



Detailed Wedding Reference

Jessica & Joshua Friess | June 2008 | Duluth, MN

My wife and I hired Laura Fryberger and Flings Event Design (now Laura Mullen Event Design) to help plan our wedding in June of 2008, and there is no question that it would not have been the same without her. It was a great event, and Laura deserves the credit for making it so wonderful. If you are considering hiring Flings Event Design to plan your wedding or event, I would strongly encourage you to hire them. Here's a little bit about our experiences that hopefully can better inform your decision.

I was not initially sold, at all, on the entire concept of hiring a wedding planner. I didn't totally appreciate all the work that goes into planning a wedding, and I certainly didn't appreciate the difference between a "nice" wedding and a GREAT wedding.

We spoke with Laura before we officially decided to hire her, and I was certainly struck by her kindness, energy, and professionalism. It was clear to me that she knew what she was doing and that she would do a good job of planning our wedding, however I remained unconvinced that wedding planners, in general, were worth the money.

I still think that is probably a healthy skepticism regarding the event planning industry as a whole. My feeling is that it's probably quite easy to set up shop as a wedding/event planner. It's much more difficult to actually be a **good** wedding planner. The fact that Laura understood this, along with a little prodding from my wife, was what ultimately persuaded me to want to hire Laura as well.

Shortly thereafter we had our first meeting with Laura, and it was immediately clear that she would be well worth her fee. She was extremely well organized, had several great ideas, and was willing to work within our budget. Not only did she have great ideas, but – and I think this an extremely important attribute of an event planner – she wasn't married to her ideas, and wasn't the least bit pushy about doing things "her way". In fact, there wasn't even a concept of "her way". It was all about us and how we wanted the wedding to look and feel. This was a common thread throughout our interactions with her. There are a lot of wedding planners out there, and I would guess that relatively few are able to walk the line between creativity and freedom of choice for the client as well as Laura can. She was always willing to help us make decisions, but I can't recall any point when it seemed that she was trying to impose her will on us.

One way that Laura was integral on the day of the event was helping my wife and I with lots of little tasks that allowed us to relax a bit more and focus on what was important. For example, I was running late on the day of the wedding and hadn't yet wrapped the gifts for my groomsmen. I showed up at the wedding with a bag full of gifts and gift bags, and Laura's assistant put everything together for me. They weren't really supposed to be doing this; I'm quite sure that there were many more important things they could have been doing, and I felt bad for asking them to help me out. But they knew that it would help me get ready on time, and consequently were happy to oblige.

Laura and her staff also took care of numerous things that would have otherwise been left to my wife and I, and/or our wedding party: Getting people their flowers for the ceremony; figuring out how the wedding party would walk in and out of the ceremony; making sure that the DJ got set up; making sure that our vendors got paid; etc. There were a number of bigger things as well, like setting up the reception and cleaning up afterwards; and getting the

drinks that we served at our wedding. And then countless things that we wouldn't have even thought to do that really put the finishing touches on our wedding: Creating a great looking seating chart that told our guests where to sit for the reception; making up menu cards listing the various courses of dinner; setting up curtains to separate the cocktail hour room from the room where we served dinner; mixing up some incredible shots to get people awake and dancing after dinner.

Laura got us a few discounts with vendors, but we didn't really negotiate too strongly with the vendors themselves on pricing. But this is where I think Laura really excels: She had a phenomenal ability to work within our budget, and given those constraints, find the very best vendor available. Even more impressive was that this was on relatively short notice as well, given that the bulk of our planning took place roughly 3-4 months prior to the date itself.

Given the very wide range of vendor quality, the importance of this talent can't be underestimated. More than anything else, as I mentioned above, I think this is what distinguishes a "nice" wedding from a GREAT wedding. There's no question that we could have planned a wedding ourselves, and it probably would have been a nice wedding. But Laura gave us a truly great wedding. We had an amazing night ourselves, and nearly every one of our guests couldn't stop talking about how wonderful a time they had. Several actual quotes from guests that we heard included "best wedding I've ever been to", "best wedding food I've ever had", "best weekend of my life", and "we'll be talking about this night forever".

This was all on a wedding budget that was about 30% less than the national average, though probably slightly above average for our particular wedding location. There is simply no way this would have happened without Laura and Flings. In my opinion, the value of the wedding easily exceeded twice the amount that we spent.

Without question, we made the right decision in hiring Laura – certainly the most important decision we made regarding the wedding. I honestly think her services were probably worth about two to three times her fee. If you decide to hire her, I would be surprised if you weren't extremely happy with your decision.

