

'A Twist in Time'

Franklin's newest venue combines rustic history with modern convenience

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When it comes to event planning, Lydia Petersen knows her stuff. After years of working her wedding planning business, Elle Squared, she has pretty much seen and done it all. With her new venture, The Arling, she has made her personal vision a reality—a larger scale meeting space in a rustic setting just off Exit 2 in Franklin.

Over the years, Lydia planned weddings, anniversaries and other parties in locations all over south central Kentucky. From Lost River Cave and Olde Stone Country Club in Bowling Green to Kentucky Downs and The Roxy in Franklin, she and husband, Chuck Petersen, found themselves packing up decorations and driving them to venues almost every weekend, creating the special touches requested by clients.

"Someone once asked me to drape the banquet room upstairs at Kentucky Downs to cover all the screens and walls," she recalls. "It was so beautiful, time consuming, but after that I hoped everyone would do it."

Eventually, when Kentucky Downs decided to no longer offer the room for meeting and event space, she found that there was a void that needed to be filled for larger groups. If you needed more space than was available at other venues in Franklin, meaning more than 150 people, it was necessary to look elsewhere for something.

Although it's been a long time in the

planning, and not an easy path to tread, her face lights up as she talks about the rustic barn and how it came to be a reality. She says that it's exactly what she envisioned more than five years ago, although getting there wasn't easy.

Lydia and Chuck Petersen bought the old tobacco barn along with eight acres surrounding it. Although the barn was old, it was still being used by local farmers to hang more than six acres of tobacco each year. The property is adjacent to Kenny Perry's Country Creek and has a spectacular view of the golf course on one side, and farm land on the other.

When you walk into the hall, even during the day, the first thing you notice is the rustic feel. All support poles and the tin roof are original and remained from the barn. Insulation and a new roof were added on top of the original roof and new walls were crafted to close in the space. Although the floors were originally dirt, the concrete floors fit in perfectly with the style of the venue. You get the barn feel, the history and the spacious out-under-the-stars feeling inside the space.

"When we're here at night, and all the candles are lit...well, it's just magical," says Petersen.

She says the hall works even for more formal events. The wooden support beams can be draped with a lush fabric to lend a very upscale, elegant air to the space.

One entire wall, facing the golf court, features glass roll-up garage style doors which can be opened during



Image courtesy of FocusPocus

A first dance at The Arling in Franklin.

good weather to bring the outside into the space. The other side, facing the farm land, features a wrap around porch that provides the perfect setting for photos.

Everything she needs for hosting events is right inside the space. An addition on the front of the barn provides finished, heated and cooled space that houses restrooms, a bride's changing room, a full catering kitchen and their office.

The Arling is named for Lydia's

grandfather, Arling McKinley Perry, and is a nod to her family's roots. In the front vestibule sit several framed family photos, featuring both her grandfather and her father that lend a historic air to the building. The space will soon be ready to host receptions, parties and other gatherings. Petersen says she doesn't want people to think of it as "just" a wedding venue.

"My original dream was to have a space in Franklin where we could be the host for larger scale gatherings, and bring people to our community. I see company retreats and corporate meetings being hosted here, I think it's a perfect space for that."

She notes that with hotels and restaurants so close by, and the golf course right next door, coupled with Franklin's location between Nashville and Louisville, it makes sense to consider it as a meeting space. Also, plans are being made in the near future to host some music-related events.

The space will continue to be developed through a very well planned process in three phases, says Petersen. There's more to come down the road, but she feels they are off to a good start. The Arling has already been host to a few receptions and events, has events lined up for the fall and is already booking dates for next spring.

The Arling is located at 1075 Kenny Perry Drive and you can reach Lydia or Sarah at 270-586-5810 or through their Facebook page, titled The Arling at Kenny Perry's Country Creek Golf Course.