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# Weddings



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COURTESY OF AMBER ADAMS

Here comes the bride -- Shannon Murphy is escorted into the Mayberry replica courthouse for her wedding.



# Mayberry is for lovers?

By John Peters

**W**ith apologies to the city's northern neighbor, where Virginia officials declare their state is for lovers, Mount Airy may be able to stake claim to that title as well.

Or maybe it would be more appropriate to say Mayberry is for Lovers, because it seems Mount Airy's ties to the fictional town have a rather romantic effect on those looking to tie the knot.

David and Shannon Murphy, of High Point, are the most recent example of folks visiting Mount Airy to find wedded bliss, having married on Dec. 7 in the replica Mayberry Courthouse and Jail.

"I've always been a fan of the show, my wife has been a huge fan," David said recently in describing their reason for choosing the Granite City for their nuptials. "I've been coming up to Mayberry for years, going to Snappy Lunch, going to the courthouse." He said he and family and friends make regular drives up to Mount Airy, doing many of the same activities, but also trying to add a little something new to each trip. He also is a regular to the Surry Arts Council's Summer Concert Series shows, so much so that he said this season they'll probably buy season tickets.

David and Shannon had been friends for years, and he discovered she had never visited Mount Airy.

He changed that in short order, the couple visiting several times, taking in the Mayberry sites and activities.

Once the two decided to marry -- they were engaged in the spring of 2024 -- David said he half-jokingly said "It would be cool if we could get married in Mayberry."

Shannon, he said, didn't take it as a joke, instead running with the idea. By December, they had a full wedding planned, with the help of some Mount Airy folks. There, he said they "worked out a price for us." The price was all-inclusive -- including rooms at the Mayberry Motor Lodge, the bride being picked up and



COURTESY OF AMBER ADAMS

David and Shannon Murphy exchange rings during their December Mayberry-themed wedding at the replica Mayberry sheriff's office.





COURTESY OF AMBER ADAMS

David and Shannon Murphy, shortly after their Dec. 7 wedding, pose in front of the Andy Griffith mural in Mount Airy.

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driven to the wedding in a squad car, and one little surprise.

"Norm Shultz came in as Otis," David said, both he and Shannon laughing when relating the memory. "He burst in as Otis the drunk, made his way to the jail cell and locked himself in....it was a total surprise to us. We all laughed at that...it was a magical day, and when Otis came bursting in, that was just the icing on the cake."

After the wedding, the couple and their friends and family made their way to Snappy Lunch, for a Mayberry-themed wedding reception. Nearly every facet of their wedding was all about Mayberry and the real-life Mount Airy. David said they used all local business -- from the florist and hair stylist to the photographer and baker, they were all based in Mount Airy.

Even before the wedding, the couple said people around town were getting in the spirit.

"We were in a restaurant and a couple sitting there eating next to us, they struck up a conversation while we were there," David said. "We told them about our wedding, -- they said 'Can we come to your wedding?' Dadgum, if they didn't show up with their two kids."

"When we would be sitting there, waiting, people would say 'You're that couple getting married' and we'd say yeah, we are, and they'd say 'Can we get a picture of you all?'" Shannon said.

Before the wedding, Shannon said her Mayberry Squad Car driver motored her around town for a few minutes waiting for traffic to clear near the courthouse.

"People were blowing horns and waving, it was just wonderful," she said. Even people who weren't at the wedding wanted to see the couple, so after the ceremony, they walked from the courthouse to Snappy lunch.

"People were waving and talking to us. My dress train is black from walking along the sidewalk, but it was so worth it."

David said the main reason he initially began visiting Mount Airy was because of its connection to "The Andy Griffith Show," but now it's as much about the people of Mount Airy.

"We just appreciate the people there," he said, adding that whenever he has visited, he can strike up a conversation with just about anyone as if they were old friends -- something that

doesn't happen in most communities.

"It's just home to us," he said. "When you leave, you feel like you've actually been to Mayberry."

"It's like you've been with family," Shannon said of visiting the town. "The closest thing I can tell you, it is actually just like Mayberry. People will smile and wave, they'll talk to you in a restaurant."

"We just love Mount Airy," he said.

### ***Not the first Mayberry Marriage***

That the Murphys would love Mount Airy so much they wanted their marriage ceremony to take place there should be no surprise -- they aren't the first.

During the 2023 Mayberry Days, Bonita Sohn and Chris Bray, two long-time friends from Elizabeth City, were married on stage at the Blackmon Amphitheatre at the conclusion of that year's opening ceremony.

They weren't just married there -- the couple were in full Mayberry regalia, he as Ernest T. Bass and she as Charlene Darling. The ceremony got off to a rocky start when the first bride turned out to be Barney Fife tribute artist Brett Harris, hiding his true identity behind a wedding veil and poorly fitting bride's dress.

Once he was chased off, the ceremony went without a hitch, with plenty of Mayberryesque components. Eric Lowery, from Scottsburg, Indiana, is a well-known Mayor Pike tribute artist who has been a regular at Mayberry Days for many years. He also is an ordained minister, which made him perfect for conducting the ceremony while dressed as Mayor Pike.

All around the couple were family, friends, and quite a few folks in town for Mayberry Days -- many dressed as Mayberry characters. She was even escorted toward the stage by Bill Hiatt, whose father Russell Hiatt operated Floyd's Barbershop in Mount Airy.

"Ya'll are my family and I didn't want a wedding anywhere else," Sohn told the gathered crowd of Mayberry fans and tribute artists just before Mayor Pike proceeded with the wedding. "Now, every time we come to Mayberry Days it will be our anniversary," the happy bride said after the ceremony.

Eric Lowery, right, an ordained minister and Mayor Pike tribute artist, performed a wedding ceremony Friday for Bonita Sohn, dressed as Charlene Darling in a wedding dress, and Chris Bray, dressed as Ernest T. Bass, Friday, with Bonita's daughter, Toby Sohn, serving as maid of honor. The wedding took place at the Blackmon Amphitheatre shortly after the conclusion of the 2023 Mayberry Days opening ceremony.



FILE PHOTO



# How to manage the menu at your wedding reception

*Though there may not be any insignificant decisions when planning the post-ceremony party, some choices will loom larger than others, including which foods will be served.*

**W**edding receptions are the culmination of a lot of planning. Though there may not be any insignificant decisions when planning the post-ceremony party, some choices will loom larger than others, including which foods will be served. When planning a wedding reception, couples can choose a venue that provides the food, such as a traditional reception center; otherwise, the reception may take place at an outdoor location or a venue that is not equipped to prepare and serve food. In the latter instances, couples will contract with an outside caterer. In both situations certain factors can help determine who to use for reception food services.

## **Planning**

A traditional reception center/catering hall is likely a wise choice for couples who prefer simplicity in wedding day meal planning. These facilities are experts at addressing all of the components that go into a reception. Such venues offer access to a cocktail area and banquet room, and the facility likely has a staff of chefs at the ready to dish up meals. While many reception centers offer restaurant-quality offerings, scouting venues and sampling dishes will provide an idea of how foods taste and help couples narrow down their choices.

## **Preferences**

Some receptions are multi-course events starting from the moment guests arrive and snack on hors d'oeuvres to the dessert display served as a final course. Others are low-key and may not have full sit-down service. If you prefer a cocktail atmosphere only, certain venues may make more sense than others. Identifying how much food to have and the type of service desired can help pinpoint caterers to interview.



## **Chef access**

Having a specific chef or cuisine in mind may require separating the food from a venue. Reception centers likely will not allow couples to bring in their own food. Therefore, you will have to find a venue where outside food is possible. Then you can work with a favorite chef for catering services.

## **Location**

Some couples prefer to combine their ceremony and reception at one spot. This may be at a beachside location or in a converted country barn. If this seems like a scenario you are considering, then the venue will take priority and you'll have to find an outside caterer to service the wedding.

## **Allergies**

Food allergies and intolerances are on the minds of many nowadays. It is important to be mindful of food restrictions when speaking with caterers. Take careful inventory of work-arounds so that every guest at the wedding can enjoy a safe, delicious meal.

The wedding reception menu is an important variable for engaged couples to consider. A host of factors may come into consideration as couples try to determine how to feed their guests come their wedding day.



# Consider **wedding flowers** carefully



*Here are some variables to consider when selecting wedding flowers.*

**A**lthough many decorative elements help to create ambiance for a wedding celebration, perhaps none is more awe-inspiring than beautiful floral arrangements. Flowers offer visual appeal, captivating aromas and texture that can make a space more welcoming.

Engaged couples typically go to great lengths when planning their weddings, but flowers may not be as micromanaged as other elements. Some are content to let florists design their arrangements, but the average cost of wedding flowers in 2023 was \$2,800, according to The Knot Real Weddings Study. That price tag merits some input on the part of couples. Floral experts say couples should budget for floral arrangements coming in at 10 percent of the overall wedding budget, which is the industry standard. Therefore, for a \$60,000 wedding a couple should assume their florals will cost \$6,000. It's important to note that the cost of wedding flowers has been steadily increasing over the last few years due to inflation and climate change, says The Knot. So couples may need to be even more involved in floral decisions to maximize their dollars spent.

Here are some variables to consider when selecting wedding flowers.



- **Greenery:** Adding greenery to fill in spaces in floral arrangements can save some money. Centerpieces and bouquets that are floral-heavy will certainly cost more.
- **Symbolism:** Consider the meaning behind flowers to make choices even more personal. You also may want to select flowers that will complement the theme of the wedding. For example, traditional spring blooms like tulips and daffodils will coordinate with spring weddings.

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- **Flower varieties:** Hardier varieties of flowers, such as daisies, mums, carnations, and protea, are less likely to wilt quickly in bouquets or centerpieces than some other blooms, even when they are cut. Such blooms can hold up in any weather and last the entire day so that arrangements will be picture-perfect no matter the hour.

- **Venue:** Couples may find that some venues already have faux flowers or other decor. That may mean couples do not need to have as many flowers or any elaborate arrangements.

- **Size:** A particularly large floral centerpiece can overwhelm a table, and a bouquet that is overly cumbersome may detract from the bride or her bridesmaids. Choose the correct scale for comfort in bouquets. For table arrangements, select a size that will not discourage conversation or block guests' view, nor take up too much real estate on the table.

- **Allergies:** Although they are cut, flowers in arrangements can trigger allergic responses in some people. Others may be bothered by overly aromatic flowers. Work with the florist to find blooms that will be best.

- **Color scheme:** Although white flowers always

coordinate, many couples like some color in their arrangements. Be sure the flowers pick up the hues used in bridesmaid dresses or even the season of the year.

Couples should take an active role in deciding what to include in floral pieces for their weddings.



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Beyond Catering SWVA is located within Crossroads Institute in Galax and can be reached by phone at 276.235.8057 or emailed at [events@beyondcateringswva.com](mailto:events@beyondcateringswva.com). Also visit their website at [www.beyondcateringswva.com](http://www.beyondcateringswva.com) to learn more!





# How to create a backup plan for an outdoor wedding

*Here's what couples should know about having a backup plan for their outdoor weddings.*

A wedding day is a magical and memorable day for a couple and their family members. Months or even years of planning may go into making a wedding day special.

For some, an outdoor wedding and celebration amid the beauty of nature is the ultimate setting in which to tie the knot. When Mother Nature is your decorator, the setting can be hard to match. Perhaps that's why 62 percent of couples opted for outdoor nuptials in 2023, according to The Knot 2023 Real Weddings Survey. However, there may be some extra work involved when exchanging vows outdoors, hosting a reception outside or both. That work includes having a contingency plan in place if the weather does not cooperate. Here's what couples should know about having a backup plan for their outdoor weddings.

- Identify a second location. Couples who book outdoor receptions at catering halls can inquire how they handle inclement weather. Many will have a clause built into the agreement to move the party indoors in the event of bad weather. Others may enable the wedding to move to a different space for an added fee. Smaller, less formal weddings taking place at other locations may require a bit of ingenuity when looking for a backup space. Perhaps a friend has a large house where everyone can gather, or an employer may have a warehouse, loft or even a barn that can be transformed into unique venues at the last minute?

- Choose outdoor spaces with covered areas. The wish might be to have blue skies overhead, but it's impossible to control the weather. So it's safe to select outdoor spaces that offer a measure of weather protection, such as a pavillion in a park or a covered deck

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at a beachside locale. Such sites offer a little security without detracting from the ambiance.

- Look into a tent rental. A tent is a great investment because it keeps everyone out of the elements rain or shine. Even on a lovely summer day, the blazing sun can make being outdoors uncomfortable. A tent is the solution. Couples should coordinate with a wedding planner or the venue itself to be sure that a tent is allowed on the grounds.

- Think about event insurance. Special event insurance may protect against financial loss in the event that severe weather

throws a wrench into outdoor wedding plans. Poor weather may make moving around the venue treacherous and might force a postponement. Liability and cancellation protection in an insurance policy helps couples avoid financial hardship.

- Hire a wedding planner. The Knot suggests hiring a wedding planner or coordinator who can pivot to plan B in the event of bad weather. This helps take some of the stress off of the couple so they can enjoy the day.

- Plan wardrobe and hair/makeup accordingly. Brides and bridesmaids can choose fabrics for dresses that will be comfortable and not become blown around or see-through due to rain and wind. The wedding party can ask hair stylists to create a wedding hairstyle that is somewhat weatherproof. Experienced makeup artists likely know some tricks to keep makeup looking flawless even when the weather isn't.

Outdoor weddings can be beautiful events, but it is important to have a backup plan in place in case weather doesn't cooperate.



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# A mock wedding day timeline

*The following timeline can serve as a guideline for couples as they map out their own big day.*

**M**arried couples often advise loved ones who are engaged that they should make time to enjoy their wedding days in the moment, noting that the day has a tendency to fly by. The pace of a couple's wedding day can seem so fast because the hours leading up to the ceremony and reception are typically filled with activities to ensure couples and bridal parties look their best.

Wedding ceremonies begin at different times depending on variables such as couples' preference, ceremony site and even



the time of year the wedding is taking place. The following timeline, which is based on a summer wedding with a 5 p.m. ceremony, can serve as a guideline for couples as they map out their own big day.



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10 a.m.-2 p.m.: Begin getting ready. Grooms and groomsmen typically do not require the same level of attention and amount of prep time as brides and their bridesmaids, so they likely won't need to start at 10 in the morning. But brides and their bridesmaids will need ample time to do their hair and makeup, and it may be necessary to begin by 10 a.m. Depending on the size of the bridal party, the hair and makeup session may last to 2 p.m. Grooms and groomsmen can decide when to start getting ready within this four-hour window. If a groom and his groomsmen will get a hot shave at a local barbershop or hairstylist, schedule the shave so there's enough time to return to the hotel to get dressed, as it's not advisable to get a shave when already dressed in a tuxedo.

2 p.m.: Once everyone's hair and makeup is done, a bride can begin to get in her dress. Be sure the photographer is aware of this timeline, as many prefer to document the bride revealing how she looks in her dress.

3 p.m.: Couples who want to do what's called a "First Look" can do so at 3 p.m. for a 5 p.m. Couples choose to do a first look for a number of reasons, but it involves the happy couple seeing each other in their tuxedo and gown prior to the ceremony. One reason to do a first look is to take photographs with bridal party members prior to the start of the wedding. Doing so ensures the newlyweds will get to spend more time with their guests, particularly during cocktail hour. A pre-wedding photoshoot also can ensure couples have ample natural lighting for their photos should they choose to take

some outdoors.

3:15 p.m.-4:30 p.m.: A first look won't take very long, which leaves ample time for photos of the happy couple and their bridal party. Sixty to 75 minutes should be plenty of time for a photographer to get all the shots couples requested. It helps to submit a list of desired photos (i.e., couple with full bridal party, couple with all four parents, etc.) prior to the wedding day, and some photographers even insist on doing so to ensure they don't miss anything.

4:30 p.m.: Rest and some last-minute preparation and sprucing up can take up the final 30 minutes before the ceremony begins.

5 p.m.: Ceremony begins.

5:30-6:30 p.m.: The hour right after the ceremony can be designated as cocktail hour. Couples also can use this time to take additional photos with family and others that might not have been taken during the initial photoshoot. This window also serves as a good time to sign the official documents confirming the couple's nuptials, particularly if a hired officiant will be taking that paperwork and filing it with the appropriate government office.

6:30-10 p.m.: The reception, featuring bridal party member and couple introductions, can commence at 6:30. The choice of when to perform father-daughter and mother-son dances is up to the couple and their parents, but such traditions are generally reserved for early in the reception so every guest is still around to witness these special moments.

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# What to know before a wedding gown shopping trip

**W**eddings mark a turning point from one stage in life to another. The significance of that transition is perhaps one reason why couples and their guests dress so nicely for a wedding ceremony and reception. Formal garb is a wedding tradition, and guests anxiously await seeing which type of gown a bride will wear. In western cultures, white wedding gowns have been the standard since the nineteenth century and are believed to symbolize purity and grace. In eastern cultures, wedding gowns often have been elaborate, colorful creations that have their own symbolic meanings unique to various areas of the world.

Shopping for a wedding gown can spark mixed emotions. While it is exciting to try on some remarkable garments, there also is the pressure of knowing all eyes will be on you while wearing this couture creation. Narrowing down wedding gown prospects can take vision, time and patience. The following pointers can help when it comes time to visit bridal shops.

## ***Make an appointment***

Many bridal shops operate by appointment only. That's because the staff wants to devote complete attention to a client, and having people simply walk in from the street can draw their attention away and/or lead to long wait times. Identify the stores you want to visit, and then call to secure your time slot.

## ***Narrow down styles***

Think about what your personal style might be and how you want to look on your wedding day. If you're not sure about the vocabulary surrounding dress silhouettes, visit Pinterest or Instagram and save images of dresses that you love. Then you can show the sales staff what you are thinking instead of going in empty-handed.

## ***Keep an open mind***

Try on a few different styles even if you have a particular dress in mind. You never know if something might be a better fit for your body type or the scope and style of your wedding unless you give it a go.

## ***Start the process early***

Unlike off-the-rack clothing, most wedding shops will have to order your dress and have it shipped. Then comes a few weeks for alterations. KWH Bridal notes eight to 12 months before a wedding is a good time to choose and order a dress. Brides magazine says most made-to-order wedding gowns take about six to nine months to create. There also are three separate fittings to ensure the gown will fit like a glove.

## ***Invite a handful of confidantes***

It's best not to arrive at the shopping appointment with an entire entourage. Pick, at the most, four people whose opinions you trust; otherwise, it could be a case of too many cooks in the kitchen. As a bride-to-be you'll already be anxious,




and you'll want soothing, supportive people with you.

## ***Plan your budget***

Know well in advance what you can afford to spend. According to data from The Knot, wedding attire accounts for 7 percent of the average couple's budget. Most wedding gowns are in the range of \$2,000. Don't forget about additional costs, such as veil, shoes, alterations, undergarments, and any add-ons.

In addition to these tips, arrive to an appointment well-rested, fed and comfortable.

  
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# The wedding budget



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Save the Date Cards \_\_\_\_\_  
Invitations, Reply Cards \_\_\_\_\_  
Postage \_\_\_\_\_  
Programs \_\_\_\_\_  
Menu Cards \_\_\_\_\_  
Place Cards \_\_\_\_\_  
Thank You Cards \_\_\_\_\_  
Calligraphy \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Bridal Attire & Beauty

Gown \_\_\_\_\_  
Veil/Headpiece \_\_\_\_\_  
Alterations \_\_\_\_\_  
Shoes \_\_\_\_\_  
Lingerie \_\_\_\_\_  
Accessories \_\_\_\_\_  
Jewelry \_\_\_\_\_  
Makeup \_\_\_\_\_  
Hair \_\_\_\_\_  
Nails \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Groom's Attire

Tuxedo/Suit \_\_\_\_\_  
Shoe \_\_\_\_\_  
Cuff Links \_\_\_\_\_  
Grooming \_\_\_\_\_  
Accessories \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_



## Wedding Ceremony

Location Fee \_\_\_\_\_  
Officiant Fee \_\_\_\_\_  
Marriage License \_\_\_\_\_  
Rings \_\_\_\_\_  
Music \_\_\_\_\_  
Wedding Consultant \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Reception

Location Fee \_\_\_\_\_  
Food \_\_\_\_\_  
Drink \_\_\_\_\_  
Rentals \_\_\_\_\_  
Wedding Cake \_\_\_\_\_  
Groom's Cake \_\_\_\_\_  
Favors \_\_\_\_\_  
Music \_\_\_\_\_  
Security \_\_\_\_\_  
Gratuities \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Flowers

Ceremony \_\_\_\_\_  
Reception \_\_\_\_\_  
Decorations \_\_\_\_\_  
Bridal Bouquet \_\_\_\_\_  
Attendant Bouquets \_\_\_\_\_  
Boutonnieres \_\_\_\_\_  
Flower Girl \_\_\_\_\_  
Parents & Grandparents \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_   
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Photography

Photography \_\_\_\_\_  
Videography \_\_\_\_\_  
Albums \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Transportation

Limousine(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Gifts

Wedding Party \_\_\_\_\_  
Parents \_\_\_\_\_  
Bride & Groom \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Honeymoon

Airline Tickets \_\_\_\_\_  
Accommodations \_\_\_\_\_  
Car Rentals \_\_\_\_\_  
Food \_\_\_\_\_  
Entertainment \_\_\_\_\_  
Excursions \_\_\_\_\_  
Souvenirs \_\_\_\_\_  
Passports \_\_\_\_\_  
Clothing \_\_\_\_\_  
Gratuities \_\_\_\_\_  
Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Miscellaneous

Gown Preservation \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Expenses \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL BUDGET** \_\_\_\_\_



# White Chapel Farm & Venue

2300 Coulson Church Rd  
Woodlawn, VA

Nestled in the mountains, the farm hosts a variety of options for your wedding. The 5600sq ft heated and cooled venue can accommodate 200+ easily and comfortably. The chapel or oversized barn doors offer a quaint backdrop for a ceremony. There's also the option for ceremony set up inside the woods! This is a must see venue, schedule a tour today! We look forward to meeting you!

276-237-  
2620

