

# Scenic farms, quiet chapels and English manors

*Area locales that may be the perfect place for your wedding*

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**T**he Greater Rome area is a destination for brides and their beaux looking for a special place to exchange vows.

The area is home to several picturesque historic churches. The grounds of Rome's landmark clocktower have been the site of a wedding. Cave Spring's scenic Rolater Park, with its namesake cave and spring as well as historic locales, is also a popular wedding location.

One local couple even got married at home plate at State Mutual Stadium.

Some couples have a local connection to Rome, but sometimes it's our reputation as a scenic, quaint charming locale that gets the attention of betrothed couples who have never even been here, says Lisa Smith, executive director for the Greater Rome Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"The Rome CVB receives calls from brides, grooms and family members seeking the perfect location for the couple's service, rehearsal dinner or reception. In our area we have many unique offerings depending on their personal taste, from the water to the rolling hills, pastoral settings, historic landmarks.

"The interesting note is that of the many (wedding) calls we receive at the visitor center, many do not have a connection to Rome."

She recounts that she once had a call from just such a bride whose one criterion was a waterfall. Well, there's one on the grounds of the CVB and so the couple wed on the visitor center deck.

A visitor center as a wedding venue? You might be surprised to learn that it's an occasional site with its scenic little amphitheater next door and the community center across the parking lot for the reception.

But more often than not, the Convention and Visitors Bureau guides couples to other local wedding and reception venues and helps the wedding parties with accommodations, guest packages, visitors guides and such.

"It's kind of fun to be part of it," said Smith. "We love it."

A popular outdoor wedding venue is Proctor Farm north of Rome on Fouché Gap Road off of Big Texas Valley Road.

The farm offers the rustic charm of an "open timber framed wedding chapel bathed in the glow of an antique crystal chandelier" as well as a large covered pavilion dressed out in wrought iron and stained glass.

Owner Mike Proctor says you can have your dream wedding there whether you want a big elegant event with up to 450 guests or a casual

intimate affair. As the Web site proclaims, "Whether your style is as elegant as Chantilly lace or casual as blue jeans, you can have it your way."

"We let them be creative," said Proctor. "We have had every kind of wedding you can imagine."

The Proctors started the trend. Proctor and his wife Tara got married in a cedar gazebo on the farm in 1998. After that, a friend asked about having a wedding there and through word of mouth, it became a frequent wedding site.

"It just progressed from there," said Proctor.

So the Proctors built the open-air chapel, brought in 26 antique wooden church pews for guest seating, built a pavilion and transformed what was a barn into a bride's dressing room with stained glass with an upstairs area for the groom and groomsmen — complete with pool table — for pre-wedding socializing and getting ready.

A breezeway leads to the High Lonesome Saloon for entertainment and dancing. (The saloon is a western throwback, but not an operating bar that serves alcohol to the public.)

The farm offers site-only services for the ceremony and reception, which means couples

choose their caterer, florist and all the details and Proctor Farm takes care of the setup for the wedding and reception.

Proctor Farm plays host to about 14 weddings a year and that's expected to increase, so a wedding coordinator is coming on board to help couples plan their dream day.

South of Rome in picturesque Vann's Valley, there's another outdoor venue that's alluring to couples.

If an English manor on a lake surrounded by gardens and gently rolling lawn sounds appealing, then Belle Terra might be the spot for your wedding.

Garden and lakeside weddings are popular in this scenic setting. A new facility and site are in development that will accommodate large parties, says Latrelle Jones. Couples will be able to have their ceremony surrounded by a water garden while a 25-foot waterfall provides a flowing backdrop. After adding additional staff, Belle Terra plans to begin accepting new clients again in late January, says Jones. Full-service wedding planning and event supervision are available.

Berry College's chapels are popular Rome wedding sites for those with an affiliation with Berry. You have to be a current or former student or staffer or be affiliated with one of the college's boards or councils to reserve them.

The private college has three chapels — Berry College Chapel, Barnwell Chapel and Frost Chapel. Frost Chapel, with its wood-beamed ceilings, flagstone slate floor and leaded-glass and stained glass-windows, is a popular place for Berry folks to exchange vows. Coupled with a reception at Ford Hall, the campus has made for many a beautiful wedding day.

Bartow County also boasts a couple of scenic weddings venues.

Governor's House is a 12-acre estate in Kingston where garden weddings are a specialty. The formal ceremony gardens with a quaint Rosa Chapel beside the koi pond and waterfall provide romantic backgrounds, whether couples want a intimate wedding for a few or an event for 250. The estate offers accommodations for rehearsal dinners, weddings and receptions.

Barnsley Gardens Resort in Adairsville has historic ruins and gardens for outdoor events and Town Hall for indoor ones, with full wedding planning services available.

Of course, many couples marry in their home church and then have the reception at another site around Greater Rome.

Smith says Magretta Hall, the Forum, The Forrest Place Ballrooms and Coosa Country Club are popular wedding reception venues around town.

Historic Magretta Hall downtown on Broad Street is not only an elegant locale, it's home to a catering company that conjures up tasty menus for rehearsal dinners and receptions.



With rustic stonework and a lush, green carpet of grass, the Rome Convention Center Amphitheater provides an ideal venue for spring, summer and fall ceremonies.

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