

Growing small venues with love, new website provides backyard connections for microweddings

BUSINESS

Published on Aug 11, 2021



HUDSON — When Carolyn Germaine was planning her wedding in the fall of 2019, she was looking for a private site for her small wedding. She didn't want to go the traditional route of a large venue, but she wanted something more intimate than a public park.

"There was nothing, absolutely nothing," Germaine said.

That struggle stayed with her even after her wedding, and last year she decided to do something about it. Germaine set out to create an online site with a collection of private microwedding sites.

To kick things off, she went on garden tours to meet homeowners with beautiful gardens and backyards that might be interested in lending out their gardens. There, she met Louise Nyquist, a homeowner who loved her idea.

"She caught the vision," Germaine said.

Together the two have created Backyardsites.com, an AirBnB-style website that connects engaged couples with homeowners offering their sites up for small weddings.



A backyard site in Hudson offers a private venue for weddings with a view of the river. The site is one of several available on the BackyardSites.com website, a new venture by two local women to provide microwedding venues. Submitted photo



A backyard wedding site on Minnehaha Creek, which winds through the Twin Cities, features a moongate, a symbol of wholeness, perfection and infinite love. Submitted photo

To build the site, the two started by sharing the vision with potential backyard hosts. They listened to the owners before then moving on to create the site itself.

The website is a nationwide venture, and the two welcome potential sites from anywhere in the country. To begin, they're focusing on the St. Croix Valley and Twin Cities area, as that's where they're from. Currently the site has six backyard sites available.

The microweddings, an increasingly popular trend in the wedding industry, does not include all the aspects of traditional large venue weddings.

"We are not trying to create a small traditional venue with all the embellishments, that's not what we're about," Germaine said. "We are going to be having new visions."

At these weddings, the bride and groom will arrive already dressed and ready. The hosts and couple will have discussion leading up to the wedding to have the space arranged as they wish. On the day of, the hosts will be responsible for setting up chairs, providing an indoor bathroom and having an inclement weather plan. They are also responsible for checking with their individual municipalities to host the events. That is the extent of it though, Germaine said.

The sites can host both microweddings and microreceptions ranging between five and 50 people. The setup is designed to take away the expectations that often come with weddings, and the stress and financial burden those expectations can create.

"The vision is one that holds on to the essential part of the wedding day, which is your marriage to the person who you love, your guests are really really important and other memories of the day," Germaine said.

The backyards provide an enchanting site for the couple to start their marriage and for the guests to engage and enjoy the moment.

"People who have these backyard and are welcoming people into these backyards, they work that ground, and so you get a sense, in the most truthful way that I can think about, you do get a sense that you're standing on sacred ground," Germaine said.

Nyquist said it gives the homeowners a chance to show off all their work.

"As a gardener I had these other feelings like, I do all of this work, it looks gorgeous and wouldn't it be wonderful to share that with somebody," she said.

It also allows gardeners to support younger couples as they begin their marriage.

"It's good for revitalizing people, I think and sharing the joy was just part of it," Nyquist said.

An additional income is also a benefit that can make a big difference in their lives, she said.

Some of the sites will also be available for other events, including graduations, anniversaries, birthdays, showers and more.

Those interested in being backyard hosts or having a microwedding in one of the sites can learn more, view sites and fill out applications at www.BackyardSites.com.



A backyard site in Minneapolis is ready for a microwedding. Through www.backyardsites.com, couple and homeowner work together to create a vision for the space. Submitted photo

Link to Star Observer article:

https://www.hudsonstarobserver.com/business/growing-small-venues-with-love-new-website-provides-backyard-connections-for-microweddings/article_cfc77186-f9f2-11eb-a207-97a4b96d275d.html