

# Real Brides

A bride with blonde hair styled in an updo, wearing a white lace wedding dress and holding a large bouquet of white and yellow flowers. She is looking down and to the right. The background is a soft, light-colored wall.

South Africa's Exciting  
Wedding Magazine

May 2020

*Celebrity  
Wedding*

*Spectacular  
Backdrops*

*Boho Chic  
Real Weddings*

# *Real Brides Takes Planning To Another Level*

*Real Brides magazine has taken its service to brides-to-be to another level.*

## **VIRTUAL WEDDING EXPO**

Real Brides launched South Africa's first Virtual Wedding Expo. Visit the EXPO [www.realbrides.co.za](http://www.realbrides.co.za)

Enter the Real Brides *VIRTUAL WEDDING EXPO* and you will find an audio visual presentation for each Exhibitor together with a full overview of what they have to offer brides-to-be.

## **DIRECT CONTACT**

We have enhanced the website to allow you to communicate directly with the Exhibitor of your choice via WhatsApp. This revolutionary concept provides direct communication between you and the vendors that you are considering for your big day.

**PLUS** – You will find a link to take you directly to the Exhibitor's website.

## **FULLY MOBILE**

The Real Brides *VIRTUAL WEDDING EXPO* is fully mobile. You can view it on your Computer, Tablet or Cellphone.

## **VISIT OUR ADVERTISERS VIDEOS**

The following advertisers featured in this issue of Real Brides are exhibitors in the Real Brides Virtual Expo. To view an audio visual presentation and to see what they offer just click on the links below.

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**On the cover:**

**Bride:** Carienne van der Merwe

**Photo:** Simone Venter Photography

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### **Beat The Winter Blues**

There's a distinct nip in the air these days so get yourself nice and cosy and enjoy reading about the weddings of another great lot of 'real' South African brides. If you would like your wedding to be considered for publication in Real Brides, write to [robbyn@topicpublishing.co.za](mailto:robbyn@topicpublishing.co.za). Include a sample wedding photo and a list of your vendors so that we can include your wedding on our list for consideration.

# CARIENNE & STEPHAN VAN DER MERWE



*Long distance dating for a while put this couple's relationship to the test but they happily got engaged after dating for just over two years.*

## **Romantic proposal?**

Stephan went all out with the proposal; to this day I cannot believe how romantic he was! He told me he'd won a helicopter flip at golf. So, we flew over a game farm and stopped for a champagne breakfast in a field, where he popped the question! We continued our adventure by then flying over the sea and Mossel Bay Point.

## **How many wedding venues did you consider?**

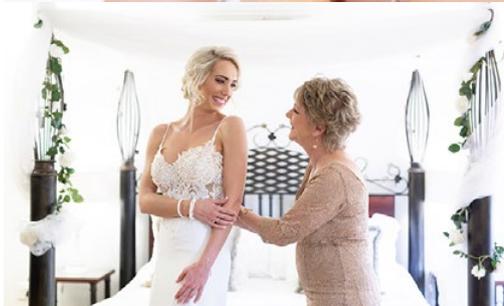
We viewed about 5 venues before going to Chez Charlene and when we saw that venue we both knew immediately that was where we would love to have our wedding. I literally got goose bumps walking into that chapel for the first time.

## **Did Chez Charlene pull out all the stops for you?**

Oh yes, their team is amazing, they truly go the extra mile. I don't know how they can do that many functions and still remember all the itty bitty details you requested for your specific function. They really are in a league of their own! Not only are they extremely professional and capable, but they are genuinely nice people too.

## **Tell us about your gorgeous dress.**

I fitted a few dresses but was unsure as to what exactly I wanted. I then saw a photo of one dress from the front and a photo of another dress from the back and I wanted to combine the two designs. I eventually had my dress made in Spain and fitted with Swarovski crystals and pearls after it was imported to South Africa. The dress had a Spanish lace top part with a very low back and a sheath fit. What made this dress unique is the lace that continued from the top into the train. It was so comfortable and lightweight and made me really feel like a princess. My dress is now for sale and anyone interested is welcome to contact me!





*“Three things make a wedding unforgettable - good food, good music and reasonable bar prices.”*

***Venue: Chez Charlene, Pretoria – [www.chezcharlene.co.za](http://www.chezcharlene.co.za)***

***Wedding gown: Mariana Zwaan***

***Hair: Hair by Lieze***

***Make up: Larietha Smith Permanent Makeup & Beauty***

***Décor: Eventz & Weddings***

***Cake: Lay-licious***

***Photography: Simone Venter Photography***

**Your bridesmaids all had the same hairstyle?**

One of my bridesmaids, who has been my friend since I was 14, has done my hair for all my special events as we grew up and we used to joke about how she would one day do my hair for my wedding day too. Not only did she do my hair but she did her own and all the other bridesmaids as well. She recommended the sock bun style for the girls and I loved it. The up style created such an elegant look with their long earrings and off-the-shoulder outfits.

**How many guests?**

160. Many people came from overseas, including my older brother who came from South Korea - I had not seen him for two years! Other guests came from Kenya, the UK, the Netherlands and the UAE. It was so special to have all our loved ones celebrate our wedding day with us.

**Décor?**

Another amazing friend did all our décor as a wedding gift. With Darin's trained eye and amazing taste, he set up mock-ups for me to make sure we found exactly what I wanted. After seeing the flowers I'd chosen; he carefully picked every item on the table with me to ensure it all came together perfectly.

**Great menu?**

I am of the opinion there are three things that make a wedding unforgettable - good food, good music and reasonable bar prices. Chez Charlene ensured all these aspects were taken care of! Our dessert was spectacular – a flaming Ferrero Rocher Crème Brulee. The waiters served the dessert (while it is on fire) in a dimly lit room with Alicia Keys' "Girl on fire" playing.

**Your first dance song?**

A classic never dies! L.O.V.E by Nat King Cole is cute, catchy and has a nice beat to dance to. Also, Stephan doesn't like dancing, and the song is quite short.

**Honeymoon?**

We received a two-week stay at Herolds Bay as a wedding gift and after that we went to the Maldives for a week. ♥



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# LEE-ROBIN & LEHAN GRAVETT



*This couple met at a student commune in Pretoria and their friendship turned into love. They celebrated a lovely scaled down wedding in the Free State the weekend before the national Covid-19 lockdown.*

## **Unexpected proposal?**

Lehan and I went out to dinner to celebrate our anniversary and little did I know that my cool, calm and collected boyfriend would be my fiancé by the end of the night! We finished our dinner and by 7pm Lehan had asked for the bill. This made no sense to me. We had only been there for about two hours and he already wanted to leave! So we did. I suggested getting drinks at our favorite place? No? He had plans, he told me very clearly. We then arrived at his uncle's flat, who was not home. So we went inside. In that moment, I was completely overwhelmed by the sight of candles, fairy lights and flowers! Lehan brought out homemade Gin and Tonic sorbet, which his sister had made; I could feel the love and the romance so clearly. Then the big moment came. He dropped onto his knees and asked me to make him the happiest man alive by becoming his wife. This was then when I also dropped to my knees with excitement and yelled YES. We then met with our closest friends and family to celebrate our engagement.

## **How long did it take you to plan your wedding?**

I honestly don't think any amount of time is enough time, because either way, we women always need more time! We were engaged for 14 months, which I think was the perfect amount of time to plan a wedding. If you can do it 4 months, why not?

## **Gorgeous wedding venue?**

Welgelegen Cherry Estate is situated in the Eastern Free State, 40 km from Clarens, and lies in the picturesque Witteberg mountains and overlooks the Maluti mountains. We chose to get married there, not only because of the breathtakingly gorgeous views, but also because of the hospitality of the Welgelegen Cherry Estate team. We visited about five other venues, but Welgelegen Cherry Estate won hands down each time.



*“We had to cut  
back on the number  
of guests due to  
the Covid-19  
restrictions on public  
gatherings.”*



*Venue: Welgelegen Cherry Estate, Fouriesburg, Free State – [www.cherryestate.co.za](http://www.cherryestate.co.za)*

*Dress: Kelsey Theron*

*Hair: Surien Botha*

*Make up: Chané De Jager*

*Flowers: Welgelegen Cherry Estate*

*Décor: Venue and Jaunmari Matthe*

*Photographer: Onesto Studios*

### Weekend wedding?

We chose to have a weekend wedding because the venue is far from Johannesburg and Pretoria where most of our guests are from. This was such a treat for them as they were able to spend the Saturday morning in nearby Clarens and a few of them even stayed over in Clarens until the Monday, which was just before the national Covid-19 lockdown! My guests were all on a blissful holiday for the weekend.

### Stunning backdrops for photos?

The mountains and the orchards at Welgelegen Cherry Estate are stunning. Our pictures really do not do them justice at all. The apple orchards were busting with apples on our wedding day - much later on in the year it's cherries. The thing about this venue is you don't have to spend too much money on décor because the setting and the magnificent mountain scenery actually does it all.

### Tell us about your dress.

My dress was custom designed, which I am beyond grateful for. From the beginning, Kelsey knew exactly what I wanted and she took my idea and made it glow.

### Covid-19 restrictions affected your wedding?

Originally, we had about 110 guests on our list but we ended up having to cut back to around 50 people due to the Covid-19 regulations concerning public gatherings such as weddings. One good thing however was that all of our guests were at least able to be accommodated at the venue.

### Honeymoon delayed?

We were not actually able to go on our honeymoon. When we arrived at the airport on the Sunday after our wedding, we were informed that our flights between Dubai and Phuket had been cancelled due to Phuket having gone into a lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Hopefully we will eventually be able to go on our honeymoon in December 2020 – that's if the Coronavirus has gone by then. ♥



# Welgelegen

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# STEFANI & TYRELL WINTER



*This couple's story started off as a longstanding friendship, which suddenly turned into love.*

## **Was your proposal a surprise?**

The proposal was a complete surprise, even though we had spoken about marriage and what ring designs I would like. On 11 May 2018, Tyrell's sisters helped him organise an evening at a luxurious boutique lodge and spa where, after dinner, he unexpectedly asked me to be his partner for life. We decided to enjoy being engaged as long as we could and chose a wedding date that we would treasure: 19 – 10 – 19

## **The most stressful or difficult part of planning a wedding?**

I studied Fine Arts and enjoy all things artsy and colourful and very much wanted our wedding day to be fun, different and colourful. This meant that we had to become quite creative with the budget set aside for décor and lighting, which was the most difficult aspect for me. But we managed to make it all work and were ecstatic with all aspects of the décor and lighting and the day itself!

## **What stood out about Cavalli Estate?**

We only ever wanted to get married at Cavalli because that was the place where the sparks between us first flew at a wine-tasting with friends and our magic started! Besides the fact that it is close to where our friends and family are based, the venue is also minimalistic in its architecture, has amazing food and wine, but more importantly has breath taking views of the amazing area we live in.

## **Was it always your plan to have an outdoor ceremony?**

Yes - because we live in, what we and others, deem to be the most beautiful area in the world! Why wouldn't you want vineyards and mountains as the backdrop for your I Do's?!

## **Tell us about your dress, bought or specially made?**

I definitely knew what I did not want my dress to look like, but could not quite pinpoint exactly what it ought to look like! I wanted something that was chic and



A bride with blonde hair in a bun, wearing a white strapless gown with a long train, stands in a field of tall, golden grass at sunset. She is looking down and smiling. The background shows a line of trees under a warm, golden sky.

*“My dress truly  
made me feel like  
a movie star!”*

**Venue:** Cavalli Estate, Stellenbosch – [www.cavalliestate.com](http://www.cavalliestate.com)

**Bridal gown:** Robyn Roberts Bridal Wear

**Hair:** Dawid Kriel from Institute Aesthetics

**Make up:** David Sharp

**Photos:** Dawid Botha Photography

classic, yet funky and different. Luckily I ended up at Robyn Roberts Bridal Wear where I found that perfect starting point for what would become my stunning custom-made dress. The ideal would have been to have two dresses (like the French do) but instead she managed to make one dress with a silk corset bodice combined with a glittered tulle skirt that was taken off during the evening to reveal a column silhouette underneath, making it easier to dance. The dress truly made me feel like a movie star!

### Big entourage - intentional?

Yes! We both are very sociable people and wanted to have our closest friends as part of the ceremony! The fact that we had such a large entourage made for some really fun group photos too!

### Did your invitation include children and plus ones?

We did not want a very large, impersonal wedding so we stuck to close friends and family. This meant one or two people were accompanied by plus one's because we knew them. No children were at the wedding as we wanted our guests and family to have an awesome evening out celebrating with us with no distractions! We were however fortunate enough to have 8 of our nieces and nephews be part of the ceremony and photos, after which they went home.

### Lovely use of colour, mainly through gorgeous flowers?

The use of colour in the flowers and the décor was very important to me, but I also wanted to include trendy aspects like neon lights, a hanging garden and colourful hanging bulbs as a way to create a bright, funky and relaxed atmosphere for the reception.

### How many guests?

100.

### Any advice for brides-to-be?

Truly try to enjoy every aspect of the planning of the wedding, the good parts and the bad and try not let the stress get to you. I decided two weeks before the wedding to just let everything be and to start enjoying the build up to the wedding as well.

### Honeymoon?

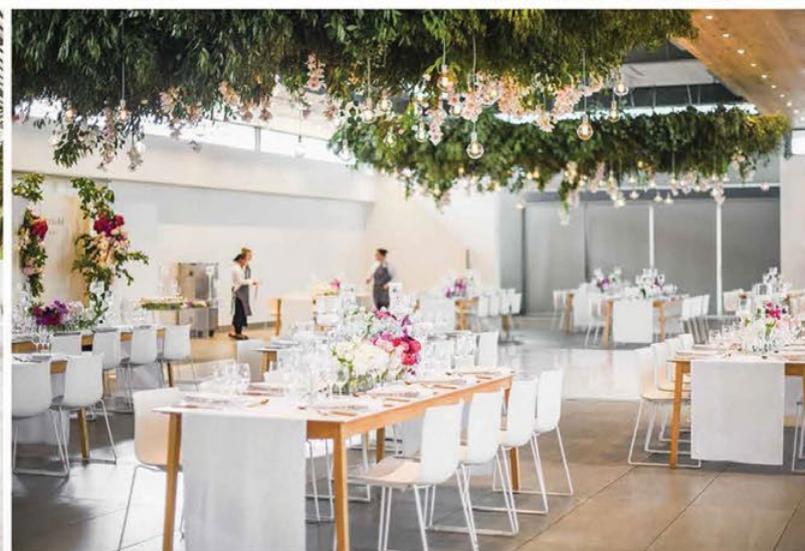
We spent 7 magical days at two different resorts in Mauritius. ♥





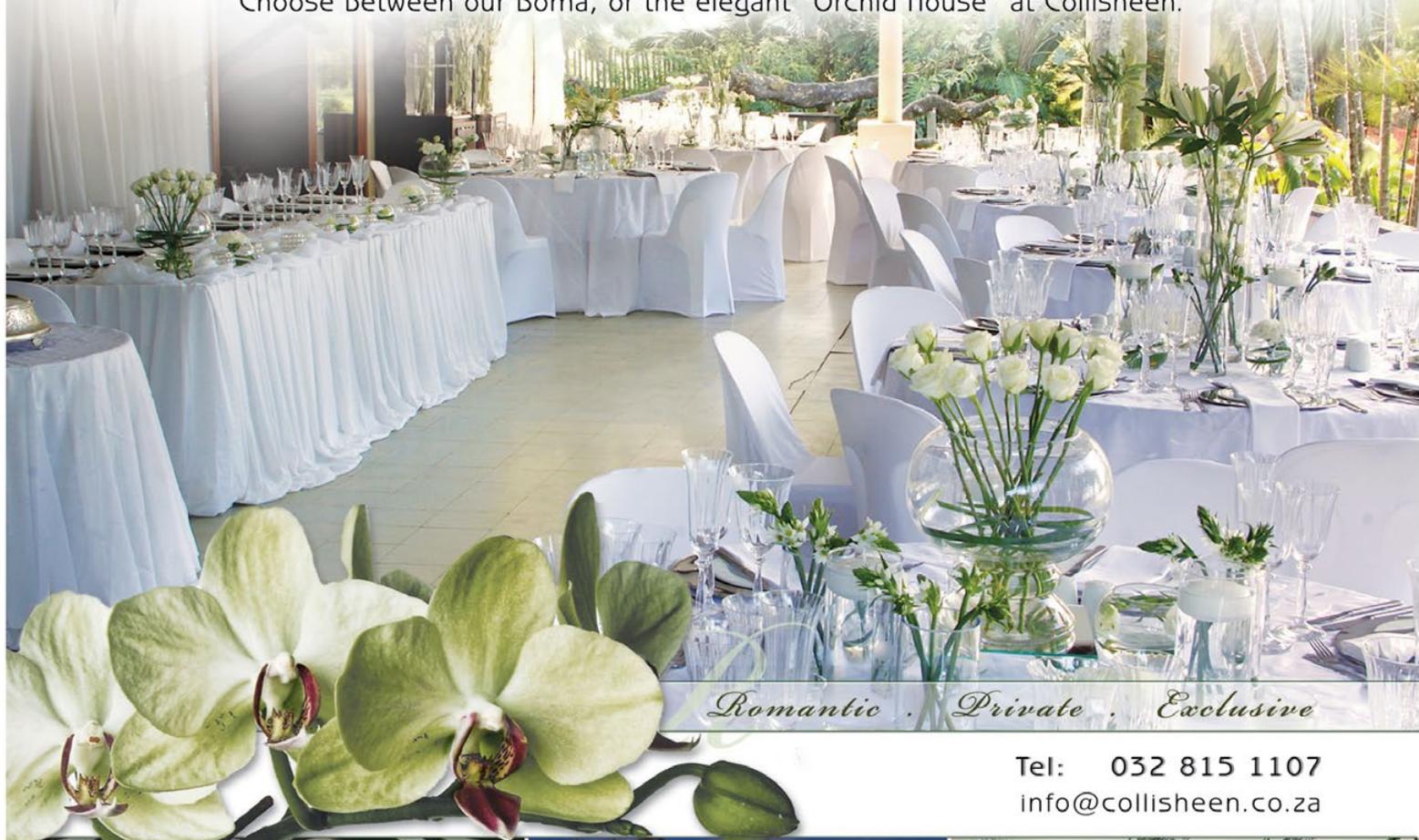
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# LILANI & STEPHEN SPOGTER



*This groom took a long time to get down on his knee to ask his lady to marry him and they had a lovely wedding on a private game reserve in the Eastern Cape.*

## **How did you meet Stephen?**

We met in 2007 at my parent's home. Stephen had visited our house a few times before with my brother but neither of us was really interested in one another. One particular day however we just started talking and, as they say, the rest is history.

## **Proposal out of the blue?**

Yes, it certainly came as a surprise. By the time Stephen proposed we had been together for 10 years and we already had 2 children! I had actually started to not worry about marriage anymore! On our 10-year anniversary I was sure it was going to be just another normal day and did not expect too much. There were no signs of anything and I was fully prepared for it to pass by as per normal. To my surprise however I got woken up very early in the morning – it was around 2am! Stephen woke me and took me through to the lounge, where I found candles that had been lit in the shape of a heart. He then went down on his knee and asked me to marry him. I didn't know what to say, it was so unreal. When I finally snapped out of my shocked state, I said yes!

## **How did you get to know about Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve?**

We were searching for venues online and came across the Inkwenkwezi website and saw that it was quite close to home. We loved the look of the venue - especially the view on the outside and the pictures we saw with the elephants. After getting a quotation we found that they were also very affordable.

## **Where is Inkwenkwezi; what do they offer and would you recommend them?**

The Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve is about 30 minutes outside of East London. The wedding package they offered included a beautiful honeymoon suite in the bush, which came with breakfast and a game drive. The catering was good and well-priced too. They made everything so special on our big day.





*“Our guests had a picnic while they waited for us to have our photos taken.”*

*Venue: Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve, Chintsa, Eastern Cape*

*Wedding gown: Lady Marmalaide*

*Hair: I did my own hair*

*Make up: Bianca from Intrinsic Beauty*

*Wedding planner: Janey from The Wedding Knot*

*Photography: Studio 68 Photography*

Danny was super nice and helpful every step of the way and made us feel very welcome and at ease.

**You had a wedding planner?**

Stephen got involved but not too much and we eventually enlisted the help of a wedding planner as I found the planning process to be quite overwhelming.

**Fun finding your dress?**

I searched online and came across Lady Marmalade's site. I went to go and see them and it was quite easy to find a dress that I liked. I only went to that one bridal boutique and did not have to look anywhere else.

**How many guests?**

80.

**Many couples choose to exclude kids from their wedding but you didn't?**

Since we have kids of our own we did not mind having a few kids from our family and friends joining us. They were very well catered for and had lots of fun - they even had their own table.

**Your guests had a picnic?**

This was actually our wedding planner Janey's great idea. She thought that since the venue was in such a nice setting our guests could have a picnic while they waited for us to have our photos taken. The picnic baskets were something different from the normal canapés at a wedding.

**Elephants made for interesting backdrops?**

On the day of our wedding we only had the elephants and no other animals but there is obviously lots of wildlife all around the reserve.

**Your first dance song?**

We danced to Ed Sheeran's popular song Perfect.

**The best moment of your big day?**

For me it was when I walked down the aisle. Getting married felt real for the first time!

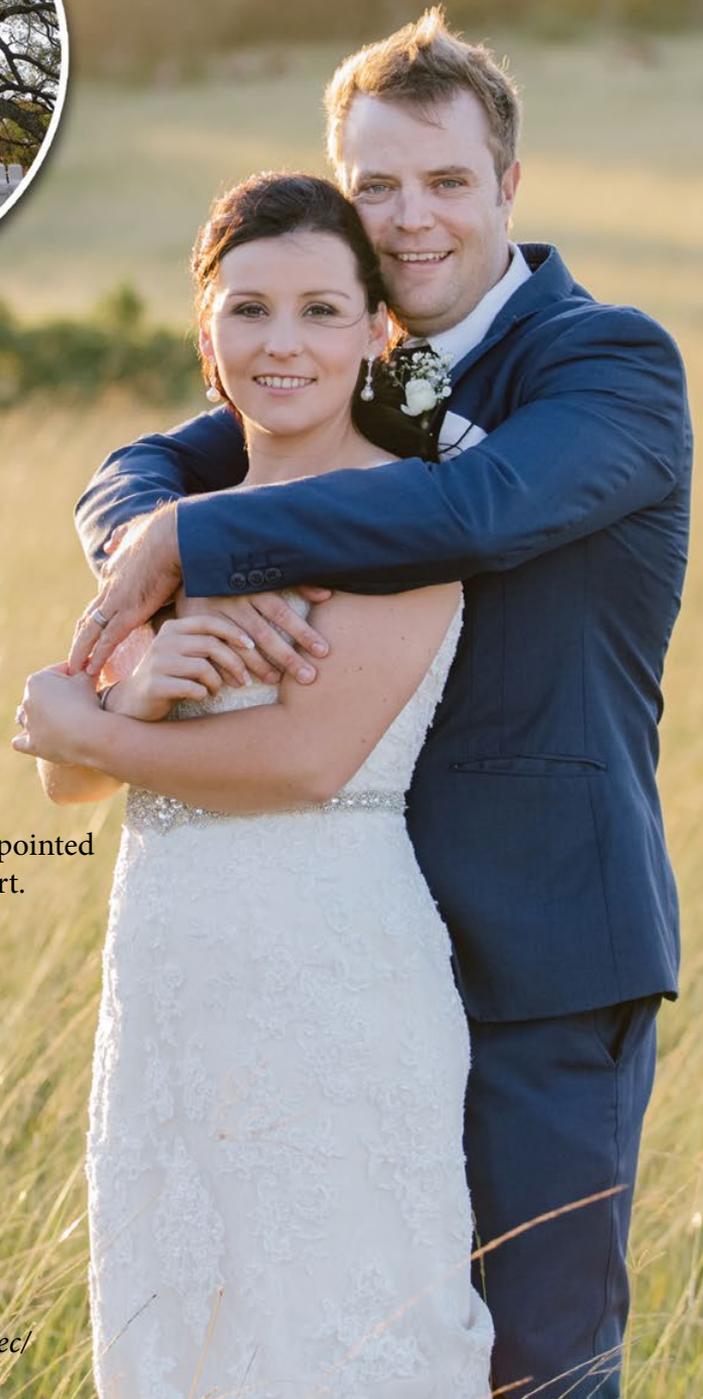
**Honeymoon?**

We have not been on honeymoon yet; maybe one day! ♥



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# STACEY & MATTHEW BOUTON



*This love story began when this couple met and started dating in High School.*

## **Tell us about your proposal.**

It happened on top of a hill in the Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana. As the sun set over the peaceful bushveld in front of us, Matt got down on one knee and asked me to marry him. It was so perfect and we were fortunate to have some of our family and friends with us to share that magical moment at our favourite place.

## **How long were you engaged?**

We were engaged for 15 months. We didn't have a specific wedding date in mind, but knew that we wanted it to be sometime in Spring 2019. The venue's availability ultimately decided our wedding date.

## **How many venues did you consider?**

We wanted a destination wedding but nothing further than 400kms from Joburg. After searching the internet, we made a short list of the venues we wanted to view and Whispering Thorns was our fourth venue visit. What we loved most about the venue is their beautiful glass chapel set amongst the big thorn trees. Their double volume reception venue is tastefully decorated and was the perfect size for our wedding. We are bush-lovers and there is something so special about the Lowveld and after viewing Whispering Thorns we just knew that it would be the perfect venue for us.

## **Lots of help from your venue?**

Yes, from day one Carmen was very helpful, professional and accommodating. The venue and staff met all our expectations and their experience was clearly evident.

## **How did you send out your invitations?**

We had our own wedding website which we used to send out the invitations, to communicate any additional information and to answer any questions.

## **Your theme/colour scheme?**

We wanted a classic, elegant and timeless styled wedding. We decided to keep the floral arrangements



*“I think we  
did a good job  
of bringing our  
vision to life.”*

**Venue: Whispering Thorns, White River, Mpumalanga – [www.whisperingthorns.com](http://www.whisperingthorns.com)**

**Wedding Gown: Timeless Bridal Couture**

**Hair & Make up: QueenB**

**Photography: Jack and Jane Photography**

and décor simple, as we didn't want it to overshadow the venue's unique beauty. The colour palette we worked with was shades of green, white, blush and gold.

### How many guests?

115.

### Large entourage?

We have a big group of friends and at the time of deciding on our wedding party "the more the merrier" seemed fitting. We had so much fun with our bridal party and are very grateful for all they did and contributed to making our wedding journey so memorable.

### Amusing wedding gift?

Matt's sister, Kirstie, gave us some cute baby clothes and accessories; I guess a subtle hint to tell us that she is excited and ready to be an aunty!

### Did you manage to stick to your budget?

We were so fortunate to have my father's generous financial support. With that in mind we made sure we were price-conscious in all our decisions and did not spend unnecessarily. I think we did a good job of bringing our vision to life, but still keeping within a ballpark budget.

### Did you enjoy dress hunting?

I did enjoy it - my dress happened to be the last one I tried on at the first boutique I visited. It ended up being quite different to what I thought I would go for. It's really worthwhile trying a variety of styles before deciding.

### How much prep went into your first dance?

We went to five dance lessons, which were helpful and good fun. We learnt a few steps to incorporate into our first dance, in our own time. As for the father daughter dance... what a hoot it was and possibly the highlight of the night for many of our guests!

### Advice for brides-to-be?

It's true that your wedding day flies by and before you know it the day that you have spent months planning and dreaming of is all over. So, enjoy every moment leading up to your big day and when the day arrives, make sure you take it all in and enjoy every moment.

### Honeymoon?

We spent a couple of nights in the Kruger Park with family after the wedding, which was a lovely way to conclude the wedding week. We then left for two weeks in Bali, with a stopover in Singapore on our return. ♥





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# TAMMY & THEODORE JANTJIES



*This groom is a well-known TV actor and is used to being in the limelight but his bride had her time to shine on their recent wedding day at Tsekama Lodge.*

## **How did you and Theodore meet?**

We met while I was doing a school musical in 2004. I was 17 and he was 21. He was assisting with the directing of the play. We became friends first and he asked me out about a year later.

## **Was your proposal a surprise?**

We love the bush. Theo took me to a game farm in Limpopo and we were on a game drive, when suddenly we pulled over close to a waterhole where he popped the question against the setting sun. It was beautiful. The proposal was not a complete surprise, but the location was.

## **The most difficult part of planning your wedding?**

Having a demanding job as a lawyer, which often means I have to work long hours, was the most challenging part. Ours was a destination wedding and most of our guests travelled from Cape Town to Limpopo to attend. Trying to navigate accommodation and all the logistics for our guests was very challenging as most of them have never been to Johannesburg let alone Limpopo before.

## **With Theodore being a TV personality, did you manage to keep your wedding private?**

Though we had an agreement with a popular magazine to cover our wedding, it was not too difficult keeping it private. We are very private people and our friends, family and vendors were aware of that. We refrained from sharing too much on social media and kept most of the details a secret from our guests.

## **Your main reason for choosing Tsekama Lodge as your venue?**

We considered about 3 other venues in the Western Cape, as we are originally from there. However, we fell in love with the bush when we moved to Johannesburg and could not imagine having our wedding anywhere else. Tsekama is a magical place, which offered us all the beauty of the bush that we



*“I was blessed to have my parents walk me down the aisle.”*

**Venue: Tsekama Lodge, Limpopo – [www.tsekama.co.za](http://www.tsekama.co.za)**

**Wedding Dress: Kobus Dippenaar Atelier**

**Hair: Izelle Bodenstein**

**Make up: Nicola Roodt**

**Gowns: Lilly's and Lust**

**Wine: Klaver Wines**

**Gift boxes: To Be Gift boxes**

**Photography: Darrel Fraser Photography and Picture Perfect Photography**

had hoped for. Marinda, the owner, was wonderful to work with and made our lives so much easier with the planning. She shared my vision of my special day and made everything come together perfectly.

**Did you have your wedding dress specially made?**

Yes. The amazing Kobus Dippenaar of Kobus Dippenaar Atelier in Cape Town made it specifically for me.

**Your entourage?**

I had two bridesmaids and a Man of honour. Theo had three groomsmen.

**Special moment walking down the aisle?**

I was blessed to have my parents walk me down the aisle. My Dad had a severe stroke a while back and my Mom stepped in to help. Looking back, I would choose both of them to walk me down the aisle again, even in different circumstances.

**How many guests?**

About 100.

**The place names on your tables?**

Each table was named after a place where Theo and I have shared a special memory. The guests could then read about it to learn something which they might not have known about us before.

**Two garters?**

As is tradition, I had a garter, to be tossed by the groom at our reception. The second garter was a gift from a special friend. It was made by a wedding dress designer and was absolutely beautiful. This one I will hang on to as a keepsake from our special day.

**The highlight of your wedding day?**

The highlight was definitely walking into the venue for the first time as husband and wife. We walked or rather danced in to Miriam Makeba's catchy tune Pata Pata and, much to our surprise, all our guests stood up and danced with us! It was a moment I shall never forget.

**Any tips for brides-to-be?**

Start planning as early as possible and enjoy every moment of your wedding day as it goes by really fast.

**Honeymoon?**

We went to Houtbay, Cape Town and Franschhoek for our honeymoon. We are planning another honeymoon outside of the country as soon as we are able to travel again. ♥





# Tsekama Lodge

*Wedding and conference venue*

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# KELLY & JUSTIN DE REUCK



*After many fun adventures together as friends, this couple realised that they had a future as man and wife.*

## **Tell us about your proposal.**

It was a surprise, Justin took me away for the night to a Spa, where we were pampered with champers and treatments. After a dinner under the stars we spent the evening sipping cocktails in the jacuzzi where Justin got down on one knee and proposed. We were engaged for 5 months.

## **Did Justin get involved and did you have a clear idea of what you wanted for your big day?**

Justin was very involved with all the decision-making. In saying that, he basically agreed to anything I wanted! It was clear we both wanted a simple but beautiful wedding with all our loved ones.

## **With so many wedding venues available, what stood out about Oakfield Farm?**

Oakfield was so beautiful and their staff made such a good impression on us. They were so organised and gave us so much support along the way. There weren't any dates left for 2019 so we had to get organised quickly if we were going to pull off a wedding in less than 4 months.

## **Which of the facilities at Oakfield did you choose?**

We got married in the Conservatory Chapel and chose the Summer House venue as our reception area, we loved how the venue was so open and all glass fixtures could be removed.

## **You arrived at your ceremony in style?**

I arrived in a horse and carriage – this was included in our wedding package and it was so special.

## **Your biggest challenges?**

The guest lists and photographer and possibly even getting suppliers at such short notice.

## **Tell us about your dress?**

My dress is a Mikado ballgown with a sweetheart bodice with a flowing organza skirt. The off-the-



A bride with blonde hair and a floral headband stands in a doorway, wearing a white lace wedding dress with a full skirt. She is smiling and has her left hand on the wooden door frame. The scene is brightly lit, with sunlight streaming in from a window to the left. Green foliage is visible in the foreground on the right.

*“Read the  
terms and  
conditions and  
the small print on  
everything.”*

**Venue:** Oakfield Farm, Honeydew, Gauteng – [www.oakfield.co.za](http://www.oakfield.co.za)

**Dress:** Bridal Manor

**Hair:** Mipelo Hairdresser

**Make up:** Merician Boshoff, Madison Make-Up

**Décor, flowers & bouquets:** CS Events

**Photography:** Shoot the Moon Photography

shoulder lace top was embroidered by hand with pearls by my Vovo (granny in Portuguese). Bridal Manor's service and alteration process made this process absolutely seamless.

**How many guests - were children included?**

90 guests and only our nephews and nieces were included.

**Cake and donuts?**

The cake and donuts were a huge hit - the donuts vanished as soon as the dessert table opened! The cake was a double layer cheese cake from our local bakery (Cake Gallery), which I then decorated - seeing as I was banned from making my own wedding cake by my bridal party, husband and family members!

**Your first dance song?**

It was Music to my eyes by Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga. For walking down the aisle: Can't help falling in love, the Crazy Rich Asians version, which was mixed to include sax by a very talented friend of ours, Michael Botha.

**You had your "dancing shoes" at the ready?**

The dancing shoes - sneakers - only came on after our first dance. I really struggle to wear heels but I made a deal with Justin that if he wore a jacket then I would wear the heels. This only lasted until our first dance!

**How did your budget fare?**

We used a detailed spreadsheet downloaded off the internet, breaking down the costs of each supplier, which we then took to our parents. We are blessed to have parents who could help us pull off our lovely wedding. Some costs we were shocked about were photographers and then any item that has the word "wedding" in it! We were so lucky to have very hands-on parents and a bridal party who helped us with additional décor, guest lists, setting up and making favours.

**Any advice?**

It's very important to read the terms and conditions and the small print on everything to ensure that you and your suppliers' expectations are all on the same page. And, whatever you have budgeted for ... add on 50% as there are so many hidden costs that you are not aware of when planning a wedding.

**Honeymoon?**

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances we had to put this on hold and hopefully will get to go somewhere when the COVID-19 global crisis ends. We did however spend the week after our wedding at Zimbali near Durban and it was so perfect ♥



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# YANKE & JAC HOOGENBOEZEM



*This bride's brother played Cupid and set her up on a blind date, which proved to be a match made in heaven.*

## **Tell us about your proposal.**

We had a trip planned to visit the family in Pretoria and Jac told me that we would be having dinner with them on the Friday evening. My sister drove us from the airport to a beautiful venue where Jac then blindfolded me and told me that he had a post-Valentine's day surprise for me. He said that I should only remove the blindfold when I heard music. When I took it off, I saw a Lover's Lane with rose petals along the pathway and photographs of us hanging from the trees with a letter on the back of each photo. I followed the pathway to the end and there Jac was; full of tears. He got on one knee and we then had the best night sharing the excitement with our closest family. We were engaged for 8 months.

## **How did you send out your invitations?**

I designed an online invitation, which was sent out in July 2019. Getting the RSVPs back was quite a struggle. Some people responded quickly, while some responses took very long.

## **Tell us a bit about Smitsfield Farm, where they are and what they have to offer?**

Smitsfield Farm is situated in Lothair near Ermelo in Mpumalanga. The iconic chapel at Smitsfield brings history and modernity together perfectly. The chapel was built in 1924 in remembrance of the Day of Reconciliation, with Cedar trees planted in a X formation – the chapel is at the centre. Old oak trees surround this beautiful scene. The unique 130 year-old pews were saved during the Boer War when British soldiers attempted to burn down the Dutch Reformed Church in Ermelo, and they were kept at Smitsfield. The chapel offers a clean, white canvas, complemented by the nude wooden pews and crystal chandeliers. From the first visit I fell in love with Smitsfield Farm and didn't consider any other venue. A big positive of Smitsfield Farm is that the venue is yours for the whole weekend. This





*“Rain is said to bring good luck for a lasting marriage.”*

**Venue:** Smitsfield Farm, Lothair, Mpumalanga - [www.smitsfield.co.za](http://www.smitsfield.co.za)

**Wedding gown:** Calegra Bridal, Kobus Dippenaar

**Hair:** CANVAS Makeup Artistry

**Make-up:** Annie B Studio

**Flowers:** Tanya Eyssell

**Caricaturist:** Gary Carvalho, Live Cartoon Portraits

**Photography:** One Fine Day

gives you ample time to get everything done with no unnecessary stress.

### Interesting accommodation?

In keeping with the heritage theme, the skeletons of wooden passenger and cargo railway carriages, which remained on the farm, have been luxuriously renovated into 15 lavish rooms, including a bridal suite. The vision behind the design was to create two station buildings, imitating a railway platform, with restroom facilities at the end of the station.

### Did you use a wedding planner?

No I didn't; my mother and I planned everything by ourselves. We sourced all our vendors ourselves too and were really happy with all of them.

### Tell us about your gorgeous dress.

Absolutely my dream dress! It was my very first fitting at the first bridal boutique I went to and I immediately fell in love with the crystal beaded, mermaid-style dress.

### How many guests?

140.

### Caricatures were drawn of all your guests?

We got this great idea from another wedding. Gary Carvalho of Live Cartoon Portraits is a caricaturist who does most of his work at Monte Casino. He was so quick in sketching all our guests and everybody was so surprised to see themselves drawn "cartoon-style". The caricatures also served as the table placements and a unique gift for each guest to take home.

### Any surprises on your big day?

There had been a very bad drought in the Lothair area so the Wednesday before our wedding, farmers from all around gathered to pray for rain in the 130-year old chapel at Smitsfield Farm. On our wedding day, just after our ceremony and photos were done, there was a hailstorm. This was indeed a blessing as rain is also said to bring good luck for a lasting marriage.

### The best advice you and Jac were given as newlyweds?

Never go to bed angry!

### Honeymoon?

Jac kept our honeymoon destination a surprise until the morning we left for the airport. We spent two weeks in beautiful Thailand. ♥





EST. 2017

# SMITSFIELD

- F A R M -

WEDDINGS | ACCOMMODATION | EVENTS

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*Mona-Liza*  
PHOTOGRAPHY

# JOHANNÉ & BENNIE GENIS



*Inspired by the likes of artist Frida Kahlo, this creative bride let her imagination run riot with some very unusual attention to detail.*

## **How unexpected was your proposal?**

I didn't expect a thing. We went for a walk on the beach. Bennie had been weird and shaky the whole day and I couldn't understand what was going on - until he went on his knees to pop the big question. We had such a laugh because he struggled to get the ring box out of his pocket and he had planted his brother and cousin to capture the moment on camera!

## **The most difficult part of planning?**

The most difficult part was definitely choosing who to invite and who not to because of budget constraints.

## **You wore two different dresses on your wedding day?**

My Mom has been my dressmaker from day one. She made all the bridesmaid dresses, the flower girl dresses and both of my dresses. My first dress was dramatic without any lace and my party dress was fun with some lace and polka dots. The embroidery work was done by my Mom, grandma and my mother-in-law, so that was very special.

## **Veil?**

I had a veil for when I walked into the chapel but took it off directly after the ceremony as it irritated me too much!

## **Your theme/colour scheme?**

Boho chic using fun autumnal colours.

## **You designed your own stationery?**

Yes, I am a graphic designer so I designed my own stationery.

## **Big entourage including kids?**

I had 5 bridesmaids and 4 flower girls and Bennie had 5 groomsmen and my little brother as his entourage.

## **Entourage all blended in well with loads of detail.**

Flowers are so expensive so we kept it intimate using wrist corsages for my bridesmaids. Pom poms were a fun replacement for flower crowns and gave such a





*“The food was exceptional with a big variety to choose from.”*

*Venue: Mooiplaas, Modimolle, Limpopo – [www.mooiplaasvenue.com](http://www.mooiplaasvenue.com)*

*Dresses: Bride's mother, Desiré Krantz Atelier*

*Make-up: Cashmere Tart*

*Hair: Spectacular Hair Design*

*Stationery: Tekstier Atelier*

*Photography: Bahama Burgundy*

quirky Frida Kahlo vibe to the flowergirl's outfits. The cotton bolls came from Bennie's Dad's farm and we wanted to make them part of our flowers. The guy's boutonnieres were bullet casings containing some berries and yellow kol kol.

**How did you find out about Mooiplaas as a wedding venue?**

One of our friends got married at Mooiplaas and the whole idea of having a venue with a bit of a Cape look in the Bushveld really appealed to me.

**What did you like best about Mooiplaas?**

They are such down to earth people who won't think twice about helping out. The chapel, venue and the accommodation are all close to each other so no need to worry about driving or anything like that. The food was exceptional with a big variety to choose from. We opted for traditional "boerekos", which went down very well.

**Did Mooiplaas meet all your expectations and would you recommend them?**

Would definitely recommend them - super friendly staff, great food and quick to help where they could.

**Your décor?**

My grandma was amazing throughout and she created all of the macramé used for the décor and one of my mother-in-law's friends did all of our lovely flowers! We did all of the rest of the décor on our own!

**How many guests?**

180.

**Any "oh no" moments?**

My candles were a big mess when they arrived at the venue and we had to act fast to fix the situation. But other than that everything went smoothly.

**Your wedding songs/music?**

I walked into the chapel to an instrumental version of Hallelujah and we walked out to "Celebrate" by Kool and the Gang. Our first dance song was "So lank sal ek jou liefhê" by Jay.

**Any advice for brides-to-be?**

Enjoy every moment as the day goes by way too fast. On the day take a moment to take it all in with your hubby away from all the chaos. We did it just before we went back to the reception just to appreciate it all and to appreciate each other, after all the day is all about you.

**Honeymoon?**

We went to Zanzibar and I only found out where we were going on the day before we left. I was however already packed and prepared for an island destination. ♥



# Mooiplaas

EST 2016

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*Photography: Wilma Toweel Photography / Lauren Setterberg*





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# BRITNEY & BEN CURRAN



*This London-based bride has her roots in the Cape and found a splendid place to marry the man of her dreams.*

## **How did you and Ben meet?**

We met by absolute chance in Athens in 2013 – we sat next to each other at the back of a bus on the first day of a tour of Europe and hit it off right away. After a few long distance months between Cape Town and London, we moved to Auckland (where Ben is from) and back to London, where we currently live.

## **Romantic proposal?**

We'd only been dating for 17 months but Ben said that after saying goodbye at the airport so many times he never wanted to have to say goodbye again. He proposed in Pringle Bay, my favourite place in the world.

## **How long did you have to plan your wedding?**

We spent over 5 years dreaming up our day! Ben helped with everything - we're equal partners in life and love, and our wedding was no different. My coordinator seamlessly managed the entire process and the staff of Vredenburg Manor House were so accommodating.

## **Why Vredenburg Manor House as your venue?**

We flew out twice from London to look at venues and liked nothing, until we got to Vredenburg Manor House. We wanted a venue that would allow external caterers, as we had our hearts set on using Zest Catering. Playing music late into the night, having the entire celebration outside and accommodation on site were important too. The venue itself was perfect, and made even more so by Leon and his incredible team at Vredenburg Manor House who went above and beyond to support us and seamlessly and calmly handling proceedings and truly surpassed our expectations! They checked every box and then some.

## **Did you know what you wanted for your big day?**

We wanted our day to reflect the love we have for



*“The incredible team at Vredenburg Manor House truly surpassed our expectations!”*



*Venue: Vredenburg Manor House, Somerset West – [www.vredenburgmanor.co.za](http://www.vredenburgmanor.co.za)*

*Hair & Make-up: Hannah Kruyer*

*Wedding Planner: Meagan Oosthuizen*

*Décor: Baie Goeters*

*Photography: Mint Tea Photography*

each other and our families, and to incorporate our favourite things - delicious food and wine and great music. Having the ceremony and reception outdoors was important too - lots of greenery, fairy lights and candles, and disco balls to bounce the light. The gardens at Vredenburg Manor House are exquisite and really complemented our theme. We were able to have our ceremony, pre-drinks and reception in different pockets of garden.

### **Your outfit was very different?**

I found my outfit just after getting engaged and bought it right away! We're not traditional people - we're both keeping our own surnames, wrote our own vows and never had a wedding cake or a bouquet or garter toss. My outfit was no different - untraditional and true to my personality.

### **What was on the menu?**

The menu was incredibly important to us - with a number of international guests we wanted a couple of traditionally South African foods to shine. Canapés included Ostrich skewers, lamb bobotie spring rolls and locally sourced oysters, amongst mini steak tartars and beetroot gnocchi. Our main was a Springbok loin served with peppercorn sauce on celeriac puree, with wild mushrooms and sautéed greens. Dessert was served canapé style!

### **What worked best?**

Choosing a flexible venue that worked with us to create a perfect day that was a true reflection of ourselves. We did the first round of speeches in our pre-drinks garden, which allowed enough time before the second round just before dinner so people weren't bored. The only course served at our tables was the main - our starter could be nibbled at during the second round of speeches. Our desserts were served as floating canapés. People weren't tied down to their tables, they could mingle and chat and the dance floor was full all night long! Boerie rolls served at 11:30pm as a late night snack went down a treat!

### **What did you do about gifts?**

We politely requested cash or vouchers for UK-based stores.

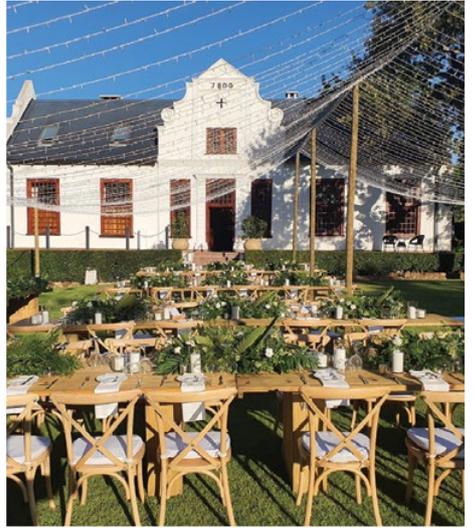
### **Any handy tips for brides-to-be?**

Don't allow others to dictate your day. Think about what you don't like at weddings and just leave those bits out of your own.

### **Honeymoon?**

We decided not to have a honeymoon just yet, but enjoyed a 2-week holiday with our families who had flown into Cape Town. ♥





*Vredenburg Manor House*



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