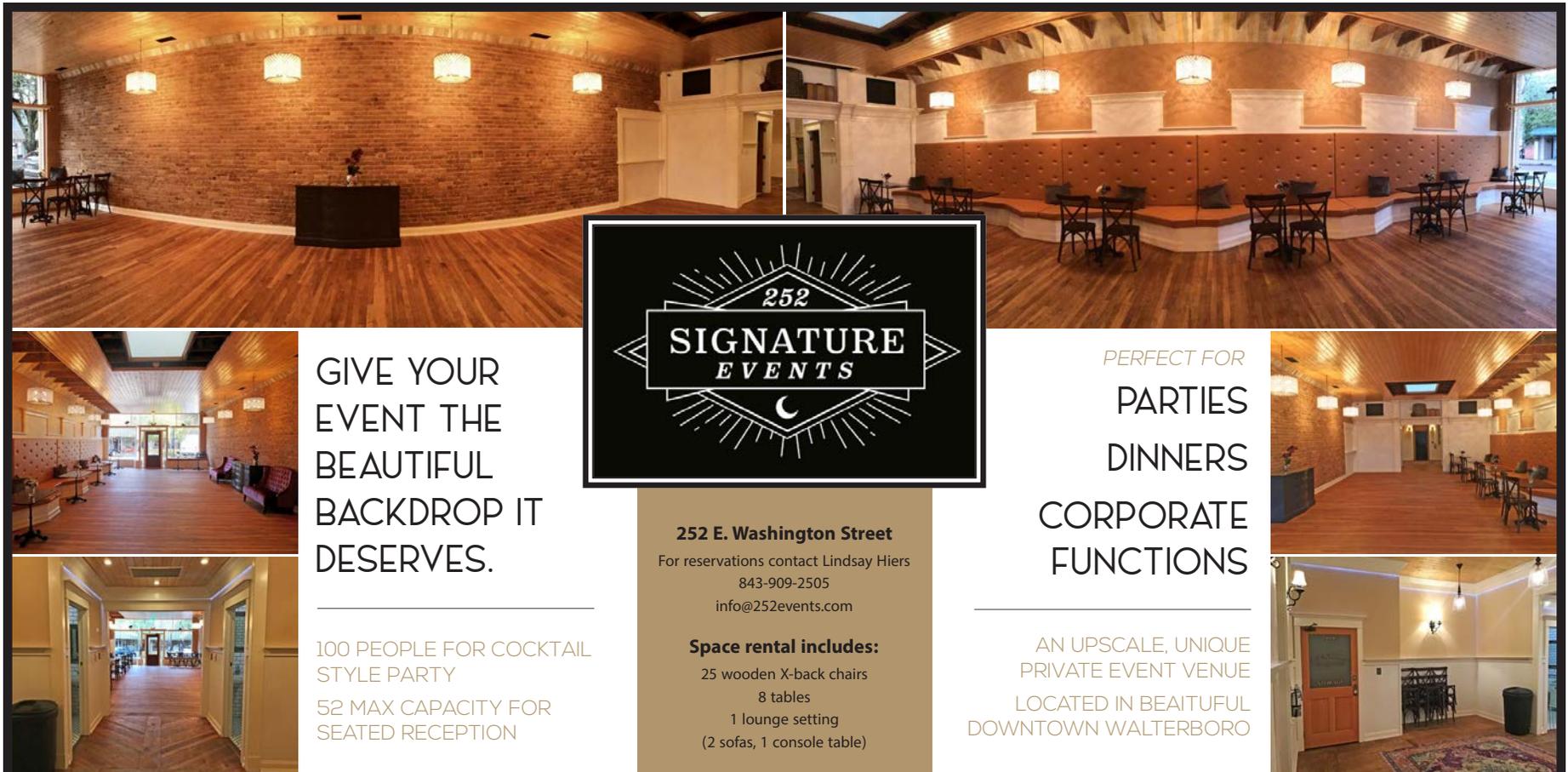
Wedding Trend: Pre-Packaged Dinners

Buffet lines are a thing of the past amid COVID-19 concerns and overcrowding.

The new trends are more personal and smaller, including passed hors d’oeuvres, bento boxes, pre-boxed dinners and even small food stations.

Wedding Trend: Big and Bold Décor

Brides are making bigger statements amid smaller weddings with 2021 color choices. Gold is making a





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comeback, along with bright oranges, bold patterns on tablecloths and décor and even patterned ribbons wrapped around wedding bouquets. Forrest writes in her blog that she expects this year to also bring oversized floral installations, like dramatic ceremony backdrops or floral chandeliers make a “major statement.”

Wedding Trend: Unique Reliance on Music and Entertainment

Dancing and overcrowded dance floors might not be a safe option this year amid the pandemic. It is also becoming harder to find DJ’s that will work in this environment. To help keep the party going this year, brides and grooms are using comedians or an Emcee instead of a DJ or band. This is still entertainment, for guests seated at smaller tables and spaced apart.

“Incorporating a live activation or live entertainment into the wedding reception creates a memorable experience that goes beyond just having a DJ for music or having standard reception elements,” Jamésa S. Adams said. Adams was quoted in Wedding Wire. Couples are also incorporating photo booths, themed dancers, confetti cannons and other forms of entertainment to keep guests entertained without creating a crowded dance floor.

Wedding Trend: Getting creative with the giveaways

Amid the pandemic, giving your guests something more functional that isn’t necessarily engraved is becoming more of a trend. Couples are giving away favors this year like masks, hand sanitizer, individual boxes of mementos about the couple and even small baskets filled with soaps.

About the Contributor: Kim Forrest has been writing about weddings for over a decade, specializing in etiquette and planning advice. Kim writes and edits much of the content you’ll read on WeddingWire, and also manages our team of freelance writers. Kim’s love of the wedding space first blossomed when she was an assistant editor at Washingtonian magazine in the mid-2000s (her first wedding-related article was about a hot new trend—destination weddings!). She became WeddingWire’s first full-time editor in 2012. Kim is originally from Long Island, New York and currently lives in Bethesda, Maryland with her husband and two children. She loves baking, yoga, ballet, theater, trying out the latest skincare fads, and listening to podcasts on a variety of random topics.

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- Pipe & Drape Backdrop
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TOP SPOTS TO TIE THE KNOT



Photo Provided by Donnie Smith, of Donnie Smith Photography

Lowcountry-area photographer Donnie Smith routinely shoots photographs of brides in outdoor settings, such as a South Carolina State Park or on the grounds of an area outdoor reserve or plantation. Shown here: Bride Tara Morris poses at the Sewee Preserve in Awendaw, S.C.

By HEATHER WALTERS

Besides choosing a top destination spot like “Old Wide Awake Plantation,” as featured in this issue of “Veil,” there are other spots in Colleton County and throughout the Lowcountry that offer outdoor charm with beautiful and rustic appeal.

Some of those spots include green spaces or waterfront walks in South Carolina State Parks. Others in the area include the Sewee Preserve, in nearby Awendaw, S.C.

“I’ve shot plenty of weddings in state parks, particularly at the Old Santee Canal State Park in Moncks Corner,” said Donnie Smith, of DonnieSmithPhotography. One of his images taken at a Lowcountry-outdoor reserve is featured in this article.

Smith said more brides are choosing spacious outdoor spaces amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Finding beautiful outdoor spaces is not a difficult task in Colleton County. The rural Colleton County landscape is home to multiple plantations and green spaces for wedding venues. The same can be said for nearby Johns Island and the greater Charleston County region.

❖ In Walterboro, however, smaller spaces are also becoming more popular for ceremonies and on-site receptions. The Little Library and the historic Bedon-Lucas House have become popular wedding sites in recent years.

❖ South 40 is also a local wedding venue in Round O, that sits on approximately 40 acres. Other local wedding venue sties are the Walterboro-Colleton County Museum, the Walterboro Wildlife Center and Dogwood Hills.

❖ To book any of the above-listed Walterboro sites for your wedding or reception, contact Linda Lamb at the Colleton County Historical and Preservation Society at 843-549-9633.

❖ For information on having your wedding at a South Carolina State Park, or to virtually tour any of the public parks and their grounds, visit the state parks Web site at www.southcarolinaparks.com.

❖ For information on having your wedding at Edisto Beach, visit the town’s Web site at www.townofedistobeach.com.

Regional Wedding Venue Sites:

- The Little Library, Walterboro, S.C.
- The Bedon-Lucas House, Walterboro, S.C.
- South 40, Round O, S.C.
- The Barn, Walterboro, S.C.
- Walterboro-Colleton County Museum, Walterboro, S.C.
- Dogwood Hills, Walterboro, S.C.
- Edisto Beach State Park, Edisto Beach, S.C.
- Lighthouse Vineyard, Walterboro, S.C.
- The Old Wide Awake Plantation, Hollywood, S.C.
- The Candlelite Pavilion at Summerville, Summerville, S.C.
- Legend Oak Golf Course, Summerville, S.C.
- The Inn at Middleton Place, Summerville, S.C.
- The Beaufort Yacht and Sailing Club, Beaufort, S.C.
- The Colleton River Club, Bluffton, S.C.
- Agapae Oaks Weddings, St. Helena Island, S.C.
- Old Sheldon Church Ruins, Yemassee, S.C.
- Southern Elegance, Lodge, S.C.

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING YOUR WEDDING CAKE

As one of the key components of most weddings, decisions about the cake shouldn't be left until the last minute. Here are five factors to consider before you order yours.

1. The number of guests

You want to make sure there's plenty to go around. However, it would be a shame to waste your money on an excessively large cake and have to throw some out.

2. The wedding theme

The cake is as much a part of the decor as the flowers. Don't hesitate to bring a copy of the invitation, color samples and pictures of the decorations to guide the baker.

3. The design

In addition to choosing the shape of the cake and the number of tiers, consider what decorative

elements you'd like to incorporate. Fresh flowers, edible gold leaves and chocolate lace are just some of the many choices.

4. The flavor

From praline mouse to passion fruit, you might be surprised by how many options are available. Fortunately, most cake shops offer tastings to help you make your choice.

5. The ingredients

If you have a limited budget, determine if you favor high-quality ingredients over a refined look. You should also consider if any of your guests have allergies.

Contact cake shops in your area to schedule a consultation and make sure your cake checks all the boxes.



Photo Provided

The Petal Palace Florist

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MARRIAGE LICENSE FAQ'S

How do I apply for a marriage license?

Both parties must appear together in Probate Court to file an application for a marriage license. Marriage licenses are issued between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

How much does a marriage license cost?

The application fee for a marriage license is \$40.00. The fee for a certified copy of a marriage license is \$5.00. All fees must be paid by cash, money order, credit card, or debit card.

What documents do we need to bring to apply for a marriage license?

You will need to bring either (1) your Social Security card or some other documentation that confirms your Social Security number (such as your income tax

record). If you are a resident alien who does not have a Social Security number, you are required to present your visa, resident alien card or a statement from the Social Security Office that you do not qualify for a Social Security number.

Additionally, you will need to show proof of age and identity. If you are over 18, the documents we will accept include your driver's license, state identification card, passport, or military identification. If you are under 18, you will also need to bring an original birth certificate or a certified copy of the birth certificate.

Is there a waiting period for getting a marriage license?

Yes, there is a twenty-four-hour waiting period in S.C. from the time you apply for the license until the time the license can be issued. After the waiting period has expired, you may return to pick up the license (only one party necessary).

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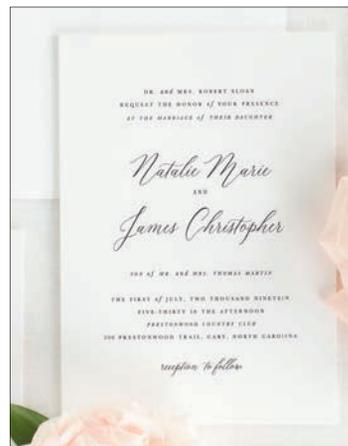
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Where is my marriage license valid?

Regardless of where you live, the license is valid for marriage ceremonies performed in South Carolina.

Who may perform my wedding ceremony?

State law dictates that only ministers of the Gospel or accepted Jewish rabbi and officers authorized to administer oaths in this State are authorized to administer a marriage ceremony in this State.

My divorce hearing was last week. Can I apply for a marriage license?

No, your divorce must be final. A divorce is not final until the judge signs the Decree of Divorce and it is recorded in the office of the Clerk of Court.

How old do I have to be to get a marriage license?

In South Carolina, applicants ages 16 and 17 may obtain a marriage license upon presentation of an

original or a certified copy of birth certificate, parent's consent, and a state-issued identification. (If minor's parents are divorced, the parent with custody must give the consent and produce a certified copy of their divorce decree to prove custody.)

Does Probate Court perform marriage ceremonies?

Yes, marriage ceremonies are conducted by appointment only. Please call the Court if you would like to schedule a ceremony. The fee for a marriage ceremony is \$25.00.

What do I need in order to change my name on my Social Security card and driver's license after I get married?

You will likely be required to take a certified copy of your marriage license. You may obtain a certified copy for \$5.00 by contacting the Court. Or, you may arrange for a certified copy by visiting <http://www.southcarolinaprobate.net/search/>.



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3 TIPS FOR YOUR FIRST DANCE

Your first dance as a married couple can be as exciting (and as nerve-racking) as walking down the aisle. Here are a few tips to ensure it's a moment you'll look back on fondly for years to come.

Choose a well-known song, or ask your DJ to create a mashup of genres so you can transition from a graceful waltz into an energetic salsa or swing dance routine.

Hire a professional to choreograph the dance, and be sure to rehearse it (in the shoes you'll wear at the wedding) until you feel comfortable with every step.

If neither of you are particularly good dancers, opt for a slow romantic song and go all out on light or smoke effects to make your simple moves look more dynamic.

Above all else, don't worry too much about putting on a show for your guests. It's your day after all, so make your first dance a moment you'll enjoy.



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Wedding checklist

The question was popped and the proposal joyfully accepted. Now it's time to plan the wedding. Here's a month-by-month checklist to make sure you don't forget a thing.

12 months before

- Decide on the type of wedding you'd like (civil or religious, big or small)
- Choose a date
- Determine the number of guests
- Establish a budget
- Pick venues for the ceremony and reception (it's best to reserve early)

11 months before

- Make your guest list
- Choose a caterer (meet with a few first)
- Select your wedding party
- Hire a wedding planner

10 months before

- Start shopping for a wedding dress
- Decide on a theme for your wedding
- Choose an officiant if you haven't already done so

9 months before

- Book a photographer
- Reserve a block of hotel rooms for your out-of-town guests
- Purchase a wedding gown
- Shop for the groom's attire and purchase it

8 months before

- Meet with your officiant to plan your ceremony
- Book your entertainment (DJ, band, MC, etc.)
- Shop for and purchase your bridesmaids' dresses
- Design and order the wedding invitations and save-the-date cards

7 months before

- Create a gift registry
- Hire a florist
- Plan your honeymoon

6 months before

- Send out the save-the-date cards

- Book your hair and makeup appointments for the day of (also schedule trial runs for both)
- Book a hotel room for the wedding night if necessary

5 months before

- Create a schedule for the big day
- Decide on dates for bachelor and bachelorette parties
- Shop for and purchase shoes, jewelry and accessories

4 months before

- Reserve wedding day transportation for the wedding party
- Select alcohol and other drinks for the reception
- Taste and choose your wedding cake
- Buy wedding bands
- Shop for and order the groomsmen's attire

3 months before

- Purchase wedding favors for your guests
- If you'd like your loved ones to say or read something during the ceremony, let them know
- Write down your vows
- Decide on activities for the reception (photo booth, dancing, games, etc.)

2 months before

- Send out your wedding invitations
- Do trial runs for both hair and makeup
- Give your music selections to the DJ or MC

1 month before

- Finalize the schedule for the big day
- Choose a seating plan for the reception
- Break in your shoes

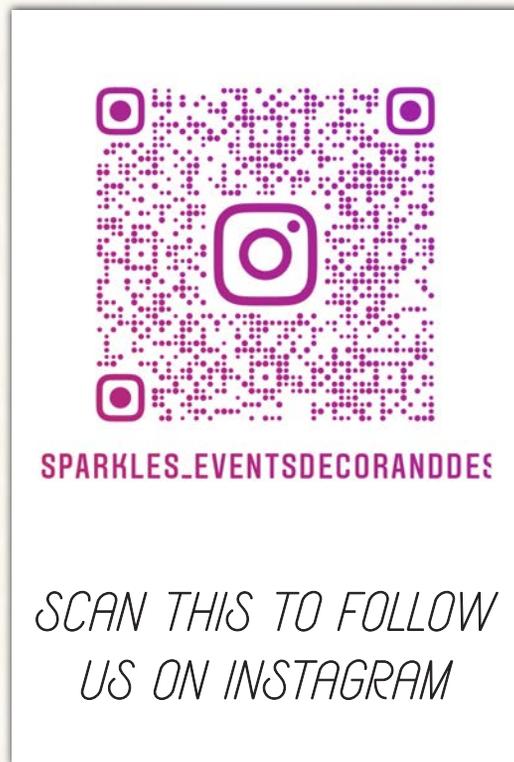
1 week before

- Visit the desired beauty professionals (hair colorist, esthetician, etc.)
- Practice reading your vows
- Write out checks to pay your vendors

1 day before

- Get your nails done
- Give the checks to someone you trust to pay the vendors





Love Story

Austin and I met the Summer of 2018. Over the course of six months Austin asked me out more times than I can count, I have no doubt he knows the exact number, with me turning down every single opportunity. Even though we had many people encouraging us to give it a try, it took me until that December to finally cave in and I haven't looked back since. He likes to claim that was my last chance but I still don't believe him.

On our first date we went to Outback where I managed to win him over by dropping my ranch covered chicken wing down the front of my white sweater, and the rest was history. Fast forward a little over a year later Austin had planned an early Valentine's Dinner for us. As we were walking down waterfront park in Beaufort he got down on one knee and popped the question. With some of my best friends there, and a photographer to capture it all, he had planned the perfect day. He truly is my best friend, soul mate and biggest supporter. We go so well together and I am thrilled for our future together.






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Hi there!

Welcome to Sparkles Events Décor & Design. We are a wedding planning company based out of Walterboro, SC. We travel all over the state planning and coordinating couples "Best Day Ever." We have been in the business for 10 years and have done 100's of weddings. We pride ourselves on professionalism and creating a relationship with our clients to insure they have the most perfect day. Sparkles will coordinate, plan, design, and create a perfect day that reflects your vision. You will never have to stress about anything for your wedding when you have us. We take care of it all for you and create a stress free planning service for you.

We plan weddings for brides of all

budgets. We promise to give each bride their dream wedding while keeping them within their budget. Yes, you can still have the most perfect day and be on a small budget.

What makes us different? We listen to you! We never try to change the way you want your wedding, helping you create the vision you want is our favorite thing to do. We have the resources to assist you in finding the perfect venue and we have many connections in the wedding industry. We get prices personalized for us because of the relationship we have built with vendors in the wedding industry. We will always find you the best price for a vendor that meets your budget. Our number 1 goal is to make you happy.

Teamwork makes the dream work.

At Sparkles Events there is no I in team. We all work together to make sure your day is everything you dreamed of. You will find a professional team of Wedding and Event Planners when you come to Sparkles who give 100% when bringing your vision to life.

Creating a lasting experience is what you will receive from us. A day you and your significant other will never forget. If you would like to schedule a phone call or meeting with us feel free to contact us at 843-599-4777. Thank you for taking the time to learn about us and what we can offer our community and future brides.

Xoxo Sparkles



HOW TO GET MARRIED ON EDISTO BEACH

Edisto Beach is Colleton County's beach-front town. The town is situated on 4.5 miles of uncrowded, pristine beach, creating a peaceful and perfect setting for a small beachfront wedding. Its undeveloped community is rich in options for strolls on the beach, local restaurant flavors and natural flare, giving some brides the laid-back beach wedding they have always wanted.

The Town of Edisto Beach allows weddings on the beach, but there are guidelines in place. Here is a list of guidelines and rules for planning your wedding at Edisto Beach.

Weddings

Town leaders at Edisto Beach want to keep the beaches clean and safe for everyone - including you and your wedding party. General rules and common sense still apply. Glass containers are never allowed on the beach, nor are fireworks, open fires or grilling.

Your wedding may be sited anywhere along the beach and no permission is required if your guest list is under 50. However, permission is needed if your guest list is over 50 or if you are renting a home for the reception and wish to have entertainment that extends beyond our normal 10 pm noise ordinance.

If either of the above conditions applies, you must fill out a special event request form and submit it for approval at least 45 days in advance. There



Photos Courtesy of The Town of Edisto Beach

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is a \$30.00 fee for this event request.

Tents and chairs may be set up on the beach for guests but must be removed by dusk.

Please leave only your footprints when you depart.

Beach Regulations

Whether you are having a wedding or just a stroll, the following activities

are prohibited on the beach:

Glass containers

Bon fires

Littering



Motorized vehicles

Motorized water craft

Sailboats on sand dunes or grassy areas of dunes

Parking on sand dunes

Dogs on leash May 1 through Oct 31 and owners must cleanup pet excrement

Leaving holes on beach

Disturbing or hanging items on sand fencing

Disturbing, damaging, trampling or removing vegetation that stabilizes dunes



Photos Courtesy of The Town of Edisto Beach

A BEACH WEDDING. Brides wanting to get married at Edisto Beach can do so. The town has about 6-10 weddings each year, according to town officials. More weddings are held at the town's Bay Creek Park, as shown.

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A WEDDING AT THE BARN

By VICKI BROWN
vbrown@lowcountry.com

When it comes to planning that special day as a future bride, one of the first things on your “To Do” list is to find the perfect venue. It needs to be a place that makes the vision in your head and heart become a reality...a place to tie the knot with the person you want to share your entire life, and yet a place to celebrate with family and friends. “The Barn” in Colleton County is becoming a spot for such a wedding venue.

Charlie Smoak retired from Palmetto Co-op. His wife, Kathy, also retired from the Hampton County School system. They had a dream to buy a farm and build an event venue. After they both retired, they purchased a 66-acre farm at

1800 Co-op Road and constructed “The Barn” at Escondido Farm.

“The Barn,” as they call it, consists of a large metal building with beautiful rustic wood completely comprising the inside. It is fully enclosed, heated and air conditioned with a full, onsite prep kitchen, restrooms, and bridal suite.

“We offer many options for ceremony and receptions both inside and outside. We have seating for 200 people but can easily accommodate more for larger wedding parties, weddings, receptions, and events,” said owner Kathy Smoak. “We are adding lots of new floral and decor options for our brides to use on their big day,” she added.

On the property there is also a lovely spot for outdoor pictures and weddings with lights twinkling, strung from tree to tree and along a lit archway.



Photo Provided

Couples in Colleton County are using “The Barn” as a one-stop destination for wedding venues. Some top trends in 2021 include having smaller weddings and weekday weddings, as a way to save cash and to reduce crowding during COVID-19.



Photo Provided

“The Barn” in Colleton County is a wedding venue destination, offering brides and grooms a rustic flare to their wedding ceremonies. It is locally-owned and operated.

“The Barn” has a stock of greenery and neutral florals, flower girl/ring bearer items, vases and/or rustic decor, signage, whiskey barrels, mantles, arbors and so much more available for use. They also have white, floor length tablecloths, candles, wreaths, etc.

“These are all available to use complimentary - the only costs involved are for the cleaning of the tablecloths. We also offer full service wedding coordination and decorating if desired,” Kathy said. “We usually stay busy, and our venue booked, but we do have several openings since the pandemic has changed wedding plans for many.

“So, couples need to schedule a tour of our beautiful venue today as soon as possible,” she said.

“The Barn” has also hosted baby showers, birthday parties, Christmas parties, and recently, the Secretary of Agriculture held a region-wide meeting for farmers there.

“What I like about ‘The Barn’ is that it is a blank slate inside. Any style of wedding or event is perfect here,” said Kathy.

For more information on booking this venue or touring it, contact The Smoaks at escondidofarm1800@gmail.com or call 843-726-3611 or 843-226-3612.



Photo Provided.

The Smoaks were married at “The Barn” in Colleton County in 2019. This venue is becoming a popular site for couples who want to get married in Colleton.


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LOCAL BRIDAL EXPERT TALKS 2021 DRESS TRENDS

By HEATHER WALTERS

Brides who will ring in their big day this year have a lot more options in front of them, as the typical white bridal gown is coming in new colors and styles.

"Color is definitely in this year," said Betsy Watts, manager of Bridals by Jodi in the West Ashley side of nearby Charleston. The privately-owned bridal boutique opened in 2001. It caters to brides and bridal parties who come to them from across the Lowcountry, including Colleton County.

When Watts talks about color being an option for brides this year, she is referring to a specific palette. "We have blush, stone, almond, and sand," she said. "It's more of neutrals, earth tones, soft whites and even on the side of pink," she said.

"Of course, we still have white for the classic bride."

Besides looking at the colors of gowns, Watts said new bridal gown trends for 2021 have designers focusing on the backs of bridal gowns. "We are seeing more back details, with our designers focusing on ways to wow you," she said. "We are seeing lower backs, backs with lots of details."

"Lace is always a priority and it's something we always see as being popular, classic and beautiful. With us being in Charleston, lace is just a classic choice," she said.

Watts said the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly changed the way brides are designing their wedding days, with more and more brides choosing to have smaller ceremonies. The smaller guest lists and smaller ceremonies have prompted some brides to do a more casual approach to their personal style and to their gowns, said Watts. "We are seeing a few more brides choosing to forego the classic veil," she said, "but, more times than not, that veil is still a staple in a bride's look for her wedding day. Veils are still important to a lot of our brides this year."

No matter the trend, however, Watts said the bride should pick the gown that speaks to her and is true to her own style. "Less is always more with accessories," she said. "And the dress should always be the loudest piece of your ensemble. No matter what you are accessorizing with, the dress is still the center piece of the bride," she said.

According to "Brides," a magazine publication that focuses on bridal trends, the 2021 Fall wedding gown trends will focus on two things: the shoulders and the back.

"Brides" Writer Sophia Moore states in her February issue that the top wedding gown trend this year are cap sleeves that turn into capes. Moore states that the "cape trend" might also be called a shoulder duster, a ribbon train or long ribbons that flow from the shoulders. "...(It's) giving brides a regal option that's lighter on drama than the usual train," she said.

The other option that brides are embracing this year, Moore states, is a backless gown.

The third big trend this year, she said, is all about "over-the-top" shoulder accessories and ruffles. The ruffles are biggest seen on the shoulder, with some of them able to be removed after the ceremony.

The more exaggerated bride wanting a fancier option might go for gowns layered in ruffles.

"Paired back weddings were on everyone's minds for the coming season, evident in the choice of hemline favored by many designers – the tea-length dress," she said.



Photo by Donnie Smith

RUFFLES, RIBBONS AND BARE BACKS. For 2021's top wedding gown trends, local experts and national designers say that backless gowns are exaggerated ruffles are on the top trends for gowns.



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FINANCIAL TIPS FOR COUPLES MARRYING LATER IN LIFE.

Getting married is one of life's most significant milestones. A wedding is a joyous occasion, one that you are sure to remember for the rest of your life.

For some couples—particularly those who are young—merging two lives can be easy. That's because they generally have few assets or ties, and are flexible when it comes to their lifestyles and careers.

But for those who marry later in life, things can be a bit more complicated. By the time they reach their 30s and 40s, many people have built up substantial assets, have significant ties to their communities, and are well entrenched in their careers. Some may even have children from previous relationships.

If you and your soon-to-be-spouse fall into the second category, there are a number of important financial issues that you may want to discuss before tying the knot.



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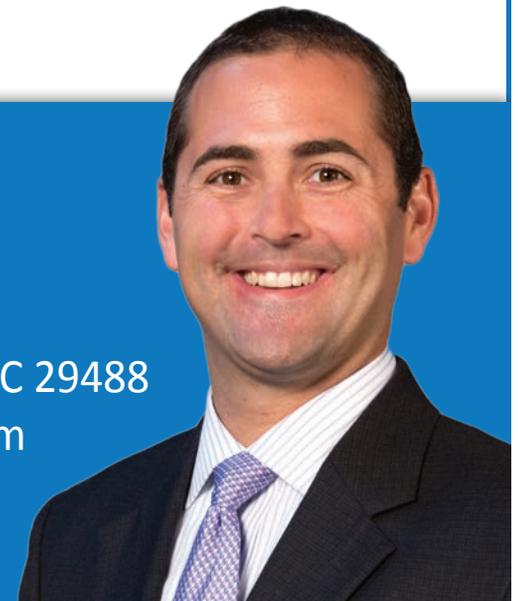
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KEY'S TO A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

By Dr. Zane Brown
Pastor and pastoral counselor
Contributor to The Press and Standard

After being married to the same woman for 43 years, I know a little something about having a good marriage. Is there such a thing as a perfect marriage? No. Is my marriage always wonderful with rainbows and singing birds? No. But we learned a lot over the years and came to understand the keys needed to make a marriage fulfilling. Here are some ideas for making a marriage commitment permanent, and those vows meaningful.

Talk every day. Be open and honest in your conversations. People change as they age, and this is when relationships usually fall apart. If you and your spouse don't regularly talk about everything important as well as insignificant in your lives, you lose touch with your spouse who then becomes a stranger.

Go on dates. Why do couples stop dating after they marry? This is when dating is just as important. Dating helps your spouse feel special and reminds you of what initially drew you to that person.

Cuddle on the couch. Couples tend to drift to "their own side" of a sofa or room. Get rid of the recliner. The touch of your spouse should never get old. Medically, it can actually lower your blood pressure and create feelings that relax your brain. It also stimulates intimacy between you both.

Hold hands. Wherever the two of you go, hold hands. It creates feelings of safety and belonging in a world that seems to create hostility, chaos, and isolation.

Put the phone down. Believe it or not, your spouse should be more important than Tik Tok, Twitter, or Facebook. Find something to do together. Consider going to church together. The Bible can teach you how to love someone else more than you love yourself.

It's not all about you. Put your spouse first in your daily life. If each of you is putting the other first, then there is no room for problems. There is no place for selfishness in a successful marriage.

Shut up and listen. Your spouse is important and has a lot to say. If he or she is unhappy, really listen to understand the emotions and issues. Even if it seems to be inaccurate, it is still perceived...which makes the problem real to him or her. Reframe what is being said to be certain you understand what is being said. Don't let the negative emotions overwhelm you as you discuss issues. Cool heads, warm hearts, and open minds are important in a successful marriage. And don't go to bed angry. Stay up and work it out. The more tired you grow, the less important the argument becomes!

Don't talk negatively about family members. Doing so will put your spouse on the defensive. Remember that when you marry, your family expands. Usually, that's a good thing. However, resist drawing family members into issues between you and your spouse. When other family members are even passively involved in your issues, it can quickly destabilize relationships and trust.

Be careful of spending too much time around single friends. While their lives might seem more exciting than yours sometimes, in actuality they are desperately running around and searching for what you already have.

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EASY BUT AWESOME PHOTO BOOTH IDEAS

Are you planning to set up a photo booth at your wedding? If you do, your guests will love hamming it up in front of the camera, and you'll wind up with a slew of fun, candid mementos. Here are some backdrop ideas for a photo booth you'll love.

Sequins. For an old Hollywood feel, choose white, silver or gold. Or put a modern spin on it and choose reversible sequins that your guests can play with to change the look.

Flowers. A wall of flowers is the perfect romantic backdrop. Match the blooms to your wedding colors or opt for white or red roses. Alternatively, create an ombre effect from light to dark using a variety of flowers in an array of hues.



Photo Provided

Balloons. The trick to nailing a balloon backdrop is to use balloons in various sizes and shapes. Choose pastel tones for a soft look or go for bright colors for a more whimsical touch.

Wood. A wall of wood planks decorated with ivy and twinkle lights will make your guests feel like they're hanging out on your back porch. This backdrop is well-suited to a rustic or country themed wedding.

Don't forget to include props to take photos with. Frames, hats and mustaches on sticks are classic, as are comic book-style word bubbles with fun messages on them.

Advertisement for Fringe Style Co. featuring hair and nail services. The ad includes two photos of styled hair, the company logo, and contact information.

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\$8.00 per tablecloth: Floor length black and ivory tablecloths available.

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Situated in the heart of historic downtown Walterboro



Pictures by Becky Moorehead

The Market Hall, located within the Colleton Museum and Farmers Market, offers an inviting and spacious wedding venue situated in the heart of historic downtown Walterboro.

The indoor area of the Market Hall can seat 100-120 guests for formal dining; however, the option of opening three overhead doors leading into the covered outdoor area of Farmers Market leads to endless opportunities for larger guest lists.

When it comes to catering, the venue has several options available on site. A small prep kitchen, ideal for food setup and storage, is just steps away from the party. Should catering require a larger space or access to a full kitchen, the Colleton Commercial Kitchen is located on site and offers caterers a bevy of options at their fingertips.

“With the addition of the Colleton Commercial Kitchen, the availability of caterers and custom

cakes is greater than ever before,” said Matt Mardell, director. “In the kitchen, A Soulful Taste has proven popular for catering, JJ Gourmet Cupcakes for a memorable cake and how about your wedding favors from Juice C Treats? Now there is also a surge of new food truck businesses coming in with similar capabilities. These go along with the old classics such as Jimmy Fitts, who we all know has an impressive outfit. Jimmy has used the museum multiple times and he always finds it has everything he needs.”

The Market Hall offers plenty of other perks to make your day unforgettable including an air-conditioned area, outdoor ceiling fans, multiple lighting options, a projector screen, multiple power sources inside and throughout the outdoor area, along with plenty of places to locate a DJ and dance floor.

Parking in downtown Walterboro is not a concern for those considering the Market Hall for their special day, as plentiful parking

exists on site and nearby. “Our new parking lot addition has been really important to help us meet demand,” said Mardell. “Around 40 new spaces were added in the gravel parking area under the trees.”

“Before the museum came along, there were limited choices for a local wedding space,” said Mardell. “But now we’re pretty much booked every weekend throughout the year and we have some bookings for the following year. It will be great that the Walterboro Wildlife Center is now also open to help meet the large demand for event space rental that we have

With all these options at your disposal, the biggest surprise may be the budget-friendly cost. “The inside event space rents in a six-hour block for \$300,” said Mardell. “This includes the Farmers Market area, inside and outside restrooms, along with some tables and chairs with more available at an extra cost. Depending on availability, the space

can be set up during working hours before the event so families may rest easy knowing it is ready and under lock-and-key until the big day.”

To learn more about booking the Market Hall, contact Eartha Cunningham, event coordinator, at ecunningham@colletoncounty.org, call 843-549-2303, or visit www.colletonmuseum.org.

“With all that the Colleton Museum and Farmers Market has to offer at a great value, why wouldn’t you want to get married locally surrounded by your family and friends? Consider the history all around you in the museum, along with gorgeous photography spots like the benches beneath the vines — then toss in a trademark Lowcountry sunset — and anybody’s wedding day is perfect!” — Matt Mardell, director of the Colleton Museum and Farmers Market

FORMER WATERFRONT GENERAL STORE HAS TURNED INTO TOP WEDDING DESTINATION FOR BRIDES, GROOMS

By HEATHER WALTERS

A beautiful former general store is now a top wedding destination spot, and it's only a short drive from Colleton County.

The "Old Wide Awake Plantation" was built as a general store, only accessible by water for those weary boaters and travelers passing through along the Intercoastal Waterway. The store was built in nearby Hollywood, S.C.

"It was always built to be a general store on the riverfront, on the intercoastal waterway. It was never a working plantation," said "Old Wide Awake Plantation" Event Coordinator Margaret McKenzie.

While there is no clear date as to when the general store was first built, the general consensus is that it was constructed in the late 1800's. It was only accessible by water to those in need of buying goods. Then, the Jarvis Family bought the house in the 1980's, as a secondary property for their "very large family," said McKenzie. That family held a wedding on the property, and the idea of getting married on the grounds was born. "That is how it all began, with the thought turning to using the property as a wedding rental site," she said.

Eventually, the Jarvis Family sold a portion of the store and property to a wealthy English landowner, who wanted to retire on the property with his wife. When those plans changed, that landowner gave the original Jarvis family an option to buy back their property from him.

"The property was then sold back to the original family for \$1, in the year 2000," said McKenzie.

After some renovations and refurbishments, the house now sits further inland, and is located about 300-yards inland, from the original site.

Weddings on the property continued, but it wasn't until 1999 that the "Old Wide Awake Plantation" drew national attention. This is when Hollywood actress Reese Witherspoon married Ryan Phillippe on the grounds.

Praise about the peaceful and beautiful grounds continued to pour in: in 2019, the "Old Wide Awake Plantation" was named a Top Pick by "the knot" in their national "best of weddings review" issue.

The plantation was also named Couples Choice for being the best place to wed in 2019 by "wedding wire," another national wedding publication.

Couples interested in touring the property for their upcoming wedding can do so by appointment only. Tours are held seven days a week, except on days when the property is already booked for another event. To schedule a tour, contact Margaret McKenzie at 843-814-4980.

For more information on the plantation, including Frequently-Asked Questions, photos and availability, visit www.oldwideawakeplantation.com.



Photos Provided, Courtesy of "Old Wide Awake Plantation"