

Game On!

KEEP YOUR GUESTS ENTERTAINED ALL DAY LONG WITH LIVELY GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS.



WITH THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF OUTDOOR WEDDINGS and more casual themes, Minnesota couples are discovering that providing their guests with activities and games creates a fun and relaxing reception atmosphere. Amusements from yard games to stargazing help entertain guests between the ceremony and reception, and offer a great alternative for those with two left feet.

Reception guests have a ball playing lawn games. Stargazing, bonfires and s'mores can also add to the fun once the sun goes down.

For newlyweds Jaclyn and Mike Fladmark, providing games for their guests meant that everyone could fully enjoy the beautiful scenery at Gale Woods Farm in Mound. "We love games, especially yard games," Jaclyn explains. "We also wanted people to take advantage of our reception space. Having the games was a great way to get guests outside to enjoy our beautiful scenic venue."

While this may seem like a foolproof way to keep the wedding day fun and exciting, there are a few factors to keep in mind when you're deciding whether to include outdoor activities. First and

foremost, does this fit the desired atmosphere of your wedding day? If your wedding is formal, guests may be thrown off by yard games and less willing to participate. Providing a basket of flip-flops for those who may not have worn comfortable footwear can help avoid this issue.

It's also important to consider the beverages that may be consumed at the same time the games are out, advises Rachelle Mazumdar, director of weddings and events at Style-Architects in Minneapolis. Since most games require two hands to play, Mazumdar recommends having high top cocktail tables

nearby where guests can set their drink and appetizers. This allows them to still be a part of the mingling without missing out on the snacks. And if you think there is the possibility that some guests might overindulge with alcoholic beverages, you might want to be sure that the games don't present any safety hazards.

The final choice is the most fun of all: Which games and activities should you offer? To make this decision, analyze the space you have to work with (for example, are there hills or other natural elements that might interrupt the layout?), as well as the amount of

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: MIKE & JACLYN FLADMARK

time guests will have to play.

"I recommend quick, easy games that guests can play while holding a drink and without breaking into a sweat," says Mazumdar. "Select a few fun, easy games that the majority of guests know how to play."

Jaelyn and Mike opted to offer bocce ball and washers (a horseshoes-inspired game), which not only entertained their guests, but also gave them the opportunity to use some of the games they had received as shower gifts. The outdoor activities complemented their relaxed wedding theme and ensured that their guests had fun throughout the night.

"People jumped in and started playing right away," Jaelyn says. "It was a great way for people to mingle and introduce themselves. They were a hit!" *

Reception-Ready Games

BOCCE BALL

This game is cocktail-friendly, as it only requires one hand. With simple rules and an adjustable time frame for game completion, guests of all ages can play.

BEAN-BAG TOSS

Currently one of the most popular outdoor wedding activities, this yard game is easy and allows for wedding theme coordination. Paint the boards with your wedding colors, a monogram, or bride and groom silhouettes to add a chic, personalized look to the traditional game.

CROQUET

This classic game requires ample room, but is often a hit among all ages. Consider providing a list of basic rules for guests, and assume that no one will be a stickler for them.

HORSESHOES

A perfect option for a barn venue or a rustic-themed wedding, this game can be played in teams, creating a great opportunity for guests to mingle.

RING TOSS

Paint old soda or milk bottles in your wedding colors and arrange in an antique crate. Ring toss requires little space and will keep the young ones busy all night.

BADMINTON

This is another traditional game that requires ample space, but the rules are well-known. Make sure to keep high-top cocktail tables nearby for guests to safely set down their food and drinks.

GIANT JENGA

An enlarged version of the childhood favorite requires little physical activity and guarantees an uproarious time. Purchase the game online or get crafty and build your own. Paint the wooden blocks to match the colors and theme of your big day.

AFTER DARK

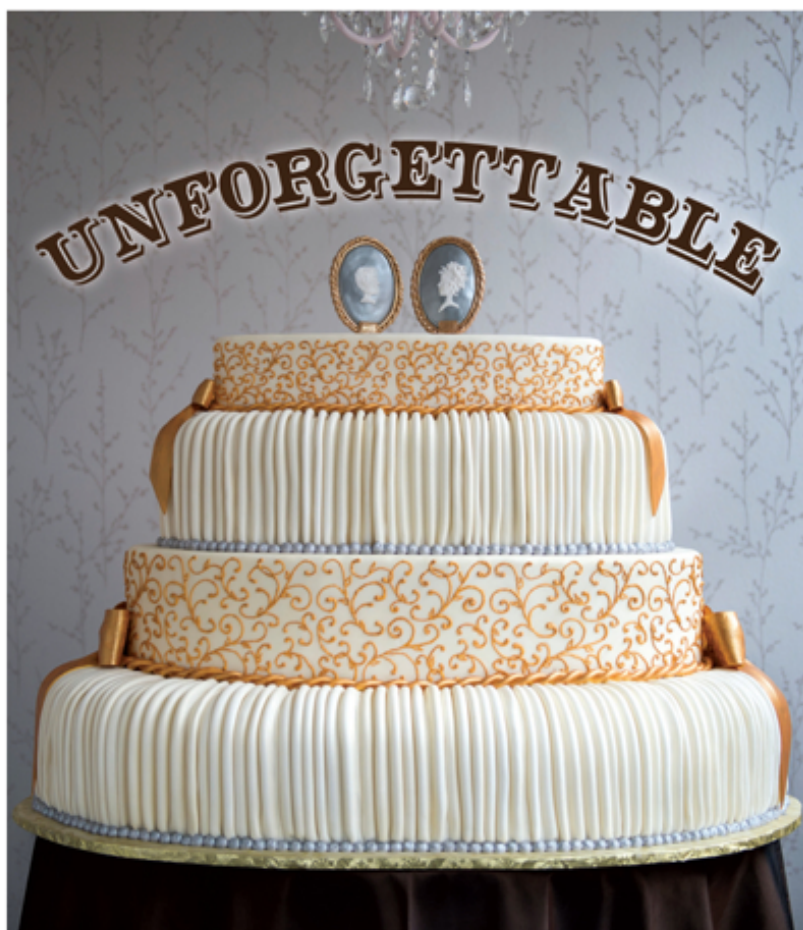
There are plenty of ways to keep the outdoor fun going after the sun sets. Have a fire pit where guests can roast s'mores and gaze at the stars. At the end of the night, supply a bucket of sparklers for everyone to assure your big day ends with fireworks—literally.

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