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Community Corner (/minnesota/stillwater/around-town)

# Stillwater: The Unofficial Wedding Capital of Minnesota

Stillwater has a reputation for being a city full of beautiful wedding venues. Here's a quick look at three of the top sites.

By Meghan Hatalla (Patch Poster) - (<https://patch.com/users/meghan-hatalla>) Updated June 26, 2011 3:20 pm ET

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### Something Borrowed?

In the same fashion that Carrie Bradshaw from the “Sex & the City” movie chose to have her almost-wedding in a building that housed and borrowed out the greatest love stories of all time, the Top Terrace is a popular matrimony site. It’s so popular, in fact, that mega-wedding website TheKnot.com recently named the terrace the second-best outdoor wedding site in Minnesota (<http://outdoor.weddings.com/articles/best-minnesota-outdoor-wedding-venues.aspx>), which came as a surprise to the library’s wedding and event coordinator, Anne Young.

“Since the library is a nonprofit organization, we don’t do any advertising,” Young said. “This was a very pleasant surprise!”

Due to seasonal constraints the library only hosts around 30-40 weddings per year, a factor that adds to the unique qualities of the location. Most people who reserve the terrace come from the Twin Cities, Young said, and are looking for a fun, outdoor venue within a reasonable distance from the cities.

“People love that even though it’s wide open with beautiful views of the river and the town, it still feels very private and secluded on the rooftop,” Young said.

However, not all are sold on the library as “the” wedding venue in the area, and while TheKnot.com was unresponsive to inquiries, others were not. Stillwater native and October 2011 groom Douglas Hatalla was surprised at that the library was ranked higher than other Stillwater monuments—like the Washington County Historic Courthouse.

### Something Old?

The as a wedding site is nearly as old as Stillwater itself. Hatalla may be slightly biased, as his own wedding will be at the Historic Courthouse.

“We chose it because it’s a nice space, inside and out,” he said, referring to the option of hosting weddings inside or outside—in other words, an ideal rain site if the weather chooses not to cooperate.

Historic Courthouse volunteer Lisa French-Austin reiterated this point, citing a wedding a few weekends ago that as set to be outside. When the clouds threatened rain, the wedding was moved from the front stairs to the stately former courtroom on the second floor.

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Sara Gocken, a 2010 bride at the Stillwater Courthouse, also said that the option of hosting inside or outside was a factor in her decision, but not the only one.

“We loved the idea of getting married high up on the hill, we loved the historic aspect of the Courthouse and the many photo opportunities,” she said. “I can’t say we’d change a thing.”

“It’s a really cool space,” French-Austin said, adding that, including weddings, the Historic Courthouse hosts over 100 events each year which range from re-enactments to musical concerts. “Inside or outside, it’s so lovely that many people choose either not to decorate or only bring in minimal decorations.”

While the Historic Courthouse makes for an elegant venue, there are other, more modern ways to incorporate the history of Stillwater into your wedding site.

### **Something New (that was old)?**

Recycling old buildings for new purposes is common enough in Stillwater, and that’s the case with the . Originally constructed in 1890 and called the Lumber Exchange Building, the building has undergone numerous changes up through the present day, but some elements—such as the tin ceiling, various murals and lobby bar—are rooted in the building’s history.

But the historical aspect is a nice aside from one of the reasons Jeff Harrison and his wife chose to have their July 2000 wedding in the space.

“We’re not religious,” he said. “So we wanted a place where we could do both the ceremony and the reception, without having to travel between.”

In addition to reducing travel time, Harrison said the patio gave guests a great view of the river. But there is one thing he would have done differently—bought less food!

### **Something Blue?**

The color blue signifies love, modesty and fidelity, and was a popular dress color for brides as evidenced in the proverb “Marry in blue, lover be true.” While today’s brides typically opt for white or some variation, most slip in some blue, whether it’s shoes, a handkerchief, or something to only be uncovered later in the night. Jane Austen may have thought that happiness in a marriage was entirely a matter of chance, but faith in traditions—and starting off in a venue that reflects your individual relationship—seems like an ideal start to any happy marriage.

What did you think?



*Originally published June 8, 2011. This post is contributed by a community member. The views expressed in this post are the author's. [Registered users are welcome to post on Patch \(https://my.patch.com\)](https://my.patch.com).*

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