

Real Brides

South Africa's Exciting
Wedding Magazine

April 2021

*Iconic
Church*

*Small
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We look forward to planning & hosting your dream event!

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Did You Get Married Recently?

Would you like your wedding to be featured in Real Brides and to share tips and stories from your scaled down Covid wedding experience? REAL BRIDES features “real” South African weddings - real people sharing their real stories.

So, if you got married recently and would like to have the opportunity to be part of our popular digital magazine then email us at robbyn@topicpublishing.co.za. Include a sample wedding photo and a list of your service providers and we may just be able to make your dream come true.

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On the cover:

Bride: LINDIE DE WAAL

Photo: Little White Ribbon Photography

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We look forward to planning & hosting your dream event!



TOP WEDDING VENUES

One of the most important decisions you have to make when planning your wedding is choosing your venue.

Your choice of venue will determine a multitude of important factors such as the number of guests, décor, food and drink and accommodation requirements. Doing your research and looking for the right place to host your wedding is also time-consuming and can be a difficult task because there are hundreds of venues to choose from.

To help you with your planning Real Brides has launched a new series – TOP WEDDING VENUES.

In this edition we feature and highlight another top wedding venue that is endorsed and recommended by Real Brides.

In TOP WEDDING VENUES we will provide you with:

- A full overview of the venue
- A link to a virtual tour of the venue on our website
- A link to the venue's website

IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue we focus on one of the Top Wedding Venues in the picturesque KZN Midlands HAYCROFT FARM – See pages 34 and 35.



LINDIE & BRANDO DE WAAL



This couple finally got to walk down the aisle after having to postpone their wedding not once but twice!

How did you and Brando meet?

We worked at the same company, which was my first job after leaving school.

Your proposal?

We went to a family reunion and hiked up a koppie – I wasn't really equipped and was wearing flip flops! My parents and my brother were with us and it was so special that they could be a part of it.

Covid-19 restrictions interfered with your wedding plans?

Our original wedding date was 2 May but then Covid happened and we had to postpone it to August. August came and we then had to postpone it a second time. We finally got married on 14 November. We had wanted to get married just before Winter but ended up getting married in Summer. Our vendors were all very accommodating and helped us everywhere they could. Guests had to fill in a register on the day and wear masks - we made the best of a bad situation.

Tell us a bit about your wedding venue and why you chose it.

We wanted our venue to be near home and we looked at 3 or 4. Klip River Country Estate ticked all the boxes and was definitely our best option; we loved it right from the start. They have such beautiful gardens and are situated right on the Vaal River so it is a fabulous place for wedding photos. We got married in their chapel and they were really helpful in every single way. Marike, who owns the venue, is very well organised – I like a person who is organised because I'm also a list person! They have accommodation – we stayed there too. They also have a Salon for hair and make-up on site. We would definitely recommend Klip River Country Estate – they are not too far from Joburg and the venue has a really cosy, country feel.



“If you don't plan, then you plan to fail!”



Venue: Klip River Country Estate, Vereeniging – www.klipriverguesthouse.co.za

Bride & bridesmaid dresses: Zelda Marais

Hair: Get Inspired Hair & Nail Studio

Make up: Charmaine, Pro Laser Beauty Clinic

Décor & flowers: Crystal Designs

Cake: Sweetly Cakes

Food: Urban Eatery

DJ: DJ Tach Sound

Photographer: Little White Ribbon

Your dress?

I only fitted 3 or 4 and decided which parts of them I liked and then got a designer to put them together. My dress was an A line style in off white. I knew what I wanted. I was a bride on a budget – buy your dress because you can sell it afterwards and get your money back.

Your colour scheme?

Pinterest and Blogs become your best friends! I looked at the trends for 2020 and chose Autumn colours and decided to stick with warm burgundy, blush pink and rose gold colours despite having to postpone to Summer.

What were you thinking as you walked down the aisle?

Firstly, I hoped I wouldn't trip and fall! It was actually very emotional as my Dad passed away 7 weeks before our wedding and so my brother walked me down the aisle, which though sad was also very special.

If you could have your big day all over again, is there anything you would change or do differently?

I'm a graphic designer so I designed everything myself. My advice would be to not stress too much about the little things because most people don't see or notice them anyway.

How many guests?

79 adults and 5 kids.

First dance song?

Nothing's going to stop us now by Starship. It's a good old 80s song and we just love the lyrics.

What worked best on your big day?

The planning – it was the success of our wedding. If you don't plan, then you plan to fail!

Any "oh my gosh" moments?

We didn't plan for a wedding band so imagine my surprise when our ringbearer arrived with 2 wedding bands!

Any advice for brides-to-be?

Plan, plan, plan and save, save, save! Focus on good food, a good venue, a good DJ and the best photographer – those are the main things. Only pay deposits and not the full amounts and do your homework.

Honeymoon?

We couldn't go at the end of November because of Covid so we postponed it to March. We kept it local and drove down to Cape Town. ♥





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COLLEEN & DARREN JANSE VAN RENSBURG



Getting married in the time of Covid lockdowns has its challenges but this couple made the best of the circumstances.

Instant attraction?

We first met on a beautiful December summer's day 17 years ago at a beach restaurant where Darren was singing. I immediately felt butterflies, and turns out he did too! You just know that when a person is your kind of person! We remained friends as the years went by until fate finally brought us together.

Was your proposal a surprise?

I was definitely caught off guard. It was a typical Wednesday evening in 2019, we got home from work when Darren said his brother had called to say that their car wouldn't start and they are at the beachfront. I found it rather strange that they would be down at the beachfront but, I got dressed and off we went. On the way there, I could see Darren was a bit nervous. As we approached the beachfront his brother called again to say that they are on the beach and we needed to hurry. By then I was very confused. We stopped the car and ran down to the beach where a large crowd of people were gathered on the pier looking down at the sand and I thought something had happened? As I approached, my breath was taken away for there, on the sand, lit by candlelight were the words "WILL YOU MARRY ME" I was speechless and as I turned around, Darren was on one knee with a ring in his hand. Of course I said yes!! The crowd on the pier and people all over the beach all started applauding! We then toasted with a glass champagne; it was the perfect evening with a beautiful sunset to set the mood. Darren had my ring specially designed and made for me and we were engaged for a year before saying I DO.

The most difficult part of planning your wedding?

Covid, that says it all! Our wedding took place in the middle of the lockdown restrictions. A MONTH before our wedding, some restrictions were lifted and shortly after our wedding they enforced lockdown again so we were truly blessed to have had our wedding inside of that gap. The only really difficult part for us





*“We were engaged for
a year before saying I
DO.”*

Venue: *“The Milestone”, Kragga Kamma, Port Elizabeth*

Wedding Gown: *Lady J*

Make-up: *Shariksa Make Up & Lash artist*

Décor: *The Décor Hub*

Flowers: *Sobabini Farming*

Photography: *Mardee Maree Photography*

was cutting down our guest list down due to venue capacity restrictions.

Did Darren get involved in the planning process?

Yes, every single step of the way. That is what I love about Darren, we discuss, agree and do everything together. It's not often that men really want to get involved but I am not only blessed with a wonderful husband but a best friend, which made our planning so easy.

Your venue?

The Milestone is on the same property as Running Waters, with a beautiful outdoor setting. When we went there I could picture our day and we both agreed it would be our venue. We wanted something cosy with an intimate feeling and the venue had all of that.

Your wedding gown?

Not everyone wants to keep their dress so I hired mine. I knew what I wanted. I tried four dresses and found the one wanted quite easily.

Your entourage?

We could not have chosen a better entourage for our day; we are blessed with friends who were there for us all the way. Our flower girls were our beautiful daughters who were all pretty in pink.

How many guests?

We would have loved to have had more guests with us but were only able to have 58 because of the Covid restrictions.

Your songs?

We chose songs that represented our love for each other - "Falling like stars" by James Arthur as the aisle song and "We belong together" by Jacob Lee for our first dance.

Things to avoid?

Stressing. There are things, like the weather, that you simply cannot control!

The highlights of your day?

Our whole wedding from the start to finish was a highlight for us - our vows especially. I will never forget those precious words.

Any tips for brides-to-be?

Start planning well in advance. Make your wedding personal and make it all about you and your partner. ♥



Keeping It Small

Current restrictions mean it's a time for small weddings and intimate gatherings. But just because your special day is a small one doesn't mean that it won't be memorable.

Here are five ways to turn your small wedding into a big deal.

- **SPLURGE ON LOCATION**

With a smaller guest list, many couples will find that they have more money to spend elsewhere. So, why not splurge a bit and choose a dream destination?

- **CONSIDER ELOPING**

If you're not interested in having any guests at your wedding and you just want to make it a private affair, then consider eloping. You don't even need to go far - simply plan a secret wedding at a location of your choice and enjoy your day together. You could use any money that you had planned to use on your wedding, on your honeymoon instead.

- **RECORD IT ALL**

If you can't invite everyone you really want to your wedding, then be sure to hire a photographer and videographer to capture the day so that you can share it with loved ones afterwards. Browsing through an album and re-watching your wedding video is something you can do every year on your anniversary to remind you of the occasion.

- **GO ALL-OUT ON ACCESSORIES**

A small wedding shouldn't mean going small on your look. And it doesn't have to break the bank either - you can find amazing designer items like perfumes, necklaces, watches, shoes - even your groom's suit online and at affordable prices.

- **ADD YOUR PERSONALITY**

With smaller weddings, it's easier to add your own personality to everything on the day. If you and your partner are gin and tonic people, then have a small G&T station or perhaps you would like a pizza station or a donut wall. With larger weddings, these small touches add up really quickly, but now that you have decided to have a smaller affair, it might be within your budget to add these unique touches to your day.





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VREDENBURG MANOR HOUSE



Looking for an outstanding wedding venue in the Western Cape? Then look no further.

Tell us where Vredenburg Manor House is situated and also some of its history.

VMH is situated in the heart of the Winelands. Our Municipality is Stellenbosch, but some people would argue that we are more Somerset West. We are 18 min (14,8 km) from Stellenbosch town. The farm was originally called Vredenburg Moddergat, handed to Jan Stevense Bothma by Simon van der Stel in 1659. So, this farm was established long before the town of Vredenburg. The Manor House was built in 1800 so this grand old lady is 221 years old and still holds much of its yesteryear charm. There are 5 bedrooms in the Manor House and two self-catering cottages. Due to demand, we will be building some more cottages next year.

How far is VMH from the Cape Town International airport?

We are approximately 21 min from the airport, depending on traffic (28,5 km) via the N2.

What is the core focus of VMH?

We are first and foremost a 4-star guest house but do give every wedding that we host, our utmost attention. During our peak season, we do not encourage weddings because we have a lot of long-staying guests from Europe. The average European returning guest will book for two to three weeks. Our minimum stay, between 15 December and 30 March, is 7 nights. Should brides want to get married here during that time, we require them to book all the accommodation too, making it the perfect destination wedding. This is subject to change and at our discretion. We are far more accommodating and flexible for morning or afternoon weddings during this time.

How many people can the Manor House accommodate?

14 Pax. Two per room except for cottage 7 that can sleep three. All of our rooms are a carefully blended combination of contemporary



that complement this grand old lady. We have three deluxe rooms. These are the biggest. Two Classic Rooms and two self-catering cottages. All the rooms have modern full bathrooms. We have our own borehole water and a massive back-up generator that can basically run the whole farm.

Each room has air-conditioning and underfloor heating for the winter months. The lounge, breakfast room and library all have fireplaces, so you can enjoy a lovely glass of red wine with a good book. We also have a pyjama lounge for the 4 rooms upstairs in the Manor House. This is a perfect area for the bridal party to get ready if you book the whole house.

Tell us a bit about the VMH management team.

Vredenburg Manor House is run by two managers and 5 guest house assistants. We all love what we do. Service is our forte and we do everything to make sure that our guests leave with the stuff that magical memories are made of and with the intention of returning. We often have guests who book for one night and then end up staying for a week!

Does VMH have a resident chef?

The two managers are the resident chefs. We almost NEVER allow outside caterers because it is not the caterers name that is damaged when the food is no good. It is their experience at VMH that they will refer to when complaining about the food! The fact that we love what we do can be tasted in our food because we

cook with love. The minute we stop loving what we do, will be the day that we stop doing it!

Being so close to the famous Cape Winelands, do you serve a house wine?

We have our own wine labelled under the name of Vredenburg Manor House. We do not sell it to the outside public, so you have to either be a guest or attend a function here to enjoy the privilege. The wine is not produced on the farm. The grapes are from our sister company, Helderzicht.

What is it about VMH that attracts bridal couples?

Our beautiful pocket gardens have the most amazing views of either the old Manor House or the Helderberg mountains. There are endless options to choose from for your reception and ceremony. We also have a back-up plan for rainy weather. The old winepress was built in 1818 and has that old rustic charm that is very in fashion at the moment. Our latest addition is our enchanting Boma that is perfectly situated and sunken. One can enjoy the most amazing sunsets and views of the mountains. Apart from the Boma/Fire pit, it offers a bar, dancefloor and braai. The perfect space to end off your wedding function.

Do you recommend various vendors or handle most things yourselves?

We do everything except wedding cakes, dresses, hair and



makeup. We are flexible with most things except outside catering. We can recommend various vendors for the areas that we do not get involved with.

The strangest or most unusual request you've ever had from a bridal couple?

To not tell their parents that they have already been married for 2 years and to let their dog be the ring bearer!

What wedding packages do you offer?

Please visit www.vredenburgmanor.com to download our wedding packages.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the hospitality industry; what has been your biggest challenge?

Getting people to comply with COVID rules! After a few glasses, people lose their inhibitions and don't care. We will charge a fee to sanitise the entire Manor House if people do not respect the rules. It is very difficult running after 50 or more people to remind them about their masks, but we do our very best.

What plans for the rest of 2021 and beyond?

To get our additional rooms completed, thus making it possible to sleep 40 guests. This will ensure that guests can enjoy the wedding festivities more, knowing they do not have to travel after the party. ♥





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CHARLEÉ & HANNES BOSCH



If ever there was a fairy tale wedding, then this is it!

How did you meet Hannes?

We met at Tarkastad's Annual Show. After a year of working in nearby Cradock I thought my chances of meeting my "trouman" in the area were limited, but then Hannes introduced himself and it was love at first sight. We dated for a year and got married exactly 2 years after our first date.

Was your proposal a surprise?

We were busy renovating and I had on my oldest clothes, a cap covering my dirty hair and my hands were full of paint! Hannes said he wanted to go and check the water at our favourite spot on the farm. When we arrived on the mountain he suddenly climbed on to a big rock and his eyes filled up with tears. I then realised what was happening! We then walked on to where a sunset picnic had already been set up.

You originally wanted a farm wedding?

I really wanted to get married on the farm where we would be sharing our lives together but soon realised that it was actually unrealistic. We wanted a weekend wedding and accommodation would've been a problem too. Luckily, after our engagement, we went to Cape Town and stayed overnight at the Drostdy Hotel in Graaff-Reinet. We loved it and it became a thought to consider it as our venue. After arranging nearly everything at Drostdy, we then had to start planning the farm wedding again because of the Covid regulations! However, three weeks before the wedding we were given the go ahead again by the Drostdy. So there were a lot of ups and downs but in the end we are so grateful that we were able to have it at the beautiful Drostdy Hotel.

Ceremony held in a landmark church?

If you speak of Graaff Reinet you immediately think of that iconic church, Die Groot Kerk. So, when we decided on the Drostdy Hotel as our venue we immediately wanted to have our ceremony at that



“The Drostdy Hotel exceeded our expectations.”

Venue: Drostdy Hotel, Graaff-Reinet www.newmarkhotels.com

Dress: Phoebe by Enzoani

Hair: VIP Hairstylist @ Drostdy Hotel

Make up: Charné Du Toit, The Skin Clinic, Cradock

Cake: Drostdy Hotel

Flowers & bouquets: Sophia's Roses

Photography: Leze Hurter Photography

magnificent church nearby. We feel honoured that we were able to start our fairy tale there.

Magnificent backdrops for your photos?

Taking our photos overlooking the Valley of Desolation took time because of the drive, but Hannes insisted and WOW am I glad that we went. A perfect day with the most amazing light. So special watching the sunset at that stunning place - as our one chapter ended and the next began.

Stunning venue?

The Drostdy Hotel exceeded our expectations. We especially wanted a venue that could accommodate most of our guests and they offered a discounted rate. It was so much more than a hotel, it felt like we were staying in our own little town and we were treated like royalty. Everything, from the Friday night Street Soiree (arranged by the hotel) through to Sunday morning breakfast, was an absolute treat. The rooms are stunning and the food even better. There are swimming pools, lounges, beautiful garden areas and a lovely Spa for the bridal entourage. There are no words to describe how well trained and friendly the Drostdy Hotel staff are. They take things to the next level. Two Managers, Janus and Pieter, helped coordinate everything and the whole weekend ran so smoothly.

Outdoor reception?

I had always dreamed of an outdoor wedding and Covid kind of forced us to have everything outside anyway and so my dream became a reality. It was a lovely hot day, difficult for the flowers, but so nice to be outside. We asked the chef to narrow down the menu as there were so many fabulous options. For dessert we wanted a Gelato station and they arranged that too.

Your dress?

After fitting the Enzoani range I knew that I would love to wear one of their dresses. I decided on Phoebe and fell in love with the beading on it and it fitted perfectly, with only a few minor alterations.

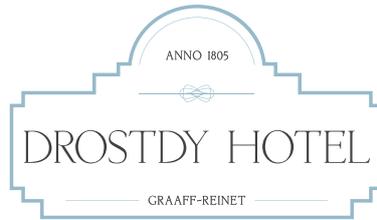
How many guests?

117.

Tips for a bride?

A small clutch bag for essentials and a comfortable dress. Make sure when you decide on a dress that you can sit and dance in it! ♥





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CLARISSA & MARCO BOERSEMA



This was an unconventional wedding for unconventional times. Forced to do things differently due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this couple really did what they wanted to do and thoroughly enjoyed their day shared with only their nearest and dearest.

How did you and Marco meet?

We first met 15 years ago as teenagers, and always had a crush on each other - right up until we got together again 3 years ago! The rest is history.

Tell us about your proposal.

It was a surprise. Marco took me to a massive, beautiful maze surrounded by huge trees. We walked the maze, and when we got to the middle there was a table with my favourite flowers and champagne and when I turned around, Marco was on his knee.

The Covid restrictions interfered with your original wedding plans?

We had limited guests, 12 in total. It was great because our friends understood why they could not be there, and we promised them we'd have a huge get together when all this craziness is over. We had so much fun because we literally only had the closest people in our lives present on the day, so we didn't care if there were small hiccups. We played lawn games and probably had more fun than any other wedding we've ever been to.

Tell us about your dress?

My dress was made by Bride&Co. I loved it from the moment I saw it and bought it immediately as it was my dream dress. I didn't wear a veil.

No bridesmaids?

We had 2 flower girls and no bridesmaids. The one flower girl was our 6-year-old daughter and the other was my sister-in-law's little girl who is also 6 years old.

Outdoor ceremony?

It was all outdoors, except for the dance and speeches made by my Dad and my mother-in-law.





“I am a baker by trade, so I made our wedding cake.”

Dress: Bride & Co

Hair: Hair by Jontel

Cake & candy buffet: @LoveLeeCake, Pretoria

Photography & videography: Mighty Fine Productions

We had a harvest table in the centre of the maze, in the very same place where Marco proposed to me. After the ceremony we went to have lunch and listened to some good music, after which Marco and I went off to have some photos taken. There was no real reception as such. We cordoned off the big hall to make it more intimate for the speeches and our first dance

The days of the traditional wedding cake seem to have gone, tell us about yours.

I am actually a baker by trade, @LoveLeeCake, so I made our wedding cake. I love perfecting the styling and leaving that personal touch on cupcakes, cake pops, cakes, sugar cookies and the famous macaroon. My maiden name is Lee and LoveLee was born out of my obsession with buttercream icing and helps me express my creativity as an artist. For our wedding cake I tried to think out the box a bit since our entire wedding was unconventional. It was a naked cake made of lemon dream sponge.

Your first dance song?

We chose Chateau by Angus and Julia Stone.

Tell us how and why you chose your photographer.

We saw some amazing videos and photos on the Mighty Fine Productions Facebook page, as they were the photographers for the wedding of friends of ours. We would definitely recommend Mighty Fine, their service and professionalism went way beyond what we expected.

The best advice you could give couples forced to scale things down?

Save the money, keep it intimate and just enjoy the day! It's probably the best decision we have ever made!

Honeymoon?

We were fortunately still able go away on honeymoon. We road-tripped through the Western Cape and stayed at some amazing places. ♥



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PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY



MABELIE & MARIUS VAN NIEKERK



Planning a wedding with many Covid restrictions led to much uncertainty but Tsekama helped make it all happen.

Tell us how you and Marius met?

I actually met Marius' Dad first when he came into the Spares shop where I was working. He told Marius he should go and meet the lovely girl working there! I eventually met Marius about a year later when I moved to Warmbaths and he brought a bakkie in for a service.

Rate your proposal!

10 out of 10! We went to Cape Town for Marius to look at a harvester on sale for the farm and we visited the Cape Point Reserve. There was nobody around - just the two of us. It was very romantic and very special.

Were you able to have a Kitchen tea?

Yes, my Mom and bridesmaids arranged it on the farm – lovely tea and cake and I received lots of gifts.

You planned your wedding with the uncertainty of Covid restrictions hanging over your head?

It was quite difficult as we never knew if everything would work out as planned. But, we chose our wedding date and decided to stick to it, no matter what. People made their choice whether to attend or not.

You chose Tsekama as your venue?

Tsekama is actually situated just a few kilometres from where we live and we know the owner, Tannie Marinda Turvey very well – she's an awesome person and is so good at what she does. Tsekama is a beautiful venue with a dam and a chapel. It's always so green and there are plenty of wild animals, which is great for photos and so on.

What time of the day was your ceremony?

We were supposed to start the wedding at 4pm but our original plans were made before a curfew and a ban on the sale of alcohol were implemented! We sent out a WhatsApp that no alcohol would be allowed and we had to change the time to 12 noon to accommodate the curfew. Two weeks before our





“We chose our wedding date and decided to stick to it.”

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

Wedding gown: Bridal House

Hair: Anne Joubert

Flowers: Tsekama

Photography: Marius Kruger Vidtophgy

wedding however President Ramaphosa announced that they were easing the curfew hours and lifting the ban on the sale of alcohol! By that stage however we couldn't change anything again so we just left things as they were.

How many guests?

Not as planned. We originally had a guest list of 120 people, which came down to 56 because of the curfew and alcohol ban. No doubt many more guests might have attended had they known the curfew time would change and that the alcohol ban would be lifted. But, they made their own choices.

Did you know what you wanted when it came to your dress?

I really had no idea what I wanted so I tried all sorts of different styles. A fitted style seemed to suit me best and when I fitted this one particular dress, I just knew it was the right one.

Your bridesmaid's dresses?

My bridesmaids went shopping with me – we were actually looking for ivory dresses but couldn't find anything suitable so we chose a dark blue/navy dress and the girls looked beautiful in them.

Your colour scheme?

My wedding colours were ivory, light pink and then some orange to break the colours.

Your best wedding gift?

We got lots of lovely gifts, for which we are thankful, and I would say that an Air Fryer from my sister-in-law was one of the most exciting.

The best moment of your big day?

It was when I walked into the chapel and saw Marius – the man I knew I wanted to grow old with! It rained just about the whole day but stopped for about 2 hours after our ceremony, which was great for photos and so on, and then it carried on raining right through the night.

Any advice for brides-to-be?

Everybody told me that the day flies – and it did. Try to treasure every moment. Before you know it, it's all over so don't let anything spoil the day.

Did you manage to go on honeymoon?

We did, but obviously not overseas as everyone dreams. We went to Graskop for a week, which was very nice but way too short! ♥





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.

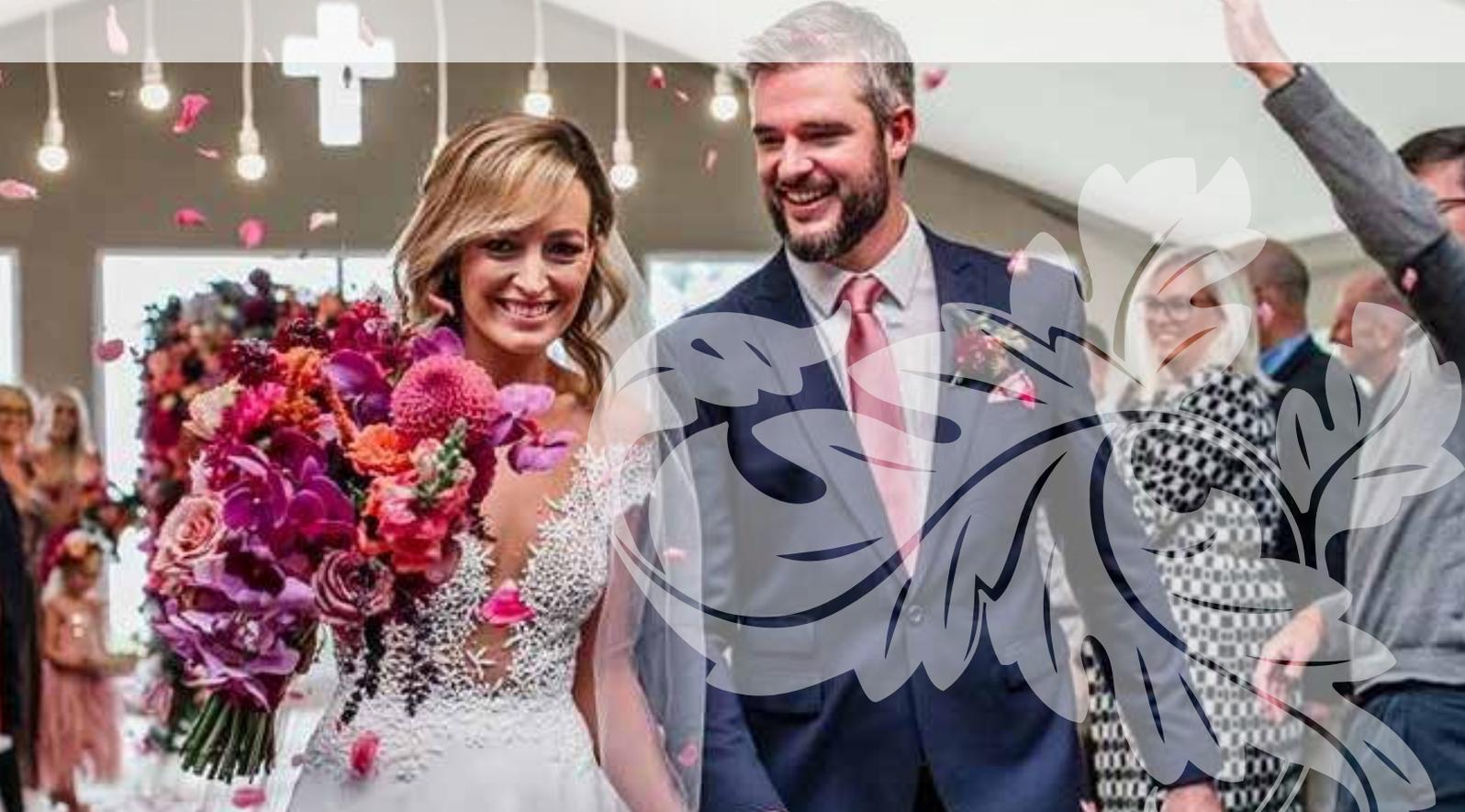
Imagine your ceremony in the natural splendor of the African bush with buffalo, giraffe, zebra and a wide variety of antelope partaking in your wedding celebration.

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



TOP WEDDING VENUES



Haycroft Farm

country venue & accommodation

One of the most important decisions you have to make in planning your wedding is choosing our venue. It is also a difficult task because here are hundreds of venues to choose from. To help you with your planning, Real Brides has launched this new Top Wedding Venue series.

In the second of the series we are featuring HAYCROFT FARM. The KwaZulu-Natal Midlands had long been one of the country's prime wedding destinations. The area is home to some of the most sought after wedding venues in South Africa – one of which is HAYCROFT FARM. If you are planning to have a Midlands wedding, then look no further than Haycroft Farm - it is without a doubt one of the top venues situated in this scenic area. If location is what you are looking for, you will not find anywhere more breathtaking!

At Haycroft Farm, Pippa and the team strive to make the decision easy. From the location of your "I do's" to choosing dessert, they are there to help you every step of the way. The Haycroft Farm

team strive to make the decision of choosing your wedding venue really easy. Haycroft offers three special packages to choose from.

The Pennygum Package: An afternoon wedding ceremony in the pine forest or farm chapel with casual welcome celebrations on the deck where canapés or a starter will be served. A wedding reception in the country venue for dinner and dancing of up to 140 guests.

The Protea Package: An afternoon wedding ceremony in the pine forest or farm chapel. A cocktail reception, with casual seating and dining in the country venue and surrounding gardens for up to 140 guests.

The Rock Rose Package: An afternoon wedding ceremony in the pine forest, wooden deck or venue garden. A picnic-style welcome celebration on the wooden deck or in the venue garden, with your wedding reception in our farm chapel venue for up to a maximum of 70 guests.





FANTASTIC ACCOMMODATION

Haycroft Farm also offers a number of outstanding accommodation options. It can accommodate up to 60 overnight guests on the property, all within walking distance of the wedding venue. Currently, the accommodation is self-catering, but Haycroft have some exciting plans to add a dining area & café, thereby offering bed and breakfast.

The Bridal Barn: This accommodation suite is perfect for the bride-to-be and her girls or family. Bedroom 1 is ensuite, with an exquisite walk in shower and bedroom 2 & 3 share a bathroom, with a spacious shower. Adjacent to this accommodation wing, is Bedroom 4 which is situated in the loft, above the living room.

The Grooms Quarters: This quaint cottage sleeps up to six guests. Bedroom one is spacious and en suite with a shower. The second bedroom sleeps four, with an en suite bathroom with a shower. These Quarters boast a lovely open plan living area, with a lounge and dining room, as well as a comfortable patio to enjoy the evening sunsets and soak up the tranquil setting.

The Hayloft: This luxury suite sleeps two guests, with a king size bed. It is a self-catering suite which has an open plan bedroom, sitting area and kitchenette. Ensuite with a shower, and is wheelchair friendly.

The Annex: This luxury suite sleeps two guests, with a queen-size bed. It is a self-catering suite which has an open plan bedroom, sitting area and kitchenette. This unit has a double shower ensuite. Secluded & private, perfect to be used as the Honeymoon Suite.

The Tack Room: This secluded and private cottage sleeps up to six guests. Bedroom one is spacious with a shower ensuite. The second bedroom sleeps two, with a bathroom across the passage, which has a bath tub. Bedroom 3 has a shower ensuite and has its own private entrance. This cottage has a lovely open plan living area, with a lounge and dining room, as well as a comfortable patio to enjoy the evening sunsets and soak up the tranquil setting.

The Stables: Originally the stable block, creatively renovated into an accommodation suite full of character. There are eighteen double rooms off a central courtyard. All have an ensuite shower. All rooms have a kettle & tea/coffee making facilities. There is a communal kitchen and lounge/dining area, looking over the lunging ring and the dam beyond.

Take a Virtual Tour of Haycroft – [CLICK HERE https://realbrides.co.za/haycroft-farm/](https://realbrides.co.za/haycroft-farm/)
To visit the Haycroft website – [CLICK HERE https://haycroftfarm.com/](https://haycroftfarm.com/)



Haycroft Farm
country venue & accommodation



MONIQUE & RIAAN VAN NIEKERK



A mutual friend played Cupid and brought this fun couple together.

How long were you engaged?

We had been together for a year when Riaan proposed - just 12 days before my birthday. We had been engaged 4 months when we decided why wait? And, with Covid going on we didn't know if we would get a chance to have the wedding we wanted. Lockdown went from Level 2 down to 1. We saw our chance and decided that it was then or never as we knew we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together.

Rate your proposal on a scale of 1 to 10!

Definitely a 10! I did not expect it all, and I don't think Riaan even planned it the way he asked me. It was an in-the-moment proposal. We were enjoying a good Friday night at home when he decided that he was going to ask me to marry him. I wouldn't change a thing about that moment.

How long did you have to plan your wedding and what did you start with?

We planned the wedding for 4 months. We started with choosing a venue and then Chante the wedding coordinator who did the best planning ever.

Tell us about your wedding venue, where it is and what they offer?

Our wedding venue was Diep in die Berg, which is in Pretoria East. They offered catering, drinks, décor, and the honeymoon suite at a Guest House just around the corner.

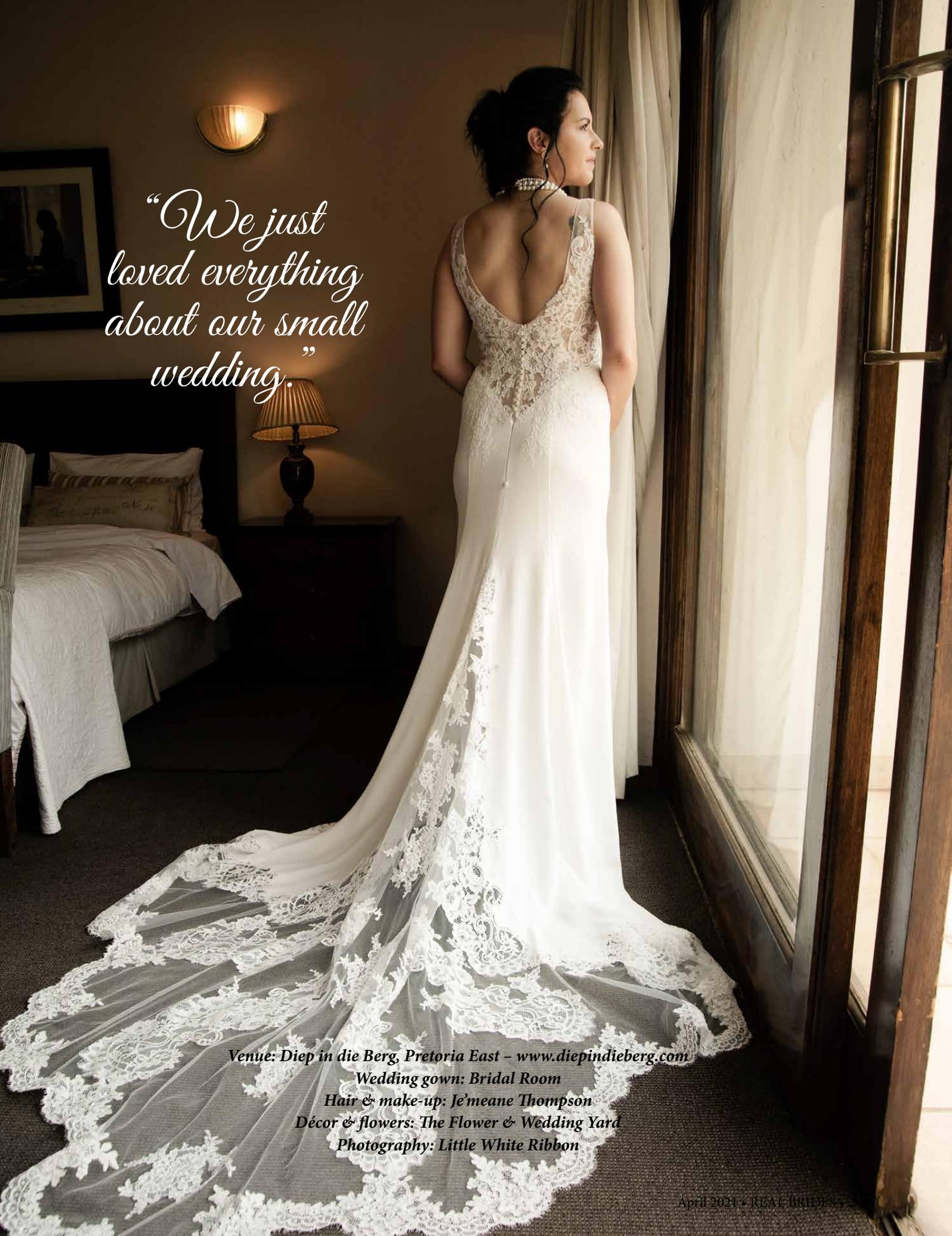
Your main reason for choosing Diep in die Berg?

The first time we went there I just fell in love with the place. There is a certain atmosphere that just makes me happy. I told Riaan that day that when we got married this was the place where I wanted to be married.

Your dress - specially made or bought?

My dress was bought, it was actually the first one I fitted and I immediately got goosebumps. It was in that moment that I really felt like a bride!



A bride is shown from the back, wearing a long, white lace wedding gown with a deep V-neckline and a long, flowing train. She is standing in a bedroom, looking out a window with sheer curtains. The room is dimly lit, with a lamp on a bedside table and a bed visible in the background. The overall mood is romantic and intimate.

*“We just
loved everything
about our small
wedding.”*

Venue: Diep in die Berg, Pretoria East - www.diepindieberg.com

Wedding gown: Bridal Room

Hair & make-up: Je'meane Thompson

Décor & flowers: The Flower & Wedding Yard

Photography: Little White Ribbon

Classic pearl accessories?

I have loved pearls since I was a little girl. The pearls were a wedding gift from my mother, something new, and I will be passing them down to my children as well.

Limited entourage?

Because of Covid we could only have a limited number of guests and we also kept our entourage small - I had a maid-of-honour and Riaan had his best man. It actually made it more personal.

How did you choose your photographer?

I knew Elmaine (Little White Ribbon Photography) from my brother's wedding, and I just love the way she captures moments. Her work is really stunning.

Outdoor ceremony?

We both love Nature, so we decided that an outdoor ceremony is what would suit us best. Diep in die Berg was the best place for that with all their greenery. It's an absolutely breath-taking place.

How many guests?

We were only allowed 50 guests which made it quite hard to choose. Only close friends and family were invited and we just loved everything about our small wedding, it was way more fun!

Tell us about your wedding cake.

For our wedding cake we opted for Diep in die Berg's cheesecake. It was the most delicious cheesecake ever and the presentation was stunning.

Your reception tables were all named?

The tables were named after some of our favourite places. I wrote something special about what each place means to us.

The significance of the "anchor" wedding favour and captain's hat?

Riaan and I are sailors, he has his Skipper's licence and we wanted to bring something personal in so that every time our guests look at the anchor they will remember our commitment to one another. The captain's hat was my idea, because it makes me Mrs. Captain now!

Any tips for brides-to-be?

Don't worry about stuff that goes wrong, focus on the fact that on the day you will become a wife to someone you truly love and get to spend the rest of your lives together.

Honeymoon?

We went to Ngwenya Lodge at St Lucia in KZN. We enjoyed every moment. ♥





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ANELDI & SEAN PHILLIPS



A simple coffee date ultimately led this couple on a walk down the aisle.

Sean's Mom played matchmaker?

We were both students when I crossed paths with Sean's mother. She said she had two sons and that I HAD to meet one of them! About a year later I needed a date for a semi-formal Valentine's picnic. All my friends were going and I was the only single person in our group. I remembered what Sean's mother had said so asked her eldest son Sean if we could meet for coffee. After the 4-hour coffee date Sean and I never stopped talking and we fell in love.

Tell us about your proposal?

I always wanted to do a couple's photoshoot and Sean took the initiative and arranged a photoshoot for our 3-year anniversary. During the shoot, in the most beautiful garden in front of a fountain, Sean took me by surprise and popped the question. Thereafter we decided to save up to enable us to have the wedding of our dreams, which is why we were engaged for a year and a half.

How long did you have to plan your wedding?

We started planning our wedding as soon as we got engaged. We were very blessed since we didn't have to postpone our wedding and were able to get married under Level 1 lockdown.

How many venues did you look at and what made you choose Chez Charlene?

Third time is definitely the charm as Chez Charlene was the third venue we viewed. We were firstly blown away by their breathtakingly beautiful venue as well as the friendly staff who welcomed us. They provided us with the best value for our money and every time we visited the venue they made us feel like family. Furthermore, they assured us that the whole venue had air conditioning as well as solar panels in case of a power outage, which also contributed to our decision.



A bride with long, wavy blonde hair is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a white, sleeveless, off-the-shoulder wedding gown. She is holding a large, cascading bouquet of white flowers, including roses and hydrangeas, with greenery. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting with light-colored walls and a white curtain on the right side.

*“Chez Charlene
ticked all the
boxes and exceeded
our expectations.”*

*Venue: Chez Charlene, Pretoria – www.chezcharlene.co.za
Wedding gown: Olivelli Bridal Boutique (Designer: Stella York)
Hair & make-up: KarenB Makeup & Hair
Photography: RDK Photography*

Did the fact that the venue has a chapel on site influence your decision?

One of our requirements was to have a chapel on site with a white ceiling. Chez Charlene ticked all the boxes.

Were your other expectations met?

Chez Charlene exceeded our expectation. The day of the wedding I didn't have a worry in the world because I knew that everything had been left in very capable hands. Charlene, the owner of the venue, threw her heart into every little detail to ensure that we received 5-star service. I would rate the whole staff with 10 stars if I could! They made our dreams come true in ways we didn't think was possible.

Tell us about finding your dress.

After holding on to a picture for many years, I saw an advertisement for a wedding dress at Olivelli in Northcliff that had my mother in tears. This dress was actually the complete opposite to what I'd ever imagined. I made a booking to fit that specific dress and my parents and brother accompanied me. It was the first dress I tried on and I immediately knew it was the one. I did try several others but none compared to the first dress.

Dress code?

The dress code was Black tie and our colour scheme was black and white with hints of aubergine.

How many guests?

115. Luckily we chose a big venue which enabled us to have all our guests and still comply with the Covid-19 regulations and stick to our strict budget.

Most treasured wedding gift?

Our most sentimental wedding gift was a big family Bible. This was very special since our religion is very important to us and we will be able to pass the Bible on to the next generation.

Any advice for brides-to-be?

People will always have an opinion - whether you asked for it or not! The sooner you realise that it's not for them but for the two of you, the better. The prettiest wedding is a wedding that's a reflection of the bride and groom.

Honeymoon?

We had planned to go to Mauritius but due to Covid-19 we had to make other arrangements. Family members offered us their beach house and we had a wonderful breakaway. ♥



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PHOTOGRAPHY

0797079931

hello@dreneplunkett.com

www.dreneplunkett.com