



Explore

**Big Sky**

# Wedding

SPECIAL SECTION

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**Your guide to wedding season in southwest Montana**

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**Whipped Confections**

Bozeman's far from  
cookie-cutter baker

**Kokoro Flowers**

Beautiful bouquets  
for every bride

**Wedding Guest Activities**

Entertainment for  
your friends & family

# Wedding

## AVERAGE COST BREAKDOWN IN THE U.S.



A fairytale wedding has become something that most brides and grooms look forward to as one of the most important and memorable days of their life. Visions of a perfect day push planners to labor over every last detail—from the dress, to the food, to the party favors.

With those nearest and dearest to them present, it's no wonder why some couples are willing to spend a good chunk of change on their big day. Couples have consistently been spending more each year on the total cost of their weddings, and this trend shows no signs of slowing down.

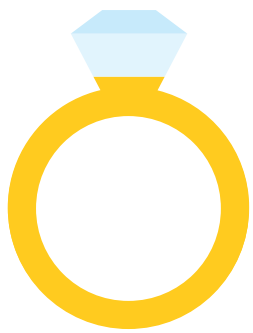
Montana weddings are truly unique, with countless options for a venue to provide breathtaking scenery for the special day. But the special day wouldn't be possible without proper planning.

From picking the venue, which tends to be the largest wedding expense, down to selecting sweet treats to celebrate the occasion, EBS's wedding guide will help guide engaged couples on their wedding planning journey.

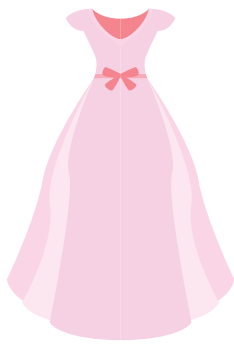
For example, floral arrangements can set the tone of the wedding, with roses providing a more elegant setting, or sunflowers offering a more casual atmosphere. A beautiful cake provides not only a tasty treat to end the night, but many are now thinking of this as a centerpiece of art for their reception.

And don't forget the guests! Many attendees plan a vacation around the big day, and we've included a robust list of activities to keep them busy and entertained throughout their stay.

No matter what details the bride and groom choose, weddings provide a festive time to be with friends and family and celebrate newfound love. —Carie Birkmeier



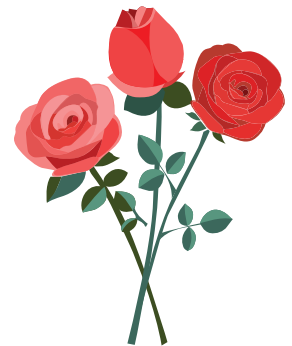
Engagement Ring  
**\$5,871**



Wedding Gown  
**\$1,469**



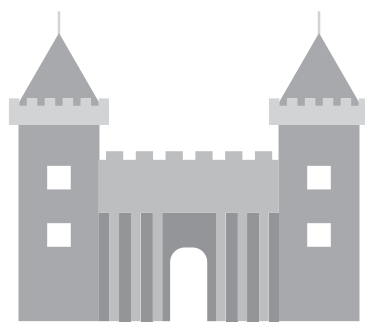
Groom's Tuxedo  
**\$269**



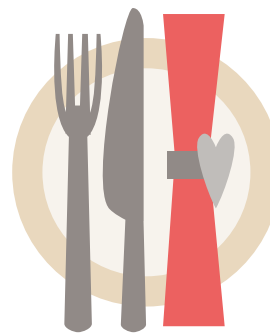
Florist/Decor  
**\$2,300**



Rehearsal Dinner  
**\$1,296**



Reception Venue  
**\$14,788**



Catering (per head)  
**\$273**



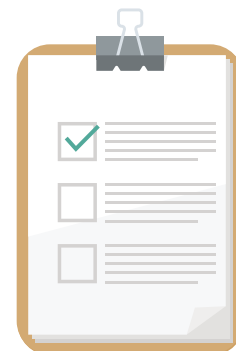
Cake  
**\$575**



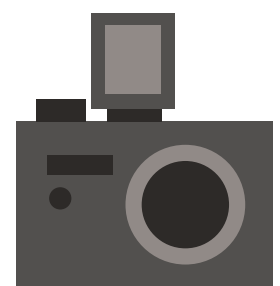
Live Band  
**\$3,833**



Invitations  
**\$445**



Wedding Planner  
**\$1,996**



Photographer  
**\$2,618**



# Bozeman Bridal Walk makes it easy, and fun, to shop local for wedding needs

EBS STAFF

On Saturday, April 1 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. the Downtown Bozeman Association presents the 13th annual Bridal Walk, a self-guided stroll to nearly 40 local businesses offering wedding-related goods or services.

Brides-to-be and their entourages are encouraged to stop by the historic Baxter Hotel at any time during the event and pick up a map, informative booklet and bag of goodies before starting the tour down Main Street. On the circuit are businesses offering dresses, rings, invitations, flowers, gift registries, catering services and more.

Participants will be able to sample wine, cake and hors d'oeuvres from various vendors along the way. Montana Party Rentals and Zac's Montana Kitchen have partnered to co-host a wedding lounge and tasting area in front of First Security Bank, and Bozeman Spirits Distillery has teamed up with Rainbow Ranch Lodge for a cocktail and appetizer sampling.



Connect with the Bozeman businesses that can satisfy all your wedding needs during the 13th annual Bridal Walk on Saturday, April 1. PHOTOS COURTESY OF DOWNTOWN BOZEMAN ASSOCIATION



Pick up a map at The Baxter Hotel and start your tour of nearly 40 businesses and vendors offering refreshments, raffles and information about their wedding-related goods and services.

There is also the opportunity to win many in-store giveaways and raffle prizes including a \$500 shopping spree to be used at any of the participating businesses. Consult the Bridal Walk booklet for details.

A photography contest, featuring more than 15 professional wedding images by local and regional photographers, will be on display at the Element Bozeman hotel at 25 E. Mendenhall St. during the Bridal Walk event. Vote on the most scenic image, the most unique image and the best overall bridal image, while choosing which photographer might be best for your own wedding.

“The Downtown Bridal Walk is a fun and unique way to plan your Montana wedding,” said DBA Director Ellie Staley. “At each stop you are not only welcomed by merchants that can help you with every small detail of your big day, you are also invited to partake in wine and appetizer tastings, raffles and bridal activities of all sorts to make your day of planning exciting and memorable.”

Pick up your Downtown Bozeman Bridal Walk map in the upstairs ballroom of The Baxter Hotel located at 105 W. Main St. between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday, April 1. Additional event information can be found at [downtownbozeman.org](http://downtownbozeman.org).

## Bridal Walk Map

- 1 The Baxter Ballroom registration 11am-3pm
- 2 Bozeman Spirits & Distillery spirits & cocktails, grand prize drawing
- 3 Rainbow Ranch Lodge spirits & cocktails, grand prize drawing
- 4 Erotique get a fun gift and enter a drawing
- 5 Heyday thoughtful gifts
- 6 Collective by dawn josephine discounts, giveaway & refreshments
- 7 The Crossroads schedule an appointment
- 8 Pure Barre bride-to-be package
- 9 The Element by Westin Bozeman we cater to groups large and small ★ Photography Contest

- 10 Meridian Boutique schedule a private shopping night
- 11 Indulgence walk-ins and appts. welcome
- 12 Montana Gift Corral 20% off cake toppers
- 13 Privat - Private Event Space enter to win prizes
- 14 LillyLu enjoy delectable samples
- 15 The Gem Gallery sip and sample
- 16 Zac's Montana Kitchen catering services & innovative menus
- 17 Montana Party Rentals offering classic and vintage rentals
- 18 Owenhouse Ace Hardware enter our drawing
- 19 The Spice and Tea Exchange of Bozeman Enjoy a sip of bubbly and specials

- 20 Miller's Jewelry first 50 brides win prize
- 21 Suelto Boutique win a pair of hanky panky thongs
- 22 Montana Honey Bee Company enjoy awesome honey treats
- 23 Head West indulge in mimosas and sweets
- 24 REVOLVR Menswear stop in for a white wedding cocktail
- 25 Alara Jewelry free gift and scavenger hunt
- 26 Hattie Rex 20% off custom order

★ 7th Annual Photography Contest vote for your favorite images:  
 Best Overall  
 Most Unique  
 Most Scenic



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# Whipped Confections

## Edible art in the Gallatin Valley

BY TAYLOR-ANN SMITH  
EBS STAFF

Satisfying Bozeman's sweet tooth with an artistic twist is Jasmine Lilly's local bakery, Whipped Confections. Opened in 2013, Lilly's small company is bringing big taste to the area.

Lilly is far from your cookie-cutter baker. She relies heavily on her extensive culinary background and education in the arts to bake one-of-a-kind delights. Growing up in Bozeman, Lilly was introduced to cooking at an early age by her mother, who was a personal chef. However, her mom despised baking and needed an extra hand to assist with the sweeter side of events catering. Lilly "applied" for the job when she was 6 years old, baking a banana cream pie while her mother slept.

Lilly's professional culinary experience began in 2001 when she got a job at Looie's Down Under—the now defunct Main Street restaurant—which led to various other opportunities from a barista at International Coffee to the pastry chef at the Bozeman Co-op. There, she helped develop the gluten-free offerings that are still popular today and she credits this experience for teaching her the "science" of baking by learning how ingredients work and interact.



Whipped Confections uses preserved rhubarb strips to add an extra layer of texture and color to this cake.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF RUTHLESS PHOTOGRAPHY

What makes Whipped's creations so special is Lilly's multifaceted love for the arts. An alumna of Montana State University, she began her education in the ceramics program but eventually finished with a degree in metalsmithing.

When asked how her artistic skills and baking complement each other, she explains how applying an even pressure while frosting mimics that of sculpting clay. She says metalsmithing honed her sharp eye, explaining how she would painstakingly solder every chain link in her necklaces, a skill that reflects in the details of her baked goods.

"Pastry making is an inherent[ly] creative adventure," Lilly said. "The fact that I top it off with my background in the arts really sets me apart and gives me a unique perspective on problem solving."

Whipped Confections is focused on providing clients with goods featuring unique ingredients and a personal, artistic touch. Lilly explains that she's developed a new way of decorating cakes using preserved fruit instead of the industry standard of fondant. She utilizes various fruits, such as halved peaches or strips of rhubarb, in a graphic design matter to create patterns and textures.



Add an extra special touch to your wedding with hand-painted delights such as sugar cookies.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN GAIN PHOTOGRAPHY

One of her other notable creations is her hand-painted cookies. These edible art pieces not only make a good treat but are a creative alternative to place cards at a wedding or special event.

Being heavily involved in the wedding industry, Lilly created a side project known as "The Avowed Podcast." This podcast explores the meaning of marriage in the modern age through conversations with wedding industry icons, real couples and locals in the community with an interesting take on love.

From dessert platters to birthday cupcakes and wedding cakes, or just to satisfy your cookie craving, Whipped Confections offers sweet delights in the form of edible art.

Visit [whippedconfections.com](http://whippedconfections.com) for more information and you can subscribe to 'The Avowed Podcast' on iTunes.

A version of this story first appeared in the Oct. 31, 2014, edition of EBS.



This French-style cake has layers of crepes stacked together with pastry cream between the layers. Garnished with an array of fruit, it makes a great alternative to a traditional wedding cake.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF RUTHLESS PHOTOGRAPHY



# Kokoro Flowers

## A farm to table arrangement

BY SARAH GIANELLI  
EBS ASSOCIATE EDITOR

For eco-conscious brides or those simply looking for flowers to suit an authentic Montana wedding, Kokoro Flowers is a one-stop shop you can feel good about.

Meara Cassidy and her partner Travis Cox grow more than 100 varieties of seasonal flowers and ornamental grasses between April and late September on their 1-acre plot on organic Rathvinden Farm. Located at the base of the Bridger Mountains in Belgrade, Rathvinden Farm also serves as a wedding venue.

“A lot of brides are looking for something that fits into the mountain setting of Montana,” Cassidy said. “Since we grow with the seasons, that’s exactly what we can provide.” She also said they aim to develop a personal relationship with couples, and work together to bring their wedding flowers to life.

“We understand that flowers are important additions to weddings, and wish to provide beautiful, quality cuts that will flourish as a backdrop for any couple’s big day!” she said.

While Cassidy’s commitment to green-farming means her offerings are dictated by what’s in season, that does not translate to a paltry selection. “For a small grower, we offer a huge range to choose from,” Cassidy said. “We’ll be focusing a lot on what’s popular in the bridal world right now—a lot of pastels and greenery—as well as the full gamut of bright colors and show-stopping flowers.”

Cassidy rattles off sunflowers, Ranunculus, Anemone, snapdragons, lilies, foxgloves, poppies, sweet peas, tulips and daffodils in the show-stopper category; cosmos, sea holly and love-in-a-mist as examples of secondary flowers; and Bells of Ireland, honeywort, Euphorbia, forget-me-not, feverfew, Bupleurum, lady’s mantle, sage, and dusty miller—“just to name a few.”



Meara Cassidy and Travis Cox grow over 100 varieties of flowers on their 1-acre plot on organic Rathvinden Farm in Belgrade. In addition to providing personalized, farm-fresh cuts for weddings and special events, Kokoro Flowers has become a popular fixture at regional farmers’ markets. PHOTO COURTESY OF KOKORO FLOWERS



Meara Cassidy of Kokoro Flowers works closely with couples to create unique arrangements that reflect their personal style and an authentically Montanan sense of place. PHOTO BY DAVID ERICKSON

She also incorporates foraged components such as ferns, aspens and pussy willows found on the land into her bouquets to further enhance a Montanan sense of place.

Cassidy has worked on small organic farms in Colorado and Montana since 2011, but the 2016 growing season marked the beginning of her full-time commitment to growing flowers organically in Montana’s Valley of Flowers.

In that short time, Cassidy’s earthy approach to decorative flowers has earned her gigs providing centerpieces for large-scale events like Big Sky PBR and for a multitude of area weddings at Rainbow Ranch Lodge, Rathvinden Farm, The Ponds at Dry Creek and Flying D Ranch.

Her flowers are as at home in a burlap-wrapped mason jar as they are in fine crystal and Cassidy is as hands-on with the arrangement design as her clients would like.

Brides-to-be are encouraged to visit Kokoro Flowers at Rathvinden Farm and see her abundant garden for themselves.

“You can really see what’s in season and work with Montana-grown arrangements—which is what a lot of brides who choose to get married here want,” Cassidy said. She adds that brides concerned about their environmental footprint can feel good about choosing Kokoro Flowers.

“Not only are we completely organic, there’s no fossil fuels expended for shipping. You can be excited that what you’re buying leaves a small environmental impact in terms of our farming and distribution techniques.”  
*For more information visit [kokoroflowers.com](http://kokoroflowers.com).*



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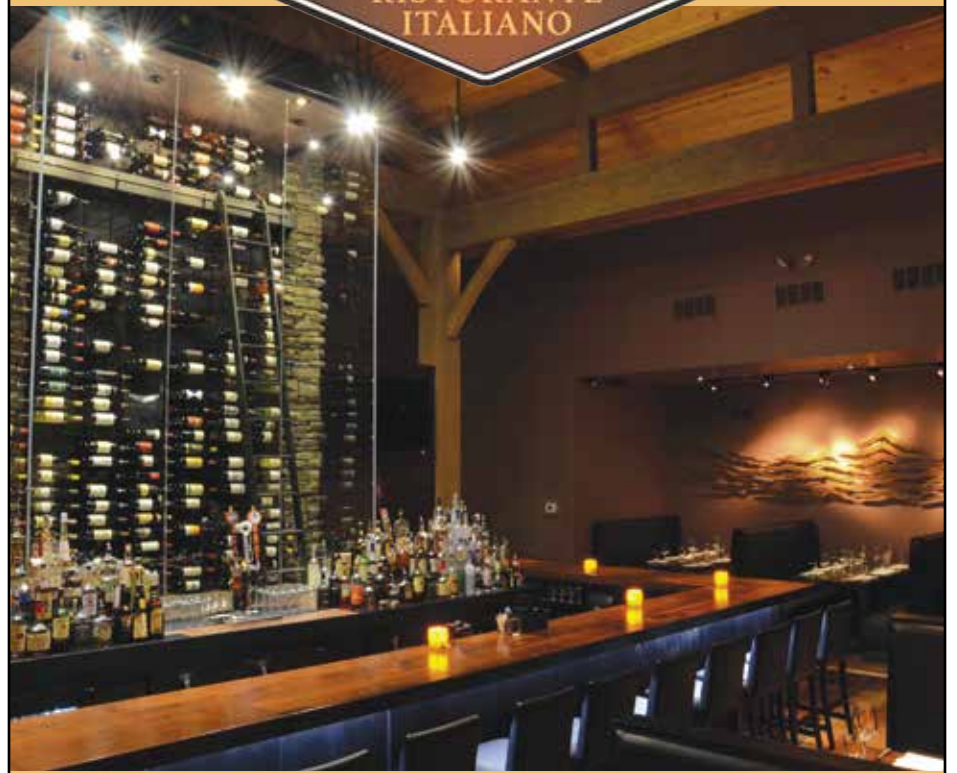
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lauren brown



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# 13th Annual Bridal Walk

Downtown Bozeman  
Saturday April 1st, 2017  
11am to 3pm



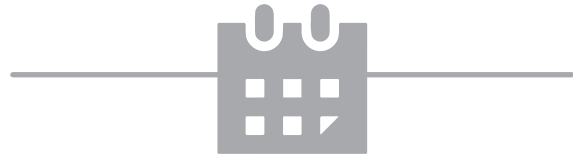
*Helping brides plan their Montana Wedding in the "Heart of Downtown Bozeman."*

[downtownbozeman.org](http://downtownbozeman.org)





# Wedding Planning Timeline



### 11-12 Months

- Set a date for your wedding
- Decide on a budget
- Choose your wedding party
- Research wedding venues
- Determine if you'd like to use a wedding planner
- Select options for venues and schedule tours
- Decide on a wedding theme and/or colors
- Book your ceremony and reception venues
- Book your ceremony officiant
- Draft your guest list and organize addresses

### 3-4 Months

- Send out formal invitations
- Meet with officiant
- Select and order wedding cake
- Research rehearsal dinner venues
- Schedule tasting with reception caterer
- Create/order wedding favors and centerpieces
- Finalize dates for bridal showers / parties

### Notes

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### 9-10 Months

- Book a photographer and videographer
- Have engagement photos taken
- Start shopping for your wedding dress
- Book your wedding planner, caterer, dessert supplier, event stylist, and florist
- Build your gift registry online and/or in store
- Finalize guest list
- Send out Save-The-Date cards (print or email)

### 2 Months

- Write your wedding vows
- Obtain your marriage license
- Design and order wedding programs
- Book rehearsal dinner venue
- Schedule hair & makeup trial
- Send a shot list to your photographer
- Finalize honeymoon plans

### 6-8 Weeks

- Collect RSVP's and organize seating chart
- Finalize menu selection with your caterer
- Order alcohol and beverages

### 8-7 Months

- Shop for wedding party's attire
- Research cake vendors and schedule tastings
- Consider honeymoon options
- Book a DJ or band for reception
- Reserve a hotel block for yourself and guests

### 2-6 Weeks

- Have final dress fitting
- Confirm total headcount with venue and caterer
- Review music with DJ or wedding band

### 5-6 Months

- Shop for wedding bands
- Arrange transportation for wedding day
- Reserve rental furniture for ceremony/reception
- Book hair and makeup artist
- Finalize honeymoon plans and book accordingly

### 1 Week

- Have ceremony rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
- Confirm date, time, and venue with all vendors
- Breathe: Take a moment to enjoy your soon-to-be life partner



# Keep visiting friends and family entertained

BY AMANDA EGGERT  
EBS SENIOR EDITOR

Finding activities to keep out-of-town friends and family entertained before and after the big day is a snap in southwestern Montana. Here are some options that highlight some of southwest Montana's best features.



OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTOS

## Go fly-fishing

The Gallatin River is a mecca for fly-fishing devotees for a reason. Gallatin River Guides can set you up with a rod, a few new flies, beta on what the rainbows have been biting on, and a guided excursion on the river.



## Tour Yellowstone

Bears, wolves and bison, oh my! From geological history to ecosystem-scale talks about the flora and fauna of Yellowstone, there's a lot to learn about our nation's first national park. Yellowstone Forever Institute can set up day trips or multi-day field excursions for park newbies and seasoned regulars alike.



PHOTO BY RYAN WEAVER

## Go for a soak

There are three excellent options for soaking within an hour and a half of Big Sky: Bozeman Hot Springs (36 miles), Norris Hot Springs (65 miles) and Chico Hot Springs (90 miles). Each offers a unique charm. Bozeman recently added several outdoor pools accented by multicolored neon lights and a "fire wall"; Norris is great for the outdoor soaker who enjoys live music; and Chico has heaps of history and first-class cuisine at its stunning Paradise Valley location.



## Sample local food and drink offerings

From more casual options like Gear Belly (think: pedaling a 14-person bike to Bozeman's breweries to sample their brews) to fine dining offerings at Big Sky Resort's annual Vine and Dine, southwest Montana's gastronomical offerings are growing and worth sampling. Beehive Basin and Lone Peak breweries in Big Sky are great post-fishing options, and a trip over the hill to Ennis wouldn't be complete without some Bighorn Bourbon from Willie's Distillery.



## Get up and dance

Southwestern Montana is host to many music events throughout the summer that are great for locals and visitors alike. Check out free music every Thursday evening during the summer at Big Sky's Music in the Mountains series or at Bozeman's Music on Main. Popular festivals such as Red Ants Pants, Headwaters Country Jam and Big Sky PBR feature major artists and are sure to get you dancing.



# Hitching posts

## Where to get married in Big Sky

EBS STAFF



PHOTO BY SALT AND PINE PHOTOGRAPHY

### Buck's T-4

46625 Gallatin Road  
(800) 822-4484  
buckst4.com

Buck's T-4 offers nationally recognized cuisine and a detail-oriented staff. Whether your dream is to get married under a blanket of snow, or in a garden filled with flowers, Buck's T-4 offers lodging and venues for outdoor ceremonies, receptions and rehearsal dinners with catering that can accommodate 10 to 225 guests.



PHOTO BY KENE SPERRY

### Rainbow Ranch

42950 Gallatin Road  
(406) 995-4132  
rainbowranchbigsky.com

Nestled snugly in the Gallatin Range alongside the picturesque Gallatin River, Rainbow Ranch Lodge provides an unparalleled setting offering a unique combination of elegance, romance and Big Sky Country alpine surroundings, complete with the Rainbow Ranch's lodge, historic barn, covered deck and river rock gazebo grill.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVERHOUSE GRILL

### Gallatin Riverhouse Grill

45130 Gallatin Road  
(406) 995-7427  
gallatinriverhousegrill.com

Perched above the shoreline of the Gallatin River, the Gallatin Riverhouse Grill boasts breathtaking views, immaculate grounds and distinctive Montana charm. The grounds include 2 acres of riverfront property, a volleyball court, horseshoe pits and can accommodate 200 to 600 people.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BROOK PETERSON PHOTOGRAPHY

### Big Sky Resort

50 Big Sky Resort Road  
(406) 995-5672  
bigskyresort.com

Big Sky Resort is surrounded by the peaks of the Northern Rocky Mountains, and offers a selection of locations for the wedding ceremony and reception, from the summertime Lone Peak Pavilion, to the elegant Summit Hotel Talus Room, and more.



PHOTO BY REID MORTH

### Moonlight Basin

66 Mountain Loop Road  
(800) 760-5658  
moonlightbasin.findyourbigsky.com

You will always remember when you said, "I do" and where you said it. Moonlight Basin is the ideal setting for that special day, with the scenic backdrop of the Spanish Peaks and Lone Mountain.





PHOTO BY MORGEN AYRES

**Cinnamon Lodge**

37090 Gallatin Road  
(406) 995-4253  
cinnamonlodgeandadventures.com

The Cinnamon Lodge is located on the banks of the Gallatin River between Big Sky and West Yellowstone, offering a majestic location that is a wonderful backdrop for any wedding.



PHOTO BY CLUNEY PHOTO (MARK CLUNEY)

**320 Guest Ranch**

205 Buffalo Horn Creek  
(406) 995-4283  
320ranch.com

Located on the Gallatin River, 12 miles south of Big Sky, the 320 Guest Ranch is surrounded by spectacular scenery and highlighted by the authentic beauty of rustic cabins and corrals. The 320 Guest Ranch was awarded Borrowed & Blue's 2017 Best Large Wedding Venue for Bozeman/Big Sky.



PHOTO BY GLACIER WORLD

**Montana Backcountry Adventures Dinner Yurt**

1 Lone Mountain Trail  
(406) 995-3880  
bigskyyurt.com

The Montana Dinner Yurt, located at Big Sky Resort, offers an off-the-grid backcountry setting for a truly unique wedding venue experience. The yurt operates throughout the winter and is located in the woods on the flanks of Lone Mountain, accessible by snowcat.

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