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MAGAZINE

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THE HALIFAX RIVER YACHT CLUB

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As the first venue in the entire state of Florida to obtain a liquor license, the Halifax River Yacht Club knows how to throw a party – it's been hosting events for more than 120 years. And now, with a classically trained French chef at the helm, it's an ideal setting for a wedding.

Couples usually go for the lobster tail and filet mignon – the seafood buffet is also a popular choice – and Executive Chef Gary Hoffman is “fabulous, especially with themed events and weddings,” Freddie Smith, the yacht club's membership coordinator, said. While the club offers a number of dining options from which brides can choose, Smith said there is some flexibility in creating a menu.

The club's historic prestige and picturesque views of the Intracoastal Waterway offer a beautiful backdrop for the couple's big day.

She said prospective clients sometimes make up their minds



even before they step inside.

“They pull up to this gorgeous building downtown on the Halifax River,” she said. “Once you walk into the banquet rooms and see the view and the sailboats and yachts ... those are our selling points.”

The yacht club's banquet rooms are available for use by the public so members aren't the only ones to enjoy such a sophisticated locale.

“Our banquet facilities are available for the public. A lot of people assume that because we're a private club, they can't use it – but that's not true. They also assume we're a lot more pricey, but we're quite accessible.”

The club offers more than

one banquet facility, so if you're looking to host an intimate reception, you'll still enjoy the breathtaking views of the Halifax River.

And while some may think an afternoon wedding would be the best way to enjoy such a venue, a night wedding at the yacht club is something to behold. The boats are all lit up and the marina lights create a romantic glow.

“The moon reflects on the water. It's absolutely stunning,” Smith said.

Wedding styles run the gamut, from relaxed gatherings to formal affairs.

“Our building is beautiful in itself,” Smith said. “The architecture and design stand alone

Chris and Julie Brown, Halifax River Yacht Club's commodore and first lady, recite their vows on a yacht just outside of the venue. Chris Minnich officiates the ceremony. [PHOTO COURTESY OF OCEAN VIDEO PHOTOGRAPHY]

and don't need much dressing up like other venues. So it's perfect for a casual wedding. Then we have others who go all out.”

And for the couple intent on creating even more of a splash for their guests, the club can arrange for you to get married on a yacht while friends and family watch from the second-floor banquet rooms. The railed balconies run along the entire outside and feature tables and chairs, while those who want to stand inside can view the ceremony through the expansive windows.

“Guests can see out of all the windows,” Smith said. “Three hundred guests can watch the ceremony and vows and then the couple comes upstairs” to join them for the reception.

The yacht club can accommodate 180 seated guests with a dance floor and band. Couples hosting a standing cocktail party can invite up to 400 guests.