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Summer 2008



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Under the Oaks



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD ISRAEL

A New York-based couple who met on a flight home to Charleston returned to the Lowcountry to tie the knot on the banks of Rockville's Bobicket Creek. See how their laid-back, color-laden event can inspire your own with loads of easy-to-emulate ideas

continued on page 58

Rockville, that sweet little fishing village on Wadmalaw Island just 40 minutes out of town, is the epitome of sleepy Southern charm. So when it came to planning Sarah Glenn and Kevin Smith's wedding there on the back lawn of the bride's parents' waterfront home, event designer Melissa Barton of A Charleston Bride simply took her cues from the inspiring surroundings. Colorwise, that meant playing with a palette of navy blue (the color of Rockville's Bohicket Creek) and lime green (the shade of the fresh spring leaves unfurling all around the rural town). Melissa's goal was to let place inform every aspect of the wedding and replicate the quiet and mellow feel of the area. The end result was a vibrant and low-key but festive day that began with a ceremony at an 1850s whitewashed church, then a reception within walking distance. There, under ancient live oaks and surrounded by bouquets that Melissa says "looked like they were picked out of the garden," 200 guests kicked off their shoes and danced to beach music as trawlers glided past the festivities and into the night.

"We embraced the landscape and started with an oak tree motif that was carried throughout the wedding."

—Melissa Barton



CHOOSE A MOTIF: Programs printed in navy repeated the wedding's oak tree motif, which was also on the invitations and cake. Choosing such a symbol—this one based on the location—gives thematic continuity to any party, be it a shower, rehearsal dinner, or reception.

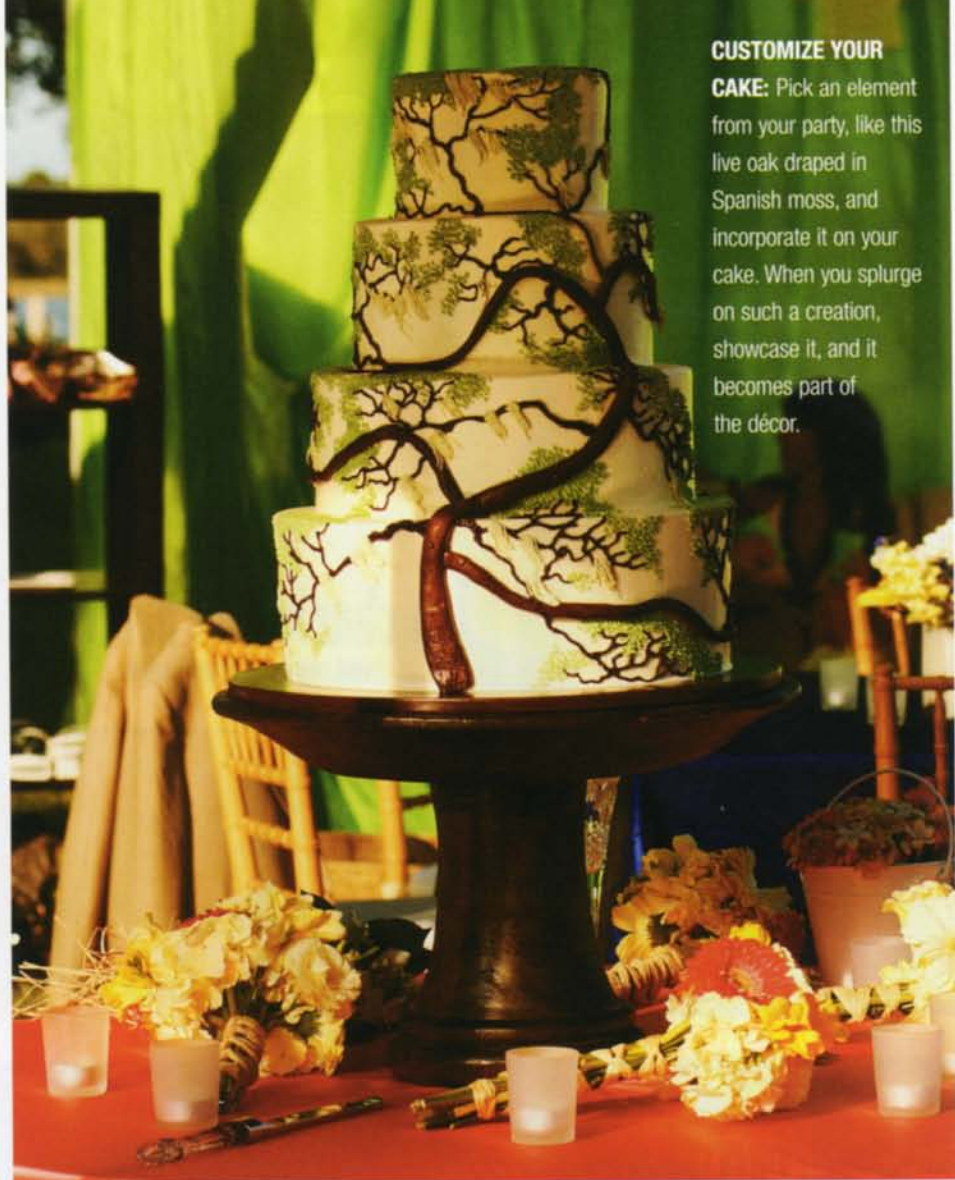


KEEP GUESTS COMFY: Lawn parties can be awkward for those in heels, so fill a basket with alternative footwear, like this rainbow of flip-flops marked by size. But remember to offer a safe—and stylish—place to stow cast-aside stilettos, too. At this event, Melissa used a cubed bookshelf.

WORK WITH NATURE: Place tables under tree canopies for shade; create wind shelters with sturdy tents that have sound siding; and time your event to coincide with high tide to spare your guests the scent of pluff mud.



PICK A COLOR PALETTE: Select two or three dominant colors (like the blue above) that work with your party's location, then showcase them on the invitations, and with your linens, menu, and flowers.



CUSTOMIZE YOUR CAKE: Pick an element from your party, like this live oak draped in Spanish moss, and incorporate it on your cake. When you splurge on such a creation, showcase it, and it becomes part of the décor.



RE-INVENT TRADITION: Skip traditional party platters (like the ubiquitous veggie platter) and opt for unconventional vessels such as these plexiglass containers. The "garden display" was part of an informal lineup with passed hors d'oeuvres and food stations, as a sit-down dinner was more formal than the setting dictated.

Small Bites Are Best

Easy to eat, little treats like these Rockville goodies star at any party

1. Goat cheese "pops" with clover honey and peach coulis
2. Mini barbecue sandwiches
3. Petite local crab cakes
4. Roasted stuffed mushrooms
5. Wild rice pancakes with grilled scallops

