



All FOR love

BETWEEN THE HILLS AND THE WHITE-CAPPED SEA, THE BAY OF PLENTY HAS AN ABUNDANCE OF TALENTED ARTISANS AND TRULY SPECIAL SPOTS TO TAKE YOUR DAY TO THE NEXT LEVEL



First-hand fairytale

Jacqueline O'Neill and Wade Hammond married at Ataahua, Tauranga, close to where the bride grew up

We chose to get married in the Bay of Plenty because there's no place like home. My favourite thing about this region is how relaxed it is, plus it lends itself well to weddings because the weather is relatively reliable.

We exchanged vows in Ataahua's walled garden and held our reception in the adjacent dining room. Ataahua is stunning, so we didn't need to do much, but I found some vintage suitcases and made bunting, then trusted Shaye from On My Hand for special extras and flowers; my face lit up when I saw the arrangement she'd created for over the fireplace.

Our day had so many highlights, but some that really stand out were arriving in a Kombi van from Lovedubs, our catering by Hereford Kitchen (our guests raved about it for months afterwards) and our chocolate raspberry, banoffee dulce and lemon sherbet cake by Spongedrop – it was to die for! ▶



THE DETAILS

Bride's gown ALLURE BRIDAL Bride's shoes MI PIACI
Groom and groomsmen's attire HALLENSTEIN
BROTHERS Hair BLOW HAIR CO Makeup BLUSH
COSMETICS Venue ATAAHUA GARDEN VENUE Styling
and flowers ON MY HAND Catering HEREFORD
KITCHEN Cake SPONGEDROP Celebrant MICHELLE MUIR
Transport LOVEDUBS Photographer MAREE WILKINSON

PHOTOGRAPHY MAREEWILKINSON.COM



Bouquets by Honeysuckle Rose



On the Beach

FOR EVENTS WITH A...

BEACH VIBE: Waihi Beach's On the Beach (onthebeachweddings.co.nz) has a floor-to-ceiling view of the waves. Hold your ceremony on the sand, then amble across the lawn to the dining room where a fully catered feast awaits.

VINTAGE SLANT: try Old Forest School in Pongakawa (oldforestschool.co.nz), a restored 1930s school house set on three acres studded with spots for photos. Hold a rustic reception at Redwood Stables and stay in the historic forestry cabins on site.

COUNTRY LODGE APPEAL: opt for Treetops Lodge in Rotorua (treetops.co.nz). Newly renovated, it's surrounded by an 800-year-old forest, offers various settings and can cater to events of any size. Complete with villas, lodge rooms, a spa, a gym and access to a golf course, you'll want for nothing.

FRENCH FLAVOUR: check out The French Country House in Pahoa (thefrenchcountryhouse.co.nz). A blend of classic and contemporary on a property with all the romance of the Gallic countryside, you'll be smitten with its opulent décor, glorious gardens and luxury on-site accommodation.

FANCY AN INTIMATE DINING SPACE WITH AN INDOOR/OUTDOOR FEEL? THE IVY-COVERED GARDEN ROOM AT TAURANGA'S L'ORANGERIE ([LORANGERIE.CO.NZ](http://lorangerie.co.nz)) IS AS PRETTY AS THEY COME.

Precious petals

BOASTING SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S LUSHEST SCENERY, THIS REGION IS ALSO FERTILE GROUND FOR FLORISTS.

Rosie's Wildflower Co has a "wild and whimsical" style and offers a DIY service for couples wanting to do their own arranging, delivering carefully curated buckets of beautiful blooms that you can assemble yourself. rosieswildflowerco.com
Honeysuckle Rose For those who like a relaxed, romantic look, Jess Jackson of Honeysuckle Rose (honeysucklerose.co.nz) picks from her childhood garden and services the Bay of Plenty, Coromandel and Waikato.

Shot list

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER FOR ROSE MCMAHON, AKA LITTLE MISS ROSE (ROSEMCMAHON.COM), THE 14-YEAR-OLD WOWING THE REGION WITH HER PHOTOGRAPHIC TALENT. SHE SHARES ADVICE FOR GETTING THE BEST OUT OF YOUR IMAGES IN THE SUNNY BOP.

1 "Face away from the sun during your ceremony to get beautiful backlit photos and avoid squinty eyes. Try using the Sun Seeker app to see where the sun will be positioned."

2 "Suspend a canopy of lace over the bridal party during the ceremony to shade their faces."

3 "Ask your guests to take their sunglasses off when they're being snapped so you can see the emotion in their eyes."

4. *Make the most of the rays. Provide parasols or hats to add an extra dimension to your images.*

5 "The Bay abounds with photogenic forests and bush. Try Rotoehu Forest in Pongakawa or the Redwoods in Rotorua."

6 "Bring a festival theme to your wedding photos at Mount Maunganui's Little Big Markets and Gourmet Night Market."

7. *"Lakes, rivers and beaches are easily accessible in this district. Check out Pukehina Beach, Lake Rotoma and Lake Rotoiti."*

8 "The sparkling ocean, funky lights and multi-coloured containers at the Port of Tauranga make great industrial backdrops."

9 "There are lots of charming farms and orchards in the Bay of Plenty. In exchange for a box of beer or chocolates, most people would be happy to provide a shoot location."

10 "Gather in front of one of the walls around Tauranga adorned with great graffiti artwork by the likes of Mr G."

HUNTERS & GATHERERS

TAURANGA IS A HUB FOR CREATIVE TYPES AND OFFERS OPTIONS FOR A HEN EVENT WITH AN ARTSY SLANT.

Craft Collective (craftcollective.co.nz) creates customised celebrations. Enjoy an art lesson, make soap, screen-print a cushion or even make your own clutch. Or consider a workshop at Pickled Whimsy (pickledwhimsy.co.nz), where you'll learn how to build terrariums and kokedama (Japanese moss balls) that could be used to beautify your reception.

AND FOR HIM... Let the boys be boys on a stag do at Te Puke's Equine Estate Sporting Claybirds (equinesportingclaybirds.co.nz). Surrounded by native bush, they can take aim to their hearts' content, accompanied by an experienced guide.



Art meets dessert in a cake by Sweet Deer

STREET FOOD AND TEMPTING TREATS

Tap into the latest trends and have fun with your catering. We love these mouth-watering options

SWEET DEER

A Whakatane-based baker, chef and artist specialising in hand-painted cakes that are as beguiling to behold as they are delicious. sweetdeer.co.nz

DUTCH QUEEN

Dutch street food (including authentic chips/friets and ice cream) served from the cutest little caravan. dutchqueen.co.nz

NONA'S CAKES

Nourishing and beautifully decorated, these cakes cater to any dietary requirement and are made with free-range eggs, unbleached flours and natural sugars. nonacakes.co.nz

TAG BURGER

A funky truck dishing up gourmet burgers, some laced with a secret sauce handed down from the owner's 104-year-old grandmother. tagburger.co.nz

FACE TIME Desiree Osterman (makeupartistdesireeosterman.com) has enjoyed an international career and is now in demand as a Bay of Plenty-based makeup artist. Her advice when marrying on the beach? "Apply primer before your make-up, use a good setting powder or spray, and opt for waterproof everything if you can."

PHOTOGRAPHY (FACING PAGE/TOP LEFT) JANE KEAM; (FACING PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT) ROSE MCMAHON; (THIS PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT) ANNE PAAR; (TOP RIGHT) NIKKI SOUTH



Kutarere church, Opoitiki

BEFORE & AFTER

AS WELL AS SURFING AND SUNBATHING (SPF IN TOW!), THE BOP HAS MYRIAD ACTIVITIES TO KEEP YOU ENTERTAINED

- ◆ Enjoy a picnic at Bowentown, a family-friendly cove near Waihi Beach, then shake off the post-feast sleepiness with a wander over the hill to explore the opposite side of the peninsula.
- ◆ A short drive from Whakatane is Ohope, where just 15 minutes walk from the main beach you'll find magical Otara-wairere Bay, accessible only by foot or kayak.
- ◆ No visit to the Bay of Plenty is complete for international guests without a trip to Rotorua. Or take a break with your bridesmaids at Polynesian Spa (polynesianspa.co.nz), where you can indulge in thermal-mud spa treatments.
- ◆ Take a tour to explore two of the region's offshore gems: active volcano White Island, and wildlife and plant sanctuary Whale Island. Visit whiteisland.co.nz.
- ◆ Spend a romantic evening paddling amid the swans on a lake lit by glow worms. At McLaren Falls Park in the Kaimai Ranges, you'll be guided through the tranquil waterways at dusk. Visit waimarino.com.
- ◆ Appease your adventurous side with the rush of a whitewater rafting expedition. Wet 'n' Wild has options on the Wairoa River and elsewhere in the area. Visit wetwildrafting.co.nz.