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Wedding Guide

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15TH ANNUAL

WEDDING GUIDE



Oy! What a Year

There is an existential expression that pretty much sums up the year **2020: “Man plans, God laughs.”** That sentiment was certainly true for people expecting to marry in this year of the pandemic. Many weddings long planned were either minimalized or put off for another day.

The *Bloom* staff searched for in-person weddings that took place during the pandemic and faithfully followed the CDC safety guidelines for masks and social distancing. Alas, we could find none.

So, what we present here, in our 15th annual Wedding Guide, are four of our most popular weddings from years past. They are beautiful, colorful, creative, unique, and full of incredible ideas for couples hoping to gather family and friends for unforgettable romantic nuptials in the near future.

Here’s to better times and amazing weddings in 2021.

Mazel Tov!

A TRADITIONAL WEDDING IN A RUSTIC SETTING

Photography by Tall and Small Photography





DEJOHN + MICHAL

“Michal Picked a Rose” read one of the hand-lettered signs posted on rustic wood panels that dotted the grounds of Sycamore Farm, a 20-acre working horse farm in southwest Bloomington. And indeed, Michal Adut picked DeJohn Rose to marry in an outdoor ceremony at the farm, followed by dinner and dancing in a beautifully decorated barn.

DeJohn is a local boy, the son of A John and Judith Rose, the owners of Bloomington’s Textillery Weavers. But Michal was born in Israel and grew up in the New York City borough of Queens. The couple live and work in Manhattan. At the time of their wedding, DeJohn, 28, was an account executive for Jack Victor, a menswear manufacturer, and Michal, 29, was a senior account manager for a public relations firm.

“We met at a birthday party in New York in July 2012,” recalls Michal. The party was for Michal’s

(left) Michal and DeJohn Rose under the canopy of lights at Sycamore Farm.
(above) Flowers by Linda Chapman of Harvest Moon Flower Farm.

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college friend, who was dating a friend of DeJohn's. "They didn't last very long, but we did," Michal says with a laugh. "We had our first date three days later," DeJohn adds. They're New Yorkers, so it was sushi. The proposal was also very Manhattan. It took place on the Bow Bridge in Central Park in April 2014.

You might expect the couple would choose the Big Apple for their wedding. "We did a lot of exploring for venues in New York, but they just didn't feel right," says Michal. "But we were sold on Sycamore Farm as soon as we saw it." As DeJohn explains, "Michal had grown up riding horses, and Bloomington is a big part of who I am, so it was a really nice blend."

(top) DeJohn's mother, Judith, wove the cloth for the chuppah under which the couple was married.

(above, left and right) Following Jewish tradition, the bride and groom were rocked aloft at the reception. So were the groom's parents, A John and Judith Rose.

(opposite page, top) DeJohn and Michal enjoy a quiet moment with a friend at Sycamore Farm.

(opposite page, bottom) Dinner with rustic elegance, courtesy of IMU Catering.



All the planning had to be done long distance, but that was easier than expected. DeJohn had worked for Indiana Memorial Union catering, so the food decision was a no-brainer. The couple worked with then-IMU Executive Chef Thomas Berinati on a menu that could be grilled outdoors. “We added our own flair to the presentation,” says Berinati, with touches like an artichoke aioli for the New York strip steaks and baby pearl potatoes.

—Julie Gray

Following their wedding in 2015, Michal and DeJohn returned to New York City. There, they welcomed their daughter, Nili, on Mother’s Day 2018. Michal is now a stay-at-home mother to Nili, 2, who “loves ballet, horses, and building towers.” DeJohn works in menswear sales and eCommerce. ∞

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A WEDDING FIT FOR A

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AND HIS BRIDE

Photography by Hudson Photography

JORDAN + AUBREY

He is one of the most popular basketball players

Bloomington has ever produced, but it took a little help for Jordan Hulls to get the girl. “Indiana Mr. Basketball” 2009 and a four-year standout with the Indiana University Hoosiers, Jordan met Evansville, Indiana, native Aubrey Wathen at IU where their paths crossed in the School of Public Health. But that was about it until Jordan’s teammate Derek Elston and best friend Caleb Konstanski intervened.

Aubrey worked at Opie Taylor’s, one of Jordan’s favorite eateries. One day in early 2013, Jordan, Derek, Caleb, and a few other friends stopped in for a bite. When the group left, Aubrey saw a phone number and the words “call me maybe” on the back of Jordan’s receipt.

“I thought he had written it, but I found out later Jordan had no idea,” Aubrey says. “It was Derek and Caleb.” Aubrey decided to take a chance, texting Jordan a few days later. Texting led to talking. “And we’ve been talking ever since,” Jordan says with a smile.

“We did everything together for five or six months straight,” Jordan says. “I knew it was good when I was with her all the time and we never got tired of being together.”



(above) Aubrey and Jordan chose a traditional mass for their ceremony at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church.

(opposite page) The reception at Henke Hall of Champions at Indiana Memorial Stadium.





In July 2013, Jordan and Aubrey took a trip to Chicago with friends Todd and Shelley Bontrager. “We did the tourist thing—Navy Pier, the boat tour, the Ferris wheel—and I knew Aubrey had no idea what was coming,” Jordan says. The last stop was Skydeck Chicago at Willis Tower. The Bontragers had been taking photos all day. “I said ‘Let’s take one more picture,’ and when Aubrey turned around, I was down on one knee,” Jordan says. He knew he had surprised her when she didn’t really say yes. “She just kept asking, ‘Are you sure?’” he says, laughing.

Wedding plans started immediately because Jordan was leaving in August to play basketball in Poland. The wedding date was largely based on the availability of the only place they wanted to hold their reception—Henke Hall of Champions in Indiana Memorial Stadium—and Jordan’s schedule.

Aubrey, now a nurse, did most of the 23 1/2 months of planning. Their June 27, 2015, ceremony was at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, where Aubrey carried her grandfather’s handkerchief as the “something old” added to her bouquet. “We’d both lost our grandparents in October 2014, so we tried to find little ways to pay tribute to them,” she says.

(top left) A happy sendoff after the ceremony.

(top right) Aubrey’s bouquet from White Orchid Distinctive Floral Studio included lisianthus, spider mums, and sweet peas.

(above, left) This photo of Jordan with his groomsmen and ushers in their candy-striped warmup pants was an internet sensation, going viral in the days following the wedding.

(above, right) Stealing a kiss.




Jordan and Aubrey more recently with sons Jackson (standing) and Leo. They have since added daughter Margaret to their family. *Courtesy photo*


Zeta Tau Alpha sorority was a big part of college life for Aubrey, and her sorority sisters were a big part of her wedding day; four of her eight bridesmaids and maid of honor Morgan Momcilovich were in her pledge class. Jordan's IU teammates were well-represented, too, with teammates Derek Elston, Cody Zeller, and Christian Watford serving as groomsmen, and Will Sheehy and Victor Oladipo ushering. Older brother Jay had best-man duties—on his own anniversary. Jordan had been Jay's best man six years earlier to the day.

The reception was a fun affair, with groomsmen changing into Hoosier candy-striped warmup pants to complement their formal shirts and jackets. And food was abundant. "We had a buffet," Jordan says. "We wanted to make sure the guys got enough food. They eat a lot." The wedding cake was from Sugar Coated Cakery, which also provided cupcakes and a groom's cake in the shape of Assembly Hall. And just in case anyone was still hungry, the Big Cheeze food truck showed up for a late-night snack.

After a sparkler sendoff, the two spent a week in St. Lucia before heading to Belgium where Jordan played basketball. They say their wedding was everything they hoped it would be. "It's all kind of a blur, because there was a lot going on," Aubrey says. "But in a good way. We were just so in the moment." —*Carmen Siering*

Jordan and Aubrey are currently living in Ludwigsburg, Germany, with their three children: Jackson, 4, Leo, 2, and newborn Margaret. Jordan currently plays on MHP Riesen Ludwigsburg basketball team, which has so far had a successful season. This is Jordan's eighth season playing in Europe. 🌀





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photo by Wandering Heart Photography

A full-page photograph of a wedding couple in a forest. The groom, on the left, is wearing a dark blue suit and a white shirt, smiling as he looks down at the bride. The bride, on the right, has long, wavy blonde hair and is wearing a white lace wedding dress. They are standing close together, with the groom's arms around the bride. The background is a soft-focus forest with green and yellow foliage.

ABLE TO

Celebrate

THEIR LOVE WITH MARRIAGE

Photography by Icarus Photography



(opposite page) Jourdan Eastling (left) and Sarah Hugus share a quiet moment before their ceremony.

(top) Sarah and Jourdan Hugus celebrate with friends and family as they walk up the aisle. Until same-sex marriage was legalized in October 2014, the couple had planned to have a commitment ceremony, making their wedding day especially sweet.

(above) A kiss seals their union as Sarah's uncle and officiant Ron Wohrle looks on.

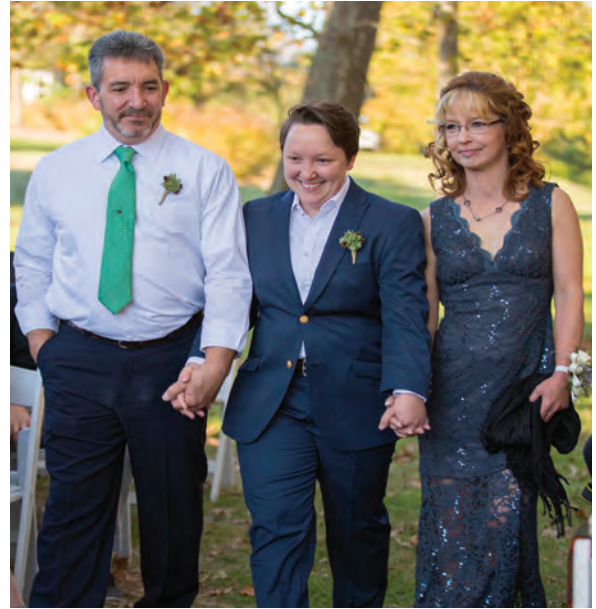
JOURDAN + SARAH

One cold, snowy day in January 2014, Jourdan Eastling asked Sarah Hugus if she wanted to drive to Lake Monroe and have a picnic on the wintry beach. Enjoying a glass of wine, Sarah turned to find Jourdan on one knee, proposing that they spend the rest of their lives together. Sarah never saw it coming. "I thought she was kidding!" the 25-year old Indianapolis native says. As disbelief gave way to delight, Sarah said "yes."

Jourdan, also 25 and a native of Lowell, Indiana, met Sarah in 2010 when the two Indiana University students joined the women's rugby team. As teammates, they were slow to warm up to one another, but eventually became close friends. In 2011, friendship turned into something more.

"That first year, it took us awhile to get to know each other," Sarah says. "But after our sophomore year, none of our other friends stayed through the summer. Just Jourdan and me, and that's when it started to happen."

"That's when we started to fall in love," Jourdan finishes.



On that snowy day in January when Jourdan proposed, same-sex couples couldn't marry in Indiana. So rather than planning an elaborate ceremony spilling with tradition, together they planned a party that concentrated on celebrating their commitment and love.

As winter melted into spring, the U.S. District Court declared Indiana's same-sex marriage ban to be unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the decision, and same-sex marriage became legal in Indiana on October 6, 2014.

All of a sudden, the couple was no longer planning just a party to celebrate their commitment. Now they had an actual wedding to plan, something that was equally exhilarating and exhausting. Fortunately for Jourdan and Sarah, loving friends and family helped by lending hands whenever possible.

Sarah's mother coordinated the taco bar dinner menu details with Terry's Catering. The couple asked Bloomin' Tons Floral Co. to add subtle floral accents to complement the natural look and feel of the Clubhouse at The Fields, where the wedding and reception

(above, left) It was the perfect autumn day for a photo under the Sample Gates.

(top, right) Jourdan with her parents, Grant and Tracie Eastling.

(above, right) Sarah's parents, Steve Hugus and Bobi Eastman, accompanied her down the aisle.



Sarah and Jourdan share their first dance at the reception, held at The Clubhouse at The Fields.

took place. The cake was from Rainbow Bakery. And everything was captured in photos by Katy Lengacher of Icarus Photography.

Sarah was accompanied down the aisle by her mother, Bobi Eastman, and her father, Steve Hugus. Jourdan's parents, Grant and Tracie Eastling, walked with her. Both women chose to have a sibling by her side: Sarah's sister, Sam Hugus, served as her maid of honor, while Jourdan's brother, Grant Eastling Jr., served as her "best man of honor."

The couple asked Sarah's uncle Ron Wohrle to officiate. "He's not a minister, but he's also gay, and we have a very special relationship with him," Jourdan says. "We're not religious, so we wanted someone we love and are close to to marry us, and Ron was the perfect fit." He was ordained through the Universal Life Church especially for the occasion.

Wedding guests were encouraged to dress in whatever pleased them. "We just wanted people to be comfortable and happy," Sarah says.

Looking back, Sarah and Jourdan recall how much love they felt that day from their guests.

"It wasn't a normal, traditional wedding in any sense, except for the fact that we were actually allowed and able to celebrate our love with marriage," Jourdan says. —Sara Sheikh

Since their wedding in 2015, Sarah and Jourdan moved to Indianapolis, where Sarah now works as a physical therapist at Indiana University Health Methodist Hospital and Jourdan works as an information security analyst. The pair enjoys spending time in nature and traveling, and regularly return to Bloomington to visit. 🌿

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A HAUNTINGLY *Beautiful* WEDDING

Photography by Laura Von Photography

MIKE + NATASCHA

Mike Jacob admits that he's not a particularly romantic guy. So it's no surprise that his marriage proposal to Natascha Buehnerkemper was unconventional. "Getting on a knee—that's not me," he says. Yet their wedding was hauntingly beautiful and quixotic.

Natascha, 33, and Mike, 32, met as co-workers at Bloomingfoods. Theirs was a low-key courtship. Their first date was an evening at Kilroy's with a few of Mike's friends. But as they spent time together, they realized they were a good match. "It started off as just fun, but then we got along really well, continued to hang out, and got more serious," Natascha says.

In October 2015, the two were having dinner at El Ranchero when Mike mentioned a recent dream he'd had. Natascha remembers, "Out of nowhere, he said, 'I had a dream the other night that we were getting married, and it just made sense. I haven't been able to stop thinking about that. So will you marry me?'"

After getting over her initial shock, Natascha said "yes," and the couple went back to eating dinner. "It was very low key and very true to us," Natascha says.

From the beginning, Natascha and Mike had a specific vision for their wedding, and they enlisted Lucee Blue Events to help them bring that vision to life in The Clubhouse at The Fields. To evoke the moody feel they wanted, they used a color palette of deep jewel tones with black accents. Bloomin' Tons Floral Co. created lush arrangements that featured dark red and peach roses, succulents, and eucalyptus.



(top) Natascha and Mike had matching notebooks where they wrote their wedding vows.

(above) The couple wanted to share their love with family and friends, and did so with a special unity candle ceremony that included everyone in attendance.

(opposite page) Natascha's dress was a custom-made top and skirt created by Liby Ball of Bloomington Stitchery.





Natascha's wedding-day attire was a custom-made top and skirt created by Libby Ball of Bloomington Stitchery. One side of the reversible velvet skirt matched the pale gold top, while the other was deep red. The ensemble included a velvet cape in emerald green with black sequined epaulettes.

The wedding took place on November 19, 2016. That morning, photographer Laura Von took photos of the wedding party at Woolery Mill. "I finally saw her dress and how beautiful she looked," Mike says. "I was holding back tears, that's for sure." Adds Natascha, "It was total happiness."

(top) The wedding party—and more.

(above, left) The couple wrote their own vows for the ceremony, which was officiated by their friend Ryan Boyce. Natascha's godmother, Christy Buehnerkemper Elder, was maid of honor. Mike's friend Stephen Maynard served as best man.

(above, right) A quick kiss during the reception.



The four-tier naked red velvet cake with dark red and peach roses.

The couple's friend Ryan Boyce officiated the ceremony, for which they wrote their own vows. Christy Buehnerkemper Elder, Natascha's godmother, was her maid of honor, and Mike's close friend Stephen Maynard was his best man.

The ceremony also included a twist on the traditional unity candle ritual. Before the ceremony, each person received a black taper. The couple's parents lit the main candle, from which Natascha and Mike lit their candles. They in turn lit the bridal party's candles, and the bridal party lit the guests' candles. Bathed in soft candlelight, the pair exchanged rings.

At the reception, guests dined on barbecued pork and macaroni and cheese from Carson's BBQ & Catering. The cake, from Icing on the Cake by Kristina, was a four-tier naked red velvet decorated with dark red and peach roses.

Dave Walter served as the DJ, spinning 90s R&B and hip-hop tunes. At the end of the reception, a

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school bus transported everyone to The Atlas Bar, where the celebration continued.

The couple honeymooned in Southeast Asia for three weeks. They visited Mike's extended family in Malaysia, where they held a second wedding reception, and also traveled to Brunei.

When Natascha and Mike reflect on their wedding, they agree that the best part was being surrounded by family and friends. "The thing that sticks out to me is how incredible it was to have all those people in one place celebrating us—this total feeling of being enveloped by love," Natascha says.

—*Molly Brush*

Natascha and Mike are in the process of renovating their home in Smithville, which they purchased in 2018. Mike continues to prepare food for Bloomingfoods and Natascha, who earned her B.F.A. in graphic design, has launched an independent design studio called Rhizome Design Co. 

(right) Black linens and greenery, with plenty of candles, made for a cozy November evening.



Monroe Convention Center

A Full-Service Wedding Venue



Newlyweds Megan Abbott and Garrison DeMoss. Photo by Rebecca Tabor / Bex Photography

When a bride first approaches Monroe Convention Center Sales Manager Jean Kautt, she often arrives with a guest count and a lot of questions. Kautt takes couples on a tour of the 24,000-square-foot event space that can accommodate 10 to 350 guests, explains all the amenities included in the room rental, helps them select their space, and reassures them that they are not alone in the process.

"Couples feel like they have to come to us with every decision already made," says Kautt. "Our events manager, Lisa LaMarca, has experience and a checklist to guide them through their options and help them set the tone for the whole event. We are not going to let them forget anything. We love to see the relief on their faces after they meet with Lisa."

Kautt adds that couples are often surprised to learn all that is included with the room rental—tables, chairs, linens, dishes and flatware, setup and teardown, and a complimentary rehearsal and bridal room if the ceremony is held at the convention center, as well. Add-on features include a stage for the ceremony, dance floor, bar service, and more. Most couples opt to bring their own wedding cake.

With in-house catering, LaMarca schedules a complimentary tasting so the couple is able to bring their parents and sample the menu they're considering. "Our catering has received great reviews, and there's a lot to choose from," Kautt says.

"It's fun to see all their plans come to fruition," LaMarca adds, explaining that she creates a timeline for all the wedding details, including decor setup, DJ arrival, photographer setup, and

cake delivery. She provides a list of vendors when couples don't know where to start. "When something isn't happening on the timeline we've created, we step in and do our part to make sure that it gets done. We really want it to be flawless."

LaMarca adds, "Even during the era of COVID, we have been able to have a few smaller wedding receptions here with every health measure completely in place."

Megan Abbott, who had her pandemic-friendly wedding reception at the convention center in June 2020, said that having LaMarca's help made all the difference for their special day. "During the entire planning process, Lisa kept us informed and was so patient with us as we asked questions and clarified what needed to happen to make sure we, our guests, and the staff were all kept safe," she says. "If I needed anything, someone was there."

With its proximity to downtown, Monroe Convention Center is often selected because of its location to restaurants, shops, nightlife, and wedding weekend activities. "Many of our couples are IU alumni, so being close to their favorite places from college days means they can share the experience with friends and family," LaMarca says. "Being near the B-Line Trail and having the connected Courtyard by Marriott hotel are added bonuses, and the convention center is an easy stroll to seven other nearby hotels and inns."

Ultimately, LaMarca, Kautt and the convention center staff want to ensure that every bride and groom's special day is memorable. "We take the worry out of the wedding," Jean says.

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Jean Kautt, sales manager.



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