

Real Prides

A bride with blonde hair, wearing a white lace wedding dress, is shown from the back, looking over her shoulder. She is standing in a garden setting with pink and white flowers and a pink ribbon backdrop.

South Africa's Exciting
Wedding Magazine

June 2020

*Choosing
Your
Wedding
Dress*

*Home
Garden
Wedding*

*How To Plan
Your Budget*

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

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 VIRTUAL WEDDING EXPO

The following advertisers featured in this issue of Real Brides are exhibitors in the Real Brides Virtual Expo. To view their audio visual presentations or to visit their websites, click on the links below:

Click On Links Below

Chez Charlene
Collisheen Estate
Haycroft Farm
Inkwenkwezi
Tsekama Lodge
Whispering Thorns
Neon Productions
DRene Plunkett Photography
Oakfield Farm
Diep In Die Berg
Welgelegen Cherry Estate

Vredenburg Manor House
Sugarbush Hill
Eensgezind Function Venue
Cheerio Gardens
Ekudeni
Mooiplaas
Eden Lassie
Oh So Pretty Planning
Smitsfield Farm
harpNOTED
Crystal Brides



Contents



4. ELANA and JED SHERWOOD

10. JESSICA and RUBEN KRIEK

16. TANYA and WIM PRETORIUS

20. Glorious Cakes

22. MONECIA and NICOL CLAASSEN

26. Choosing your dress

27. Want to be in Real Brides?

28. MARI and PAUL COETZEE

34. SHANI and IVAN KNOETZE

40. MARLI and JACO STORM

45. Plan your wedding budget

46. LANIE and CORNÉ BLIGNAUT



www.realbrides.co.za
Visit our website!

Find us on:



@realbrides



@realbrides



Facebook.com/RealBridesMagazine

On the cover:

Bride: Elana Sherwood

Photo: Lauren Setterberg

REAL BRIDES is published independently by
Topic Publishing (Pty) Limited.

TOPIC
publishing

To advertise call:
Stewart on
061 490 4915

We Live In Interesting Times

Never have any of us ever been subjected to the extraordinary restrictions of the past few months. Enforced shutdowns and lockdowns in order to try to contain and prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus are unprecedented and the consequences have wreaked financial havoc worldwide. Due to the social distancing regulations concerning public gatherings, one of the industries hardest hit has been the wedding industry. Whilst life might never ever be quite the same again we sincerely hope that the return to some form of normality will be swift and that brides-to-be can soon continue to plan and celebrate beautiful weddings.

If you were lucky enough to get married before lockdown and would like your wedding to be considered for a feature in Real Brides, send a sample wedding photo and a list of your vendors to robbyn@topicpublishing.co.za

ELANA & JED SHERWOOD



Getting married in the magnificent garden where she grew up was a dream come true for this lovely bride.

Home garden wedding?

Jed and I decided during August 2019 that the time was right to make a commitment to each other before God, our family and friends. A search commenced to find a venue in the Natal Midlands that could accommodate our dates but, none were available in December 2019 or January 2020. The only dates available were during April 2020 and it didn't take me long to realise that the location of my dream venue was in fact the spectacular garden where I had grown up – a haven nourished by my mother's passion. In secret, I had always imagined and hoped that I would one day be able to get married there. My parents were very excited and welcomed the idea and my mother immediately began assisting me to plan our garden wedding - inside of 3 months. My fairy tale came true on 14 December 2019 and, in hindsight, we were lucky to have selected December and not April as it would have been devastating to have had to postpone our day due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

What had to be done in the garden?

My mother worked exceptionally hard to ensure that all the roses bloomed. Sweeping staircases, bridges over the stream and a deck over the pool area for the ceremony were specially built. A clear marquee was erected on the tennis court and many lights were installed around the garden to capture that magic and romance. We are extremely grateful for our parents' endless hours of hard work spent making our dream day come true.

You used many local vendors?

Having grown up in Pietermaritzburg our family have made so many acquaintances, who became friends and who I wanted to be part of my day. Music has played a huge part in my life and I wanted my day to portray that. The Midlands Chamber choir,



A bride with blonde hair, wearing a white lace wedding dress, stands in front of a large floral arch. The arch is decorated with white and pink flowers and pink ribbons. The background is a lush green garden.

“It is always important to support local businesses.”

Venue: Bride's family home, Pietermaritzburg

Dress: Bridal Manor, Pretoria

Décor, tables, arch and flowers: Kerry's Flowers

Caterer, Chef, Waiters, Cake: Jackie Cameron School of Food and Wine

Choir: Midlands Chamber Choir

Hair and Makeup: Sole, PMB

Chairs etc.: Exclusive Hire Co

Videographer: Conway Photography

Musician: James Freedman

String Quartet: Tangent Strings, Durban

DJ: Drak Entertainment

Photographer: Lauren Setterberg

which I have been part of for many years, sang at my ceremony and brought me to tears. I used local suppliers, where possible, as it is always important to support local businesses. By using local suppliers, who in all probability have worked together before, ensures that all the planning on the day will run smoothly.

Some suppliers went above and beyond?

Kerry Dinkelman of Kerry's Flowers assisted in creating an elegant, classical and romantic wedding. She took all my requests into account and gladly offered advice to ensure that the flowers and the ambiance of the garden would be incorporated into all aspects of the décor. This included many visits to visualise my dream to ensure that my ideal garden wedding would materialise. The other supplier who played a major part was Jackie Cameron. She gave exceptional advice on all aspects of planning a wedding. She incorporated all my ideas into the food and her professionalism was put to the test under difficult circumstances. Her food was exceptional and a real 5-star eating experience.

Pros, cons and advice for a home wedding?

Sentiments and fond memories created by a home wedding do not come without stress. You need to be extremely organised. Having trustworthy professionals to assist is key. If your ideas are not stressed, it may lead to disappointment. Normally conventional wedding venues have various conditions and regulations to be followed but with a home wedding there are no time constraints. This gave our suppliers sufficient time to ensure creativity and us time to ensure that the various elements such as the clear marquee, the kitchen marquee, the decking, the fairy lights and the draping could be installed and that all the tables and chairs were delivered in good time. Ensure that you have sufficient plans in place to accommodate your main ideas and take all uncontrollable elements into account. If you are planning to have more than 100 guests, it's advisable to have a professional wedding planner for the day before and on the day to take charge of the remaining preparations to alleviate any stress for you and your family. This will give you time to relax and make memories. To avoid any unnecessary complaints, inform your neighbours as a courtesy.

The weather toyed with your emotions?

When we chose our date we never dreamt that the Spring rains would come so late; they started in November and continued into December. This made us very anxious as the ceremony was to take place in the garden. You can plan every detail but not the weather! It rained all week leading up to our big day



and Plan B had to be put in place. It is said that if it rains on your wedding day, your marriage would be blessed, so we looked upon it as a blessing from God. Despite the anxiety caused by the continuous rain, our wedding day dawned a miracle and was one of the hottest days in Pietermaritzburg. Hallelujah!

Your dream dress?

Believe it or not, finding the dress that you have been dreaming about, and wear to make one of the most important promises of your life, within 3 months is possible. Finding that bridal boutique to accommodate your circumstances, take your wedding theme and feel into account and offer professional advice is very important. I found my bespoke wedding dress within a month. This was achieved by not having any preconceived ideas, by being open-minded and by trusting my own emotions and intuition. My dress is exquisite and made me feel beautiful and elegant.

Your entourage?

My US-based sister was my Maid of Honour; my best friend and "other sister" was my bridesmaid and my husband's beautiful sister was my flower girl. I knew that my bridal entourage would include those whom I love dearly, who would be honest and ensure that my day was filled with happiness. They all worked extremely hard, stood by me and celebrated with me, for which I shall be forever grateful.

How many guests?

180.

The highlights of your big day?

The whole day was exquisite, emotional, sentimental and one that I would repeat in a heartbeat. Highlights include the wedding planning, the bridal preparations (in my parents' picturesque home), the photographs taken in special locations around the house and garden, the kiss on the Romeo and Juliet balcony, sharing memories with our family and friends in a beautiful and happy surrounding and, most important, marrying my soulmate.

Honeymoon?

We sailed to Mauritius and Reunion Island on the MSC's New Year's cruise. ♥



Eden Lassie

the venue with a view



Whether you are looking for a picture perfect chapel, or a magnificent garden setting, Eden Lassie offers something very special to even the most discerning couple.

Eden Lassie can seat up to 200 guests in an open rafter-style venue as well as a beautiful covered verandah overlooking a lake and the picturesque Tala Valley - ideal for pre-function refreshments.

The idyllic garden setting is perfect for your photographic shoot.

Together with our appointed caterers, CHC Catering, we offer a selection of high class cuisine either plated or buffet style.

Décor is in house only by Daleliteful Décor.

Our dedicated team will ensure that your special day is a memorable occasion.

WEDDINGS • CONFERENCING • FUNCTIONS

JUDY LOWRY - 083 552 9134

www.edenlassie.co.za • edenlassie@sai.co.za

harp

NOTED



Accomplished musician Jana van der Walt pursues both solo and ensemble performances through her company harpNOTED at various events and weddings in and around Cape Town, with a variety of music from classical to contemporary.

Every client's specific needs can be customised to create a timeless and perfect event-suited atmosphere with background music

SOLO

Elegant & timeless harp solo music

DUET / TRIO / QUARTET

Harp and singer / classical guitar / cello / violin / viola / flute

LIVE BAND

Harp and singer / guitar / cello / violin / viola / flute / double bass / percussion

**Any combination with harp can be offered upon request.*

Call +27 79 496 1854 • Email harpnoted@gmail.com • www.harpnoted.com

JESSICA & RUBEN KRIEK



Choosing a venue with a great team, who literally offer a complete service, made planning this wedding a breeze.

How did you and Ruben meet?

We met back in 2012 at a festival in Ellisras and remained friends. It wasn't until 2015 however that we officially started dating and we got engaged in 2018.

How romantic was your proposal?

We went on vacation to Graskop. After a few days we went to visit the Graskop Gorge, where we were astounded by the sheer beauty and lush scenery. As I was admiring the waterfall and rainforest Ruben went down on one knee and popped the big question.

Your engagement ring?

I wanted a unique vintage look with symbolic features and it turned out even more magnificent than I could ever have imagined. My ring was made by Marion van Staden at Marion Rehwinkel Jewellery who is an amazing artist.

Who helped you with your wedding planning?

Our wonderful families provided guidance and support every step of the way. Our parents (Esme and Frans Reichel and Erna and Jurgens Kriek) and sister (Emerensea Erasmus) especially took it upon themselves to make our day even more special and they stood beside us throughout the long hours of planning and preparation for our wedding.

How many venues did you look at?

We looked at Tsekama and only Tsekama. I'd always wanted to get married there. Fortunately, we were lucky enough to have this astonishing wedding venue close to home.

Tell us a little about Tsekama Lodge.

Tsekama is just superb, with a powerful team of people. They provide the complete package, which lowers the pressure and stress for the bride-to-be in terms of décor, accommodation, flower arrangements, food service and cake designs etc. Tsekama also has its own chapel on the premises, with magnificent landscapes and scenery. To top



“We had a photobooth, which was a real favourite with us and our guests.”



Venue: Tsekama Lodge, Limpopo – www.tsekama.co.za

Wedding gown: Whimsical Bridal, Centurion

Hair: Herman from Studio H, Nylstroom

Make up: Lozanne Pienaar, Naboomspruit

Flowers: Tsekama Lodge

Photography: Lood Goosen

everything off, Tsekama offers a wonderful bushveld braai under the stars the night before the wedding and then a delightful breakfast before departure.

Your dress?

I hired my dress from Whimsical Bridal in Centurion. The ladies there are so lovely and obliging. They really make you feel comfortable and help you find the perfect dress that suits you.

Your theme/colour scheme?

The colour scheme for our wedding was navy blue, burgundy and green. Even though we got married in the hot summer, those colours are our favourite and I couldn't resist. We chose those colours because they blended in perfectly with our rainforest theme.

You used a lot of greenery as opposed to actual flowers?

As mentioned we got engaged in a 'rainforest' setting at the Graskop Gorge so that kind of became our theme. That magnificent scenery inspired us to use a lot of greenery to recreate the atmosphere of a rainforest at our venue on our wedding day.

How many guests?

95.

Lots of extras?

We had quite a few surprises for our guests as we wanted them to enjoy our wedding day as much as us. We arranged a live artist, Chris Else, to entertain our guests while we were off having our formal photoshoot done. This worked extremely well because the guests didn't even notice that an hour and a half had passed by. We also had a gin bar where guests could make up their own gin drinks whilst enjoying the performance. Secondly, we had a photobooth! This was a real favourite for us and for all our guests. Each guest posed in the photobooth and then pasted the photo of themselves in a guest book together with a sweet note for us newlyweds.

Wedding favours?

A jar of honey was placed at each seat. Attached to the honey jars were the names of each guest, which covered the placement names as well.

Any handy tips for brides-to-be?

You should do what your heart desires because, when you look back on your special day, you really don't want to have any regrets.

Honeymoon?

We decided to stay local and have a longer honeymoon so we took a wonderful adventurous 3-week trip along the Garden Route. ♥





Tsekama Lodge

Wedding and conference venue

www.tsekama.co.za



Relax while our team take care of every small detail to contribute to the *perfect* day in your life.

We understand the dreams and wishes of every bride and groom, and will go the extra mile to make sure that all requirements are met. Tsekama is the perfect venue for adding a touch of magic and style to your wedding day.

Tranquil, serene and picturesque, providing a natural but very romantic atmosphere.

The Lodge is a mere 130 km north of Pretoria near the Kranskop Toll plaza and offers the ideal location for a wedding with a difference.

Imagine your ceremony in the natural splendor of the African bush with buffalo, giraffe, zebra and a wide variety of antelope partaking in your wedding celebration.

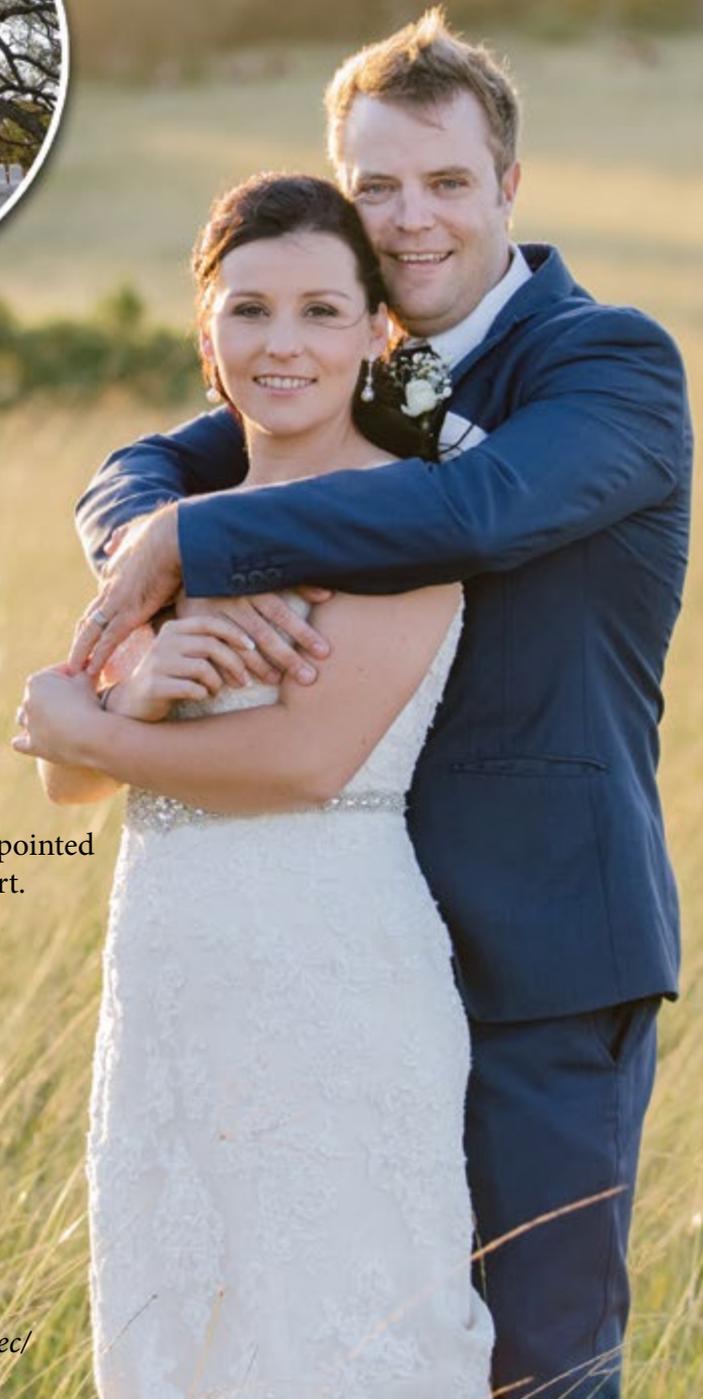
Please note we have a 80 guest minimum and a 300 guest maximum.

Contact Marinda: 082 416 2363 or Ilze: 084 497 8388
e-mail: info@tsekama.co.za



Inkwenkwezi

PRIVATE GAME RESERVE



Weddings at Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve are as romantic and unique as the Wild Coast itself; as unforgettable as the love that brings you together.

Contemporary and yet authentically African, our perfectly-appointed venue is the ideal mix of wild beauty and modern comfort.

Big 5 Game Reserve

30 kms from East London

• Weddings • Functions • Conferences

Tel 043 734 3234 / Fax 043 734 3888

PO Box 236, Kwelera, 5259

E-mail: marketing@inkwenkwezi.co.za

Website: www.inkwenkwezi.com

Please watch our latest video on You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zXO6P6ssOE>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/inkwenkwezi.reserveec/>



Cape Town's Award Winning
event planning company



084 660 0501
OhSoPrettyPlanning.com

oh so pretty

WEDDING PLANNING

Offering planning, on the day
coordination and more.

Sit back and enjoy the
champagne while they take
care of every aspect of your
wedding day.



TANYA & WIM PRETORIUS



Many a relationship begins on social media and this is a classic modern day love story.

How did you and Wim meet?

We met at North-West University in Potchefstroom during our honour's year in 2014. We shared a few classes and sat next to one other but we were nothing more than classmates. We both then worked in the media industry – I in government and Wim as a journalist. Our paths crossed professionally a couple of times, but he actually once blocked me for “spamming his mailbox” with press releases! It wasn't until November 2016 that I received an Instagram message from him, asking me how I was doing. As the kids would say, he then ‘slid into my DMs’! This led to an invitation for coffee and the rest is history.

Was your proposal a surprise?

It was a complete surprise! I always told Wim that, should he ask me, I wanted it to be a private moment between the two of us with no photographer or family lurking nearby! I was visiting my parents in the Karoo in December 2018 and shortly before New Year's Wim drove all the way there from Johannesburg. He was looking for the right time to ask my parents and the opportunity presented itself one evening while I was in the shower. Dressed in his boxer shorts and a Bryan Adams t-shirt, he asked for the green light and my family all agreed! I was completely oblivious to the scheming taking place over the next couple of days! We planned to go to the Karoo National Park for a picnic and took a scenic drive to the top of the mountain where we could overlook the Karoo. It was while we were admiring the view that Wim went down on one knee and asked me to be his wife. It was a beautiful moment I will always treasure.

Tell us a bit about the wedding venue that you chose.

We visited a couple of venues in the area, but only one had me in absolute awe – Chez Charlene. The venue offers beautiful scenery with a lovely intimate



*“Our big day
was simply,
spectacular.”*

Venue: Chez Charlene, Pretoria – www.chezcharlene.co.za

Dress: Clarice, by Gerrit Pinaar

Hair & Make up: Esmarie Yssel

Photographer: Herman Verwey

chapel, stunning suites and impeccable staff and service. We did not have a single problem during the planning and our big day was simply spectacular. Chez Charlene is highly recommended.

Tell us about your dress.

My dress was made by Gerrit Pienaar, a dear friend of my mother-in-law, who also made her wedding dress back in the day as a gift. Gerrit offers his clients the option to either buy or rent a dress or have one tailor-made. I took the decision to have a dress made for me, but gave it back afterwards. I always knew that I wanted something simple, elegant, and comfortable. Gerrit gave me exactly that – with a little pizzazz, tons of humour and a lot of love!

Your colour scheme?

We chose a colour scheme of blue, silver, and white for the table settings and Charlene turned it into magic.

Were you nervous on the big day?

I was not nervous about getting married - I was marrying my best friend and that gave me peace. I was worrying more about whether our guests would have a great time! Apparently, it is unusual for brides to be calm – or so says my wedding planner!

How many guests?

We had an intimate wedding, with only close family and friends attending, amounting to around 70 guests.

Wedding favours?

My Mom makes wonderfully decadent fudge, which we gifted each guest in an intricate silver box.

Your first dance song?

I married a nerd who loves hardcore music, so we knew that our first dance would be to an artist that falls within that genre! We danced to Escape the Fate's 'Let Me Be', a beautiful song with sentimental value to us.

Any advice for brides-to-be?

Remember to take it all in. Enjoy the day and take some time for yourself. You will cry – believe me so have a tissue close by! And lastly, there really is no excuse for being a so-called Bridezilla. It is an experience to be savoured and enjoyed and filled with special moments so don't spoil it.

Honeymoon?

We explored the Cape, and it was magical! ♥



Chez Charlene Wedding Venue



Five Star Wedding Venue

www.chezcharlene.co.za | info@chezcharlene.co.za

012 802 0791 | 082 447 6080

Perfection is the only option



Glorious wedding cakes

A gorgeous wedding cake is often the centerpiece of a wedding and it typically sits in a place of honour at the reception. This carefully planned confection is a longstanding tradition dating back to Roman and Medieval times.

Over the centuries there have been many traditions created surrounding the wedding cake and though times have changed it still remains an important aspect of any wedding.

Take a look at some of the glorious cakes featured in Real Brides recently.

All photography previously acknowledged





Cheerio Gardens is a family-owned farm located in the Magoebaskloof mountains of Limpopo, offering destination weekend wedding packages to turn any dream into a reality.

We offer the most exquisite forest ceremony area and a super stylish reception area.

The venue opens onto spectacular gardens that date back to 1946, with open rafters and enormous doors, capturing the spirit of tranquillity and beauty of nature.

We offer inclusive wedding packages and our in-house services include floral, décor and table-styling as well as wedding coordinators to ensure your event is run smoothly.

Wedding and Accommodation:

083 355 0835 | Farm café restaurant: 079 193 3848 | Email: sarah@brandcafe.co.za | www.cheeriogardens.co.za

 Instagram

 Facebook

Cheerio Gardens, L4.2 off the R71 National road, Haenertsburg, Magoebaskloof, Limpopo.



MONECIA & NICOL CLAASSEN



This very cool wedding venue astonishingly boasts vineyards in the middle of the Bushveld in Limpopo.

Tell us about your proposal?

Nicol proposed to me at sunset on our way to a Spoegwolf concert when we made a pitstop for 'pre-drinks' at a game farm overlooking a dam full of hippos.

How did you settle on a wedding date?

We were engaged for 9 months and started planning 6 months prior to the date we chose. As a student the date had to fall within my July break and, as I'd always wanted a winter wedding, July made perfect sense.

The pitfalls of planning?

Weddings do seem to have the propensity to initiate family feuds. I suggest good communication with family members on both sides to prevent any misunderstandings.

Your venue is a surprising place?

We started searching through Facebook and wedding magazines. In our mission to find our dream venue we got a pop-up from Facebook giving us venues similar to the ones we were looking at. This is how we came across Mooiplaas. I loved the look of the venue but thought it was in the Western Cape as it portrayed a winelands feel ... until I discovered that it was actually in the Bushveld in Limpopo. I immediately stopped looking and booked my date.

What stood out about Mooiplaas?

Mooiplaas brings two worlds together, one being the refined elegant look of the Cape Winelands and the other the rugged Bushveld of Limpopo. The granadilla 'vineyards' and Bushveld made our wedding photos quite unique and our guests were gifted with gorgeous views of both. Mooiplaas is situated 10km outside of Modimolle, which was perfect as it was midway for most of our guests coming from Groblersdal, Mookgopong and Pretoria.





“Mooiplaas brings two worlds together, one being the refined elegant look of the Cape Winelands and the other the rugged Bushveld of Limpopo.”

Venue: Mooiplaas, Modimolle, Limpopo – www.mooiplaasvenue.com

Wedding gown: Bridal Manor

Hair: EVE Image

Make up: Private M Collection

Photography: JCclick

What did the Mooiplaas wedding package include?

The wedding package included the lovely main venue with a cash bar attached. A 3-course meal was served with entrees served as our canapés. We had various options for the main course buffet, which included desserts. We also had first option on the accommodation facilities. For the ceremony there are lovely outside options, uncovered or covered, overlooking the vineyards and Bushveld. The package included our own coordinator, Marlize, which made sure everything ran smoothly on the day. They also had generators and gas heaters.

What about accommodation for you and your guests?

We booked the accommodation on Mooiplaas for close family and our entourage. There are many other surrounding guesthouses and lodges available in the vicinity.

Where did you look for inspiration for décor etc?

We combed through many bridal magazines and combined ideas we liked. We especially looked at warm colours for a winter wedding. We had a few of our own ideas as well to make the venue warm and cosy.

Your wedding gown?

I booked at various bridal boutiques but once I saw this particular dress at Bridal Manor, I cancelled all my other appointments. Some adjustments were made to fit my style and I also found my wedding accessories at Bridal Manor. They included a satin Mikado jacket, which I adored.

Colour scheme?

Warm winter colours, plum, mustard and shades of pink. I wanted a formal look and used black with my basic table decorations and a touch of rose gold. Black gel candles added a warm and romantic atmosphere.

How many guests?

About 140, including children of close family members. Mooiplaas has a 5-star facility for children attached to the main venue. We had an option to hire a caretaker with a separate kiddie's menu.

How did your wedding budget fare?

Because of the reasonable fees of Mooiplaas, we did not have to cut back on the most important aspects of our wedding and managed to stay within the budget for most of our expenses. We had a candy table and custom made flower stands for the centrepieces on the tables, which did increase expenses a bit, but were totally worth it in the end. ♥



Mooiplaas

EST 2016

Experience the Cape in the heart of the bushveld.

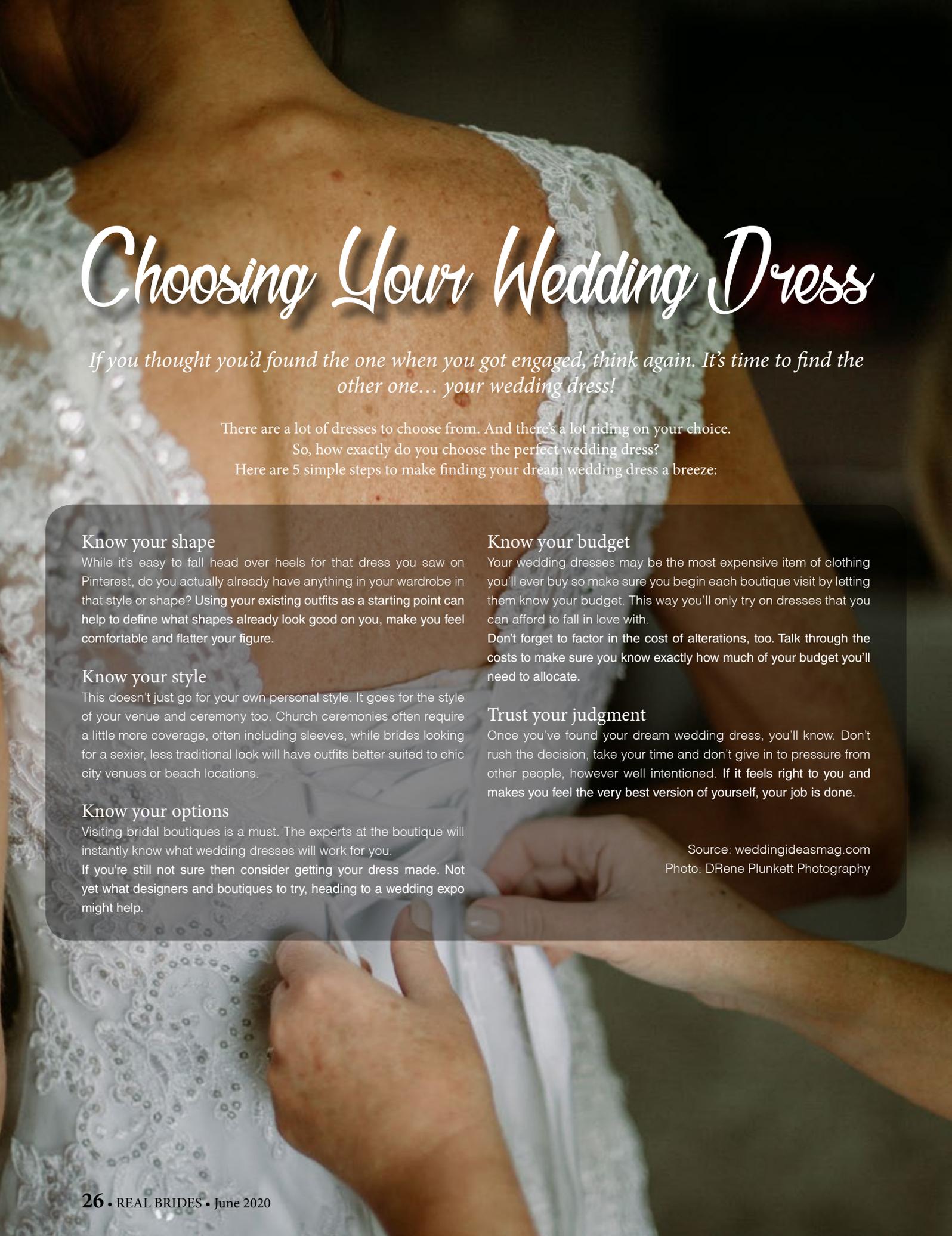


Our venue is nestled deep within the Waterberg mountains, near Modimolle in Limpopo.

The bridal couple exchange vows under a beautiful big Wild Fig tree, against a breathtaking backdrop of Granadilla fields.

The reception hall, accommodating a minimum of 100 and a maximum of 300, then awaits guests with a mouth-watering feast.





Choosing Your Wedding Dress

If you thought you'd found the one when you got engaged, think again. It's time to find the other one... your wedding dress!

There are a lot of dresses to choose from. And there's a lot riding on your choice.

So, how exactly do you choose the perfect wedding dress?

Here are 5 simple steps to make finding your dream wedding dress a breeze:

Know your shape

While it's easy to fall head over heels for that dress you saw on Pinterest, do you actually already have anything in your wardrobe in that style or shape? Using your existing outfits as a starting point can help to define what shapes already look good on you, make you feel comfortable and flatter your figure.

Know your style

This doesn't just go for your own personal style. It goes for the style of your venue and ceremony too. Church ceremonies often require a little more coverage, often including sleeves, while brides looking for a sexier, less traditional look will have outfits better suited to chic city venues or beach locations.

Know your options

Visiting bridal boutiques is a must. The experts at the boutique will instantly know what wedding dresses will work for you.

If you're still not sure then consider getting your dress made. Not yet what designers and boutiques to try, heading to a wedding expo might help.

Know your budget

Your wedding dresses may be the most expensive item of clothing you'll ever buy so make sure you begin each boutique visit by letting them know your budget. This way you'll only try on dresses that you can afford to fall in love with.

Don't forget to factor in the cost of alterations, too. Talk through the costs to make sure you know exactly how much of your budget you'll need to allocate.

Trust your judgment

Once you've found your dream wedding dress, you'll know. Don't rush the decision, take your time and don't give in to pressure from other people, however well intentioned. If it feels right to you and makes you feel the very best version of yourself, your job is done.

Source: weddingideasmag.com

Photo: DRene Plunkett Photography

Haycroft Farm

country venue & accommodation

Wedding Venue:

If location is what you are looking for, you will not find anywhere more breathtaking!

Nestled on a farm in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands,
we are surrounded by everything that is naturally beautiful.
Our forest chapel, farm chapel & venue can seat up to 180 guests.

Accommodation:

Our rooms have been tastefully decorated to accommodate 60 of your close family and friends.
All rooms are within walking distance of the wedding venue and are self-catering.

Midlands - KwaZulu-Natal
083 452 8088
weddings@haycroftfarm.com
www.haycroftfarm.com

Photography: Wilma Toweel Photography / Lauren Setterberg



MARI & PAUL COETZEE



This couple first connected through Facebook when they were students at the University of Pretoria.

Tell us about your proposal.

A long weekend was approaching and as we had no other plans I begged Paul for the two of us to go away to Dullstroom for the weekend; and he took the opportunity. He only gave me letters with packing instructions and an exact time of when he would pick me up. Our first afternoon was well spent on the patio, drinking wine and chatting about the future! He then surprised me further; and took me to a pre-arranged picnic spot next to a pond. He asked me to open a letter and a present, and then another letter and another present, and so on (like those nesting dolls), until the box became the right little size! Paul then got on one knee; and all I was able to say was 'FINALLY'. Some of our best friends were hiding in the bushes taking photos of everything! It was the PERFECT proposal.

Your engagement ring?

Paul never gave ANYTHING away. I tried to persuade him in one direction but he always argued it away! He had my ring custom made at Beaudell Jewellery, and it is perfect – different and elegant.

How long did you have to plan your wedding and who helped you put it all together?

We planned everything in about 6 months. I knew what I wanted from the beginning - DELFT and BOLDNESS! I shared my ideas with my Mom, mother-in-law and Carel, a long-time friend and our wedding planner. Carel made it MORE perfect than I ever could have imagined.

How many venues did you look at?

We looked at four venues and Smitsfield Farm's whole package stood out. We compared each venue's total costs, inclusions, exclusions, corkage, etc. Smitsfield have so many options to choose from and were very flexible in meeting our needs. Each wedding at Smitsfield is unique with their different chapel



*“I recommend
supporting
smaller local
suppliers!”*

*Venue: Smitsfield Farm, Lothair, Mpumalanga - www.smitsfield.co.za
Dress: Zanne Couture from The Wedding Collective
Bridesmaids: Fébé Fashion (tops), Sandra and Samantha Supra (skirts)
Hair: Carlia Lindeque, N.W. Style Secrets
Make-Up: Juanelize Smith
Flowers: Carel Bothma, Arum Symphony
Décor Hire: Vintage Rose Weddings and Events
Live band: The Vans
Dessert cookies: Kookies Designed
Baker: Trudi Seale-van der Veen
Photography: Carolien and Ben Photography*

locations and ever-changing natural surroundings in the heart of Mpumalanga. Being 2 and a half hours from Pretoria it was the perfect getaway weekend for our guests.

Does Smitsfield Farm have accommodation?

Smitsfield repurposed old train carriages into the most beautiful warm rooms. They are walking distance from the venue and the bridal suite has the most beautiful view. Some guests opted for the camping option; paid for a stand and brought their own camping equipment.

What did you like best about Smitsfield?

We felt right at home! Helene, Marius and their team made sure we didn't need to worry about anything. I loved the fact the venue was exclusively ours for the entire weekend, nothing was rushed before or after the wedding.

How did you know to say: 'Yes to the Dress?'

I will never forget the feeling I got when I first tried on my wedding dress! I was overwhelmed with joy and contentment; with myself and with the way it fitted me PERFECTLY. I compared each dress to it and no other dress made me feel like that.

How many guests?

About 180.

Your first dance song?

Forever like that by Ben Rector.

The most memorable moment(s) of your big day?

The moment my father walked me down the aisle and gave me away to Paul! It had always been a dream of mine that my father would be there and able to do that. I also loved seeing Paul at the end of the aisle. He said he would NOT cry but ...

Any advice for brides-to-be?

Do not do anything that you don't want to. Do what makes you YOU! I also recommend supporting smaller LOCAL suppliers! These vendors are very well-priced and you get extraordinary service from people who you can call friends afterwards.

Honeymoon?

Paul picked out a country from a map, BLINDFOLDED. Destiny decided we were going to ITALY. We travelled from Venice to Rome and finally to the Amalfi Coast and loved every second of it! ❤️





EST. 2017

SMITSFIELD

- F A R M -

WEDDINGS | ACCOMMODATION | EVENTS

Heléne Coetzer
071 680 0570
helene@smitsfield.co.za
www.smitsfield.co.za

Mona-Liza
INTERIORS



WEDDING & FUNCTION VENUE, GLASS CHAPEL, BOMA, FLOWERS, ACCOMMODATION,
COORDINATING, DÉCOR & CATERING

WHITE RIVER, MPUMALANGA
MARINDA CILLIERS: 0832761206
WWW.WHISPERINGTHORNS.COM



PHOTO: CLAREECE SMIT PHOTOGRAPHY

Want To Be In This Magazine?

The REAL BRIDES magazine is one of the biggest success stories of the wedding industry.

CONCEPT IS THE KEY – IT'S WHAT BRIDES WANT

The key to the success of Real Brides is the concept on which it is based.

Prior to the launch of Real Brides, in-depth surveys were undertaken with brides-to-be. Almost unanimously those canvassed stated that they wanted information from “real” brides on how they went about planning their weddings.

They rated information from other brides to be of major importance. They wanted to see what other brides and bridesmaids wore; how they chose their venues, photographers, themes and colour schemes etc.

The concept for the Real Brides magazine is based upon these surveys.

REAL BRIDES is a unique bridal/wedding magazine featuring over 100 weddings per year. It brings you true love stories, wonderful proposals, advice and great ideas straight from the mouths of real brides. Our featured brides are girls like you, me and the girl next door - ordinary everyday people. In this month's issue we start a two-part series highlighting some of our cover brides chosen at random from the past couple of years.

WANT TO BE IN THIS MAGAZINE?

You too can be part of REAL BRIDES - it's simple:

If you have your wedding photos, mail a sample photo and a list of your vendors to: robbyn@topicpublishing.co.za so that your wedding can be entered on our list for consideration for publication.

All submissions are acknowledged and considered.



SHANI & IVAN KNOETZE

*In keeping with our
French, vintage-
inspired vision, we
decided to use only
white flowers.*



Though their mothers were friends and they apparently met as children, this couple have no recollection of having known each other back then! They met properly as adults at a photo shoot and promptly fell in love.

Fabulous surprise proposal?

Ivan hired The Showroom art gallery to host his proposal. He decorated the gallery walls with large, printed canvas photographs of us, shot in "Amsterdam se Bos" by talented photographer Nadine van der Wielen, while we were on holiday in Europe. He suggested that we visit the gallery on a Friday evening, as a leisure activity. When we arrived, "A Thousand Years" by Christina Perri was playing in the background. I was shocked and surprised to see our photographs on the first wall I viewed, only to turn around and find Ivan on bended knee behind me, diamond ring in hand. After I (tearfully) accepted his proposal, our family and closest friends, who had hidden behind a partition, came running out, cheering and laughing. The whole proposal was recorded on video and we enjoyed a small reception at the gallery afterwards.

The most difficult part of planning your wedding?

Fortunately my mother, assisted by my brother, executed most of the planning, as my studies and Ivan's work and studies kept us both fully occupied. We still had to decide on the venue, guest list, flowers, menu and endless other aspects of the wedding though, and the most difficult part was to find the time to arrange suitable meetings to discuss and convey our decisions.



*For our honeymoon
Ivan's parents gifted
us a wonderful
20-day holiday in
France.*

Venue: Pheasant Hill – www.pheasanthill.co.za

Wedding gown: Bridal Room, Brooklyn

Hair & bride's make-up: Belinda Sephton

Shoes: The late Cindy Mynhardt

Flowers: Pieter Bezuidenhout, Pheasant Hill

Photography: Clarisse Pieterse Photography



Tell us a bit about your wedding venue.

We initially booked another venue but had second thoughts. On our "second round" of venue visits, we viewed and fell in love with Pheasant Hill. Their old world, French-inspired décor suited our vision perfectly.

What appealed to you most about Pheasant Hill?

We loved everything - the peaceful atmosphere, the stunning Ile de France Banquet Room, the beautiful gardens, the outdoor chapel, the tastefully decorated guest rooms, the delicious menu and of course the owner/manager Pieter Bezuidenhout. He ultimately realised our perfect wedding after creating a vision board with our pictures and preferences.

The most difficult service provider to choose?

Pheasant Hill provided everything, apart from a stylist, photographer and videographer. The most difficult to choose was the videographer.

Finding "the" dress; was it easy or difficult?

I found my dress at the first bridal salon we visited. When my mother, grandmother and brother saw me in the dress they all burst into tears and so the choice was made!

Did you do any hair trials prior to the wedding?

I think the bride's hair is very important and had three trials prior to the wedding. As we decided that the bridesmaids and bride's girls would wear their hair down, they were all responsible for styling their own hair on the wedding day, assisted by my Maid of Honour.

Who was in your entourage?

The girls wearing flower crowns are my beautiful cousins, Kailey and Danika. My bridesmaids were my best friend and Maid of Honour whom I've known since Grade 1, Willéte; my very dear friend since Grade 8, Melissa; my dearest friend from University, Martinet and my gorgeous new sister-in-law, Megan.

How many guests?

Our venue could only accommodate 100 guests with the seating plan we chose, excluding the bride and groom.

First dance song?

"Dance with you" by Live.

Highlights of your day?

When I came down the aisle to an instrumental version of "A Thousand Years" and first saw Ivan.

Any handy tips for brides?

Focus on your husband and enjoy every precious moment. 🌿





Country Charm and Pure Elegance



Pheasant Hill is a little piece of Paradise where time slips away, surrounded by friendly and efficient staff, delicious food, awe-inspiring gardens and exquisitely tasteful accommodation.

We offer a wide range of facilities to suit indoor and outdoor weddings. The splendour of the Ile de France banquet and wedding facility is a sight to behold. This magnificent room hosts up to 150 people seated. It is elegantly decorated with immaculate facilities.

There are numerous spaces in the Pheasant Hill gardens that can be used for different types of events. Outdoor weddings are held at our open air chapel and the lower terrace gazebo is ideal for smaller groups.

The memories of a lifetime await you at Pheasant Hill.

Contact
012 941 1724 or 083 459 0305
pieter@pheasanthill.co.za and bookings@pheasanthill.co.za
www.pheasanthill.co.za



NEON PRODUCTIONS

Photography & Videography

Please contact Morgan Brink:

morgan@neonproductions.co.za 

www.neonproductions.co.za 

Follow us on Facebook or Instagram

@neonphotoproductions 

@neonproductionsa 

MAKING *Memories*



The Most Gorgeous Venue -
Timeless Beauty, Country Cuisine, Superior
Service, Fantastic Specials, Outstanding Value

Visit us and **WIN** your entire Wedding



OAKFIELD
Farm
MAKING MEMORIES

www.oakfield.co.za | 011 933 3464 | info@oakfield.co.za

MARLI & JACO STORM

I looked around at a few venues but nothing compared to Oranje Guest Farm.



Here is living proof that blind dates do sometimes work out and that they can and often do lead to a walk down the aisle!

How did you and Jaco meet?

I was a blind date on his birthday!

Did your proposal catch you by surprise?

Yes it did, but he was so nervous, I don't think the people next to us even noticed him going down on one knee.

Did you choose/design your own engagement ring?

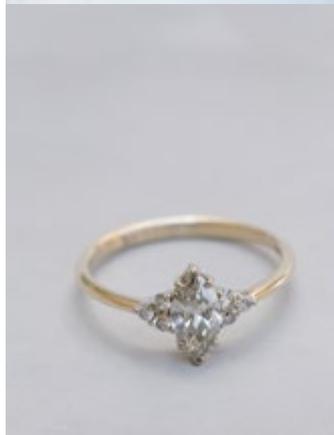
I always wanted to be surprised, but Jaco wanted us to design the ring together. I saw Lorean's work and knew that I wanted to work with him. He sourced a couple of diamonds and Jaco and I immediately liked the same one, as did Lorean - he had already designed a ring with the diamond we'd picked and we both loved it.

How far in advance did you send out your wedding invitations?

We sent them out around 3 months before our wedding. For the older generation we printed and hand-delivered them and for the younger generation we sent out e-invites.

How many venues did you look at and what "sold" Oranje Guest Farm to you?

I looked around at a few venues but nothing compared to Oranje Guest Farm. They are incredible! The views are exquisite and they have this beautiful chapel



I wanted my wedding to be a magical, memorable fairytale and Oranje managed to go over and above in helping me fulfil my dreams.



Venue: Oranje Guest House, Eastern Free State – www.oranjegastelaas.co.za

Dress: Biji la Maison

Décor: Oranje Guest House

Flowers & cake: Oranje wedding venue

Videography: Perfect Pear

Ring: Lorean Jewellery Design

Photography: Alicia Landman Photography

overlooking the majestic mountains. They included the catering, décor, service, flowers, cake and Gin bar in their wedding package. It was the perfect place for our country chic wedding. Oranje literally have everything you could possibly need in terms of the type of things that you require for a wedding and ordinarily would have to hire.

Sum up your Oranje Guest Farm experience in one sentence.

I wanted my wedding to be a magical, memorable fairytale and Oranje managed to go over and above in helping me fulfil my dreams.

Did you know what type of dress you wanted?

Yes and no... I just knew that I wanted something different and nothing in the stores made my heart flutter! However, as soon as I consulted Biji she summed me up straight away and started drawing a picture, which quickly created that flutter! And WOW, I am still in love with my dress.

What is the most important part of the role of a bridesmaid and do you think they should have a say in what they wear?

I can comment here because I have been a bridesmaid about 10 times! I think the most important part is just to be there and enjoy the moments with the bride. Make sure she doesn't forget the small things, make sure her veil is okay in church, and make sure she has lipstick on for the rest of the evening and so on as she is the centre of attraction. I do think that bridesmaids need to like what they wear... and have a say. But they should also respect the bride's wishes.

How many guests?

180.

Long tables instead of round ones?

Oranje's long wooden tables are beautiful, especially with the moss runners that we really liked. And for space, I think it was the better option.

Any advice for sticking to the wedding budget?

You do not have to have everything; you should go with what is important to you as a couple. Your guests will never know that you didn't settle on the more expensive option! For Jaco and I, the food and the entertainment were the two most important things to get right.

Honeymoon?

We went to Mauritius. It was actually the first holiday Jaco and I shared together and we had the best time.





Imagine a setting for a wedding in a valley created by the Maluti Mountains on the one side and the Rooi Mountains on the other.

Picture exchanging your vows in our beautiful sandstone church and then your stylish country style reception held in our barn which can accommodate up to 220 guests.

Oranje Guest Farm is a working farm boasting a breathtaking 360 degree view of the majestic mountains of the Eastern Free State between Fouriesburg and Clarens.

Come and see for yourself - our dedicated professional team guarantee you a memorable experience.

bookings@oranjegasteplaas.co.za

084 712 0427



www.oranjegasteplaas.co.za



Sugarbush Hill lies on the northern slopes of the peaceful Buffelspoort valley in the spectacular Magaliesberg mountain range.

- Small country weddings • Functions • Kitchen Teas
- Bridal Showers • Anniversaries • Family reunions • Peaceful getaways

Sugarbush Hill gets its name from the Common Sugarbush (*Protea caffra*) found in abundance on the hillside behind our cottages, which all have panoramic mountain views.

Guests are welcome to explore the 11 hectares of indigenous bush and prolific bird life.

Come and celebrate your special day with us and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of this beautiful haven of Nature.

Call: 083 279 5477

Email: info@sugarbushhill.co.za

www.sugarbushhill.co.za



Plan Your Wedding Budget

We know you'd rather skip this step and go straight to the cake tasting, but creating (and sticking to) your budget is arguably the most important part of planning a wedding.

Whether you're working with R10,000 or R100,000, there are some general guidelines that can help you decide what you can spend. Here are 6 easy steps:

Who's Contributing

Perhaps it's just you and your fiancé. Or maybe your parents or other family members want to chip in. Finding out who's eager to contribute to your wedding is the first step in calculating your overall budget.

Crunch The Numbers

Once you have an idea of how much financial assistance you'll receive, focus on your own contribution.

- How much can you and your fiancé realistically, and comfortably, afford to spend?
- Based on monthly income, how much can you save between now and the wedding?
- How much, if any, can you responsibly pull from an existing savings account?

Estimate your personal wedding budget based on your answers to the questions above.

The Guest Count

Now that you've got a ballpark budget, you'll want a ballpark guest count. The cost of a wedding is pretty much based on guest count. The number of guests in attendance will determine not only the size of your venue, but also how much food and alcohol you'll need.

Looking at your wedding as a "per-person" expenditure will help put the costs into perspective. Your guest count will generate the number of items you'll need to pay for—including invitations, rentals, cake etc.

Being strategic about who you invite is the best way to cut down on wedding costs.

Your Non-Negotiables

What one item is at the very top of your list? You and your fiancé will probably have differing opinions - maybe he wants an open bar, but you'd prefer to spend the money on a 5-course gourmet meal.

Once you decide your top priorities, you can allot a bigger percentage of your budget to them—which will also solidify how much you'll have left for the other less important items.

Do Your Research

There are a lot of costs, both obvious and hidden, to consider before nailing down your budget. Educate yourselves about "hidden" cost and you'll have fewer surprises and stick closer to your bottom line.

Research the price of things in your chosen geographical area and season. Decide on the type of wedding you want; be honest as to whether or not it fits into your budget and adjust your plan accordingly.

Do The Math

After completing the steps above, it's time to do a final reality check: Does your budget breakdown match the actual cost of your ideal wedding? If it comes pretty close then create a spreadsheet and allocate a certain amount to each aspect.

Source: Herecomestheguide.com

LANIE & CORNÉ BLIGNAUT

*We went to the
Seychelles for
our honeymoon.*



This couple met at a birthday party and their wedding was vintage inspired!

Proposal out of the blue?

The proposal was kept completely under wraps; I'm a very nosy person so any hint of a ring would have aroused suspicion! Corné arranged a fake photo shoot at the local botanical gardens and said he also wanted to play around with his new drone. He said I should throw rose petals over my shoulder while jumping towards him. I did that about three times and on the fourth time he was on one knee asking for my hand in marriage! At first I didn't know what was happening; I had prepared for the moment a good few times before and nothing had happened; I was caught completely off guard!

Your chosen venue?

We first looked at a forest venue but for the number of guests we invited it would not have been big enough. We then decided to have our ceremony in the Rose Garden at Toadbury Hall which is so beautiful. Toadbury Hall Country Hotel is a 5-star property with majestic indigenous trees, magnificent rose and lavender gardens and a wonderland of lakes and rivers. The estate is situated on the banks of the Crocodile River in the world-famous Cradle of Humankind and offers so many different ceremony and reception areas and many beautiful photo opportunities. The estate's main banqueting hall has a blend of charm and elegance and could accommodate all our guests.

Colour scheme and inspiration?

I called our wedding vintage-alternative. We used a moody colour palette from rose-gold to black to create an alternative-looking style. The actors



Best decision made was inviting all our friends and family and not excluding anyone.

Venue: Toadbury Hall Country Hotel, Muldersdrift – www.toadburyhall.co.za

Décor: You & Me Décor

Wedding dress: Oleg Cassini, Bride&Co, Rivonia

MUA: Angelique Nel

Flowers: Royal Flowers & Functions

Photographer: Grace Studios



Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean were my main inspiration. For the ceremony and reception, we relied on antique-looking decor, like weathered doors and worn-in wooden seats, to enhance the vintage-inspired wedding theme.

Most memorable moment?

Walking down the aisle. As my Dad and I stood in front of the closed door I could hear the song Corné had picked for me - "If I ever saw heaven" by Roan Ash. It was the most emotional walk I ever took - becoming one with my best friend and leaving my childhood behind.

No main table?

No, we had a seat made up for us at each table instead. That way we got to spend time with all our guests - we had 9 different seats which everybody still talks about!

Variety of cakes?

We had 5 different cakes. Our wedding cake had a concrete/marble-look; the bottom tier was vanilla with champagne buttercream and the top tier, carrot cake with cream cheese. The second was a chocolate cake with black drip, chocolate ganache. The third was a (burgundy) coconut cake with champagne filling. The fourth was a baked cheesecake with fresh fruit/fruit glaze and the last a burgundy and rose-gold mirror cake filled with chocolate and raspberry mousse. We also had mini grey marble donuts just for fun.

Your wedding dress?

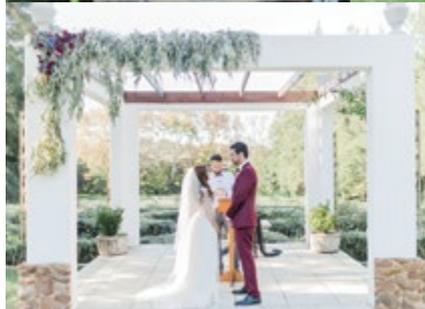
Difficult to decide; one week I wanted an A-line dress and then I'd change my mind! I finally decided on a fitted dress, fully laced with vintage sleeves and I had a tulle detachable skirt made, with a gold beaded belt which made me feel like a princess. For the reception I took it off. My hair and make-up was Elizabeth Taylor-inspired - vintage curls, complemented by a gold hair clip with pearls, which matched my earrings.

Only one attendant?

I only had a Maid-of-Honour. She wore a beautiful loose fitted navy dress, which complemented the dark moody vintage theme.

Your décor etc?

Dark and moody contrasting colours lent a dramatic feel. Bordeaux was my main colour, a very dark wine red which matched Corné's suit. The reception tables were draped with black chiffon runners, topped with dark greenery edge runners with Bordeaux, soft pink and navy contrasting mixed flowers. A modern/alternative vintage feel was incorporated using rose-gold and glass décor with black candles. 





Once in a while in the middle of an ordinary life love gives us a Fairy Tale



**Keep it
*small***

or...

**Invite
*everyone***

Toadbury Hall Country Hotel offers a number of exclusive wedding options whether you are planning an intimate gathering or a large affair. Tranquil and picturesque setting in a wonderland of lakes, rivers and beautiful gardens.

Muldersdrift, the Cradle of Humankind

+27 (0) 10 593 7523
weddings@toadbury.co.za
www.toadburyhall.co.za

*"One Destination - One
Exceptional Country Hotel"*



TOADBURY HALL
COUNTRY HOTEL





DRENE PLUNKETT
PHOTOGRAPHY



0797079931

hello@dreneplunkett.com

www.dreneplunkett.com

WIN

a wedding collection

VALUED AT R60 000

- photographer
- videographer
- wedding stationery
- make-up & hair
- discounted weekend package
- facial & lash extensions
- wedding cake
- wedding jewellery
- bouquets
- décor discount



HOW TO ENTER

FOLLOW these vendors on Facebook and Instagram: **Smitsfield Farm - Mila Photography - Die Woud Blazing Beauty - Edge Beauty - Alana van Heerden Bridal - Silver Swallow Design - Kirsten Goss Fleur le Cordeur - Underlined Creative - Royal Treats - Pink Flower Productions - La Belle Vie**

LIKE the giveaway post
TAG your fiancé and
FILL OUT the questionnaire <https://info526748.typeform.com/to/yuy68p>

- Terms & conditions:**
- Need to have a 2021 wedding date
 - Need to be 18 years or older
 - Prize cannot be exchanged for cash
 - Travel in Mpumalanga & Gauteng free, other provinces for your account
 - Entries close on 30 June 2020 at 5pm



FLEUR LE CORDEUR
floral design

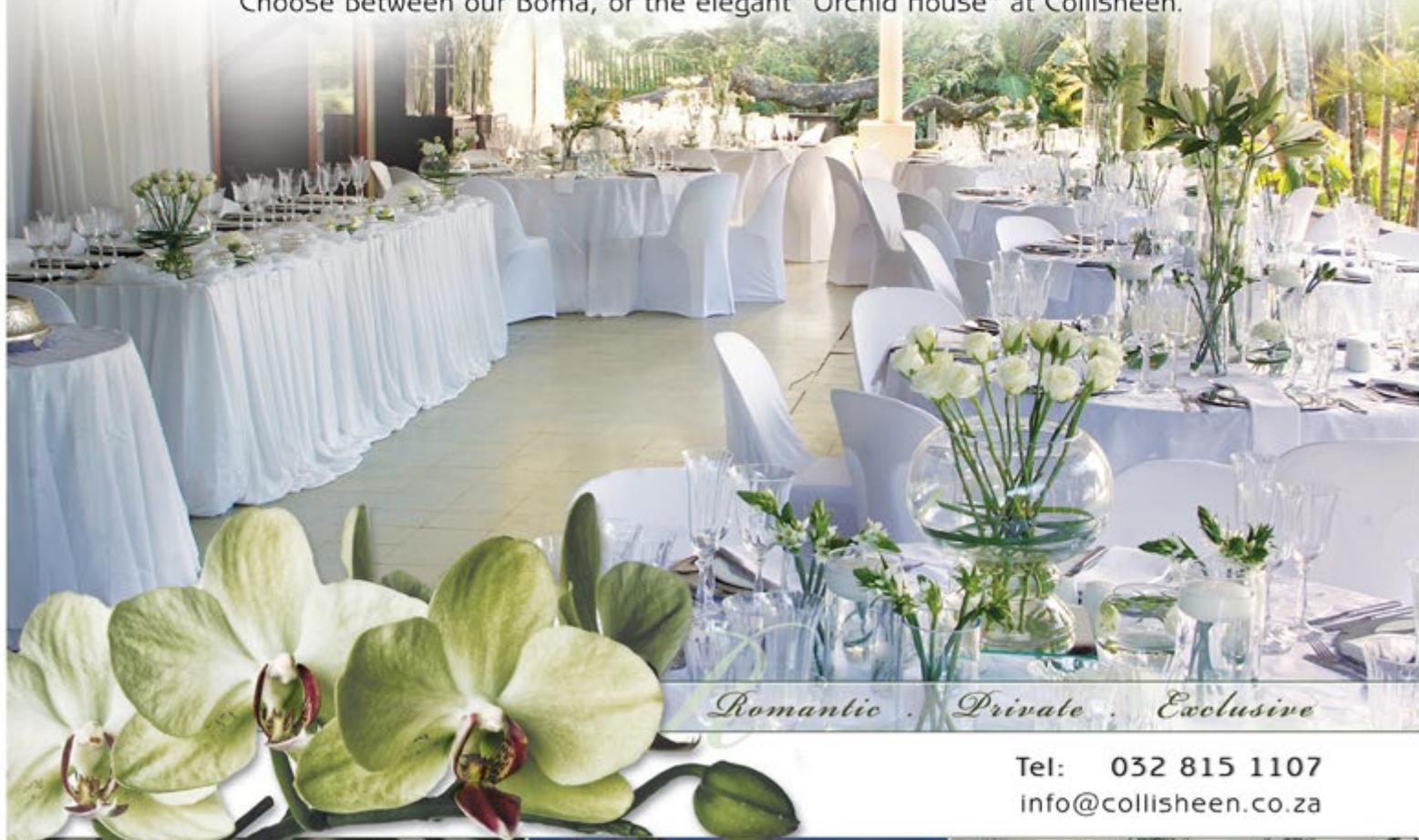


kirsten goss





Collisheen Estate is a world class wedding and function venue situated in the rolling green hills of Kwa-Zulu Natal's North Coast. Collisheen now offers two gorgeous venues for that special day. Choose between our Boma, or the elegant "Orchid House" at Collisheen.



Romantic . Private . Exclusive

Tel: 032 815 1107
info@collisheen.co.za



Plc by Jacki Bruniquel