

LAKEMARTIN, ALABAMA

# LAKE

Bridal Edition  
*Lake Martin  
weddings!*



# Rehearsal Party on the Green



The wedding weekend for Lizzy and Rob Dunavant and their daughter began with a rainbow over the Russell Crossroads Town Green

## Guests gather at Friday On the Green for pre-wedding festivities

STORY BY BETSY ILER  
PHOTOS BY AUDRA SPEARS & JAMISON SKINNER

When Lizzy Lay married her Auburn University sweetheart Rob Dunavant in an intimate ceremony at Church in the Pines on July 8, the groom's family took advantage of activities at Russell Crossroads' Town Green for the post-rehearsal gathering.

"We had guests who were just getting into town on Friday evening, and Rob and Lizzy wanted something fun but simple for the after-rehearsal party," explained the groom's mother, Amy Dunavant. "Our plan was to go to Catherine's at 5 p.m. for the wine tasting, have dinner there and go over to The Town Green for the music and lawn games."

Dunavant said she came up with the idea as she glanced through the summer calendar in the May issue of *Lake* magazine.

"I saw the article with the Friday on the Green schedule in that issue, and I realized it would be the perfect thing to do for the rehearsal party," she said. "We go to Friday on the Green every time we come to the lake. We set up our chairs and play the lawn games with the grandchildren."

"For the wedding weekend, our guests arrived into

town and got settled in their rooms at the Willow Point Villas. Then, they went up to The Town Green to meet the rest of us on their own schedules. It was convenient for them to pick up dinner to enjoy dinner at Catherine's just across the street and ice cream on the lawn. It was perfect."

"It was a lot of fun, very casual," the bride said. "I didn't want a sit-down dinner, and this gave our out-of-town guests a place to gather. The food was great from Catherine's Market, and the kids especially had a blast playing. Our daughter was about to turn 1 year old, and she had so much fun with the hula-hoops!"

Sid Phelps, the performer for the July 7 Friday on the Green event, congratulated the bride and groom from the stage, adding an extra special element to the post-rehearsal gathering.

Nearly half of the Dunavants' 150 wedding guests mingled with the regular Friday on the Green crowd, playing lawn games and dodging raindrops before the wet weather moved out of the area in time for the wedding the following day.

The lawn games and hula-hoops are available for use



at every free Friday on the Green concert throughout the summer, compliments of Russell Lands On Lake Martin.

Though rain greeted the couple the next morning for pictures, the bride and groom chose to follow through with their plans to hold the ceremony in the outdoor chapel at Church in the Pines and the outdoor reception at Willow Point Golf and Country Club.

“Our whole reason for being married at Lake Martin was to see the lake and be outside, so we made the call that morning to keep the reception lakeside instead of moving indoors,” Rob said. “The rain was out of the way for the evening wedding and reception. We had a beautiful sunset following the ceremony and an absolutely gorgeous evening for the reception.”



Rob and Lizzy Dunavant shared the special day with daughter Collin Rose



Lawn games were a big hit with the wedding guests' children



Guests at the post-rehearsal party dodged a few raindrops but the weather couldn't dampen spirits for the weekend event



# *Dreams Come True*



STORY BY BETSY ILER & PHOTOS BY BRADLEY BURCKEL PHOTOGRAPHY





Newlyweds Hayes and Matt Saul enjoyed a few minutes to themselves on the way to the reception at Willow Point

Lake Martin holds in her heart not only the best of summer memories but also the most heartfelt dreams. For the bride who calls it home, the lake holds dreams come true, like that of Hayes Holliday Saul, who – with airy elegance, simplicity and great personal style – came home to Lake Martin last June to wed Matt Saul, the love of her life, at Church in the Pines.

The bride and groom met at a CrossFit gym in Fresno, California, where the new Mrs. Saul had moved for a three-month assignment as a traveling nurse.

“It was kind of like third grade. My friend told his friend that I liked Matt, and his friend told me that Matt thought I was cute and arranged for us to hang out,” Saul said.

Saul said she’d seen Matt around the gym several times but hadn’t spoken before the two found themselves in the same class one day.

“We were running, and I was wearing a pair of shoes that had the American flag on them, and he told me he liked my shoes. I said, ‘Thanks!’ but then we didn’t know what to say to each other, so it was kind of awkward. Later on in the class, every time I looked at him, he was looking at me, and it just had that sort of grade-school weirdness about it,” she laughed.

On her first travel assignment as a nurse, Saul said, she wasn’t looking for a relationship, but an Instagram invite from Matt’s friend led to a casual gathering one evening in which Saul and Matt got to know each other a little better.

“The next day, he brought me Starbucks, and he asked me to dinner. I almost said no, just because I didn’t want to get into a relationship at that point in my life. But I told myself, ‘Hey, it’s just dinner. You don’t have to marry him if you don’t want to,’” she said.

Dinner turned out to be burgers, but Saul said it was perfect.

“It was so easy to sit there and have a burger with a stranger. Just simple burgers, but I could really be myself with him. The next night

when I got off work, he left flowers on my doorstep, and that was it,” she said. “That’s when I fell for him.”

The relationship was well established when she left Fresno for a new six-month assignment in San Diego, but the two weathered the distance between them well. Once Matt met her parents, Roger and Cindy Holliday, the future was sure.

“That’s when I pretty much knew I was going to marry him,” Saul said.

She returned to Fresno when the San Diego tour concluded, and after another six-month assignment there, she took a permanent position.

The proposal came at a pool party with friends over Memorial Day weekend.

“I remember that I woke up that morning and thought, ‘I wonder if he’s going to propose today,’ but I really didn’t want to think about it. I just figured it would happen when it happened, and I didn’t want to dwell on it. But I did wonder why my friend was following me around all day with her video camera in my face,” she said.

Matt popped the question during a pool game when Matt arranged for Saul to retrieve a toy that cradled her diamond. When he knelt on bended knee and asked for her hand, the answer was easy.

Saul called home and asked her father to put her name on the calendar for Church in the Pines.

The venue had been decided nearly 10 years before the couple met.

“When I was in high school at Benjamin Russell, I always told my dad I wanted to be married outside, and he would say, ‘No, you are going to be married in the church.’ When I was in college, we decided that Church in the Pines was a good compromise,” Saul said.

For this most important occasion, the bride paired lavender with a subtle silver gray to complement her wedding décor.

“It was light enough that it was not too much to look at, just a nice soft summer color. It’s always been one of my favorites,” she said.

Prior to the nuptials, the couple



Hayes Holliday pauses for a portrait on her way to the First Look







Clockwise from top left: The bridal party included family and friends; Lake Martin provided a spectacular backdrop for the soft summer wedding; the groomsmen's socks recalled the first words the bride and groom said to each other; the lakeside reception was held under the tent at the Willow Point Cabana; wedding guests celebrate the joyous occasion.



shared a First Look on the dock at the Lodge at Cocktail Slough.

“I was really nervous when I was coming down the steps, and he was waiting on the dock with his back to me. But when I got down there with him and he turned around, all the nerves went away,” Saul said.

A bus provided transportation for the entire bridal party from their getting ready in separate quarters at the Lodge to the outdoor chapel on the lake and from the ceremony site to the reception at Willow Point Golf and Country Club.

“We stopped at the main clubhouse and took some pictures on the golf course,” Saul said.

While the bridesmaids wore simple silvery lavender gowns that draped lightly in the breeze, the groomsmen’s attire recalled the couple’s first conversation: The guys wore American flag socks.

A custom tent on the lawn at the Willow Point Cabana protected the celebration from the warm afternoon sun as the Club rolled out its best for the beloved daughter of Russell Lands’ vice president. The tables were set with white cloths and topped with bouquets of summer blooms from Grace’s Flowers in Alexander City.



Father of the bride Roger Holliday salutes his daughter at his First Look

The buffet feast under the Cabana included boiled shrimp, watermelon salad with red curry lime vinaigrette and mint, pork belly and scallop skewers, crispy crab cakes with remoulade sauce and a chocolate groom’s cake heaped with dipped strawberries. The wedding cake of four tiers with its crown of perfect roses drew attention under the breezeway with the sparkling Lake Martin as a backdrop.

And among beloved friends and family, enveloped in the soft elegance of a Lake Martin summer’s eve, the band played and guests danced until dark.

After the event, Mr. and Mrs. Matt Saul returned to Fresno, their new home, where he manages an urgent

healthcare facility, and she works as a nurse. Both are back in school, working toward additional degrees – nurse practitioner certification for her and a second bachelor’s in public health administration for him.

And the familiar places at the lake where Saul grew up and dreamed of her wedding – Cocktail Slough, Church in the Pines, Willow Point – now hold memories of that elegant, soft summer when she wed the love of her life.



The decision to be married at Church in the Pines had been made 10 years before Hayes Holliday met her groom