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Celebrate your love...in Love, Virginia

**Make your big day a mountain getaway for family
and friends**



Photo: Anna Shapiro



Carol Diggs



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You've found your life partner. You both share a love of the Blue Ridge and the outdoors, and you want to have family and friends gather and share your commitment ceremony. Enter Love Ridge Mountain Lodging.

The name is no coincidence. The little town of Love sits astride State Route 814 (aka Love Road), close to milepost 16 of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The hamlet has been here for almost 100 years, pre-dating the current wedding boom in central Virginia. But now there's a new event venue right next door.

Love Ridge Mountain Lodging is—in the best wedding tradition—something old and something new. The site opened in the 1960s as Meadow Mountain Campground, then became Royal Oaks when cabins were added in the 1990s. Natasha Sienitsky and her husband Oliver Platts-Mills, who run Charlottesville real estate development and renovation firm 6th and Dice, took over the complex in 2022 and re-named it to fit their vision of creating an all-in-one site for getaways, events—and weddings.

“We found this place that needed love and renovation,” recalls Sienitsky; she and her husband are both big nature and Blue Ridge fans and own a renovated cabin in the area. “It wasn't hard to see its potential. But we needed to keep the place running, so we began renovating one building at a time.”

The accommodation renovations are now complete. Love Ridge has 12 units available (three family houses and nine cabins) that

can sleep up to 75. Or more, if you have adventurous guests—there's also a newly refurbished, small-scale forested drive-in campground with a brand-new camphouse featuring a community kitchen, restrooms, hot showers, and two glamping bedrooms. While Love Ridge is well suited for single, couple, or family mountain getaways, Sienitsky says they planned from the beginning to make it more workable as a single-event venue. The couple renovated the existing lodge into a 2,000 square-foot event space that can seat up to 120 guests (or handle up to 150 for a reception), with four restrooms and a catering kitchen. The adjacent 3,000 square-foot Gathering Lawn, rimmed by plantings of multi-seasonal flowering native plants, overlooks the Three Ridges Wilderness Area—making it a wonderful site for the ceremony or a post-wedding social gathering, open-air or tented to accommodate up to 200 guests.

As a fairly new event venue, Love Ridge is still developing relationships with wedding planners and a list of preferred vendors. But its owners are committed to being both flexible and helpful, and Sienitsky notes there will always be a staff person on site for events if help is needed: "We do have a great team up there."

One added benefit: The setting is amazing for all sorts of outdoor activities. Love Ridge has its own walking trails, and the beauties of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail, Sherando Lake, and Shenandoah National Park are only a drive, hike, or bicycle ride away. Man-made entertainment is also nearby—Nelson County's Route 151 and Wintergreen Resort, and, during evening or bad weather, the shopping, dining, museums, and theater in Waynesboro, Staunton, and Charlottesville. And after a full day, Love Ridge is also a dark skies site to enjoy from your front porch or around the fire pit.