

SOMETHING OLD



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BARRINGTON'S HISTORIC WHITE HOUSE IS IDEAL
FOR HOSTING UNIQUE WEDDINGS

By Elizabeth Czapski | Photos courtesy of Barrington's White House



Janet Kay of Nancy Merklng Productions



Tamara Jaros Photography

In 1898, John and Julia Robertson, Jr. built a grand mansion on Barrington's Main Street. Over a century later, the house still stands as Barrington's White House, an intimate and historic space for corporate events, cultural events, and perhaps most significantly, weddings.

Renovated in 2015, the house is on the National Register of Historic Places and has three floors, a front porch with beautiful Corinthian columns, a luxurious bridal suite, a "groom's room," a full catering kitchen, and seven bathrooms. And when you rent it for your wedding, the whole house becomes yours.

This aspect really sets it apart from other wedding venues, according to Tamara Tabel, the White House's Marketing Director.

"If you rented something in a banquet hall, you might be sharing the bride's room or the bathroom with the other bride, who's also hosting a wedding across the hall," she said. "But when you rent the White House, you can have the entire house just for your wedding. So, it's very private and intimate and has a nice warm feel, because it really was someone's home."

At the White House, the wedding ceremony and reception take place in one building, which makes

for a relaxing event without guests and vendors having to shuffle from location to location. The ceremony takes place in the mansion's third-floor ballroom with its 16-foot arched ceilings, chandeliers and brocade curtains. After the ceremony, the couple and their guests move to the first floor for cocktails, where they can relax and move around easily through the foyer, parlor room, fireplace room, dining room, and study. Then, during the cocktail reception, the ballroom is set up for dinner and dancing, and the rest of the night can begin.

In theory, this sounds simple; in practice, there are florists, caterers, DJs, photographers and more working behind the scenes. Jennifer Salvatore, the White House's Hospitality Manager, is an expert at balancing all of this. She specializes in helping couples make the White House their own, and she asks them about their style and vision so that she can help make it a reality.

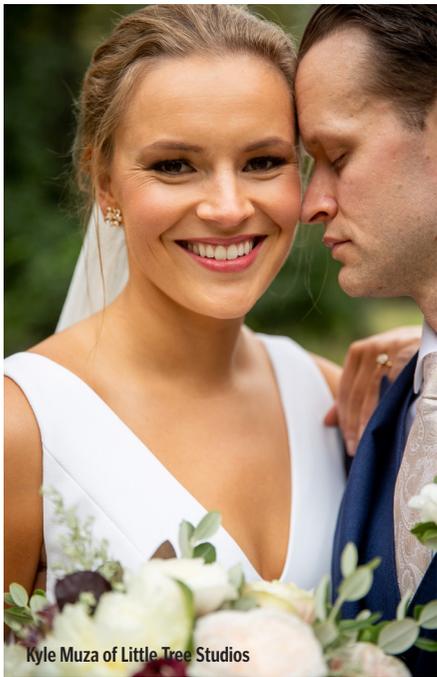
"The planning process for each event, whether it be a bridal shower, rehearsal dinner, welcome party or wedding, is unique and distinctive because clients really love to personalize the mansion for their special day," Salvatore said. "I try to take more of a consultative approach with our couples, providing them with guidance

every step of the way. I often work with their photographers and florists who come in prior to plan and prepare for their big event. I enjoy being involved every step of the way."

The White House has a list of preferred local vendors who they work with often and know well. Jennifer, assisting in finding the perfect fit, sealed the deal for Maureen Butler and her husband, who had their wedding ceremony and reception at the White House.

"Jennifer held our hand the entire time. And the follow up was impeccable. We just felt cared for," Maureen said. The day of the event, she was impressed by how well the vendors she used worked together. "They knew each other, and they knew how to work flawlessly behind the scenes to make the event amazing. It was just this perfectly flawless experience," Maureen said.

"Apart from the fact that the home on its own is a beautiful backdrop for a wedding — it has its own personality, its own character, its own charm — it had everything in one location," Maureen said. "Our guests could do everything in one house, from the cocktails to dinner to dancing, and nobody ever had to leave the venue, which was really important for us."



Kyle Muza of Little Tree Studios



Felix Rust of Felix and Sara Photographers

“It has its own personality, its own character, its own charm...”

Barrington's White House isn't just limited to weddings and receptions — the mansion hosts other, less-traditional wedding events as well.

The night before her wedding, Lauren Weidner wanted to celebrate and welcome her family and friends in an intimate space with a welcome party, and for her, the White House was the perfect venue. She had her rehearsal dinner with the bridal party and her immediate family on the third floor, then went down to the first floor for a welcome reception with 75 friends and family who were in town for the wedding.

For this event, location was everything to Lauren. “I grew up in Barrington, so it was really important to me that we showed off the town, and the White House is such a special little gem,” she said. “It felt so special to have all of that be in the same place, but upstairs felt so different from downstairs. Everyone who was at the rehearsal dinner basically got to attend two events in one, and there's so much beauty and character in that home,” she said. “It just felt warm and welcome and cozy, and that was what we were going for our whole wedding weekend. We wanted everyone to feel like they were part of this warm, intimate space, and the White House really fit that.”

Lauren said Jennifer Salvatore took away some of the chaos of wedding-planning by being extra accommodating to Lauren's and her husband's schedules. They live in the city, and Jennifer would stay late at the White House to let the couple do walk-throughs. “The White House went above and beyond to make sure that we had the event we really wanted to have. I could not recommend it enough,” Lauren said.

While Lauren had a pre-wedding party at the White House, Louise Wright's daughter Shawna had a wedding reception at the house. Shawna had an intimate wedding ceremony out of state and trusted her mother, Louise, to plan a reception in Illinois for family and friends who couldn't make it to the wedding. Barrington's White House was the first place Louise went.

“When I walked in, I knew there would be no other place that I would want to have the kind of party I wanted for my daughter. It was perfect. I never looked anywhere else,” Louise said.

When her daughter saw the venue for the first time, “she was instantly enraptured,” Louise said. “She didn't know what to expect, and she was gushing at how beautiful it is.”

The party, Louise said, was a rousing success. The catering was stupendous, and relatives with disabilities could get around easily, which was a concern for Louise starting out. The entire experience, she said, was “elegant, genteel, and homey. My goal was when people came to this party at the White House, they felt like they were actually coming to my house. And people were admiring how wonderful and beautiful it was -- how this is like a little hidden secret in the northwestern suburbs.”

Shawna loved it too, especially because she's a history buff and wanted a simplistic style. They didn't need to do a lot of decorating: the house, Louise said, “is so beautiful that it does not need adornment.” She continued, “Once upon a time, someone lived in that house. It really was someone's home and they were happy. You can feel it.”



BARRINGTON'S WHITE HOUSE
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