

Mechanicsville Wedding Venue Adapts To COVID

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MECHANICSVILLE, Md. - A popular St. Mary's County wedding venue is doing everything it can to help couples in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

Heather Zeolla, the senior wedding coordinator, at [Flora Corner Farm](#) tells me the key is to remain flexible. "We have had a majority of our couples postpone their wedding to dates to 2021 in hopes of having a wedding that will accommodate all of their family and friends."

Smaller Guest Lists and Assigned Seating

Zeolla said other couples opted for smaller guest lists, assigned seating, and outdoor dancing spaces. Some even split the difference. "We have offered that our couples can do a small ceremony outside and then a larger celebration on a date of their choosing next year. We have tried to be as flexible and understanding with our couples as they navigate this very difficult situation."

She said that careful planning is key to pulling off a safe event. "One thing that has been very helpful is requiring a seating chart not only for the reception, but the outdoor ceremony as well. This ensures that we can group families together to celebrate this special moment safely."

Flora Farms has also found ways to integrate sanitizer stations and cleaning protocols into the decor of the venue so they don't ruin the look of the big day.

Zeolla said tents have been a big help. "We have rented tents to allow all dancing and socializing to occur outside in an open air environment. This is safer for airflow and still allows for a beautiful setting to celebrate. We have also created outdoor drinking and eating areas to provide less confinement inside. Again, seating has been more thoughtful to allow immediate families to be seated together without 6-foot distancing restrictions for every individual."

Realistic Expectations

Zeolla said it's important that couples have realistic expectations of what's possible under COVID protocols. "We are meeting with our couples to discuss all details of their events and how it may look different based on COVID to ensure they have realistic expectations of their special day."

One change is that those meetings can happen virtually. "We began offering virtual 90-day appointments early so we could talk about options with our couples."

Zeolla said she thinks virtual appointments will stick around even after the COVID crisis has passed. "We think the virtual appointments we have held with couples is something that will allow better flexibility in the future. We have created online tools and visuals to help aid our conversations with our couples."

Flora Farms is even open to virtual ceremonies. "We have not had any virtual ceremonies yet, but are open to that option if our couples chose to go in that direction."

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