



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CORNELL ALUM RETURNS TO ITHACA CAMPUS TO DISCUSS  
THE BUSINESS OF WEDDINGS FOLLOWING THE PANDEMIC**  
*2022 will be a record year for weddings since 1984 because of COVID-19*

**ITHACA, New York – October 19, 2022** – This year, nearly 2.5 million couples are expected to tie the knot in the United States — a record number fueled by the pandemic and the most since 1984, according to The Wedding Report. The company's CEO, Shane McMurray, will be joining Taylor Lea Thomas, Cornell MMH '20 and Harvard graduate, on Thursday, October 20 as she talks about The Business of Weddings at the Cornell Peter & Stephanie Noland School of Hotel Administration on its Ithaca campus.

Couples who had commitment ceremonies or more intimate wedding settings during the pandemic are now tying or retying the knot as restrictions have now eased up in terms of travel and CDC guidelines.

Taylor will be speaking at Cornell's Hotel School for the course HADM 4340 Catering & Special Events Management with lecturer Ravinder Kingra with over 25 years of food-service operations experience. Taylor also worked with Ravinder in redesigning the course to reflect the changes in the industry.

In addition to Shane, Taylor will also be joined via Zoom by Paul Costello, the National Outreach Director on the Board of Directors for Wish Upon a Wedding as well as the CEO of London-based Bridelux, James Lord. Together, they will discuss the state of the wedding industry following the COVID-19 pandemic which had a tremendous impact on the service industry around the world.



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### **About Elite Soirée**

Founded by Taylor Lea Thomas, Elite Soirée is an award-winning luxury wedding planning company that started in Miami and now based in Ithaca, New York. Taylor is a 2020 graduate of the Cornell Peter and Stephanie Noland School of Hotel Administration's at Cornell University with a master's degree in Hospitality Management (MMH). Prior, she earned her degree at Harvard University. Taylor has collaborated with luxury brands including Tiffany & Co., Rolls Royce, Conrad, and recently partnered with Air Partner – the second largest private jet company in the world.

<https://www.elitesoiree.com>

### **About The Wedding Report**

The Wedding Report is the No. 1 resource for realistic, unbiased, and reliable wedding research. It has been quoted in *Forbes*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, Bloomberg, Fast Company, NPR, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

<https://wedding.report>

### **About Bridelux**

Founded in 2013, Bridelux is a specialist media brand for the global luxury weddings and events industry. Held at the most esteemed hotels in the world, Bridelux creates curated event experiences where attendees are introduced to the industry's top designers, thought-leaders, planners and vendors while enjoying a chance to network, exchange ideas and walk away empowered and inspired. Top brands included Dior, Vera Wang, Reem Acra, Vivienne Westwood, Harrods, Jimmy Choo, Laurent-Perrier, Agent Provocateur, Christian Louboutin, Bentley, Tiffany & Co. and more.

<https://bridelux.com>

### **About Wish Upon a Wedding**

Wish Upon a Wedding is national a 501(c)3 non-profit that grants weddings and vow renewals to couples facing serious illness or life-altering health circumstances.

<https://www.wishuponawedding.org>

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