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Country Weddings!
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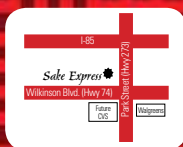


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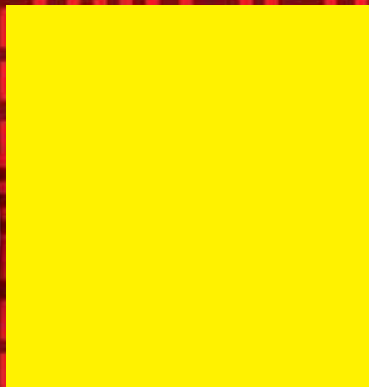
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about the cover



This month's cover was shot at the popular wedding venue, Lewis Farm, (lewisfarm.org 704-842-1208) See page 10 for related article. Models are Ashley Erickson and Tyler Gadd. Production assistance by David Van Horne and Kellie Weed. Cover photograph by Rick Haithcox, cover graphic design by David James.

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At Lewis Farm, Robbie & Cathy Lewis Host Kids Birthday Parties, Corporate Events, But Most of All They Help Brides Make

Country Wedding Memories

By David Hamrick



*Photo courtesy of April Ledford.

GA!: Lewis Farm is sort of a family affair-one with quite a history, isn't it?

Cathy: Definitely. Robbie's grandparents bought this farm in 1935, raised cotton as their cash crop, vegetables, hogs, chickens for their family. Robbie's grandmother, Winnie Lewis, also had a milk route in Ranlo where she delivered fresh milk, butter, and eggs well into her 70's. Robbie grew up helping his dad on the farm, and both our sons & daughter-in-law help us now. We couldn't do it without them.

GA!: You guys were in GA! some years ago- what's new and different?

Cathy: We built a new event barn, which is great for weddings, birthday parties, and other private events. We have expanded our Fall Pumpkin Festival, added Not-So-Spooky Hay Rides at Halloween, Trail Rides, and Horseback Riding Lessons.

GA!: I know that weddings are very popular at Lewis Farm now...

Cathy: Rustic charm is very popular. We offer the unique advantage of getting married on a working farm, with over 10 acres of privacy. We have dance floor, horse-drawn wedding carriage, horses for bridal couple to ride in/out on, and the bride is free to choose her own vendors. We do have many couples get married here, but some want to get married in church, and then come out here where they can relax and let their hair down.



GA!: What is popular in outdoor or rustic weddings right now?

Cathy: Many brides look on Pinterest for ideas. Try "Country Chic" or "Rustic Weddings" and you'll get tons of ideas. Cowboy boots for the bride, or even the entire wedding party are really popular. Hay bales, line dances, or more upscale and elegant-you name it.

GA!: You have some beautiful carriages and cool wagons...

Cathy: Wagon building/repair started as a hobby for Robbie. We are always adding to our collection of different carriages for different occasions. We still have farm wagons and implements original to this farm, including horse-drawn equipment from B.W. and Winnie's day (Robbie's grandparents).

GA!: You host lots of kid's birthday parties-pony rides, yay!

Cathy: We offer a unique party experience -lots of room for kids to explore and play and for adults to relax, hand-led horse/pony rides,



*Photo courtesy of April Ledford.

tractor or horse-drawn hay rides, hand-painted horse options, to name a few.

GA!: You also host corporate functions in your new facility?

Cathy: Again, lots of private space, no noise, relaxing atmosphere, great for corporate meetings or employee appreciation events.

GA!: What would folks be surprised to know about Lewis Farm?

Cathy: How close we are to Gastonia and Charlotte! And - How much work is involved! 7 days a week – it is always either feeding time, planting time, haying time, or harvesting time. Fence repair is an ongoing challenge....

GA!: Do you ever get to get away? Are there “substitute farmers” for when you are gone?

Cathy: Yes, we occasionally get to take a break. We have wonderful family, friends, and employees who help out while we are on vacation. Remember, animals eat EVERY day!



*Photo courtesy of April Ledford.

GA!: How many and what kinds of animals do you have?

Cathy: We have about 175 animals total, including cows, horses, pigs, chickens, ducks, goats, dogs, and barn cats.

GA!: Folks may be surprised to know how convenient you are to I-85, Gastonia, and Charlotte...

Cathy: Yes, we are only 3-5 minutes from I-85 at Westfield/Eastridge Mall. We are a well-kept secret....

GA!: Tell us something funny that happened at the farm - got any farm humor for us?

Cathy: I forgot to put the chickens up at our son's wedding, so round-up before the ceremony was lots of fun!

GA!: What would you and Robbie be doing if you weren't farmers? You both grew up on farms, right?

Cathy: Robbie would build more carriages, and I would probably be more involved with the legislative end of agriculture, but we love what we're doing and don't plan to change anytime soon. Robbie grew up on this farm, I grew up further out in the country with just a large garden, no farm animals.

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The Ben Gatlin Band



The life of the working musician can best be described as an odyssey for those who crave adventure at every turn. From the outside looking in, performing music for a living can seem glamorous and even easy but nothing could be further from the truth. Filled with both opportunity and peril, making ones living primarily from music will test your courage and dedication on a daily basis.

The Ben Gatlin Band is made up of three hearty souls who exemplify the term 'working musician'. Ben Gatlin, David Benoy and Paul Gibson are musical brothers who perform weekly not only for the paycheck, but for the joy of music itself. The chemistry these three musicians bring forth on stage is readily apparent from the first note of every show to the last.



Band leader, guitarist and vocalist Ben Gatlin began his musical journey, as most musicians do, at a very young age. Church provided the foundation for this journey which soon led to a world of discovery. After an early stint with the drums he found interest in school band where he became further skilled in reading, theory and performing. Ben credits his brother Darren with eventually inspiring him to sing and play guitar ... "He always got the weirdest but coolest sounds out of his guitar" Ben says. A rock band soon followed and Ben's path was laid out before him. There is simply

not enough space in this context to list all of his mentors, inspirations and collaborators but suffice it to say Ben is extremely grateful to all those who shaped and molded his musical persona. Ben states quite simply and powerfully "I'm forever grateful and I love you all!".

Drummer and harmony vocalist David Benoy, a Gastonia native, inherited his love for music from his parents who were both college music majors and performers. Like Ben, David has spent time on the local scene honing his chops and staying involved with the musical community. Being equally skilled on both the drums as well as the keyboards has allowed him to be much in demand. From house gigs at the Frontier in Gastonia and Coyotes Joe's in Charlotte to all points in-between, David's resume allows him the credentials to stay working on a consistent basis. He met Ben at an impromptu jam where fate took control and led to the roots of the Ben Gatlin Band.



Bassist and vocalist Paul Gibson began his professional career here in North Carolina in 1983 with 'High Degree & the Mirrors Band' as a vocalist and drummer. In 1986 he moved to bass guitar with the band 'Sequence' and then migrated to Charlotte a short time later in 1987. This began a busy and



lengthy period which saw Paul play with three different house bands along with USO tours with Chris Cook & the Critters among other various

bands and projects. Longtime friends, Ben coxed Paul out of a brief performing hiatus and convinced him that the final piece of the puzzle was there for the power trio he envisioned.

The Ben Gatlin's Bands musical style defies categorization as influences from Soul, R & B, Motown, Funk, Country, Jazz, Blues and Rock all appear effortlessly. One look at the bands FaceBook page is all it takes to realize these guys put the 'work' in the term working musician. Ben enthusiastically comments that "Playing with Dave and Paul is something I've not had the pleasure of experiencing in any other band". The Ben Gatlin Band is an epic musical voyage not to be missed.

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Citrus Salad with Mint and Feta

Wow, Mother's day at The Farmer's Fork was fun, as well as a bit stressful. I hope you were among the nearly 150 folks that joined us that morning. I felt it went really well and the folks I got a chance to talk to (when I could escape the kitchen) agreed. Thanks to all of you for coming out, but I have a very special thanks to the crew at The Farmer's Fork the local producers who supplied such fresh ingredients and especially the unbelievable big W kitchen crew of Chris Warner, Job White and Preston Wilson.

Stay on the lookout for other special events.

The salads we featured were my fresh strawberry which I wrote about last year and a citrus salad with mint and feta which we will cover today. There really is nothing like making a fresh vinaigrette dressing to make a salad special and if you have a blender it only takes a minute or two.

Ingredients:

- Oranges, Ruby grapefruit, Pink or white or Pomelo grapefruit (you want different colors)
- 1/2 cup Olive oil or sun flower or other nut oil
- 1/4 cup White balsamic vinegar or apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup Honey
- Salt, white pepper and ground coriander Baby arugula Mint Feta

Method:

Using a pairing knife peel the citrus over a bowl removing all the white pith on the outside of the citrus (this is what makes grapefruit bitter). Slice the citrus across the bias creating round slices that resemble a flower. Each slice should be about 1/3" thick. Save as much of the juice as possible to incorporate into the dressing.

In a blender mix, reserved juice (hopefully about 1/4 cup), honey and vinegar and while the blender is still running incorporate the oil into the mix in a slow drizzle that allows the oil to emulsify (incorporate and thicken) the dressing, season lightly to taste. Create small ribbons of the mint by rolling a few leaves together and slicing very thinly.

To serve place the arugula on the plate, lay the citrus on the bed of arugula, drizzle with the dressing, sprinkle a pinch of the mint ribbons and some feta over top. Light, refreshing and gorgeous, enjoy.

Till Next Month,
Glenn



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The Home Stylist

By Jodi Kines



Jodi Kines –Jodi has a degree in Interior Design from Winthrop University, and is the owner of Plan-It Design, LLC in Belmont, N.C.
Contact Jodi: jodi@planitdesign.us



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography

Design Inspiration & Planning

Part 2 of a 2 part series.

Search, don't just browse

When using resources such as Pinterest.com, Houzz.com, retail catalogs, or design publications, spend more time searching than merely browsing. Typing words associated with your project, such as, 'kitchen table' into the search browser, versus simply scrolling through random images, will help you target your search to usable results. Let your master plan be your guide to use these sites as a supplemental resource for finding specific products and ideas and your plan can come to life. You can feel overwhelmed if you just meander through pages and screens, admiring random projects and wondering if they could suit your personal environment. This meandering can often lead to the infamous 'scope creep', and be a potential waste of your time. After all, who hasn't gotten lost in the pages of Pinterest only to look up and wonder what brought them to the page in the first place?

Move at your own pace

Eliminate unnecessary deadlines. While schedules and timelines are ideal, especially for larger projects, try to give yourself some leeway in the timeline wherever possible. Not having the pressure of a 'must finish' date for your project can reduce the amount of stress as well as eliminate poor, quickly-made decisions. Try to finish one space before moving on to the next so you feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. With so many wonderful ideas and inspiring images, it can begin to feel like 'everyone else' is cranking out one DIY project or fabulous finished space after another! As you're searching and browsing, try not to get caught up in everyone else's 'before and after' photos. As you are flipping through page after page, and screen after screen, of beautiful,



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography



inspiring spaces, remember - you are looking at a screen full of many individuals' ONE completed projects, not one person's enormous list of accomplishments! Don't feel like you have to tackle too much at one time to keep up. After all, we don't all have an HGTV crew of resources willing to completely makeover a space in a matter of hours!

Be realistic & don't be afraid to make it your own

Don't shy away from being honest with yourself. Be realistic about your overall plan, your budget, timeline and even skill set, especially when it comes to DIY projects. Expecting more than is realistic is simply setting you up for frustration. Don't be afraid to embrace the idea that (for many of us) our living spaces will never be 'complete'. Much like our lifestyles, our space must evolve and grow with our changing needs and personal tastes. Give yourself a break and recognize the individuality of the design process. Your completed DIY project or room may not look

exactly like the inspiration, but that doesn't make it less successful. Give great ideas your own creative, personal twist so that it is really 'yours' and best suited to your lifestyle and taste. Ultimately, learn to appreciate an inspirational idea without having to find or recreate it. Accept that sometimes it's just not perfect for you, no matter how amazing or ingenious it seems.

So, enjoy pinning, sharing, posting, and browsing through the onslaught of design inspiration that is readily available to us today. Appreciate the inspiration, enjoy the eye-candy, but don't allow it to overwhelm you with guilt or pressure. The intent is indeed to inspire us to create our best space in the modern-day, instant, visual age. Chances are, if a stranger walked into your home, they'd see their own list of 'ah-ha' projects and begin creating their own mental to-do list as well!



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography.

Having a plan & associated budget offers a great guide to home improvement and DIY projects, offering you boundaries to make it easier to distinguish 'great ideas' from 'great ideas, perfect for YOUR home'. Knowing the difference can help shrink your to-do list and leave you feeling less overwhelmed and more inspired.






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Gaston County Restaurant & Dining Guide

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|--------|---|--|---|--|--------|----------------|
| | LUNCH <td>L <td>OUTDOOR DINING <td>↑ <td>\$\$</td> <td>\$11-\$20</td> </td></td></td> | L <td>OUTDOOR DINING <td>↑ <td>\$\$</td> <td>\$11-\$20</td> </td></td> | OUTDOOR DINING <td>↑ <td>\$\$</td> <td>\$11-\$20</td> </td> | ↑ <td>\$\$</td> <td>\$11-\$20</td> | \$\$ | \$11-\$20 |
| | DINNER <td>D <td>BEER/WINE <td>↓ <td>\$\$\$</td> <td>\$21 AND UP</td> </td></td></td> | D <td>BEER/WINE <td>↓ <td>\$\$\$</td> <td>\$21 AND UP</td> </td></td> | BEER/WINE <td>↓ <td>\$\$\$</td> <td>\$21 AND UP</td> </td> | ↓ <td>\$\$\$</td> <td>\$21 AND UP</td> | \$\$\$ | \$21 AND UP |
| | SUNDAY BRUNCH <td>SB <td>LIVE MUSIC <td>♪</td> <td></td> <td></td> </td></td> | SB <td>LIVE MUSIC <td>♪</td> <td></td> <td></td> </td> | LIVE MUSIC <td>♪</td> <td></td> <td></td> | ♪ | | |

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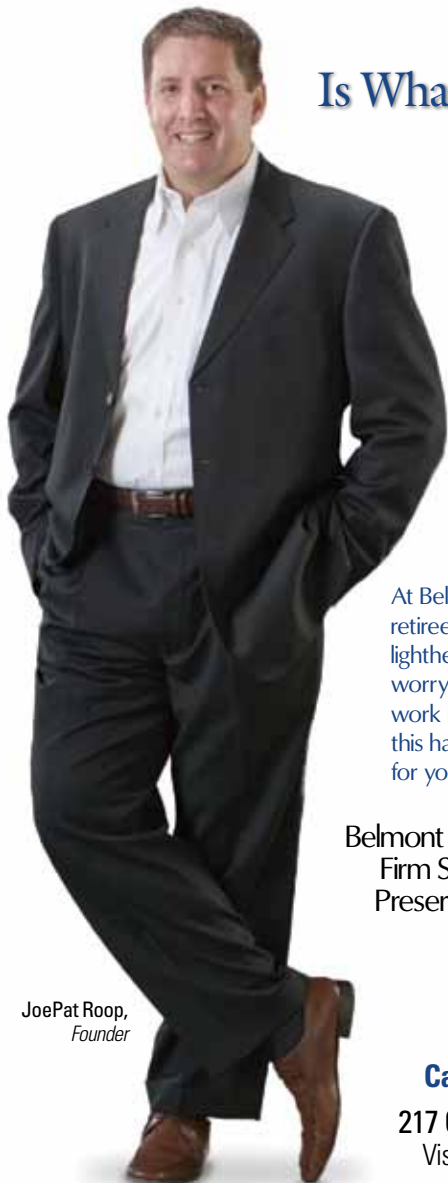
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