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Wedded Bliss

CARY LIVING CELEBRATES 3 BRIDAL STORIES



WESTERN WAKE IS UNDENIABLY BEAUTIFUL country. With rolling hills, an abundance of majestic oaks and pines, and a wide variety of blooming trees and bushes, our home in central North Carolina is a splendor to behold – no matter the season. But when you combine its natural allure with the fact that Western Wake is home to some of the most lovely inns and prestigious hotels in the state (and nation), this area becomes an idyllic setting for a picture perfect wedding day.

In order to highlight a few of the fabulous local venues, as well as several talented and creative wedding day vendors, *Cary Living* brings you bridal stories from three local women, each story distinctive and uniquely moving. As you read, we hope you find your own inspiration...and if you're planning a wedding, we know you'll discover a few great vendors!

ESTATE PLANNING
ANGELA'S STORY

As the event coordinator for the highly acclaimed Highgrove Estate in Fuquay-Varina, Angela Ismail had planned numerous weddings, all while secretly accumulating a list of "dos" and "don'ts" for the future – for the day when the planning would be all about her.

Angela, now 27, met Daniel Wright through their church, Cary Church of God, while they were both in college. "We were around each other for about four years, slowly getting to know one another in group settings," explains Angela, "until we both realized we'd like to be more than friends."

After a year of dating, the couple started to discuss marriage. So while Angela was expecting a Christmas engagement, Daniel was making his own plans. "I later found out that Daniel asked for my parents' blessing in October," recalls Angela, "and that he immediately instigated his well thought out proposal plan." Daniel, who had a habit of giving cards to Angela in order to express his love, began leaving a series of cards for her in unexpected places, each articulating a different aspect of his feelings for her and their relationship. "After the sixth card, he took me out for dinner, then he surprised me by taking me to Highgrove (he'd gotten the key from my mom, as my family is

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Photos by Cristobal Perez of Azul Photography, Inc.



part owner of the facility)," Angela says. "He gave me one last card, which he read aloud to me, describing what marriage is...at the end he got on one knee and proposed!"

"Having worked at so many weddings," says Angela, "I'd noticed over the years that the ones that really stood out integrated small, personalized touches." So the couple decided to celebrate Angela's Greek and Pakistani culture, incorporating food from both regions, as well as traditional Greek dancing. Daniel writes and performs music, so he wanted to be able to sing to his bride, making the day even more special for the couple and their guests.

Because the wedding took place in December, Angela wanted to integrate winter elements into her big day. "I decided on a chocolate brown, green and white theme, with all the flowers done in white," Angela says. "We did all the tables in chocolate brown tablecloths and incorporated twigs, huge white amaryllis, and lots of candles as the centerpieces." The cake, created by Sweet Memories Bakery in Apex, was covered in dark chocolate ganache and decorated with white gum paste flowers, to match the white flowers on Angela's dress and those adorning her hair.

"Because my parents are part owners of Highgrove, and I am an event coordinator there, I couldn't imagine a more beautiful and meaningful place to have our wedding reception," Angela gushes. "It almost feels like my second home."

RESOURCES

Wedding location: Piney Grove Baptist Church, Fuquay-Varina

Reception location: Highgrove Estate, Fuquay-Varina www.highgrove-nc.com

Flowers: Highgrove Estate www.highgrove-nc.com

Photographer: Cristobal, Azul Photography 919-270-4310 www.azulphotography.com

Caterer: Highgrove Estate www.highgrove-nc.com

Cake: Sweet Memories Bakery 919-363-1889 www.sweetmemoriesbakery.com



The majesty and elegance of Highgrove created the perfect backdrop for the Wrights' special day. The cake was covered with a dark chocolate ganache and white gum paste flowers, and was created by Sweet Memories Bakery in Apex.

Limo: *Touch of Class* 919-796-1122

Invitations: *The Green Kangaroo* 919-468-5700 www.tgkdesigns.com

Dress: *Victorian Rose Bridal* 919-833-1898 www.victorianrosebridals.com

DJ: *Uniq Events* 919-524-1047

CHAMPAGNE DREAMS

JILL'S STORY

After meeting as NC State students and dating for five years, Jill Koethcke and Shaun Osborne knew they were perfect for each other. So on a Florida vacation in December 2005, Shaun surprised Jill with an idyllic beach proposal. Because he didn't have a ring yet, but knew the time was right to pop the question, Shaun ended up making a midnight Wal-mart excursion to buy a cubic zirconia ring for the proposal. "He promised that once we got back to Raleigh, together we could choose the ring of my dreams," Jill remembers. "I told him I'd marry him, no matter where the ring came from."

Once the planning began, Jill knew she wanted to have a unique event that reflected her personal style and gave her the opportunity to be creative. "It's easy to get caught up in the many ideas, perceived expectations and traditions that can be incorporated into a wedding," she says, "so I had to make an effort to keep it simple. We wanted to avoid excess without compromising quality."

The simplicity and elegance she desired were beautifully manifested through the creativity of her florist, A Watered Garden, and by the unmatched quality of the Umstead, where both the ceremony and reception were held. According to Jill, "The Umstead really stood out as the perfect venue because of the new, contemporary design and décor – and the service was amazing. I didn't have to worry about anything because Amy Magrini, the

TAMMY WINGO PHOTOGRAPHY

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Photos by Leah Charbonneau Photography

Jill and Shaun Osborne pose in the park-like setting of the Umstead Hotel and Spa. Bright arrangements of orchids and roses from A Watered Garden brought simple beauty to the Osbornes' celebration.

Umstead's wedding planner, made sure the event progressed exactly as I envisioned it."

In order to create an intimate experience for both the ceremony and reception, the couple modified most of the typical wedding day traditions. While taking their vows, Jill and Shaun chose to face their guests rather than turn their backs to them, a decision that ultimately improved the quality of their photographs as well. And with just 50 guests, they didn't feel it necessary to have attendants. Jill laughs and says, "Shaun and I have great friends and we doubt any of them were disappointed that they weren't required to wear another matching bridesmaid dress or rent a tuxedo."

The reception was no less personalized and distinctive. Instead of a guest book, friends and family signed a large bottle of champagne with gold pens as they were entering the reception space. The couple designed their own invitations and had the baker incorporate the same design into the cake. "Our favors were small bottles of Frexienet champagne which doubled as place cards," Jill explains. "I printed silver foil labels on the black bottles using the same design from our custom invitations." And rather than huge volumes of flowers, Jill chose simple reception arrangements of brightly colored orchids and roses.

One of the most unique elements of their day was a surprise for both Shaun and the couple's guests. During the reception, Jill got up with the band to sing for her new husband. She belted out "Hallelujah, I just Love Him So" by Ray Charles and "Fever" by Peggy Lee.

The whole day was a dream come true.



LEAH CHARBONNEAU
PHOTOGRAPHY

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RESOURCES

- Ceremony location: *The Umstead Hotel* www.theumstead.com
Reception location: *The Umstead Hotel* www.theumstead.com
Flowers: *A Watered Garden* www.wateredgardenflorist.com
Photographer: *Leah Charbonneau Photography* www.leahcphotography.com
Caterer: *The Umstead Hotel* www.theumstead.com
Band/DJ: *Key Productions of Southport, NC* www.keyproductionsdj.com

SECOND CHANCE LOVE LORRAINE'S STORY

After 15 years of being a single mother to two beautiful girls, Lorraine Scott had evolved into a confident, self-sufficient and mature woman embarking on her fifth century of life. With one daughter already out on her own, Lorraine was looking to buy a townhouse for herself and her younger girl. That's when realtor Stonewall Blocker entered the picture.

"He took me to see several potential homes and in the conversations that followed, we found that we shared very similar values and that we were both Christians," recalls Lorraine. And over a year's time of dating, Lorraine and Stonewall became best friends – traveling, spending time with each other's families, even finishing each other's thoughts and sentences. Most importantly, Lorraine says, "We both keep God as the head of our lives, so we prayed daily for Him to direct our relationship and our future."

So with guidance from above, and a blessing from her precious daughters, Lorraine and Stonewall began planning their big day. "One thing about being a second-time bride, as well as a little older," Lorraine explains, "is that we planned (and paid for) everything together." So from the invitations, cake and flowers, to the music, table linens and food, the couple knew exactly what they wanted, and were able to create their wedding day precisely that way. "I think this time around," she continues, "we both remembered the things that were truly important to us."

By appointment.

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Photos by Tim Matthews Photography



Lorraine and
Stonewall Blocker
seal their vows
with a kiss.

And what were those things? God, family and friends...and of course, love. "Our wedding day was about bringing together family and close friends to celebrate our marriage," says Lorraine, "to have their love and support and invite them to share in our love for each other."

Because both sets of parents are deceased, Stone and Lorraine incorporated a special candle-lighting tribute to honor them. Lorraine's uncle - her father's only brother - gave her away at the altar, and her two daughters stood up as her bridesmaids.

"As a single parent, you try hard to raise your children the right way, and that means you have to say 'no' sometimes, and not make popular decisions," Lorraine says. "But to hear my daughters say that they love and respect me for all I have done for them over the years, and to hear them thank me for the women they have become...and then to have them welcome my husband into our family, well, I cried the whole way through their speeches!"

So with a full bouquet of roses and stargazer lilies from The English Garden in Raleigh, and a distinctive dress from David's Bridal (selected for her by her fiancé), Lorraine made her vows to Stonewall. A vow to honor and love him, and to keep God at the center of their life together. And so she began a new journey, a fresh start...all beginning at 53 years young.

"I have never had anyone love me like my husband does," reveals Lorraine. "He loves me in a very unselfish way and accepts me for who I am."

RESOURCES

Ceremony location: St. Paul's AME Church, Raleigh

Reception location: Richard Allen Fellowship Hall

Catering: St. Paul's AME Church, Raleigh

Flowers: The English Garden www.englishgardenraleigh.com 919-341-6650

Dress: David's Bridal

Videographer: Casper Productions www.caspersvideodj.com

Photographer: Tim Matthews Photography

VENUES

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 The Umstead 919.447.4100 www.TheUmstead.com
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 Chocolate Smiles 919.469.5282 www.ChocolateSmiles.com
 Kilwins 919.463.9360 www.Kilwins.com
 It's a Grind Coffee House 919.467.2810 www.ItsAGrind.com

FLOWERS

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 The English Garden 919.341.6650 www.EnglishGardenRaleigh.com
 The Garden Hut 919.552.0590 www.NelsasGardenHut.com

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