

Monday, Oct. 12, 2020



Stories of Triumph

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Business Development Board of Martin County

“The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams.” – **Michael Jordan**

Vow to help In wedding, honey bee farmers find sweet way to support small businesses



HOBE SOUND--Even amid the earliest economic impact brought by the virus, Jodi Graham's and fiancé Kurt Riley's young company, Bee Paw Farms, built a strong (*ahem*) buzz.

“When the pandemic first hit, people were very worried about grocery-store items and started really thinking about where things had come from in the world,” says Jodi. “They were really trying to source

things locally.”

Starting out about a year and a half ago, Jodi, 35, and Kurt, 39, who own 110 hives in Martin and St. Lucie counties, will soon add a third location from which to sell their honey. Rather than just savoring the sweetness of their success, the couple wanted to do something special to help fellow small business owners struggling in the shutdown.

And they had perfect occasion in mind: their Oct. 24 wedding.

A Hobe Sound native with roots tracing back 100 years, Jodi also harbors a special affinity her rural western neighbor, Indiantown.

“I've always loved Indiantown and had a great relationship with the people living and working there,” she says. “Being a small farmer here in our community, it was important for us to support other small businesses.”



Expecting 40 guests, the couple chose Seminole Inn in Indiantown for their wedding and reception.

“You just feel like you’re at home there,” says Jodi, who sees the inn’s aesthetic as in vogue.

“There’s a trend to be more rustic and less pomp and circumstance, to step back in our roots and the significance of everything rather than having a \$9,000 dress.”

Roots remain important to the couple. Jimmy Graham Boat Ramp in Hobe Sound was named after Jodi’s grandfather, who sold the property to the county instead of developers on condition of keeping it a resource for residents and visitors. Her birth father deceased, Jodi was also raised by her stepfather, Eddie Panaro, who owns Flying P Ranch in Hobe Sound. Kurt’s family is deeply connected in Fort Pierce, where he also works as vice president at Advanced Machine and Tool, his family’s business.

The couple prioritized family owned businesses in seeking where to avail Bee Paw Farm’s honey. Bottled with minimal refinement and loved for its raw qualities, Bee Paw Farm honey—which includes a crowd-favored blend infused with smoked ghost pepper—is found at Healthy Connection in Hobe Sound, Best Choice Meats and soon coming to Summer Crush Winery (both in Fort Pierce).



“This is really where we wanted to



be,” Jodi says, “in local, little family owned stores.”

The couple creatively incorporated other small businesses in their wedding plans.

During cocktail hour Tim Brown, wildlife expert with Palm City’s Treasure Coast Wildlife Center, will regale attendees with an assortment of rescued raptors.

“I thought that would be a really great way to bring awareness to the wildlife center’s cause,” says Jodi, who volunteered at the nonprofit as a teenager. “And it would give our guests something engaging during that time.”

J.R.’s BBQ and Saloon of Indiantown will handle the rehearsal dinner. Musician Jon Prestage, originally from Indiantown, will perform. And the morning of the wedding service, the men will enjoy a golf outing at Indianwood Golf Course while Village Arts & Crafts Loft, both in Indiantown, will host a painting party for the women.

“The people are helping us to the point that we have free time in the morning,” Jodi says. “I definitely hope for these local businesses that their markets grow and people see Indiantown as a quaint village where they can have a wedding and the people will go above and beyond for you.”

“And future brides, I hope you take a page out of our book and find a community that is so excited to have them—and a wedding so relaxed—that you can spend the day painting and golfing.”



Martin County CARES Act Funding Available for Businesses and Individuals

The **Martin County Board of County Commissioners** is currently distributing Federal CARES Act funding to help individuals, families and businesses impacted by the pandemic. [Click here to learn more](#) about Business and Individual

Small (Business) Centric and Mighty



The Business Development Board of Martin County is showcasing these inspiring efforts of local business leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs in a reoccurring feature called “Stories of Triumph.”

If you or someone you know is using their business to do something innovative and inspiring to help our community through this crisis, please email me so we can share their Story of Triumph.

Joan

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Business Development Board of Martin County



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