

# Here comes the Bride

Are wedding bells in your future?



*The Sampson County Bridal Guide is designed to help you plan the perfect wedding day. This special section is filled with valuable advice and businesses that will help couples getting ready to tie the knot plan the perfect wedding.*

*Get helpful tips on consolidating finances, negotiating the best deals on bridal services, choosing a wedding planner, tips for choosing the perfect honeymoon destination and more.*

*What's more, you'll find valuable advertising and offers from local wedding professionals dedicated to making your big day a success.*

## Featured Bridal Couple

**Aaron Bullard & Emily Wrench**

### Love Is In The Air

*\* Local couple shares love story, wedding plans*



When Clinton's Emily Wrench first laid her eyes on Aaron Bullard (who is from Beaver Dam) five years ago, the attraction was instant.

"We met through mutual friends and went on a 'blind' date," Wrench, now 22, remembers. "I instantly loved his eyes and his smile ..."

The couple went to a classic diner and a movie on their first date (January 1, 2013) and the chemistry between the two was instant - they clicked immediately.

"When the movie was over, and it was time for him to take me home, he took the long route home because neither one of us wanted the night to end," she said. "We rode around in circles talking for hours. He could make me laugh so hard ... I was smitten from the start, I knew I loved him already."

When Emily finally made it home, she made a bold proclamation to her family.

"I knew instantly that he was the one," Wrench said. "There was no doubt in my mind. I came home from our first date and told my parents that I knew I was going to marry him."

Five years later, on March 10, 2018, the couple announced that they were engaged.

"Aaron (now 25) and I have been talking about getting married for the past 5 years," Wrench, who is a Special Education teacher, said. "We decided to wait until he finished grad school to get engaged (Bullard is a Physical Therapist). So, now that graduation is right around the corner for him, he knew it was time to go ring shopping."

Aaron's search for the perfect ring came quickly - once he laid eyes on it, he couldn't leave the store without it.

"He called my mom to tell her he got a ring and was

planning to give it to me Easter Sunday at the sunrise service at Topsail Beach," Emily explained. "About 15 minutes later, he calls my mom back and says, 'I can't wait, I'm on my way to propose right now'."

At the moment of the call, Wrench had been painting an upstairs bonus room and ceiling and just happened to be completely covered in paint from head to toe.

"Mom, and a friend that was helping me paint, knew he was coming, and were trying to hurry me into getting a shower and cleaned up," Emily remembers. "Eventually I listened. As I was putting on my make-up, the doorbell rang. Mom asked me to get the door to let Aaron in. I knew he was on the way, because our plans were to go to a friend's house to watch the Carolina game. I ran downstairs, make-up half done, and brushes in hand. When I opened the door, there he was, on one knee."

Aaron made the proposal at Emily's house because that is where they first met, as well as shared their first kiss. The romantic gesture left Wrench stunned.

"At first, I was so shocked I was speechless, I couldn't even move," she remembers. "I dropped everything in my hands and threw my arms around him and cried and cried and cried. He finally said, 'would you like to see your ring?'"

She adds, "It still hasn't sunk in, and I don't think it ever will."

Immediately after the engagement, the couple started the process of planning their wedding.

"We did not waste any time," Emily explained. "We knew we wanted a Christmas wedding, so we started planning immediately."

The couple will be joined in marriage on December 8 at First United Methodist Church (Wrench's home church) with a reception to follow at the Sampson County Agri-Exposition Center. It will be an evening, formal wedding.

"We both have such big families and so many close friends, it will be a fairly larger wedding," Emily notes. "We wouldn't dream of it being any other way. We want everyone special to us to be right there by our sides during the happiest day of our lives."

While planning a wedding can be a struggle for some couples, Emily and Aaron's has gone very smoothly and since it is a December wedding, the couple plans to decorate with trees, magnolias and all things related to the Christmas season.

"We are going for more of a white and ivory with touches of gold and hints of red," Emily says of the color scheme of her wedding day.

As all engaged couples know, preparing for a wedding takes time, planning, budgets and most of all, patience.

Emily said that "staying organized" is the best piece of advice she would give to prospective brides and grooms.

"My mom got a 3-ring binder and sheet protectors," Emily explained. "We keep everything in that book: guest list, vendor ideas, receipts, clips from magazines, budget, everything. It helps to keep everything in one place."

With her mother's assistance and family friends helping with tips and suggestions, the planning has been a lot less stressful.

It also helps that the couple are in sync with each other to make their day an unforgettable one.

"There have been no challenges, we have similar taste on most things," Emily says proudly of her future husband. "The best part has been knowing that every day I am one day closer to being his wife."

Making the transition from girlfriend/boyfriend to being engaged, is something that Emily says is an important time that couples should really take the time to enjoy.

"You only get a short amount of time to be each other's fiancé, so enjoy the process," she said. "We only plan one thing at a time, and once we nail one thing down, we move on to the next item on our list. It keeps things from getting so overwhelming."

When asked what she thinks her favorite memory will be when she looks back to this time in the future, she says, "Being Aaron's fiancé. The transition from being his girlfriend to his future wife has been the most amazing feeling. I have also enjoyed sharing this joy with our families and friends."

Although they are still looking into options for their honeymoon, the couple is sure that they know they want to spend it somewhere tropical.

But it really doesn't matter, the loving couple could have fun anywhere, as long as they are together.

"Every day with Aaron is an adventure," Emily says. "He's funny, charming, and a pure joy to be around. I want to spend every second possible with him because he truly makes me a better me. Knowing that I will get to spend the rest of my life with him will be the greatest gift I can ever receive."

Here's to many, many years of love and happiness. Cheers!

# BRIDAL

## Bass, Monroe to Wed

### \*A Perfect Match

“You just know when he (Taz) is the one your soul longs for,” said Elizabeth Bass as she remembers the journey that brought them together. William (Taz) Monore is from Kinston, NC and while their meeting was by chance, they both knew immediately that this was meant to be, as Taz remembers their first dinner date at a local restaurant in Clinton that Elizabeth’s laugh was absolutely contagious! She could light up a room with that laugh and smile. Elizabeth knew those beautiful blue eyes, big smile and a huge heart was the perfect match for the wonderful man she could spend the rest of her life with.

When asked why Evergreen and not her church, she replies with a warm smile, “That’s my mother’s home church where she was married 39 years ago in August and it just feels right.” Elizabeth’s father (Byron Bass, pastor of Ingold Baptist Church) will perform the ceremony. “I’m truly blessed to have such a wonderful family.”

The dinner/dance reception will be held on the grounds of her grandparent’s home just as her mother did! “We are making memories that will last a lifetime,” stated Elizabeth. “We are so very blessed and cannot wait to see what God has in store for us as we begin our life together.”

Elizabeth Bass and Taz Monroe will marry on August 4th, 2018 at Evergreen Baptist Church.

After a wedding trip to Jamaica the couple will



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# Desire a destination wedding? Domestic destinations offer beauty, value

A Every wedding is as special as the bride who takes her vows that day, no matter if the setting is a centuries-old church, a hotel ballroom or the bride's own backyard. But if you dream of saying your "I do's" beside the gentle tide, or greeting your guests from the top of a staircase that looks like it's straight out of "Gone With the Wind," then a destination wedding might be right for you.

Destination weddings are becoming more and more popular, but dragging your wedding dress, favors and all the guests overseas can be pricey for brides and grooms on a budget. However, many domestic destinations right here within the continental U.S. can offer the same breath-taking scenery, diverse settings and luxurious amenities you would expect to find - and pay more for - if you go abroad.

What kind of domestic destination should you seek? Here are a few popular, cost-effective options that don't require a long trip for your guests or you to spend a lot of money:

### Beauty at the beach

When it comes to versatility in a natural setting, it's hard to beat the beauty of the beach. A beach wedding can capture the romance of the sea, evoke the party atmosphere of an island escape, and tap the depth and power of Mother Nature in all her glory.

With miles of beautiful beaches on both coasts, the good old U.S. of A. offers plenty of locales for your beach wedding. On the East Coast, Myrtle Beach, S.C. is a popular spot that offers a wide range of versatile venues and accommodating lodging for you and your guests. The region is a reasonable drive from just about anywhere along the eastern seaboard. Plus, you can find affordable direct flights to the nearby Myrtle Beach International Airport.



For a pure beach wedding, check out Myrtle Beach State Park, which offers pristine white beaches and breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean. Or, to marry the beauty of the beach with elegant style, check out Atalaya Castle at Huntington Beach State Park in nearby Murrells Inlet, S.C.

Keep in mind if you're holding your wedding on a public beach or park, you'll likely need to obtain permits from the appropriate city or county agency.

### The charm of the Old South

She might have had trouble staying happily married, but "Gone with the Wind" heroine Scarlett O'Hara sure knew how to throw a romantic wedding. You can recapture the

grace, elegance and romance of Scarlett's bygone era with a plantation destination wedding. Throughout the south, you'll find representations of the gracious architecture that personified the classic southern plantation, with grand staircases, sweeping front porches and sprawling green gardens.

You can build an entire wedding theme around the locale, with attire that evokes the elegance of the Old South and southern colors like peach and lavender. A simple online search will yield numerous plantation-style venues, like Litchfield Plantation and Pawley's Plantation, both in Pawley's Island, S.C., or Brookgreen Gardens in Murrells Inlet, S.C.

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**BRIDAL**

# Popping the Question? How to Select an Engagement Ring

“Will you marry me?” Be sure to pair these four little words with the perfect engagement ring. While there’s a bit of a learning curve when it comes to selecting the right diamond, the most important thing you can do is find a piece both you and your significant other will love.

That said, don’t let the business of choosing an engagement ring be a source of stress at this exciting time in your life. With a bit of knowledge, you can make the right selection with confidence. Consider the following.

- Consult with the leading authority: Be sure your diamond is Gemological Institute of America (GIA)-certified. Established in 1931, GIA is the world’s foremost authority on diamonds, colored stones and pearls. A public benefit, nonprofit institute, GIA is the leading source of knowledge, standards and education in gems and jewelry.

- Four Cs: Of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so make your decision based on what looks most beautiful to you, however, knowing more about the four Cs – that is the cut, color, clarity and carat – of a diamond, can help you make a selection wisely. Created by the GIA, the four Cs are the global standard for assessing the quality of diamonds, allowing you to compare one diamond to another, which is extremely helpful in determining whether you are getting a fair price.

The cut is what gives a diamond its brilliance and sparkle, so this is an important factor. As far as color is concerned, the less color the better -- tinting is indicative of a lower quality diamond. Clarity refers to a diamond’s relative flawlessness -- blemishes are a mark against a diamond. Lastly, carat measures the weight of the diamond.

Be sure to view the GIA grading report specifying the exact quality of an individual diamond when making a



decision.

- Design your own engagement ring with the help of an expert: An engagement ring is one of the most meaningful items you will ever purchase. So, why opt for the style everyone else is wearing? Consider working with a jeweler that specializes in engagement rings and quality diamonds.

Before getting down on one knee, do your research. There’s a perfect engagement ring for every couple. Finding it just requires a little bit of legwork.



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# Be smart about wedding beauty preparation

All eyes are on the bride and groom on their wedding day. Feeling beautiful and dapper can boost a couple's confidence and ensure they look back on their wedding photographs and videos with pride.

Certain beauty basics and makeup and hair strategies can help any bride look spectacular on her wedding day. The following are some dos and don'ts of wedding day beauty preparations.

**DO** employ the services of a professional hairstylist and makeup artist. Professionals have the experience and tools of the trade to help you to look your best. From contouring to make your face seem slimmer to enlarging the appearance of small eyes, some tricks of the trade are best left to the pros.

**DON'T** forget to schedule a trial run. Make this appointment several months before the wedding day so you have ample time to work with your stylists and experiment with colors and hair arrangements to fit your personality and the style of your gown. Take plenty of pictures and notes so you will remember what needs to be on hand for the wedding day.

**DO** allot enough time for the wedding day beauty appointment. If you will be going to a salon, block out two or more slots instead of one. This way the stylist does not overbook and will not feel rushed. Many brides opt to have stylists come to their homes. There may be an extra charge for this service, but it may be well worth the cost.

**DON'T** make any drastic changes to your appearance right before the wedding. This includes changing your hair color or texture, extreme tanning, using colored contact lenses, or chopping off all of your hair. It's better to wait until after the wedding to change your style.

**DO** bring a veil, headpiece, hair extensions, and any other accessories to your hair consult. This enables the stylist to practice working with these items.

**DON'T** tweeze or wax brows too close to the start of the ceremony. Redness and swelling are common side effects of tweezing and waxing, and they can be difficult to mask with makeup. Instead, take care of hair removal a day or two prior to the wedding.

**DO** exfoliate your skin prior to the wedding. This doesn't necessarily mean you should endure a harsh fruit acid peel or another procedure. You can exfoliate with a gentle washing of your skin with a nubby washcloth to remove any dryness and errant flakes. Moisturize well to ensure a smooth palette for makeup application.

**DON'T** wash or condition hair the day of the wedding. Intricate styles tend to stay better when hair has a little grip. "Dirty" hair is easier to work with than shiny, freshly washed locks. If you must wash, remember to thoroughly dry your hair before going to your appointment.

**DO** wear a little extra makeup than you are accustomed to wearing because it will show up better in photos. However, do not wear so much that you look clownish. A makeup artist can help you achieve the right balance.

**DON'T** have bridesmaids wear makeup that is bolder than yours, especially red lips. No one should upstage the bride.

**DO** experiment with any products you haven't used before to test for allergic reactions and see how well they wear.

**DON'T** wear too much under-eye concealer or one



that is too light of a shade. This can draw more attention to problem areas than remedy them.

**DO** bring a pain relief medication in case a tight hairstyle or headpiece causes a headache.

**DON'T** forget that men need a little help as well. Exfoliation and moisturization can help dry skin. Guys should use a new razor and plenty of cream before shaving to avoid irritation. A dusting of finishing powder can banish shiny noses and foreheads for photo-ready faces.

Chances are more photographs will be taken of a newlywed couple than at any other moment in their lives. Certain beauty dos and don'ts should be followed so couples put their best faces forward.



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## BRIDAL

## Hot trends in wedding cuisine

Once a couple has officially tied the knot, the newly recognized man and wife and all of their guests will retire to a party room where they can mingle, dance and enjoy a good meal.

In the past, standard fare like prime rib and roasted chicken dominated wedding menus. But today's weddings cater to people of various culinary tastes, and couples and their guests can expect more upscale and creative cuisine to be rolled out for wedding receptions. The following are a handful of the more popular trends with regard to wedding cuisine.

### Miniature bites

Many people say good things come in small packages, and when it comes to miniature versions of favorite foods, they may be right. Instead of large meals that fill guests up fast, they can munch on smaller bites of their favorite dishes. How about a piece of meatloaf topped with whipped mashed potatoes? A cherry tomato with a small piece of mozzarella cheese makes a mini caprese salad. Turning favorite foods into bite-sized adventures can add a touch of whimsy to the reception.

### Breakfast for dinner

Some couples are circumventing high price tags for their weddings by choosing to hold the festivities at less expensive times of day. Brunch-themed weddings are a big hit with those who would much rather dine on a stack of pancakes than a dish of pasta. Omelet stations, croissants and a bevy of other breakfast table fare can be enjoyed any time of the day.

### Dim sum

Dim sum allows guests to sample different foods

without filling up. Carts of dumplings and other small plates of appetizers can be wheeled around so everyone can choose what they want and what they want to avoid.

### Gourmet comfort food

People love familiar comfort foods, but now gourmet comfort foods are shaking up wedding receptions. Mac-and-cheese with gouda and brie or chicken pot pie with a puff-pastry crust are a few offerings that can add glamour to down-home cooking.

### Food with a show

Instead of passed foods or buffet stations, couples are opting to make food an experience for guests. An oyster bar with a chef serving fresh seafood or a dessert master whipping up flambé is a feast for the eyes and mouth.

### Interesting buffet stations

Keep guests on their toes with various meal stations. A bountiful display of artisanal cheeses, fruits and breads will be a cheese lover's dream. These stations also can be appetizing focal points around the room and ensure all guests get a bite of what they like best.

### Family style

Rustic and informal weddings have grown in popularity. Rather than food being brought to the guests or participants lining up in buffet lines, family-style dining allows guests to share conversation and pass the peas at the same time. Larger, rectangular tables allow more guests to sit with one another and serve themselves food from community plates located in the center of the tables.

### Food and beverage pairings



Food-forward wedding couples are offering guests mouthwatering appetizers matched with a cocktail. A slider and a craft beer or a dumpling and a shot of sake are examples of this trend.

### Nontraditional 'fake' cakes

Instead of a multi-tiered cake or the cupcake fad that is starting to fizzle, couples are now opting for something new. Desserts that mimic the look of cake, but aren't quite that combination of sponge and frosting are trending. Crepes, pies, cookies, and doughnuts are acceptable and can add a creative spark to the cake-cutting ceremony. When offered along with dessert stations, guests can certainly get their fill of sweet delights.

### Vegan and gluten-free options

Chances are one or more people attending the reception will be on a restricted diet. Rather than relegate these guests to dining on side dishes and patchwork meals, certain couples are building entire offerings around vegan and gluten-free foods.

Couples are getting creative with their food and beverage offerings at their weddings. Guests never know which culinary wonders they will encounter as they gather to wish the newlyweds well.

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# How to preserve wedding bouquets and arrangements

A bride's gown may garner its share of attention come her wedding day, but floral arrangements also tend to impress guests. Fresh flowers make a wedding and the ensuing reception more inviting and appealing.

According to The Knot.com, couples can expect to spend 8 percent of their wedding budget on flowers. For the average wedding, that equates to roughly \$2,000 for various arrangements and bouquets. That can be a considerable expense for fragile flowers with a shelf life of only a day or two.

But instead of tossing beautiful bouquets and other flowers into the garbage once the wedding day has come and gone, couples can employ various methods to preserve those impressive displays for years to come.

### Air drying

One of the easiest ways to preserve flowers is to dry them out. This is best done by hanging blooms upside down so they will remain straight and not warp or wither while drying.

Secure flowers in small bundles and hang from an out-of-the-way spot in a cool, dry area. The flowers may need to remain hanging for up to three weeks

before they are completely dried out. After which, gently remove the flowers and arrange them in a vase or another container. Otherwise, reassemble a bouquet how it was and carefully display.

### Pressing

Pressing is another way to preserve floral bouquets and arrangements. To press flowers, find a few heavy books to stack or another weighted object. Place the flowers between parchment paper or waxed paper and lay the heavy items on top. You also can place the flowers in tissue paper between the pages of a book so they are not jostled.

Leave the blooms for a week or two and then check on them before putting them in a shadow box or photo frame.

### Chemical drying

Silica gel, borax and regular sand can be used to dry and preserve flowers as well. These can be handy for people who desire to preserve an entire bouquet as-is.

Silica gel is a desiccant commonly found in small packets inside of new shoes and purses. It also can be purchased at home improvement retailers and is used to dry out musty basements and other areas.



Fill a deep container halfway with the silica gel or other drying material. Put in the bouquet and then gently add more product to the top of the flowers so they are completely submerged. Place a snug cover over the top of the container and let everything sit for about a week. Slowly the moisture will be absorbed from the flowers.

Some people choose to spray dried flowers with a sealant to keep them looking nice longer. An all-purpose craft spray might work. You also can ask for recommendations from the florist who handled your arrangements, and that florist may even preserve the flowers for you for an additional fee.



## Did you know?

There are various theories as to the origin of the word "honeymoon." One such theory suggests the word traces its origins to the Old English phrase "hony moone," which suggests the honeymoon was initially steeped in cynicism. "Hony" is a reference to honey and, the theory suggests, refers to the strong feelings of affection and sweetness newly married couples harbor and display for each other. However,

"moone" is a reference to how fleeting this period of time is and how it is likely to change as quickly as the moon changes. One rosier theory as to the origin of the word "honeymoon" suggests the word dates back to the fifth century, when calendars were based on the moon cycle. During this period, newly married couples drank mead (which accounts for the "honey") throughout their first month of marriage (or for a full cycle of the moon), as mead was a beverage many believed to be an aphrodisiac.

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