

Cara Zissman + Chris: Saturday, Fall 2027 (date TBD - open Sept through Nov)

Cara: carazissman@gmail.com

Notes:

- 150 guests
- Total wedding budget: \$60K-\$70K | targeting ~\$35-45K for venue + F&B
- Families are from Aurora and Schaumburg
- Suburbs preferred - anywhere EXCEPT La Grange (The Remi) and Brix on the Fox
- NO corporate ballroom vibe - wants something unique and fun (loved the idea of live guest portrait paintings)
- DJ with LOTS of dancing
- Indoor or outdoor both fine - no strong feeling either way; does not mind a room flip
- Dinner style flexible: plated/sit-down NOT required; open to food trucks or food stations; open to a restaurant buyout

Venue Search

Morton Arboretum (~\$43,168 comp @ 250 guests) - Lisle

Denise Martinez (630) 725-2045 dmartinez@mortonarb.org

- Grand Garden ceremony (\$1,800) + Ginkgo Room (\$9,000) = \$10,800 venue fee
- F&B minimum \$22,000 (excludes 23% service charge + 7% sales tax)
- \$3,000 non-refundable deposit within 48 hours to hold a date
- Exclusive vendor list for DJ/band/officiant/transportation (\$250 outside-vendor fee; planner fee waived per Denise 7/8); photographer + florist are open
- Couple must carry \$1M liability insurance naming Arboretum + Aramark
- Draping must come from preferred vendor (Satin Chair or AEG); no rehearsal on site - Haylie runs it day-of
- Venue access 3PM; ceremony chairs \$5/each; no outside F&B (exceptions ~\$350 fee)

Deer Path Inn (~\$43,693 comp @ 175 guests) - Lake Forest

Mary Ellen Powers (847) 234-2280

- 22% service charge + 8% IL state tax on all F&B; \$15K F&B minimum
- \$2,500 deposit (\$2,000 is the ceremony fee, credited toward total)
- 50% of estimated F&B due 90 days out; balance due ~10 days before
- Package includes ivory linens, napkins, dance floor, votives; complimentary parking; no vendor COI required; no ceremony rehearsal
- Haley Mansion (Joliet) - PHM@patrickhaleymansion.com (Michelle). Only Saturdays left: Sept 11 + Oct 30, 2027. FLAG: adult guest minimum bills at 225 - asked about flexibility/November dates

- Meson Sabika (Naperville) - events@mesonsabika.com - Pavilion seats up to 270

Community House Winnetka

Sahra Ballowe, Events Manager (sahrab@mywch.org, D: 847.881.9303) —

- NO 2027 Saturdays left; several Fridays + Sundays open — specific fall dates requested. Cara is open to a Friday if it's the perfect venue
 - Venue fees: Friday \$4,500 | Sunday \$3,500 | ceremony add-on \$800. Non-profit = NO tax or service fees
 - Max 185 seated (150 fits); package includes 5 hrs guest time (6 with ceremony) + 2 hrs vendor setup / 1 hr breakdown, exclusive outdoor gardens (Main Courtyard, Social Side Garden with bar, Arch Breezeway, Pergola) + indoor Garden Wing spaces, Historic Ballroom as ceremony backup, all tables/chairs, dance floor with installation, built-in cabana bar + portable cedarwood bar, bridal suite + groom prep (4 hrs prior), venue coordinator, 1-hr rehearsal (based on availability), free parking + Wi-Fi
 - Add-ons: extra guest hour \$500 | extra setup hour \$350 | suite early access \$85/hr
 - Catering: must use preferred list (Beyond, Catered by Design, Catering by Michaels, Chic Chef, Elegante, The Caterist, Northern Fork, Wooden Paddle — wood-fired family style, fun fit for her; plus vegan/kosher/halal/South Asian specialty teams). Caterer handles floorplans, setup/breakdown, staffing, bartenders, and all rentals. All-in catering runs \$125–260/pp = ~\$19–39K at 150 guests. \$2,000 off-list fee
 - Outdoor events end 10:30PM Fri / 10PM Sun; indoor until 11:30PM. Tours by appointment only; IG [@communityhouse_celebrate](https://www.instagram.com/communityhouse_celebrate)
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- Oak Brook Manor (Oak Brook) - NO public email; contact form at theoakbrookmanor.com or (630) 819-6175
 - Highland Loft (Elgin) - info@thehighlandloftevents.com
 - The Herrington Inn & Spa (Geneva) - Deanne Mitchell, Director of Catering (Deanne_Mitchell@herringtoninn.com)
 - The Ellery (Crystal Lake) - Erin (erin@theelleryvenue.com) - BYO vendors AND alcohol, 12-hour rental, getting-ready suites - could be great for budget + food truck flexibility
 - Canvas - Gina, Director of Sales & Events (thecanvasvenue@gmail.com) - existing relationship via Pari + Trevor. FLAG: confirm whether Yanni's \$20-25K floral minimum applies
 - Loews Chicago O'Hare (Rosemont) - Bradley Jacobsen, Catering Service Mgr (bradley.jacobsen@loewshotels.com) routing to sales. FLAG: may read too "hotel ballroom" for her vibe