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Windy Hill Farm and Preserve

A unique wedding escape

With 650-acres of rolling pasture along a bend in the Tennessee River, Windy Hill Farm and Preserve provides a breathtaking backdrop for brides looking for a peaceful, romantic and one-of-a-kind wedding escape.

While not a traditional wedding venue, Director of Lodging Monty Howard said the all-inclusive boutique resort, located at 1180 Poplar Springs-Blair Bend Road in Loudon, offers plenty of unique experiences for the happy couple to be.

“Our spacious flagstone patio provides a beautiful setting for a ceremony any time of year with a giant 100-year-old oak tree and rolling pasture providing the backdrop,” explained Howard. “The main building also offers a cozy indoor space for around 50 if weather is a concern.”

Brides interested in eloping can even choose a more secluded spot elsewhere on Windy Hill’s picturesque property, ensuring a more personalized and intimate touch.

“Elopements can pick a special spot anywhere on the property, such as the Eagle’s Nest Trail overlooking the Tennessee River,” Howard said. “The team is also happy to assist with tented options for convenience.”

See WINDY HILL on Page 5



Story by Rachel Totten / Photos courtesy of Windy Hill Farm and Preserve





Windy Hill

From page 4

On top of this, the property's luxurious lodging options consist of nine spacious private cabins, eight guest lodge units and a multi-room farmhouse, all of which offer mesmerizing views of the area's natural beauty. All stays also include access to a variety of complementary activities like yard games, puzzles and numerous hiking and biking trails.

"From elopements to small groups of 75 or less, guests can stay in one of 18 well-appointed accommodations," said Howard, adding that, with five bedrooms, a great room and a full kitchen, the farmhouse is an especially popular option for bridal parties interested in staying together. "Larger parties, however, will need to reserve the entire property to enjoy exclusive use for the weekend, and will receive a 10% discount on all lodging."

Wedding parties can also take advantage of Windy Hill's award-winning on-site restaurant, Wilder, which specializes in delectable, farm-to-table meals and Appalachian-in-

spired cuisine.

"Wilder has all the meals covered, from rehearsal to reception to Sunday brunch," noted Howard. "Standard meals are included during the stay, and they offer a variety of options for special meals, from buffet to plated five-star table service."

In addition to delicious food and luxury rooms, Windy Hill also offers a number of activities to enhance your group's stay, including clay shooting, beekeeping and a popular wine hike. Wellness options, including in-room massage services, yoga and meditation classes, are also available to give brides the relaxing stay they deserve.

"Even if booking your special day at any of East Tennessee's other beautiful venues, Windy Hill is the perfect place to host a bachelor or bachelorette weekend for a memorable experience or for out of town guests to book an all-inclusive stay," said Howard.

Bridal inquiries can be made through the Windy Hill Farm and Preserve website at www.windyhillfarmtn.com/groups. Larger groups are encouraged to reserve about a year in advance.



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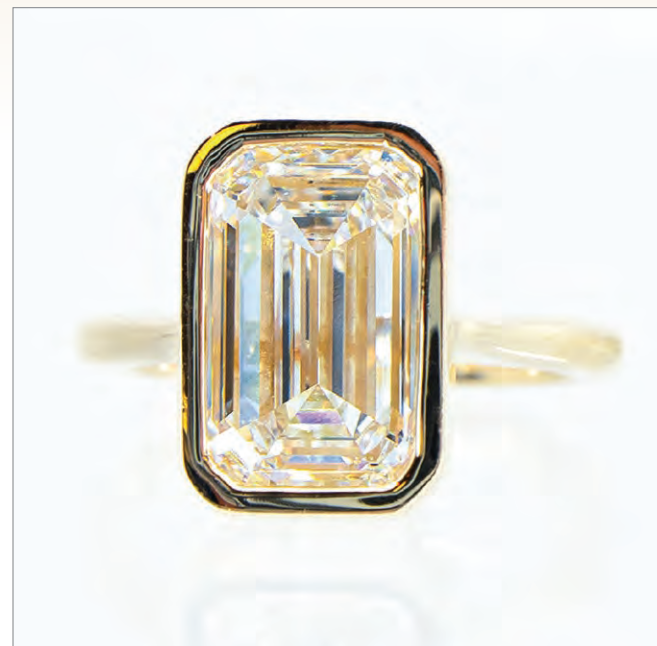
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A man with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a light-colored checkered shirt and dark pants, is kneeling on a light blue cloth on a sidewalk. He is holding a small black box, presumably containing a ring, and looking up at a woman. The woman has long brown hair and is wearing a white short-sleeved dress with a black bow at the back. She is leaning forward, looking down at the man. They are surrounded by several bouquets of white and pink roses in glass vases. In the background, there is a brick building and a large tree.

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True Love

found at The Villages

Quite unexpectedly, John Boyer and Jane Bevins found true love at The Villages in Farragut, and the newlyweds of just over a year are enjoying their golden years together.

John and his late wife, Colleen, were among the first residents of the independent living community when it opened in late 2019. John was Colleen's primary caregiver as she battled dementia.

Jane Bevins moved in almost three years later, just two apartments down from the couple, following the death of her husband.

The trio struck up a warm friendship, as Jane saw how tenderly John cared for Colleen.

"He was so good to her," Jane recalls. "He would bring her to meals or events, pushing her wheelchair, and would get her food and feed her."

"He was a very good caretaker, and I admired him for hanging in there during her illness."

"I thought he was a very nice person, and I liked Colleen, too," Jane added. "She was a very nice lady."

Colleen's brave battle came to an end in July 2023. While John grieved, he did rely on already established friendships at The Villages, which of course included Jane.

It was not long before their feelings grew.

"I knew from the first time we talked to each other, he would be in my life in some capacity," she recalled. "Right from the start, we blended so well together. We had the same philosophies, and we started dating."

John said he was attracted to Jane for a number of reasons.

"She has a great personality," he said. "She is beautiful, and nice to be around."

After a few months of dating, John asked Jane for her hand in marriage, "but initially, I turned him down."

"She said she didn't want to get married again," recalled John.

However, as Jane grew to know him better, she reconsidered.

"I already knew how nice he was, but I realized I did want us to be married after all," Jane said with a smile.

See TRUE LOVE on Page 9



Story by Michelle Hollenhead / Photos submitted

True love

From page 8

Both of the Catholic faith, they married at St. Albert the Great Catholic Church on April 3, 2024.

"We have never had a disagreement, and we never will," said Jane.

They had the blessings of not only the church, but their eight children — they each have four from previous marriages.

"The kids were — and are — thrilled for us," said Jane. "I feel very fortunate."

They refer to each other as their "guardian angels."

Jane, 84, has recently faced her own health battles, and true to form, John, who is a month shy of 91, has stepped up to help.

"I had gallbladder surgery in March, and he has taken good care of me, making sure I get my meds, and taking me to the doctor," said Jane.

They attend church when they can, and visit family nearby, as both are in relatively good health, despite Jane's recent surgery.

"I love her to death," said John.

"He is truly the love of my life," added Jane sweetly.

Their love story has not gone unnoticed.

"John is a true gentleman, and Jane is a beautiful and gracious lady," said The Villages executive director Melody Matney. "It's endearing to see this couple find love again in their golden years!"

"He is truly
the love of
my life."

~ Jane Bevins



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Unique elements for your wedding reception

Couples who are currently planning their wedding undoubtedly hope the day will one they remember forever. Weddings will be memorialized in people's minds and on film and video, and setting an occasion apart from other weddings and big events may come down to some creative touches that truly make it unique. Here are some interesting elements that merit consideration, many of which involve interactive entertainment.

Photo booth

There is a reason why photo booths complete with entertaining props and various backdrops are so popular. A photo booth is a great way for guests to capture the day and take home a memento. Couples can review the photo booth images and enjoy snippets of unscripted and unposed moments from the party.

Live painter

Hiring an artist to capture the festivities can be a truly unique feature. While photography packages and wedding albums come with some turn-around time, a painting will be done at the end of the reception and can give couples a glimpse of the evening right away.

Interesting sweets display

Couples can elevate their wedding receptions by offering guests something that's a cut above a piece of wedding cake. A "Viennese Hour," also known as a "Venetian Hour," is a popular wedding tradition, particularly in the tri-state area on the east coast of the United States. This hour features a lavish dessert buffet presented after the cake cutting. Couples need not have a traditional Venetian Hour, however. They can offer a table filled with various candies, cordials, doughnuts, cupcakes, or whatever special sweet they want to showcase. Serve with monogrammed napkins.

Entertaining performance

Performers can run the gamut from cultural dancers celebrating a couple's heritage to magicians to even a specialized singer. In addition to a band or DJ, this performer can engage the audience and provide them with a bona fide show.

Signature cocktails

Whether a couple chooses an entire open bar or has select alcoholic offerings for guests, a signature cocktail can make the reception even more special. Tie the drink's ingredients or theme into something that pertains to the couple's interests or history. For example, if the couple sipped Moscow Mules on their first date, serve a First Date Mule at the wedding reception.

Couples can embrace various extra special touches to make their wedding receptions more memorable.

Why it pays to hire a professional makeup artist for your wedding

There is no denying that weddings can be exciting, memorable and expensive. According to data from the wedding planning and registry website Zola, the average wedding in the United States in 2024 cost \$33,000. Prices for weddings will vary depending on geography and services.

In an effort to rein in spending, couples may wonder where they can cut costs, and one service that may be up for consideration is a professional makeup artist. After all, a bride and her bridesmaids may feel they already have plenty of experience applying makeup, and the plethora of online tutorials can guide them through areas where they may need some help. But before making a pilgrimage to Ulta or Sephora for supplies, savvy brides should realize there are plenty of reasons to utilize a pro when it comes to wedding makeup.

- **Bridal makeup isn't like everyday makeup.** A professional knows how to create a look that will remain flawless throughout the entire day. From the ceremony to the reception, makeup has to be durable, and a pro will know which products and techniques to use to ensure everything stays put, advises Shervonne Kitto, a makeup artist serving New York and New Jersey.

- **You can actually save money going with a pro.** Doing makeup yourself may not result in cost savings. Remember, employees at makeup stores may do your makeup for a reduced cost initially, but they are in the business of selling products. Many consumers walk away spending more in products than they intended, and sometimes the cost in getting all new bridal makeup could actually be more than if you relied on a professional.

- **Enjoy time savings.** Professionals who have mastered their crafts can quickly and efficiently create a desired makeup look, saving you time compared to a do-it-yourself attempt.

- **Enhance your beauty.** A pro knows which techniques to use to play up certain features and minimize others. This can help present the best version of yourself on one of the most photographed days of your life.

- **Create a comprehensive look.** Hiring a professional makeup artist means you can coordinate how you and your bridal party look, which can serve to complement the overall wedding theme. If you go the DIY route, you



might end up with a bridal party with some very different-looking makeup applications. A pro may do some photo-enhancing minimal touches for the gentlemen in the wedding as well.

- **Enjoy time to relax.** Having your hair and makeup done by someone else affords you an hour or more to just sit back and be pampered, something that likely will not occur for the rest of the busy wedding day.

When considering makeup artists, each should offer a free trial and be receptive to clients' needs and requests. However, it is worthwhile to trust the makeup artist as he or she ultimately knows how to craft winning wedding day looks.

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Advice from the silver side

Shared wisdom from a 25-year marriage

My wife and I recently celebrated our 25th Wedding anniversary. 25 years is the silver anniversary, or so I've been told. In 25 years there is not a single day or moment that I would change. I love her more than she may realize.

I'm married to my partner in life. I can say that our marriage has faced challenges in those 25 years. First adult jobs, deaths in the family and job losses. Financial hardships, losing a home, moving back in with my parents. Buying a new home, new jobs, mental health issues and other trials. Many in today's world can't or won't face these challenges with their partner.

There's no instruction manual when we embark on marriage. Your guides are those around you—parents, family, friends, those in public. Depending on the guides you follow, your experience can be good or bad.

Today, there are some who have unrealistic views of marriage. They seem to think that marriage is not work, that somehow relationships just happen organically. They act as if challenges and problems are not

meant to be dealt with or even acknowledged in a meaningful way.

The entertainment industry makes marriage look very easy. The honeymoon phase can appear endless. Debates over money, intimacy, communication and other relationship matters can appear to be resolved in 30 minutes. Kiss, hug, the end. Of course, it is not that simple.

Some look to social media for help. They might look for so-called experts to follow or make videos raking their partner over the coals, belittling their partner as a means of coping or entertainment. They're really just looking for a way to call the whole thing quits and move on. They're not understanding that relationships, especially marriage, are hard work.

Your partner is not a perfect person. We all come with some form of baggage, and that baggage has weight to it. Communication difficulties, money troubles, religious beliefs, political views, childhood trauma... those issues or others will come out during your marriage. Both of you will have to learn to deal with those things, hopefully with one able to help the other cope.

My wife (I call her 'Sweety') is a true partner in life. She supports me, she is my rock. She is always telling me how it is and not sugarcoating things. Now, that doesn't mean she is insensitive. She uses timing, turf and tone.

No, it's not a perfect method. But Sweety is never afraid to tell me the truth. Whether it's related to my job, hobbies, housework, views, etc. I'm the same with her. It took time to get there.

I'm not a perfect husband ... I'm not even close to being a perfect human. My Sweety is not perfect either. We have our flaws. But I wouldn't trade any of those flaws for anything. Because it's what makes us the people we are.

Every day is not rainbows and unicorns. It's a balance. It's finding time for each other. The little things, the little moments that build a life together. You may have more rough than good. You are going to have times of uncertainty. All will test your bond.

But you can get through it all.

You can get through because you have each other. You have that love. You are doing the work that builds a long-term life together.

25 years didn't just happen. We have made a go of it. We do the work. When we lose connection, we fight to find time for each other.

There are no perfect relationships. There are no perfect communication skills, love languages or anything of the kind. It's all built over time. Because you are building a house. The start of life together is building a foundation and over time, you just keep adding to it.

Eventually, you too may arrive at your silver anniversary. And there you may find your love even deeper than it was at the start.

*~Tony Christen,
farragutpress Production manager*

*"In 25 years there is not a
single day or moment that
I would change."*

