

Brides 2007

From the ring to the gown to the ceremony, it's

Destínation: 'I do'

Photo courtesy of Tropical Beach Wed-

Resort weddings growing in popularity

Local couple planning wedding on beach in Destin, Fla.

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

DESTIN, Fla. — "I decided this would be so beautiful," she says. "And it would be so much easier on everyone, and cheaper, too."

When it came time to decide where to hold her wedding ceremony, Lauren Taylor of Gilbertown considered several options. But one seemed to stand out above all the others.

On April 21, just at sunset, Lauren and her fiancé Kyle Railey of Silas will take their wedding vows — standing on a white, sandy beach in Destin, Florida.

Lauren and Kyle are one of thousands of couples who are choosing resort destinations for their weddings. From

mountain get-aways to cruise ships to exotic tropical islands, resort weddings are rapidly becoming the most sought-after sites for nuptial events.

For reasons that range from cost to ease to sheer romance, destination weddings are often the best option for couples who want a little something out of the ordinary. After considering other options, Lauren chose Destin for all those reasons and more.

"I thought about having my wedding at home," she says. "But we looked at everything and decided this was what we wanted to do."

Once the couple had made their decision, they employed the services of Mike and Cecelia Cappella of Tropical Beach Weddings out of Navarre Beach.

For the past 5 years, Tropical Beach Weddings has been providing services to the growing number of couples who choose beach weddings each year.

"We service from Destin, Ft. Walton, Navarre Beach, Pensacola Beach and Orange Beach," says Cecelia, who began the business with her husband after working with another



Lauren Taylor and Kyle Railey will be married on April 21 in Destin, Florida.

wedding provider in the area. "I was a photographer and Mike was a chef and a DJ, so we contacted Barefoot Weddings and went to work with them. After one year, we opened Tropical Beach Weddings. This business has been so

wonderful for us. Mike and I get to work together, and we love what we do."

For beach wedding providers like the Cappellas, business is booming, with hundreds of weddings logged each year by their company

alone.

"We perform over 180 weddings a year," says Cecelia. "We are booked with weddings from March through November, but the busiest months are April, May and June. We do about 30-40 weddings each of those months."

In fact, on the day of Lauren's wedding, the Cappellas have another ceremony scheduled immediately before hers at the same location, Henderson Beach State Park.

"My wedding is at 5:45," says Lauren. "She has another one right before mine. But she will decorate for that one, then take it all down to decorate for mine."

According to Cecelia, the most popular date for beach weddings this year is August 7 (7-7-07). They are already booked for 5 weddings in that one day alone.

"We are already booking weddings for 2008," she adds. "We believe that the most popular day will be 8-8-08."

Couples who choose beach weddings have several options available to them. From large, full weddings to smaller more intimate ceremonies, wedding providers like Tropical Beach Weddings have many packages to choose

from, in a variety of price ranges.

"Our services include the full beach wedding, catering, accommodations and DJ services," says Cecelia. "Our prices range from \$500 to \$10,000. There are many options for any budget."

According to Lauren, the expense of the wedding was one of the primary reasons for her decision to get married on the beach.

"It's really cheaper," she says. "You have options to choose from, and they will even do the reception, too."

But, Lauren adds, the cost was not the only reason for her decision to have a beach wedding ceremony. It is, she says, a way to have the wedding she wants, without putting stress on her family — in particular, her mother.

"They come in and decorate and take care of everything," Lauren says. "You just tell them the date and time, and they do it all."

"It's going to be so much easier on my family," she adds. "It takes away a lot of the stress of putting together a wedding, especially for my mom. I didn't want her to have to do anything — just come and be a part of it."