

Distinctive Event Venues in Happy Valley

This article is provided by Harrison's Catering, a State College caterer with more than 18 years' experience catering weddings and related festivities in the Centre Region. Here we offer ideas and recommendations for some popular event venues in Centre County, with a particular emphasis on wedding-related events. We cater weddings and other types of events in many creative locations such as Harrison's owned Above the Valley Special Event Center, as well as within the Hilton Garden Inn, where Harrison's is the exclusive caterer. Harrison's Catering has been voted "Best Caterer" for thirteen years running by the readers of State College Magazine (2004-16) and named Best of the Knot 2010 & 2011.

HARRISON'S OWNED

Above the Valley Special Event Center

Centre Hall, PA

This new event center—recently opened in May 2016 and operated by the owners of highly regarded Harrison's Wine Grill & Catering—may be the most distinct venue of all, with an incomparable blend of breathtaking views, ample gathering spaces, and award-winning food and beverage. Located atop the Mt. Nittany Ridge, overlooking the picturesque countryside and adjacent mountains, guests will be surrounded by the historic beauty of scenic Happy Valley while celebrating weddings and special occasions, or attending business retreats, conferences and meetings with catering.

The tiered building has celebration spaces on three levels, with space for as many as 200 seated guests on one level. There are multiple spaces for outdoor viewing, including outdoor decks, railed walkways, and a 400-square-foot, glassed in porch with sliding windows, perched over the mountainside. Bars and restrooms are located on all three levels. Each level may be reserved separately, with pricing also available for multiple levels or the entire facility.

Website: <http://www.abovethevalleyevents.com/>

BARNS / FARMS

General Potter Farm

Potter's Mill, PA

Located just 15 minutes down Route 322 from State College, General Potter Farm is a beautifully restored, 1830s bank barn. The upstairs of this spacious barn has exposed beams, an open loft, original wide-plank floors and whitewashed walls. The downstairs features meticulously repointed stone walls for a cozy "pub" atmosphere. The layout of the facility is perfect for events of all sizes and has plenty of parking surrounding it. This unique barn is a wonderful setting for a locally-styled Pennsylvania wedding.

Website: <http://www.generalphotterfarm.com/>

Gillbrook Farms

Warriors Mark, PA

Originally built in 1840, Gillbrook Farms has been a fully operational, working farm for 150 years. Situated at the base of the Allegheny Mountain Range, this 150-acre farm offers many

rustically beautiful areas for all kinds of events, including wedding ceremonies and receptions. One noteworthy event site is the recently renovated 5,500-square-foot barn. This structure's prominent architectural characteristics are the large, original beams and beautifully reconditioned wood floor. With the capacity to hold up to 350 guests and indoor bathrooms, the Barn is a key piece of Gillbrook Farms. The lofty ceilings and spacious floors make it easy to segment the structure, and it can easily be decorated to suit your event's theme.

Website: <http://gillbrookfarms.com/>

Spring Mount Farms

Warriors Mark, PA

A 21-acre, working farm nestled in the heart of Central Pennsylvania that gives way to vast fields and mountain views. Whether you prefer the large spring-fed pond, open lawn area, classic bank-style barn, or the intimate back porch, Spring Mount Farms has many options for get-togethers small or large. The barn floor can comfortably accommodate 200 guests, and tent space can be added outside to offer more room for guests. As an additional option, especially for weddings, you can arrange carriage rides for the newlyweds and their guests with the majestic Percheron Draft horses that are housed at Spring Mount Farms.

Website: <http://www.springmountfarms.com/>

WINERIES / DISTILLERIES

Big Spring Spirits

Bellefonte, PA

Big Spring Spirits is located in the historic, red brick Building 10 of the original Pennsylvania Match Company, founded in 1899. With beautiful views of and easy access to Bellefonte's Talleyrand Park, the distillery's Tasting Room offers guests an inviting space with brick façade, concrete floors, and views of the microdistillery production room through large picture windows behind the bar. The blend of woods, metals, and contemporary textiles create a singular artistic environment. The business is also on pace to be the LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certified distillery in the country. The Tasting Room can comfortably seat 60 guests, can accommodate 100 people for a mixed seated and standing buffet, and up to 150 if the patio and production area are also utilized.

Website: <http://www.bigspringspirits.com/>

Brookmere Winery & Vineyard

Belleville, PA

Surrounded by spacious vineyards, farmland, and views of Big Valley, Brookmere Winery located in Belleville, PA, offers multiple settings for your event. The Vineyard Inn, built in 1866 just after the Civil War with a Federalist-style front, was constructed from bricks made and sunbaked on the property. It offers an ideal setting for an intimate gathering, with a capacity of 30 people. The newly renovated Brookmere Barn offers a beautiful and rustic venue with a 150-person capacity. Last but not least, the 4,000-square-foot, open-air Pavilion situated next to the vineyards offers an excellent celebration space for larger groups with a 250-280-person capacity.

Website: <http://www.brookmerewine.com/>

Happy Valley Winery

State College, PA

Unexpectedly situated on farmland behind Foxpointe neighborhood in State College, PA, Happy Valley Winery is a great location for smaller events or more intimate weddings and receptions. The tasting room, with its cozy wooden interior and close proximity to the vineyards, can comfortably seat up to 55 people. Additionally, the patio and outdoor area can accommodate 75-100 with a tent. With a great variety of award-winning wines produced on-site and available for your event, this venue is perfect for the oenophiles of the world. Please be advised, outside alcohol is not allowed on the property.

Website: <http://www.thehappyvalleywinery.com/welcome>

Seven Mountains Wine Cellars

Spring Mills, PA

Hidden amidst the woods of Decker Valley in the beautiful Seven Mountains area 20 minutes outside State College, Seven Mountains Wine Cellars offers a scenic indoor/outdoor space for your event. Their rustic wood banquet room and large outdoor stone patio offer a truly distinct space for events of all kinds, including wedding ceremonies and receptions. Capacity is 100 to 120 people.

Website: <http://www.sevenmountainswinecellars.com/>

ART & NATURE CENTERS / GARDENS

McCann School of Art

Petersburg, PA

C. Barton McCann School of Art is a unique and elegant venue, particularly for weddings, in Central Pennsylvania. Located just minutes from State College and situated on 250 acres of lush green forest with wild flowers, ferns, streams and ponds, McCann offers modern facilities amid natural beauty. Both outdoor and indoor spaces are available for ceremonies and receptions. The Circle of Life Sculpture Garden, the most popular ceremony venue at McCann, features sculptures imported from Florence, Italy, amid lush grass, lily ponds, and a waterfall. Other areas are available for receptions, including the Lake Jeanette Gazebo; the large, open-air Fern Hill Pavilion; and Fern Hill Education Center, McCann's large indoor facility with all the modern conveniences (accommodates up to 200 guests). On-site lodging and many wedding packages available—see details on website.

Website: <http://mccannweddings.com/>

The Arboretum at Penn State

State College, PA

Since its initial construction was completed in 2009, the Arboretum at Penn State has continued to develop more and more beautiful garden areas that can be used for a variety of events. There are several outdoor event spaces for rent in the H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens, including the Overlook Pavilion, Rose Garden Bower, Oasis Garden Terrace, Hawthorn Entry, and Event Lawn.

The primary rental season begins May 16 and ends September 30. This is a stunning wedding ceremony location with a wide-range of guest-count options and books up far in advance. Please note: the Arboretum does not rent venues for wedding *receptions* at this time.

Website: <http://arboretum.psu.edu/visit/rental-venues/>

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

American Philatelic Center at the Match Factory

Bellefonte, PA

Not just for stamp researchers and enthusiasts, the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte's historic Match Factory can offer a unique backdrop for your meetings, parties, and wedding celebrations. Their largest area available for rental is Sundman Hall, a 2,000-square-foot banquet room located on the first floor of the building. With a capacity of 160 people, this room's exposed brick walls and beamed ceilings offers a uniquely historic setting for a gathering. The building also has a number of smaller rooms suitable for smaller business meetings and receptions. The Match Factory sits adjacent to Bellefonte's Talleyrand Park, where historical railways and Spring Creek leisurely meander through beautiful green spaces and gardens.

Website: <http://stamps.org/Facility-Rentals>

Centre Furnace Mansion

State College, PA

The Centre Furnace Mansion is a unique place to host any event. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Mansion has roots in the last decade of the 18th century. This house first belonged to the Ironmasters who owned and operated Centre Furnace. In 1855 the Ironmasters donated the land to establish the Farmers High School, which today is known as Penn State University. The Hearth Room can accommodate approximately 40 people for a sit down lunch or dinner or 50 for a standing reception. For larger affairs, people rent a tent and hold the function outside on the grounds, typically in the flat area by the historic sycamore tree, the gazebo garden, Margery & Rae's garden or over the parking lot. The site offers several acres of beautifully landscaped grounds and extensive gardens filled with hundreds of varieties of perennials, lilacs and roses. The grounds around the Mansion can accommodate up to 120 people. Event guests can stroll the gardens, relax in the shade of the trees or play games in the yard.

Website: <http://www.centrehistory.org/reserve-the-mansion/>

CHURCHES / SPIRITUAL CENTERS

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

State College, PA

Good Shepherd Church is a new facility with a 4,000-square-foot event hall. They accept weddings, special event parties (anniversaries, birthdays, retirement, etc), holiday parties, funeral dinners, reunion gatherings, meetings & retreats, training sessions & workshops, camps and tradeshow.

Website: <http://www.goodshepherd-sc.org/default.html>

Pasquerilla Spiritual Center

State College/University Park, PA

Located centrally on Penn State's campus, the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center-Eisenhower Chapel has been the site of many beautiful wedding ceremonies over the years. Services of all sizes, traditions, and faiths are welcome and can be accommodated in the large Worship Hall in the Spiritual Center or in a smaller, more intimate setting in the Eisenhower All-Faith Chapel or Meditation Chapel. Their staff handles more than 50 ceremonies each year and is available to assist and guide you in the planning of your special day. The Frizzell Room, on the basement level of the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center, is available for wedding receptions as well as other events, with a sit-down reception capacity of 178 and a standing-only capacity of 300.

Website: <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/spiritual/weddings/>

INNS / BED & BREAKFASTS

Bed & Breakfast at the Rock Garden

Boalsburg, PA

The Bed & Breakfast at the Rock Garden can be the venue for your party, whatever the occasion. You can experience the romance of an outdoor wedding with Mt. Nittany in the background or the intimacy of an indoor setting. Events of up to 150 can be accommodated outdoors with tents and room to roam the grounds and Rock Garden. Smaller gatherings of up to 50 people may be held inside the Bed & Breakfast, where your guests will enjoy the view from the garden room, gather in front of the wood fireplace, or venture outside to visit on the wrap-around front porch or in the courtyard.

Website: <http://www.therockgardenbandb.com/>

Earlstown Manor

Boalsburg, PA

Earlstown Manor is a favorite Penn State bed and breakfast located on 10 private acres just off Route 45, eight short miles from Penn State University. Beautiful gardens, inviting patios and rolling lawn make for a wonderful event setting. There is plenty of room for a tent to be erected to provide shade from the sun or shelter in the event of inclement weather. The owners are extremely accommodating and would welcome discussing options and ideas with you. They can comfortably accommodate up to 200 people. If you are using this venue for your wedding weekend, you have the luxury of having the entire Manor to yourselves. Each Bridal party reserves all of the rooms and Carriage House for a minimum of two nights. This allows your group to comfortably share in the entire weekend together and take advantage of the location just miles from State College, PA and Penn State University.

Website: <http://www.earlstownmanor.com/>

Harmony Forge Inn

Bellefonte, PA

The Harmony Forge property dates back to the 1790s and was originally the site of the Harmony Forge/Milesburg Iron Works. The construction of the mansion followed sometime

thereafter, and can be dated to sometime between 1796 and 1820. The Mansion and grounds were purchased by the current owners in 2012, and they have made major renovations to both the mansion and barn, and beautification of the grounds. The large barn with two exterior decks has been renovated to support up to 250 guests for events such as weddings and reunions. If you prefer an outdoor venue, 38 acres offer numerous settings. The parlor may also be used for more intimate events.

Website: <http://www.harmonyforgeinn.com/>

Inn at Walnut Acres

Bellefonte, PA

Just minutes from Penn State University, the Inn at Walnut Acres offers an elegant, comfortable, and romantic setting for your event. The Inn, a working farmette, offers respite from day-to-day life and a wonderful escape for a reunion or wedding. The Inn itself, with its tasteful period furnishings, and the grounds, with lush gardens and landscaping, are both beautiful venues for your event, whether it's a small, intimate gathering or a large 200-person reception.

Website: <http://www.theinnatwalnutacres.com/index.html>

LODGES / PAVILIONS / PARKS

Marrara's Mountain Lodge

Port Matilda, PA

Marrara's Mountain lodge is a private, family-owned facility conveniently located just a short drive from State College, in the beautiful mountains of Central Pennsylvania. Its majestic natural settings include open grassy fields, wooded forests, rolling mountains, and a one-acre spring-fed pond. The rustic wooden lodge with a large wooden sun deck overlooks the gazebo area with amphitheater-style seating, an ideal setting for a casual and laidback family gathering. The grounds include a large pond with a walkway around its perimeter, a picnic pavilion, fire ring, and recreational areas for volleyball and horseshoes.

Website: <http://www.marraras.info/>

Penn State Civil Engineering Lodge

Stone Valley Recreation Area, PA

Stone Valley Recreation Area is located in Huntingdon County of Central Pennsylvania, just 17 miles from State College. Stone Valley is owned and operated by The Pennsylvania State University, but all visitors are welcome to enjoy this year-round attraction. The Civil Engineering Lodge (C.E. Lodge) provides accommodations for a wide variety of group events, including conferences, workshops, retreats, wedding receptions, family reunions and group picnics. The lodge can accommodate 100 people with tables and chairs, and often larger groups use the porch and surrounding grounds. Features include a large meeting room with hardwood floors and stone fireplace, commercial kitchen, indoor and outdoor restrooms, a small covered pavilion, fire circle, dock, and a sand volleyball court. If your ideal event is a casual, nature-oriented affair, then the Civil Engineering Lodge is a great choice for you!

Website: http://www.athletics.psu.edu/stonevalley/sv_lodge.shtml

Centre Region Parks and Recreation

State College, PA

State College is privileged to have a wonderful system of public parks that can serve as lovely venues for your family reunion, work picnic, or any other number of events. Most of the parks have pavilions that can be rented, some of which have electricity and nearby bathroom facilities. Some favorite parks include Sunset, Spring Creek, Circleville, and Lederer. Each park has its own unique settings and features—more information can be found on CRPR's website. Please note: all events must adhere to the general park regulations, including no alcohol on the grounds and no use of the park without permit between sunset and sunrise.

Website: http://www.crpr.org/Parks/parks_menu.html

OTHER DISCTINCTIVE VENUES

University Club

State College, PA

The University Club on Penn State's campus is a unique event venue with a rich history with the University. Founded in 1908, the University Club originally acted as a social club for faculty. Although it no longer serves this purpose, it still serves the social needs of our community as an event venue for various groups and purposes. While the upstairs of the Club provides housing for graduate students and visiting faculty, the downstairs area, with its large dining room and other social areas, is available for event rental. Recently renovated meeting rooms and elegant banquet facilities make The University Club perfect for wedding receptions, cocktail receptions and other special occasions.

Website: <https://www.universityclubstatecollege.com/facility-rental>

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