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Cyndy Hendrick Hoenig and David Dumay inside the Ever After micro wedding studio in the North Penn Plaza shopping center in Oklahoma City. (Photo by Mark Hancock)

OKLAHOMA CITY – People who want to go to the chapel, but don't want to pay for a large event, have a new venue option.

The Ever After micro wedding studio is opening Thursday in the North Penn Plaza shopping center. The center is west of Penn Square Mall, on N. Pennsylvania Avenue. It's owned and operated by Cyndy Hendrick Hoenig. She said she's had four weddings in her life, and two were in Las Vegas. She said she liked that at the Vegas chapels, the couple could walk into the venue, pick an amenities package, then get married. She's also helped her four daughters plan weddings, which ranged in cost and venue. One had a \$30,000 price tag.

"I'm really excited about this," she said. "I have a lot of faith in it. There's not anything like this here."

Hoenig is partnering with David Dumay on the venture. He has seen a similar concept work in Kansas City. They signed the lease with the North Penn Plaza in November. The packages start at \$395, with the most expensive set at \$6,500.

The center is leased by Steve Hetherington, who is friends with Hoenig. He said the wedding studio complements his other tenants, which include a hair salon, a nail

studio, and Glamour Shots portrait photography.

He's also heard from his brother Bill Hetherington, a former district judge, that courthouses don't like dealing with weddings.

"Weddings are so expensive," said Steve Hetherington. "There are people who don't want to spend a ton of money, so Ever After is much nicer than the courthouse, and much more personable."

The venue occupies 2,500 square feet in the center. Hoenig said she's spent about \$50,000 of her own money decorating the space. While her career has been spent in public relations, she said this is the first time she's personally invested in her own venture.

"I'm always a little scared," she said. "But I have a gut feeling. We call it little weddings with big heart."

She looked around the city before settling on the shopping center and she said she negotiated a great deal with Hetherington. She has a one-year lease, with a three-year option.

While on the outside it looks like a retail strip, that's not the case on the other side of the doors.

"(Inside) you're in fairyland," she said.

If Ever After is successful, Hoenig said she'd like to sell franchises so other people could operate similar venues. She said she plans to market the space at wedding shows and across social media. Steve Hetherington said his brother plans to talk to court clerks so they can refer couples to the venue.

"I think there's a niche for it," Hetherington said. "If anyone can make it work, Cyndy can. She's usually pretty successful with what she puts her mind to."