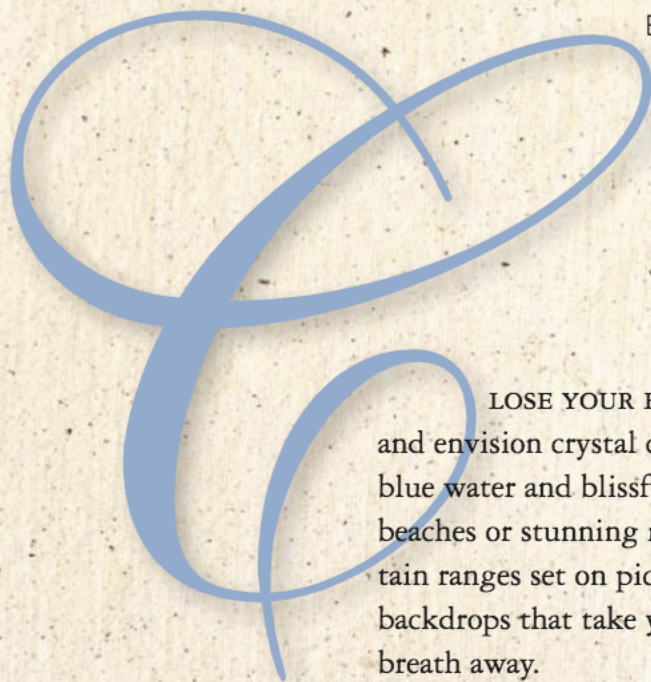


WEDDINGS 2020: PLANNING FOR FUTURE WEDDING GETAWAYS

BY MICHELLE DURPETTI



LOSE YOUR EYES and envision crystal clear blue water and blissful sandy beaches or stunning mountain ranges set on picturesque backdrops that take your breath away.

At a time when the world feels chaotic and lives have been turned upside down, imagining sunnier days, future trips, and dreamy destinations can provide a level of solace and hope for all. For couples with destination weddings in mind for 2021 and beyond, in particular, daydreaming and planning for the future can not only provide a mental escape, but also it's a wise idea.

Looking forward to your big day and planning ahead, even amid uncertainty and ever-changing circumstances, can help ensure that you still have the wedding you imagined.

Here are a few pieces of advice to help keep your dreams alive.

KNOW THAT IT'S OKAY TO CRY.

While looking forward to destination weddings and dreamy getaways can be comforting and bring joy, it is also important to feel what you need to feel during this time. Changing plans, personal hardships, or difficulties in executing your vision can be frustrating. It's okay to bury your head in your horse's mane and cry, be angry, or feel a wide range of emotions.

GET LOST IN FARAWAY LOCATIONS – VIRTUALLY.

Whether or not you have already chosen your wedding destination, or even if you have no wedding planned at all, enjoy imagining the possibilities. Browse the internet, purchase a book filled with beautiful destinations, or take advantage of virtual tours now offered by wedding venue destinations from

Mexico to Madrid. Outdoor equestrian destinations, from stunning stables to rustic ranches, make ideal venues amid social distancing concerns – and an ideal way for equestrians to daydream.

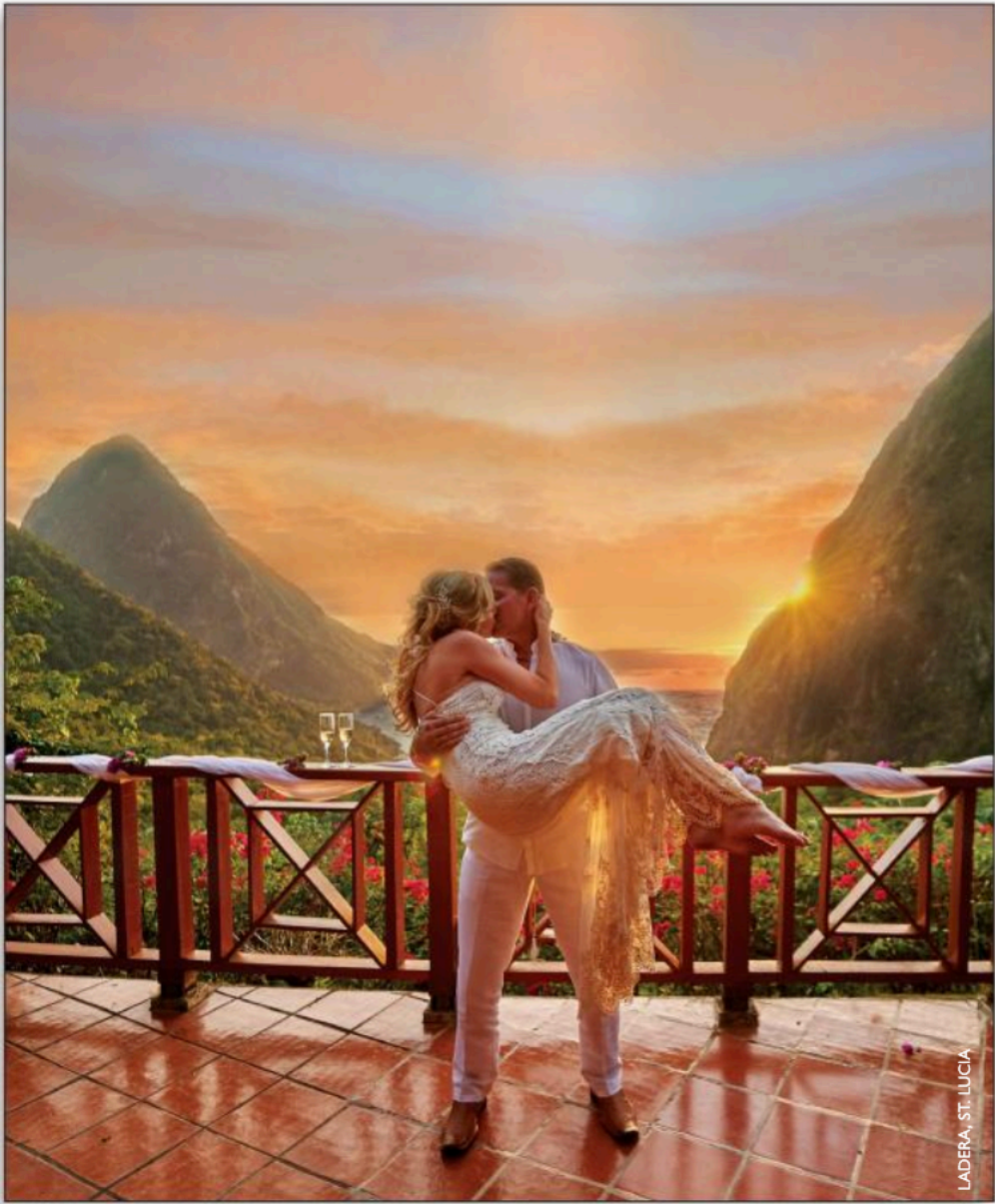
ENVISION THE DESIGN AND STYLE OF YOUR WEDDING.

While you're picturing your wedding location, think about how you want your big day to feel and the aesthetics you love. Perhaps you would like to see your horse included, or you'd like to come up with subtle ways to incorporate equestrian details. Because many vendors cannot currently produce events, they are feeling more creative than ever with more time to brainstorm exciting experiences, equestrian and non-equestrian alike, to weave into each wedding. Mood boards, virtual brainstorm sessions with friends, and good old-fashioned magazines are all great

MICHELLE DURPETTI founded Michelle Durpetti Events in 2008 and has since made a name as one of Chicago's leading firms for wedding styling, planning, logistics management, and event production locally and worldwide. In addition to wedding planning, Durpetti is an avid equestrian, competing in the amateur hunter and jumper divisions and training with Caitlyn Shiels at True North Stables



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places to look for inspiration right now. For equestrian wedding inspiration, flip through past wedding issues of EQ Living or simply search “wedding” on EQLiving.com.

ENJOY WEDDING PHOTOS AND FIND A PHOTOGRAPHER THAT MATCHES YOUR STYLE.

While you’re perusing photos, add wedding photos to your list of images to enjoy as you narrow in on your photographer of choice.

Renowned wedding photographer, Collin Pierson, says, “Photographers are such a key component to a fantastic wedding day. We are the documentarians, the ones that help you permanently capture the memories and moments from your wedding, even after the cake has been eaten and the drinks have been poured. Your wedding photos are a tangible way to look back, whether it be an online gallery, or via a wedding album.

“Because of this, we tend to book fairly far in advance. On top of that, we are striving to reschedule the 2020 weddings, creating a very full schedule for 2021 and even 2022. My advice would be to schedule your FaceTime and Zoom calls with photographers that you love now, and don’t be afraid to ask questions! Ask how we approach weddings, about our style, and our business as well.”

If you’re incorporating horses or dogs in your wedding, it’s also important to ask your photographer about their level of comfort and experience with shooting photos with animals.

SPEAK WITH A WEDDING PLANNER ABOUT A GAME PLAN AND YOUR TOP PRIORITIES.

If you don’t have a planner, now is a great time to consider one. Having a knowledgeable guide who is an excellent resource on the industry is an investment worth having.

Once you have a planner, communicate what’s most important to you and your vision for your big day. If horses are a top priority for your big day, utilizing an equestrian wedding planner can be an added bonus. But for all good planners alike, bringing milestone events to life is a passion and calling, and, particularly amid the current climate, there is more determination than ever to see couples through the planning process and to rejoice with them when they finally say, “I do.”

KNOW THAT COMMUNICATION IS KEY.

Many people are nervous about vendors, deposits, contracts, and payments, given the continuously changing circumstances. To help eliminate those nerves, and avoid losing any deposits, create a solid list of questions with your planner to bring up with each vendor that interests you. When you make your decision, make it on a

case-by-case basis so that each vendor feels as good as you do moving forward, and continue to keep the lines of communication open.

If you have a 2021 date and destination set, communicate with your guests as well and work with your wedding planner to keep everyone informed and to help alleviate any uncertainties that others may have.

REMEMBER YOUR WHY.

Your wedding day is not just about the beautiful destination you got to visit or how good your décor looked. It’s about marrying someone you love, vowing to spend the rest of your lives together, and likely doing so surrounded by friends and family members that you hold dear. So, while you’re daydreaming about those beautiful sandy beaches or riding in on your horse in a white dress, spend a little time remembering your “why” and dreaming about the life that you get to build with the one that you love.