

## A PERFECT WEDDING

### Events by Classic: A marriage of taste and talent

By USA CRAWFORD WATSON

IT ALL began with a wedding — theirs. Having met at Mission Ranch, where both worked (he as general manager and she as a waitress), the couple wanted a local wedding. When neither was able to identify the right person or place to put together their vision, they decided to do it themselves. And then they opted to do the same thing

for others.

Married in 2002, Dean and Debbie Young established Classic Catering that same year to provide gourmet food, both artistic and appetizing, for weddings and other special occasions. With an extensive resume as a personal, corporate and catering chef that spans 30 years, Dean took the helm as

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The setting at Events by Classic in Pacific Grove (right) is sublime, in a Victorian-small-town kind of way, and so is the food, prepared and served by owner Dean Young (above).



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executive chef.

Four years later, when Debbie's father and stepmother, Jim and Cheryl Cox, came to visit, they drove past the old Maison Bleue bed and breakfast in Pacific Grove, spied the "for sale" sign, and saw in it the opportunity to partner with the Youngs to create a wedding venue.

Inside the entrance of this restored Victorian hangs a reproduction of Johannes Vermeer's masterful painting, "Girl with a Pearl Earring," which serves as a silent introduction to the refined and romantic ambiance of the place. A collection of masterpieces reproduced by advanced art students, complemented by period furnishings, carries the elegance throughout the space.

Built in 1907 and owned by Robert Martin, as the green plaque out front attests, the Pacific Grove historic house is now home to Gatherings, one of two dedicated wedding venues owned and operated by Dean and Debbie Young.

Located steps from Lovers Point and Berwick Park, Gatherings offers two scenic settings for coastal ceremonies, followed by a reception back at the house for up to 75 guests. Many couples — whether motivated by preference precipitation — choose to hold their ceremonies inside the romantic rooms as well.

The second wedding venue, The Perry House, is a Queen Anne Victorian, built in historic downtown Monterey in 1860 by whaling captain Manuel Perry. Restored to reflect the elegance of an earlier era, the house hosts up to 140 guests for an intimate or extravagant affair. Consider the carriage house with its spectacular stained-glass dome, the classic Captain's Room or the Harbor View Lounge with vantage on the Monterey Bay.

Recalling their own efforts to select the setting for their wedding, and aware of the many scenic beaches along the Peninsula, the Youngs established Monterey Beach

Weddings to help couples secure sites and host their own ceremonies in the sand. As their businesses continued to expand, under the auspices of Events by Classic, the couple decided to develop operations with the help of an experienced events manager.

"We wanted to bring in someone very seasoned, very strong," says Debbie, "someone with significant experience in catering, in wedding planning and in special events management, who knew and understood the area. It was a tall order."

Meanwhile, Richard Wood was looking to pave a new career path for himself. Hailing from the legendary Meadowood Resort in Napa Valley, where he served as private dining and conference services manager, he had moved to the Monterey Peninsula to run the catering department for the landmark Casa

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Beach weddings are one of the company's specialties. But be prepared for the possibility of fog!

## EVENTS

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Munras in Monterey. Next, he brought his expertise to storied La Playa hotel where, as director of catering and social events, he created celebrations for weddings and anniversaries, private and corporate parties and events. When the hotel was sold, Wood established his own business, which he called, Inspired Weddings & Events.

That enterprise's website was the way the Youngs found Wood. Over a cup of coffee last month, they quickly engaged him as their new events manager. The relationship has proved a marriage of like minds.

"I started my own company to stay in this industry," says Wood. "Yet everything I wanted to do, the Youngs are doing, exactly the way I would do it. My goal was to give bridal cou-

ples an unforgettable experience. Whether we're creating a simple ceremony or an extravagant event, it's still about understanding expectations and knowing how to surpass them. And I have to say, I haven't seen such exquisite quality and presentation of food since I left the Napa Valley."

So they don't bake cakes. And they don't take pictures or arrange flowers. But they know the people who do. Events by Classic works with an array of local vendors to complement their catering and venues, and create a marriage of scenic settings, fine food and memorable moments.



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