

by Improper Bostonian magazine and, says a delighted Smith, “In May 2005, we made the front page of the New York Times Sunday Style Section!”

Another thing attracting gay and lesbian couples to It’s About Time is the range of the wedding packages the company offers, including the \$950 Virginia Wolfe Package (a wedding-day coordination perfect for a small wedding), the Eleanor Roosevelt and Oscar Wilde packages (for larger, more complex needs) and the Alexander the Great (for a large destination wedding). Smith has worked with couples throughout Massachusetts and has planned destination weddings (a quickie wedding in Massachusetts to make it legal, a larger reception with family and friends in a foreign locale) as far away as Puerto Rico but, she says, working with out-of-state couples gives her plenty of ideas for different types of honeymoon and wedding set ups.

“In one case a couple came to Boston and so did 16 of their friends. They had an elegant ceremony on the patio of a restaurant, which was right on the Charles River in Cambridge. The ceremony and cocktail reception on the patio was followed by a decadent meal upstairs in a private dining area. Another couple came to town and I rented a house for them on Cape Cod for the week. They wanted an extremely intimate gathering and they were just joined by a sister and friend who flew to Boston and drove to the Cape. The only people attending the ceremony, which was held on the deck of the rental house, were the photographer, Justice of the Peace, and their two guests. Another couple flew to Boston and stayed at a gay owned B&B in the city. We helped them get their license and arranged for their ceremony, which was held in the basement of the B&B, accompanied only by the JP, photographer, and myself doing video. They had a large reception back at home and showed the video of the ceremony to their friends and family.”

While Provincetown is a fantastic one-stop shop where you can marry your beloved using a gay officiant, have a reception at a local gay-owned hot spot catered by a gay chef, honeymoon in a charming lesbian owned B&B, and then spend your days on the beaches, or enjoying restaurants and galleries, Boston might hit the tempo better for many betrothed couples. You can’t go wrong hosting a reception at The Eliot Hotel, voted one of the world’s best by Travel and Leisure. The Eliot (and it’s award winning restaurant and sashimi bar) is located on Commonwealth Avenue, a grand boulevard designed after the Champs Elysee in Paris. You would also be hard-pressed to find a more romantic escape than the Onyx Hotel, part of the super gay-friendly Kimpton boutique hotel collection. A supporter of same-sex marriage and gay rights, Onyx offers a “Proud to Be in Love” honeymoon package for queer couples that comes complete with champagne, welcome treats, flower petal turndown on bed and bath, professional portrait session, a twilight carriage ride around Faneuil Hall or the Public Garden, complimentary cocktail hour, and more.

PORTRAIT OF A WEDDING

Paul J. Meoni and Tom Kidd, together 17 years, were married September 17, 2005 at the First Congregational Church in Randolph, Massachusetts. The wedding was officiated by Reverend Dr. Laurene Bowers and a Jesuit priest who is a friend of Meoni. A reception for 100 followed at The Lantana in Randolph (<http://www.thelantana.com>). Meoni is a teacher at Weymouth High School and Kidd coordinates a wellness program at Health Trax. We asked Meoni, a member of the Randolph School Committee, for a few words of advice.



Tell me why you married at the First Congregational Church?

In my family (Italian, Roman-Catholic) when you get married, it’s done in a church. I wanted my parents, especially, to see our wedding as a real wedding, equal to all the other weddings that my family has witnessed.

How did you get to the church?

We rented a white, 1934 Cadillac Limousine that picked us up at our home and drove us to the church, to our photo site, and then to our reception hall.

Did you plan the event yourself or did you use a professional service?

I planned most of the wedding with a little help from Tom and a little help from Lantana’s, our reception hall.

Tell me about local wedding suppliers you’d recommend.

Esther Sheridan at The Lantana in Randolph was wonderful! She recommended many of the vendors that turned out to be fantastic. She did everything humanly possible to make our special day just that! Pam at This Takes The Cake in Quincy is a true artisan—not only was her cake gorgeous, it





was simply delicious; the texture of the cake and the frosting were heavenly. Debbie at Towne and Country Florists in Randolph is incredible. She did all the flowers, including those on our cake. Everything was spectacular, right down to our boutonnieres.

What about your photographer?

Susan Symonds from Mainframe Photographics [in Boston] is a miracle worker. She took the most amazing photos throughout the entire day and, most of the time, I had no idea she was even there.

What is your favorite memory of the event?

I will never forget, after Reverend Laurene Bowers pronounced us “legally wed” we kissed, faced the crowd of family and friends, and proceeded down the aisle. In the front right pew were my parents, Ron and Lucy Meoni. I looked over at them and my father was crying with joy! I will never forget the love that we felt at that moment!

Do you have advice for other gay couples hoping to tie the knot?

For me, I wanted to get married in a church, so I found the only church in Randolph that would perform a same-sex marriage. I think it’s very important for the couple to sit down together and come to a consensus as to what their special day will look like. I was fortunate that Tom was of a similar mind, or didn’t fight me too much as to what I had envisioned. We both realized that this was going to be a very special event and we needed to treat it that way, in all aspects, from the flowers to the limo to the ziti and prime rib.

Is there anything you’d do differently?

We were unable to get the DJ that we wanted; we waited a little too long and he was booked. I would have given myself more time to plan everything. That way I would have gotten everything just the way I wanted. The DJ we ended up with was fine, but that is one thing I would have changed.

Jennifer and Vivian

Jennifer Lyn Simons and her wife Vivian Berrios got married in Westford, Massachusetts, Simons’ hometown, in the church in the center of the city. Simons, who’s still bragging about the lawfully married part (“It was a legal wedding!” she exclaims. “I’ve got the certificate to prove it.”), says the best part of her New England wedding, besides the legality, was that the couple married in the church and the pastor was wonderful during the ceremony.



Simons’ sister Lisa was her maid of honor, and her nephew was the ring bearer. After the family-filled ceremony, the couple led their guests to a reception at nearby Roudenbush Community Center for a mostly DIY buffet: salads, cheese and crackers, chips, dips, chicken and broccoli, meatballs, and chicken wings. Simons says, “We made everything except for the chicken and broccoli, which was catered by Paul’s Diner in Westford.”

The New Hampshire residents took a warehouse route to the edibles. “We bought a lot of stuff from Costco, including all of the liquor that we served,” Simons recalls. “We also got the flowers there. We made all of [seven] bouquets ourselves...and eight boutonnieres. The roses were bought the day before the wedding from Costco and held up wonderfully. At \$14.99 for two dozen, you can’t go wrong.”

The increasingly popular cupcake wedding cake was the centerpiece (Simons was inspired by one in Martha Stewart Living) and it was made by a local supermarket.

When it came time to consider hiring a photographer, Simons and Berrios decided to ask friends and family members to serve in that capacity. “We had friends and family take all the photos and we put disposable cameras on each table at the reception. We got some really great shots and have over 500 pictures of our special day. Friends and family, who know you really well, are great at capturing moments that a professional would not think of taking pictures of.”

Simons’ DIY affair was a success. “It was beautiful and we were surrounded by our loved ones—it was just really special. [But] it was more work than we thought it would be.”

Her advice for other couples: “Just have fun and plan it your way. Don’t let others tell you what you should and shouldn’t have as part of your ceremony or reception. Be unique and throw in as many personal touches as you can.”

That's what she and Berrios did for the honeymoon: "We went to Tampa, Florida for a long weekend to see the Red Sox play the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. Baseball is Vivian's favorite thing so we thought it would be great to get away, enjoy some baseball, the beach, and Busch Gardens. We went to Busch Gardens and that was great. We both love animals and it was like being in the zoo as a little kid. We had an amazing time that day. It was so nice we didn't want to come home! Florida is also really gay-friendly so that was wonderful, too."

Massachusetts Resources

Accommodations

The Cape Codder Resort & Spa., 1225 Iyanough Road, Route 132 and Bears' Way, Hyannis. Tel: 888-297-2200. A popular candlelight wedding spot that boasts luxurious and huge suites, a nice fitness center, and a full service spa with kiddies options that make this resort fan-freaking-tastic if you've got a kid in tow. Bonfires with s'mores and live entertainment, board games, family movies in the courtyard, parachute games, and an 8,200 square foot Cape Codder Indoor Wave Pool that comes complete with two-foot waves, an 80 foot water slide, a 50 foot water slide, waterfalls, whirlpool, dancing fountains, and two saunas. Doubles from \$179. <http://www.capecodderresort.com>

The Eliot Hotel, 370 Commonwealth Ave. Tel: 617-267-1607. Rated as one of the area's best hotels. Doubles from \$265. <http://www.EliotHotel.com>

The Onyx Hotel, 155 Portland Street. Tel: 617-557-9955. Offers packages for LGBT couples on their wedding and honeymoon stays. Doubles from \$279. <http://www.onyxhotel.com>

Bachelor and Bachelorette Parties

Party Solutions Entertainment Network. Offers celebrity look-alikes, Tarot reading/psychic parties, and caricature parties. <http://www.entertainmentboston.com>

Shuttavac Productions. Producer of women's events in Boston including First Sundays at Vertigo and Club Hollywood, which was Boston magazine's "Best of Boston" in 2003. In addition to Dyke March fundraisers and swank girl parties—they can throw you a bachelor or bachelorette party that'll make both your LGBT friends and your oh-so-straight aunt Marge happy. <http://www.shuttavac.com>

Boston Attractions

Audubon Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary, 10 Juniper Road, Belmont. Tel: 617-489-5050. 87 acres makes for a beautiful wedding setting and attached facilities (with solarium and fireplace) can host a lush reception. <http://www.massaudubon.org>

Fenway Park. Even if you don't know the difference between a pinch hitter and a short end, this baseball home of the Boston Red Sox is a must. <http://www.fenwaypark.com>

Gore Place Historic Home, 52 Gore Street, Waltham. Tel: 781-894-2798. With its 45 acres of landscaped gardens, this Historic Governor Gore Place offers the largest open space in Metro West Boston. You can host a wedding for 100 people in the 1793 Carriage House or even larger parties on the grounds. <http://www.goreplace.org>

The Museum of Fine Arts, Avenue of the Arts, 465 Huntington Avenue. Tel: 617-267-9300. Boston's heralded fine arts museum has a website feature that lets you explore, plan, and organize your visit before you ever leave home. <http://www.mfa.org>

Omni Parker House Hotel, 60 School Street. Tel: 617-725-1612. A must consider. A landmark since 1855, the Omni's rooftop ballroom—the only one in Boston—offers a magnificent panoramic view of the city. <http://www.omniparkerhouse.com>

Cake Designers

Connie's Bakery, Provincetown, 85 Shank Painter Road in the market section of Clem and Ursie's Restaurant. Tel: 508-487-2167. A P-Town favorite. <http://www.conniesbakery.com>

Donna's Cakes, Roxbury, 100 Spring Street. Tel: 617-327-5916. They can do Braille cakes and hand drawings. <http://www.donnas-cakes.com>

I Dream of Jeanne Cakes, Tel: 978-869-6013. New England's "have cake, will travel" baker whose delightful flavors (like carrot cake with white chocolate cream cheese, buttercream, or raspberry lime rickey) and whimsical designs have been the highlight of same-sex and traditional weddings around the region. <http://www.jtcakes.com>

Konditor Meister Bakery, 32 Wood Road, Braintree. Tel: 781-849-1970. This Euro-style bakery specializes in multilayered tortes. <http://www.konditormeister.com>

Catering

Clem & Ursies Restaurant, Provincetown, 85 Shankpainter Rd. Tel: 508-487-2333. Giant clambakes and lobster bakes offer your guests seaside feasts and nobody in town can cater a deluxe raw bar tasting table (think clams, shrimp, crab claws, oysters, ceviche, octopus salad, and more) like Clem's. <http://www.clemandursies.com>

Noble Feast Catering, 53 Elm Street, Shelburne Falls. Tel: 413-625-6033. Gay chef Alan Harris has worked with large and small parties (with as few as six people), which might be great if you're only bringing a few friends with you to the wedding. <http://www.noblefeast.com>

Tommy's Caterers, Tel: 800-882-0042. Has gotten raves around Boston for 25 years in part for their down-home food (BBQ chicken and turkey sandwiches) and their affordability. <http://www.tommyscaterers.com>

Music

Fast Times. The premier 80's cover band is a New England wedding fave. <http://www.fasttimes.biz>

Tapper and Bridges. A guitar and flute combo, Steve Tapper and Audie Bridges, who also provide route entertainment on the Boston AIDS Walk each year. <http://www.tapperandbridges.com>

White Heat Swing Orchestra, Tel: 617-354-7213. Seen not too long ago opening for Norah Jones at Lincoln Center, this is a hugely popular dance band for same-sex weddings and commitment ceremonies. <http://www.whiteheatswing.com>

Photographers

Mainframe Photographics, 369 Congress St., 6th Floor, Boston. Tel: 617-338-9432. Susan Symonds' gay-owned photography firm that specializes in same-sex weddings gets raves from LGBT couples for their boy/girl team of photographers. <http://www.mainframephotographics.com>

Provincetown Resource

Bay Lady Schooner, 20 Berry Lane. Tel: 508-487-9308. Take a two-hour sail or put your wedding afloat. <http://www.sailcapecod.com>

Berta Walker Gallery, 208 Bradford Street. Tel: 508-487-6411. Popular art gallery in P-Town. <http://www.bertawalkergallery.com>

Girl Power Events. Lesbian events year round. <http://www.girlpowerevents.com>

Provincetown Tourism. A guide to queer Provincetown. <http://www.ptown.org>

Whale Watching, Tel: 800-826-9300. One of a kind whale watching trips by the Dolphin Fleet. <http://www.whalewatch.com>

Wedding Resources

City Clerk/City Courthouse, 1 City Hall Plaza, Room 213, Boston. Tel: 617-635-4179. <http://www.cityofboston.gov>; 260 Commercial Street, Provincetown. Tel: 508-487-7013. <http://www.provincetowngov.org>

Gay Wedding Planner Software. For those who must do it themselves. <http://www.fivestarsoftware.com>

It's About Time, Tel: 617-733-2965. The premier Boston-based same-sex wedding planner is a gay

owned wedding planning firm that works with numerous gay-friendly and gay-owned businesses.
<http://www.itsabouttimeevents.com>

Two Brides. A website that lists vendors in every region, along with info and FAQs about lesbian weddings. <http://www.twobrides.com>

Two Grooms. A website that lists vendors in every region, along with info and FAQs about gay weddings. <http://www.twogrooms.com>

Weddings By Jeff, Tel: 866-301-7607. A gay-owned company servicing the entire New England Area. He can become your wedding planner, work with your wedding planner, or just officiate your ceremony. <http://www.weddingsbyjeff.com>