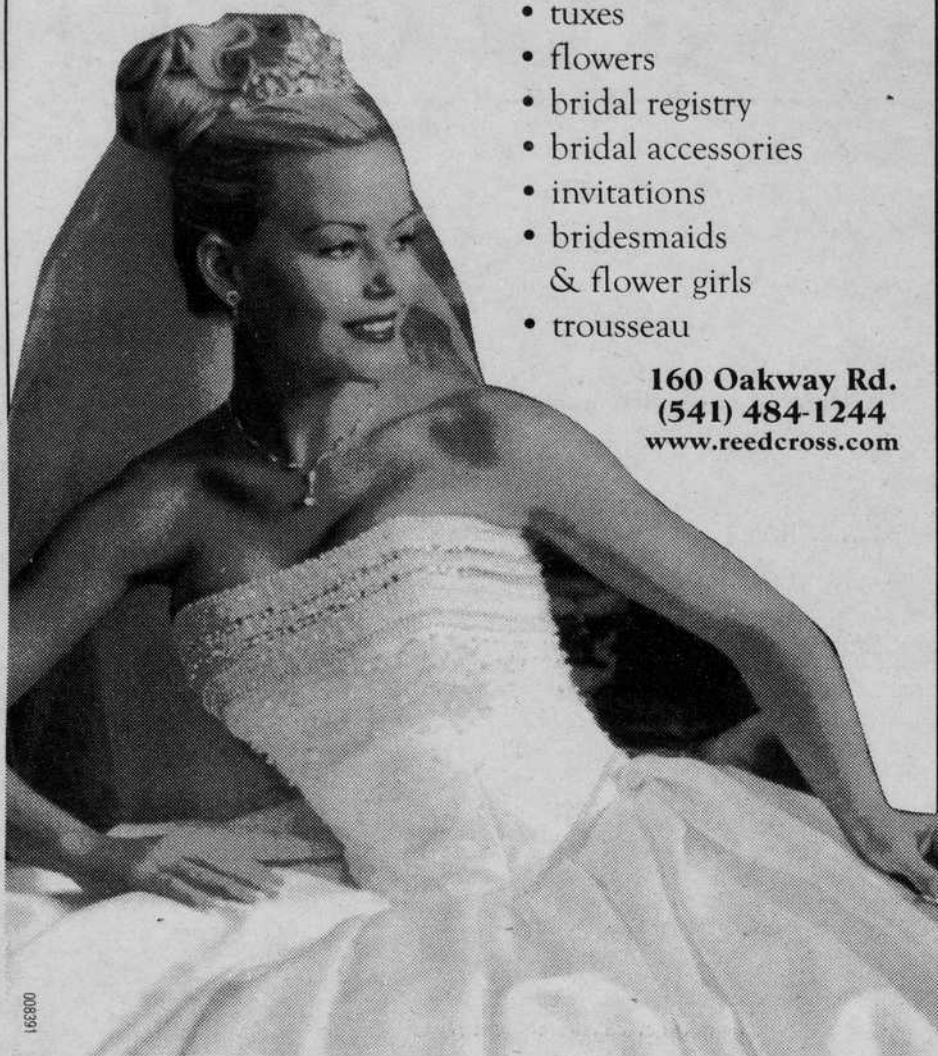


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Emerald City Bridal Show



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Janet Doolittle (top) feeds wedding cake to her granddaughter McKenzi at the Emerald City Bridal Show at the Lane County Fairgrounds Jan. 19. 10-year-old Mikayla Coveall (below) and 11-year-old Kaylee Terry enjoy being dressed as flower girls while helping out at the booth of Bride's Corner, a shop specializing in wedding clothing.

Couples plan great day in the great outdoors

■ For couples looking to walk down the aisle outdoors, Lane County has some of the perfect settings

By Helen Schumacher
for the Emerald

When planning a wedding, choosing a location can be one of the most important decisions people need to make — other than, of course, whom to marry.

Having the wedding in a cathedral can create a dignified and ceremonial feel. For others, the more relaxed atmosphere of the outdoors better suits their personalities.

For couples who have decided they want an outdoor wedding, there is no shortage of options when it comes to choosing where to hold it. From vineyards to beaches, Lane County offers choices that are as diverse as Eugene couples themselves.

One popular location, according to Jo Dial, one of the owners of Eugene's The Wedding Solution, is the Chateau Lorane. Although Dial said it is one of the more expensive areas, if a couple decides to have their wedding there, they can choose from settings that include a lakeside view or ones that are near the property's vineyards.

Another vineyard that offers wedding packages is the Secret House Vineyard Winery, located 2.4 miles west of Veneta. Secret House employee Michael Alters said the property's bird sanctuary adds to the special atmosphere.

The sanctuary attracts different species of birds, ranging from song birds to birds of prey, that might not otherwise be common to the area, Alters said. If a couple is interested in Secret House, they can request that the vineyard's wedding package, which includes menus, tent and decoration options and pricing,

be sent to them. Couples are also welcome to drive out and visit the Secret House.

Dial also sees a lot of couples choosing to have their wedding at the Beacon House on River Road. Beacon House has a large yard, gardens, a gazebo, fountains, and a bride and groom's dressing room. Couples can rent chairs, tables, linens, place settings and a sound system. If a couple decides not to rent from the house, the owner, Helen Goss, said she has a list of services, including rentals and catering, that she can recommend.

"You have lots of choices when you come here," Goss said. She said she doesn't offer catering and some of the other services that other locations might because she wants the couple to be able to choose exactly what they want.

If a couple is planning a smaller wedding, they might want to call the Lane County Parks office to request a brochure of the different parks in the area that are available for rental. Another option is the Eagle Rock Lodge. Located on the McKenzie River, it provides another outdoor setting for couples.

According to both Goss and Alters, whenever a couple decides to get married, they should make reservations about six months in advance, especially if they want to get married in the late summer months or on a Saturday. Those dates tend to fill up more quickly, they said.

While an outdoor wedding allows a couple and their guests to enjoy the natural beauty of the area, they are not for everyone. An outdoor wedding brings with it some unpredictability.

"If you worry about the weather, don't plan an outdoor wedding," Dial said.

Helen Schumacher is a freelance reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.

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