

Life in the Country

Putting Down Roots

When an environmental scientist returns to her family farm in Maine with plans for growing vegetables, she unearths all she needs to grow a thriving events business, too.

meet Catherine!

Owner Catherine Caswell sets an impromptu alfresco dinner table at Caswell Farm.



Catherine and her son, Hayden (14), survey peppers, tomatoes, and eggplants in the farm's greenhouse. At peak growing season, they have 35 different types of vegetables.



It's a warm summer evening in Gray, Maine, and Caswell Farm & Wedding Barn (caswellfarmmaine.com) is alive with the sounds of revelry. "We host up to 28 weddings a year," says owner Catherine Caswell. "It's an honor to bring people together to celebrate."

Throwing parties wasn't always in Catherine's plans. Raised in Upstate New York, she spent her childhood visiting her grandparents on this 50-acre property. After graduating from college with an environmental science degree, she moved to Juneau, Alaska, to work in the fishing industry until fate intervened in 1996. "My dad called to say he was selling the family farm," she says. "I immediately said I wanted to buy it, even though I had no experience, and soon found myself growing vegetables for nearby restaurants."

At the end of each growing season, Catherine would host a large harvest party. "Ten years in, two friends asked if they could hold their wedding in the barn," she says. It was an "aha" moment and the start of the farm's chapter as an event space, where Catherine also runs a catering outfit and hosts cooking and flower-arranging classes.

When she's not working, Catherine and her son, Hayden, spend days off relaxing at their camp on nearby Sabbathday Lake. "I feel so fortunate to have found my way back here and to get to share the magic of the farm with others," she says.



ABOVE: The Caswell Farm Stand is stocked with their pickled veggies, apple butter, and freshly harvested produce and flowers. RIGHT: Chandeliers constructed from old wheel rings set a rustic scene in the barn.



PHOTOGRAPH BY HEATHER PERRY. (OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) ERIN LITTLE; HEATHER PERRY (2).



The 200-year-old timber frame barn serves as the property's main event space, while the late-1700s white farmhouse offers sleeping quarters. Come summer, Caswell's zinnia garden provides a petal-packed backdrop for wedding portraits.