

Wedding venues in the Berkshires

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JOHN SEAKWOOD

A happy couple at The Mount, once the home of author Edith Wharton.

With their rolling hills, small towns, and cultural attractions, the Berkshires offer four-season getaways and more and more they are attracting couples planning a destination wedding.

Here are a half-dozen venues sure to add a touch of romance to that special day:

THE MOUNT, LENOX Edith Wharton might have written some of the most notable American novels, but “The Age of Innocence” author once said, “Marriage is one long sacrifice.” Still, she would probably be proud to know that her beloved Gilded Age estate, The Mount, is a popular wedding site, especially since revenue from nuptials

helps maintain the massive house and extensive gardens. The venue accommodates up to 180 guests inside and larger parties on the grounds. A wedding planner is available to arrange everything from the on-site ceremony to photography. There are no lodgings at the Mount itself. Rental fee from \$10,000. Because of the Mount's nonprofit status, a portion of that is tax deductible. *2 Plunkett St., Lenox, 413-551-5120, www.edithwharton.org*

THE RED LION INN, STOCKBRIDGE The town offers beauty and quiet and a huge dose of quaint. The Red Lion Inn in the heart of town offers a variety of accommodations, from the main building with its extensive antiques collection to the many self-contained guesthouses. Those range from the town's old firehouse to Maple Glen, which opened in 2012 and has a more modern "boutique" style. The parlors inside the main inn, or its flower-laden courtyard, allow for tailored ceremony and reception settings. The restaurant is a notable dining destination and chef Brian Alberg works with couples to create rehearsal dinner and wedding day menus. Prix-fixe catering menus start at \$75 per person for a three-course dinner with hors d'oeuvres. Flowers, beverages, and room rental fees are additional. *30 Main St., Stockbridge, 413-298-5545, www.redlioninn.com*

THE CRANWELL RESORT & SPA, LENOX The Cranwell mixes sweeping grounds with uninterrupted views. The original mansion has an English Tudor look. There are extensive spa facilities (including a hair salon), and a top-notch golf course. In summer, most couples choose to stage the wedding on the grounds; the Rose Terrace in front of the mansion is a popular site for the ceremony. An indoor option includes the newly renovated 3,000-square-foot Sloane's Ballroom, which seats up to 225 and has an elegant marble dance floor. Prices range from \$98-\$248 per person, including a complimentary bridal suite. *55 Lee Road, Lenox, 413-637-1364, www.cranwell.com*

BLANTYRE, LENOX It's not difficult to see why this Relais & Châteaux property is considered among the country's most romantic spots. Tucked off narrow winding lanes, Blantyre was inspired by an old Scottish estate. It has kept much of its original old world charm with overstuffed furniture inside and gardens filled with heirloom roses outside. Because of its small size, wedding parties generally take over the entire property and the event is tailored to suit. Most weddings are weekend-long with a maximum of 55 guests. (Some accommodations are two bedrooms, perfect for

families.) Excluding alcoholic beverages, trimmings, or outside services, pricing starts at \$1,000 per person, including accommodations for two nights. And it's dog friendly. *16 Blantyre Road, Lenox, 413-637-3556, www.blantyre.com*

THE GATEWAYS INN, LENOX The Gateways Inn is a Federal-style building located in this sleepy, artsy town in the heart of the Berkshires. The independently owned downtown inn specializes in small and intimate weddings, usually with no more than 80 guests. The inn has only 12 rooms and the wedding party can take over the whole place. Most couples choose an on-site ceremony, but local cultural destinations, such as the Norman Rockwell Museum or Ventfort Hall, a grand old Gilded Age home, may be options. Rooms vary in size and price and are extra. Wedding catering from \$85 per person. *51 Walker St., Lenox, 413- 637-2532, www.gatewaysoinn.com*



SANDRA COSTELLO

A couple was wed at the Gateways Inn in Lenox.

THE PORCHES INN AT MASS MOCA, NORTH ADAMS Porches consists of six Victorian rowhouses, which were unified into an inn over a decade ago. It has a charming simplicity that suits this rural location and, despite its age, the property feels modern. Porches is intimate and cozy, though, with a variety of function spaces and amenities to amuse, such as a year-round heated outdoor pool with heated deck, and a bonfire pit for stargazing and s'mores making. The woodland gazebo makes a picturesque setting for a wedding ceremony. The inn is a favorite among nature lovers and because of nearby Mount Greylock, it's also a wedding destination of choice for hikers. Basic venue rental fee from \$750 for the weekend. *231 River St., North Adams, 413-664-0400, www.porches.com*

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