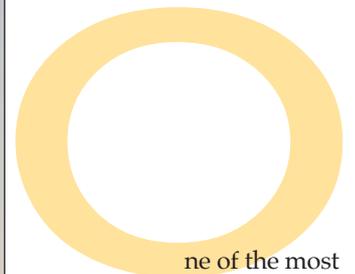


From an architectural wonder with a spectacular view to beautiful acreage and a “green” bar to a winery in a historical downtown, these three venues offer interesting details in spades — and happen to be great places to hold a wedding, too.



HILL-TOP WONDER

RIO ROCA RANCH



One of the most striking chapels in Texas — one blessed with a supremely dramatic view — is not to be found in any venue directory. Its pedigree is the clue to its exclusivity.

The Rio Roca Ranch — just more than an hour west of Fort Worth near the town of Graford — is home to a chapel made of glass, steel and wood that rises on a bluff overlooking a magnificent bend in the Brazos River. Architects Walter Jennings and his father, Maurice Jennings, designed the private sanctuary, owned by a Dallas family, to harmonize with the ribbon of water unfurling through the Palo Pinto Mountains.

Friends and neighbors who saw the limestone-steel-glass creation at Rio Roca after its 2010 completion were in awe. Maurice Jennings partnered with noted architect E. Fay Jones for nearly three decades, and Rio Roca's chapel is reminiscent of Jones'

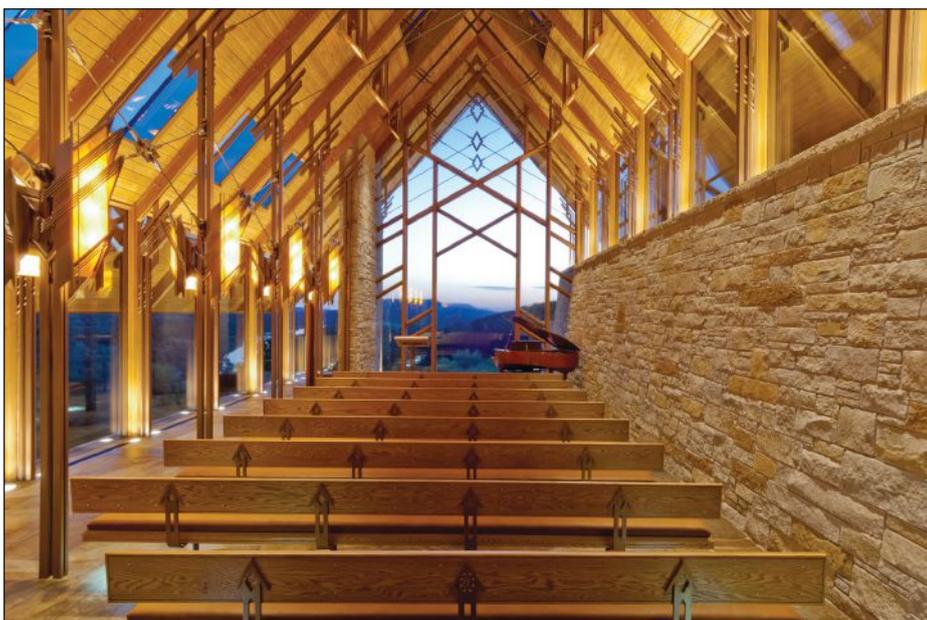
Photo courtesy of Walter Jennings



Near the chapel, a comfortable house offers the bride and her attendants private space for dressing.

Photo courtesy of Walter Jennings

HILL-TOP WONDER



Glass walls ensure a wraparound view at the chapel at Rio Roca Ranch.

Photo courtesy of Walter Jennings

Marty Leonard Community Chapel in Fort Worth and the iconic Thorncrown Chapel in Eureka Springs, Ark. After it was built, word began to spread as people, many architects among them, asked to see the Rio Roca chapel. As a result, the family — which has a working Red Angus cattle ranch to run — began scheduling tours one Saturday each month.

Requests to use it as a wedding venue soon followed. Initially surprised by the number of such pleas, the family ultimately decided to permit a strictly limited number of weddings to be held at Rio Roca each year.

The chapel accommodates up to 100 people. Larger wedding parties may use an adjacent expansive lawn, part of the 5-acre spread along the overlook. Close by is a beautiful house where a bride and her bridesmaids can stage their entrance.

The Rio Roca also offers a luxurious, chandelier-appointed barn, about a mile from the chapel, for weddings and receptions of up to 200 guests. For larger receptions, the Rio Roca staff coordinates access to an adjacent ranch.

Wedding parties and guests find more than stunning river views at Rio Roca. A collection of bronze sculptures called “The Trail of the



Iron Ponies” adorns a 2-mile reach of ranch road leading from Texas Highway 4 to the chapel. The 11 works, created by multiple artists, pertain to a famous raid by a Comanche chief in this immediate area a century and a half ago. It’s a ruggedly grand legacy matched by the spread of oaks and craggy rock that inspired the Rio Roca Chapel and its architecture.

For information about any of the Rio Roca venues, 972-386-8900 or riorocaranch.com. — **June Naylor**

The Rio Roca barn is a very modern take on rustic.

Photo courtesy of Trey Daugherty Photography

MESSINA HOF WINERY

Vintage nuptials in historic Grapevine

One of the newest wine-sipping destinations on Grapevine’s Main Street is opening its doors to weddings. Texas wine industry pioneer Messina Hof, with Central Texas vineyard roots dating to 1977, has made the downtown Wallis Hotel building its North Texas location, giving historic Grapevine another venue for special events.

The two-story, red brick hotel, which has the look and feel of the old West right down to its wooden front sidewalk, is ideal for the

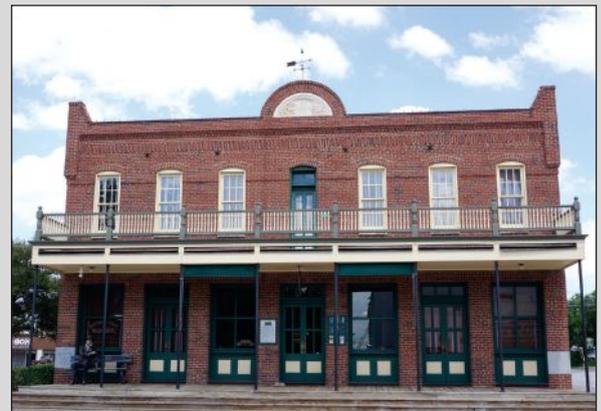


Photo courtesy of the Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau

bride and groom desiring a vintage setting for their nuptials. An upstairs room allows the bride and her attendants to prepare for the ceremony before making a dramatic entrance descending the wide staircase.

Reception spaces include wine bars upstairs and downstairs, a spacious upstairs parlor, a second-story balcony above the front veranda and a wide deck spanning the length of the building’s north wall. The adjacent Liberty Park, accessible from the deck, is often available to Messina Hof for events that need additional space. 201 S. Main St., Grapevine; 817-442-8463 or messinahof.com. — **June Naylor**