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**The Minnesota Renaissance Festival Offers Traditional and Non-Traditional Weddings**

**SHAKOPEE, Minn. (May, 2013)** - Romeo and Juliet, Robin Hood and Maid Marion, while not true Renaissance characters, the romance that they represent is still alive at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival.

With new legislation allowing same-sex marriages in the state of Minnesota, the Renaissance Festival will welcome even more couples to declare their vows and wed on the beautiful grounds. The Minnesota Renaissance Festival has always had a strong presence in the GLBT community and has performed non-traditional wedding ceremonies for many years.

With numerous first dates, blind dates, engagements and vow renewals, the Minnesota Renaissance Festival has been a romance destination since its beginning. The first wedding couple was wed almost 35 years ago, adorned in traditional renaissance attire in front of an ordained minister dressed as a monk. The ceremony took place in front of the original wedding chapel, a hand-pegged accurate renaissance style structure with stained glass windows that was unfortunately destroyed during a wind storm in 1998.

There was only one wedding during the first year at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival, but since then almost 1,200 couples have proclaimed their vows on the grounds. Many couples choose the Festival for its variety of unique venues and the opportunity to create a personalized and one-of-a-kind experience. The flexibility offered at the Festival allows couples to blend both traditional and non-traditional wedding customs and about half of all weddings performed at the Renaissance Festival are non-traditional ceremonies.

The Minnesota Renaissance Festival provides a variety of ceremony and reception options. Whether a couple wants a private celebration in an enclosed tent with private renaissance entertainment, or a more public celebration at the daily Feast of Fantasy, they can make their ceremony their own. Beautiful venues offered include the Chapel Garden, King's Arbor, Secret Garden, Bad Manor, and the

Wedding Tent. Each couple has the opportunity to be celebrated by the entire festival as they participate in the daily parade and receive a personal toast from the King and Queen.

Although numerous weddings, parties, and ceremonies are celebrated each weekend of the Renaissance Festival between August 17 and September 29, pre-season weddings and events are also offered on the Festival grounds. During the Spring and Summer months, couples can utilize other venues on site such as Crown Stage and the Front Gate that are not available during the Festival weekends. Pre-season events offer an exclusive and private setting on the beautiful Festival site, while also providing the same attention and service to events during the Festival season.

With a setting like this, the romance is inescapable and also affordable for all couples. Weddings start with cost-effective rental fees ranging from \$700 to \$900 for both pre-season and weddings during the season. With catering and serving staff provided on site by Castle Kitchens, everything can be arranged with an Event Coordinator to create an unforgettable wedding. Ceremony only and vow renewal packages range from \$400 to \$500 and can be offered at all of the same beautiful venues.

Wedding ceremonies and receptions and vow renewals are not the only events offered at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival. Celebrations such as dinner rehearsals, anniversary dinners, and bachelor and bachelorette parties are examples of other events hosted at the Festival. With a unique setting like the Renaissance Festival, the opportunities are endless! Visit the website at <http://renaissancefest.com/weddings.html> or interested couples can call 952-445-7361 or email [weddings@renaissancefest.com](mailto:weddings@renaissancefest.com).

The Minnesota Renaissance Festival is a first-class experience whose 44<sup>th</sup> season begins on Saturday, August 16 and ends on September 28, 2014. The Festival is open weekends, Labor Day and a special day for schools and seniors on Festival Friday, September 26, 2014 open from 9 a.m. – 7 p.m., rain or shine. The Festival is located seven miles south of Shakopee on Hwy 169. Admission at the gate: Adults \$22.95; Children 5 – 12 \$13.95; seniors \$20.95; four and under are free! Visit [www.renaissancefest.com](http://www.renaissancefest.com) or call 952.445.7361 for more information.

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