

SOUTH SOUND

wedding & event

MAGAZINE | SPRING 2010

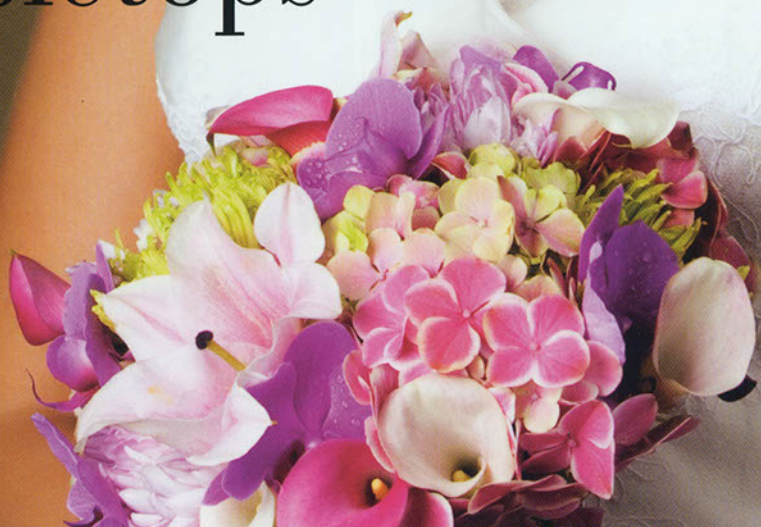
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9 South Sound
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*glamorous gowns,
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fresh *from the* farm

PHOTOS BY RED BARN STUDIOS

IN AGRICULTURALLY RICH Lewis County stands a large, traditional red barn surrounded by fields of organic green vegetables, yellow and red fruit, and brightly colored flowers. Chickens peck at the ground, deer nibble at the growing crops, and hummingbirds and butterflies land on the tall plants. During picking season, between the rows of crops, you'll find Jason Dix, picking lettuce for that day's meal. If it's a Saturday morning, he might also be supplying the salad greens for guests at a wedding reception.

NIKI SULLIVAN AND JEFF READING EMBRACE FARM LIFE BEFORE THEIR WEDDING AT RED BARN STUDIOS.



Red Barn Studios in Chehalis is the home of Jason and Laurie Dix and their children, Kaiya, 9, and Walter, an infant. Jason and Laurie are wedding photographers, and Jason is also a videographer. Their red barn is the site of many weddings, receptions and other events.

Built in 1937, the barn was once part of a prize-winning dairy farm. Today, the two-story refurbished barn has such modern conveniences as electricity and indoor plumbing, including a food preparation area with running water. The barn also has a sound system and, on the upper level, a stage. The wood structure and wood floors provide wonderful acoustics for musicians, and the facility accommodates large groups.

At the farm, crops are raised for the owners' personal use, but also to supply caterers with greens to make salads and meals for events at the farm. More than one-quarter of receptions held at the barn include farm-grown greens in their food.

"I enjoy working with the caterers to supply them with what they need," explains Jason Dix, who loves all aspects of growing crops on the farm. "I'm passionate about food. I want people to know that someone who loves to garden has produced their food."

Couples who want to serve food from the farm to their guests need to plan ahead



with Jason and their caterer. "Wedding dates should be planned according to the type of food they want," he recommends. "I can plant whatever kind of lettuce they want; they can select the seeds from the catalog. It's like having a wedding at the farmer's market!"

"This opportunity is truly for the people who appreciate and love food," explains Jason, who grew up in Nebraska. "When they purchase the food from us, they are saying, 'I believe in what you are doing. I want to support this vision.'"

One couple used pesto and marinara made from farm-grown basil and tomatoes as sauces for their pizza, which was cooked in the wood-fired pizza oven behind the barn.

Although the farm produces primarily vegetables, nearby farms that produce fruit, nuts and cheese have also provided food for receptions at Red Barn Studios. Buying locally provides fresher food, saves transportation costs, reduces pollution and supports local farmers.

Sustainable farming

After the reception, some of the food scraps are served to the chickens and turkeys, and

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the rest is composted. "In three months, it breaks down and leaves no footprint," explains Jason. "We use that compost in our gardens."

The Dixes are testing compostable plates and utensils to see which compost best.

When Jason and Laurie were married at their farm a few years ago, they chose another sustainable practice when they selected their dinnerware. "We scoured local thrift stores to find floral-themed dinner plates, which we still use today," said Jason.

Jason and Laurie appreciate feeding their children fresh, organic foods. "When my daughter says she's hungry, I say, 'Go to the garden and eat some blueberries and raspberries.' She comes back with her face covered with berry juice." While his older sister is dining straight from the vine, young Walter is eating cooked, strained fresh vegetables and fruit, grown and prepared by his parents.

By taking a step back in time to farm living, the family has also taken a step toward the future — and more sustainable living.

DETAILS: Red Barn Studios, www.redbarnstudios.net



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