

# WEDDINGS & CELEBRATIONS

[ SPECIAL SECTION ]



CEDAR CREEK

From Weddings & Family Celebrations  
to Corporate Meetings & Team-Building Retreats



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## COVER STORY CEDAR CREEK

by rebecca koenig

**WITH ELECTRONIC DISTRACTIONS** always within easy reach, quality family time can be hard to come by. Not even weddings, reunions or other celebrations are safe from the intrusions of emails and deadlines. Cedar Creek hopes to change that. The 200-acre resort, 90 minutes west of downtown St. Louis, is a rural retreat ideal for special family occasions of all kinds. "When you're out here, it's so relaxed, and you can just enjoy each other," says Jennifer Buwalda, meetings and events manager.

Opened to the public in 1978, Cedar Creek is a family-owned resort and conference center in New Haven, Mo. Guests stay in the 37-room Cedar Lodge or in one of the property's private houses. Buffet meals are included for groups, and the resort's Town Hall bar and grill is open Saturdays and Sundays, as well. "Everything is made from scratch, even the bread on the sandwiches," says sales manager Jeni Grunzinger. And Cedar Creek offers some unique attractions, such as its Western Town, a recreated Hollywood movie set with a saloon and covered wagon, and 2nd Shift Brewery, whose award-winning beers are served on site.

Family-friendly features make Cedar Creek a fun place for reunions. The tennis court, nine-hole golf course, saltwater swimming pool, and fishing lake appeal to kids and adults alike, and provide opportunities for intergenerational bonding. Buwalda has helped families organize lawn game 'Olympics' competitions. "What we find with family reunions is they can park their cars and just spend time here," she says. "They don't have to jump in a car to run to do this activity or that activity." Getaways are customizable, and may include outings to nearby wineries, afternoons at the low ropes course or evenings spent around a bonfire. "We're out in the country, yet we're not far away from everything else," Buwalda says. "There are 200 acres of endless possibilities."

This can be a refreshing alternative for couples planning weddings. Many venues have narrow guidelines about what can be done where, but Cedar Creek offers plenty of flexibility. Ceremonies and receptions can be staged almost anywhere on the property, and staff members are happy to work with outside wedding planners. "When you're doing events, there's tons of parts and pieces, and I think that's why having a staff that's so accommodating is a huge selling feature out here," Grunzinger says. "Everyone can do what needs to be done."

Cedar Creek also functions as a bed-and-breakfast for smaller groups in town for winery tours, art festivals and hot air balloon races. Sometimes, a romantic weekend escape to the resort blossoms into something more. Two years ago, a Kansas City couple (pictured) touring the countryside enjoyed an afternoon in a Cedar Creek hammock. They decided that day to get married—and to come back to Cedar Creek for the occasion. With the whole property rented for their family and friends, they were wed Sept. 28. &

CEDAR CREEK IS LOCATED AT 1401 OLIVE ROAD IN NEW HAVEN, MO. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 573.237.3672 OR SEE VISITCEDARCREEK.COM.

COVER DESIGN BY GAYLE VAN DYKE | COVER PHOTO BY ERIN VANN OF NV PHOTO