

Kelowna area supplies romantic setting

Okanagan region trending as perfect spot to trade nuptials

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Contributing Writer

When TJ and Amy met over drinks with mutual friends in 2010, it was love at first sight. Because TJ (McCluskie) had many happy memories of holidaying in Penticton, it was only natural that he proposed to Amy in the Okanagan.

“We got engaged in the Naramata Bench in the spring of 2013 so the Okanagan holds a special place for us,” adds the Vancouver police officer. “Literally, it was 30 minutes after Amy said yes that we started looking at venues in the area for our wedding.”

After a few trips back and forth from their home in the Lower Mainland, both decided that the perfect backdrop for their “I dos,” was at the Sanctuary Gardens in Kelowna.

“We both wanted an outdoor ceremony and we love being near the water, but we wanted a private venue,” says Amy. “My wedding planner had seen the Sanctuary Gardens and sent me photos. “TJ and I both loved the gardens — it was breathtaking and overlooked these amazing lake views.”

The ceremony took place on a brilliantly sunny September afternoon inside the open-air chapel-inspired gazebo.

“It truly was my dream wedding and it exceeded my expectations,” says the beaming bride.

Then, it was off to the Hotel Eldorado, which played host to their evening reception. With the lights glittering off the water, the Lakeside Sunroom and Terrace were transformed into an oasis of Victorian beauty.

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CedarCreek vineyards, planted in the 1930s, features 50 acres of Pinot Noir, Merlot, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer, Riesling and Ehrenfelser. PHOTO SUPPLIED BRIAN SPROUT/DESTINATION BC

TRAVEL



Last year CedarCreek Estate Winery saw 160 wedding ceremonies on its grounds between the middle of May and the end of September. PHOTO SUPPLIED KEVIN TOWBRIDGE

Kelowna puts on a party

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“My mom and I came here to check it out and felt like we were in the Hamptons,” says Amy. “No matter how many emails or phone calls, the staff at the Eldorado was amazing with us.”

In the end, Kelowna gave the happy couple the lake, the sun and time with loved ones from across the province and beyond to celebrate their special day.

It doesn't come as a surprise that the Okanagan Valley keeps garnering rave reviews on Wine Enthusiast magazine's top 10 list of travel destinations. With 131 wineries, and counting, as well as more than 8,000 acres of vineyard and a fabulous selection of wines to choose from, the magazine went on to proclaim the Okanagan as a “shining jewel.”

Kelowna wedding destinations:

■ **Summerhill Pyramid:**

Last year, more than 130 weddings took place at Summerhill Pyramid Winery — Canada's largest organic vineyard. The winery offers a wide variety of venues for your wedding ceremony and reception. There is the Summerhill Sunset Veranda, Vineyard Ballroom, Heritage Lawn and Vineyard Lawn, all with their own unique style. Summerhill Pyramid Winery, 4870 Chute Lake Rd., Kelowna.

Reservations: 1-800-667-3538 ext. 131 (Toll free) or email: bookings@summerhill.bc.ca
Rates: Wedding fees range from \$1,000 during the weekdays to \$2,000 Friday to Sunday. For a full package, including all food, beverages, venues fees and services range from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

■ **CedarCreek Estate Winery:**

Last year, the winery saw 160 wedding ceremonies on its grounds. Typically, the venue accommodates a maximum of 150 guests. The Pavilion and Rose Garden's private grounds, lush vineyards and breathtaking views of the lake and mountains provide an exceptional setting for an intimate wedding ceremony. The

Rose is open for wedding ceremonies only between the middle of May until end of September.

Contact: Leigh Varga, Wedding Coordinator. P: 250-764-8866 or email: lvarga@cedarcreek.bc.ca or visit cedarcreek.bc.ca. The winery is located at 5445 Lakeshore Rd.

Rates: \$3,000 for Saturdays; \$2,500 for a Friday or Sunday date (long weekends the price goes up to \$3,000); or \$2,200 for a mid-week date. Price includes private use of the gardens for a three-hour period, set up and set down of white padded garden chairs and an hour rehearsal the day before your ceremony.

■ **Hotel Eldorado:**

Reservations: 1-866-608-7500 (Toll free). Rates: Wedding packages range from the rental for its Lakeside Sunroom and Terrace for 50 or more guests for dinner service \$750 to Lower Boardwalk ceremony starting at \$1,000 for rental. (Do not include the cost of food or alcohol). Hotel Eldorado, a lakeside boutique hotel, 500 Cook Rd. Kelowna. Website: eldoradokelowna.com.

■ **Sanctuary Gardens:**

Built in 1905, the Lindon House is a stunning heritage mansion boasting English-inspired gardens. Owners Linda and Don McDonald only accept two weddings per month during the wedding season. Off the beaten track, this beautifully restored building is set on over half an acre of sprawling property. Brides using the Lindon House for their wedding, rehearsal dinner or reception can also stay at Lindon House overnight in the two beautiful guest rooms and wake on the wedding day ready to prepare for the day. Lindon House is located at 1449 Ethel St. P: 250-317-8296 or email info@lindonhouse.ca or visit lindonhouse.ca. Maximum is 150 guests. Rates: Five hours for \$1,800 or \$2,300 to include the kitchen rental. You must provide your own catering services. Sanctuary Gardens, 3792 Carrall Rd., West Kelowna. Reservations: 250-878-2116 or info@sanctuarygardens.ca. Call for pricing. For more information about Kelowna, visit tourismkelowna.com.