

Sue & Matthew

SUE MARIE DEAN &
MATTHEW BRADLEY ARTZ



JULY 11, 2008
NAGS HEAD, NC

Photos courtesy of Sue &
Matt's wedding guests.

The first time Matt Artz and Sue Dean met, the moment was captured on the cover of *The Coastland Times*. The year was 2004, and Sue and her young son Jasper were enjoying a gorgeous day playing in the surf. Matt, a photographer for the local newspaper struck up a conversation with the pretty blonde in a bikini. He took Sue and Jasper's picture that afternoon, and the next day their photo was on the front page.

It wasn't until more than a year later when the two met again. Matt took Sue to Busch Gardens for her birthday to indulge their shared love for roller coasters. They fell in love almost instantly. Not long afterwards, Sue became pregnant with her second son, Ozzie.

Matt proposed to Sue on the first Mother's Day after Ozzie was born. "Matt let me sleep in that day," says Sue. "He came in with a long-stemmed red rose and got down on one knee." Matt asked Sue to be his wife. They set the date for July 11, just three short months later.

Unlike most couples, Matt and Sue were no strangers to weddings. A classically trained violinist and owner of OBXViolin.com, Sue plays around 150 weddings every year. Matt, a wedding photographer and deejay, sees his fair share of brides and grooms as well. "We really wanted to make it personal," says



Sue. "We didn't want it to be all about the show."

They made a promise to make the wedding about their family and their love for each other. With two young children, a tight budget and the desire to make their special day as meaningful as possible, Matt and Sue went to work planning their wedding.

"I was pretty high-strung the day of the wedding. Doing it all myself was a great idea three months before. And, it was raining!" Sue laughs. "It rained up until about thirty minutes before the ceremony."

But fate was on their side, and the skies parted. The sun peeked out just in time for the guests to arrive.





Arm-in-arm with Jasper, his red shirt matching her red Gerber daisy bouquet, Sue glided down the sandy aisle in her white, princess-like wedding gown. Her eyes locked with Matt's. "I saw him as I was walking down the beach, and all of my stressfulness went away."

The wedding ceremony – from the "Sound of Music" compilation played by the trumpeter and violinist to the their hand-written wedding vows – was tailor-made by Sue and Matt. For the Family Unity Sand Ceremony,

Wedding Day Details...

Ceremony – Reverend Shirley Ann

Ceremony Music – Roy Murray
Music Studio

Reception Music – OBXViolin.com

Wedding Rentals – Metro Rentals

Flowers – OBX Flowers

Reception Site – Old Nags Head
Cove Clubhouse

Sue and Matt combined sand, colored by Sue and Jasper and gathered from four beach locations special to the family, into one jar.

After the vows and kisses, Matt and Sue walked hand-in-hand down the aisle as the musicians played "The Throne Room" from Star Wars, Matt and Jasper's favorite movie.

The happy couple and their guests moved the party on to the Old Nags Head Cove Clubhouse. As a professional deejay, Matt wanted to make sure that every song – from their introduction to the last dance – was perfect. "Matt picked every single song for its meaning," says Sue. He even gave his cousin a script to read as the wedding party was introduced and Social Distortion's "Reach for the Sky" played.

Sue and Matt's love for music played an important role in the reception. Rather than

dance the traditional father-daughter dance, Sue serenaded her parents with "Climb Every Mountain" in honor of her late grandmother. Guests danced in a conga line, and later on the whole party did the limbo (Jasper's personal favorite). For the special occasion, Sue and Jasper had decorated a limbo stick beforehand with her wedding colors.

Guests noshed on family-favorite foods – including a taco bar, homemade barbeque, jalapeno poppers and pizza. (Says Sue, "We eat pizza at least three times a week!") The couple decided against a traditional wedding cake, and instead opted for a "pizza cake" – a four-tiered pizza with heart-shaped pepperoni, baked by Sue's sister, Margie.

Sue used her creativity and budget-sense to decorate the reception site. The votive candleholders were made from Ozzie's baby food jars. The cardholder was a guitar box that Sue handcrafted and decorated herself. And, guest favors were pizza slicers, in honor of their favorite food and their unusual "cake".

After the big day, Sue and Matt took off on their honeymoon – their first vacation without kids! "Matt planned the whole thing," says Sue. For two weeks in Florida, Matt and Sue beached, camped, and – just as they did on their first date – rode roller coaster rides to their hearts' content. ♥

