

NORTH OF BOSTON WEDDINGS

Pure Elegance

Your guide
to planning
the perfect
wedding day

ALSO
INSIDE

REAL WEDDINGS

3 local couples share their wedding planning process from start to finish

GOWNS

Sleek, stunning styles to rock down the aisle

FRESHEN UP

5 ways to freshen up your wedding



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IN THIS EDITION

ON THE COVER

Anneke Sharp poses in her Hayley Paige gown, embellished with a Swarovski crystal statement belt, before her wedding to Eric Beaulieu on Sept. 5, 2015. Photo by Aubrey Greene Photography

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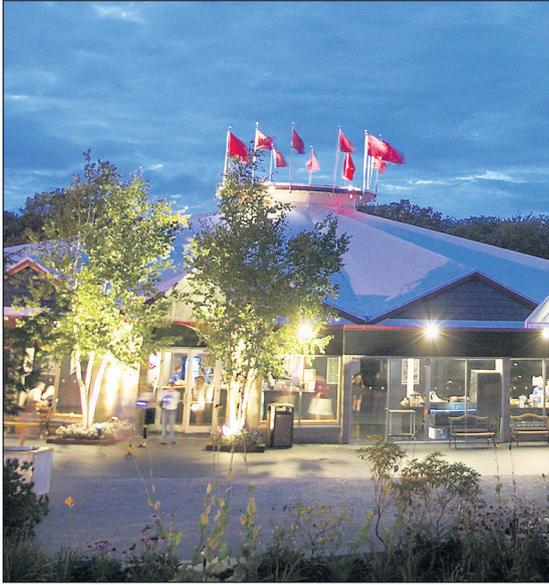
22 Gowns: Sweet '16

From sleek and sexy new silhouettes to updated takes on classic styles, these are the looks brides will be rocking down the aisle in 2016



The program for Monica Berube and Randall Thibault's wedding ceremony is nestled in a floral arrangement at the church where the couple was married.

Photo by Mary Lou Roy Photography



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NORTH OF BOSTON **WEDDINGS**

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Eric Beaulieu and Anneke Sharp share a kiss on the evening of their wedding in Ipswich.

Photo by Aubrey Greene Photography

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COUNTDOWN

SCHEDULE FOR A SPECTACULAR CELEBRATION

BEGINNINGS

- ▶ Discuss finances with everyone contributing to the event and set a budget.
- ▶ Set the date and ceremony/reception locations.
- ▶ Establish a guest list.
- ▶ Start thinking about the style and theme of your wedding.
- ▶ Start shopping for a gown.

6 TO 9 MONTHS BEFORE

- ▶ Mail out Save-the-Dates.
- ▶ Interview and book your vendors; don't forget to get a signed contract.
- ▶ Choose your attendants; shop for their dresses.
- ▶ Order your stationery.
- ▶ Start looking into honeymoon locales.
- ▶ Register for gifts.

4 TO 6 MONTHS BEFORE

- ▶ Book your hair/makeup help.
- ▶ Plan the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner.
- ▶ Shop for wedding bands.
- ▶ Reserve a block of hotel rooms for your guests.
- ▶ Finalize your honeymoon plans.

2 TO 4 MONTHS BEFORE

- ▶ Buy attendants' gifts.
- ▶ Get the men's fashions in order.
- ▶ Choose readings/music for the ceremony.
- ▶ Check marriage-license requirements.
- ▶ Meet with your caterer to discuss menu and drinks.
- ▶ Order the cake.
- ▶ Pick out favors.
- ▶ Plan and shop for welcome bags.
- ▶ Arrange party rentals, if necessary.
- ▶ Book your wedding-night room.

4 TO 8 WEEKS BEFORE

- ▶ Mail out your invites.
- ▶ Do a hair/makeup run-through.
- ▶ Discuss insurance/bank account changes you'll need to make.
- ▶ Send ceremony programs, reception menu and place cards to be printed.

2 TO 4 WEEKS BEFORE

- ▶ Submit a shot list to your photographer and setlist to your DJ.
- ▶ Finalize the seating chart and prepare escort/place cards.



Nicholas Gagalis and Brianna Healy's wedding bands encircle a rose stem. The couple was married July 18, 2015.
Amanda Sabga photo

- ▶ Confirm details with your vendors.
- ▶ Get your final dress fitting.

1 WEEK BEFORE

- ▶ Give your caterer the final head count.
- ▶ Pick up your dress; break in your shoes.
- ▶ Pack for your honeymoon.

- ▶ Organize your payments and decide who will distribute them.

1 DAY BEFORE

- ▶ Get a mani-pedi.
- ▶ Enjoy the rehearsal and dinner.
- ▶ Get plenty of sleep.



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The long and short of engagements

The big question – “Will you marry me?” – is easy to answer.

The follow-up question – “When?” – can be a lot tougher to answer.

When Sara Dorchak got engaged in September 2015, she thought for sure that she and her fiancé, Jonathan DeSoto, would be planning their wedding for more than a year – if not longer.

Instead, the couple found themselves planning their wedding on a nine-month timeline. “I had always envisioned a spring wedding and on Long Island, where we live, [and] it is not unheard of for venues to be booked for years in advance,” Dorchak says. “We never even contemplated that June 2016 would even be an option.”

But when the couple began searching for a venue a few weeks after getting engaged, one of their top picks happened to have multiple dates open in June, and they were even offered a discount because the wedding was so close. “We really didn’t want to wait or have a long engagement, so having the earlier date seemed like the perfect idea,” Dorchak says.

According to The Knot, the average length of engagement is 14 months – the precise amount of time Hayley Ryan and her fiancé, Adam Doyan, will have spent planning their wedding. “I think we’re pretty comfortable with the timeline because we are paying for it all ourselves, so we really needed the time to figure out how we were going to budget saving the money,” says Ryan, of North Reading. “On the flip side, I want it to happen sooner because the anticipation is killing me, and I’m excited about it.”

Although she planned her own wedding in just three months,



Six months? Nine? Twelve? More? A wedding can be planned on any timeline, but how much time do you need? Here, real brides offer a glimpse at what to expect with a longer or shorter engagement

Portland, Oregon-based wedding planner Marilyn Storch recommends 12 to 14 months for planning.

Competition for venues and vendors is part of the reason planning takes so long, says Storch,

particularly if you have your heart set on a specific venue. However, Storch says there can be a point where you’re planning a wedding for too long, noting that she has had weddings that have been 18 months to two years in the

making. “If you get too far out, a lot of vendors won’t contract with you,” Storch warns.

Taking a full year to plan is also a good idea if you plan on having an outdoor wedding or reception, because you can pay more attention to the weather elements when you begin planning. You’ll better know what to expect from Mother Nature.

Knowing the elements is one reason Stacie Larkin of Sacramento only spent nine months planning her October 2015 wedding. Larkin and her husband chose October because the hot California weather was starting to cool off, and it was the one date her desired venue had available. “You definitely have to be prepared to make choices,” Larkin says.

One of the choices Larkin and her husband made was to have a daytime wedding on a Sunday, which turned out to be cheaper and didn’t affect travel plans for many of their guests.

Even though venue, vendor and even dress selection help dictate when your wedding will be, your guests really are the largest factor in determining how long you’ll be planning your wedding. “The guest list really dictates everything,” Storch says.

Storch recommends trying to cut down the guest list to just those people you really want to be there because that gives you better opportunities. “To plan a wedding with hundreds and hundreds of people really does take time.”

Time also is important if you want to add a lot of personal touches to the day. Ryan says she’s grateful to have enough time to put her own touches on the décor. “If I had less time, I would definitely not be able to pull together the look that I want.”

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Purple kale flowers are used to complement the hues already present in the bridal bouquet.

5 ways to freshen your wedding

Take classic wedding elements to the next level with a few creative touches

Fresh is best. And that especially is true when it comes to your wedding style and décor. But why simply rely on seasonal blooms to give your wedding a fresh vibe?

“Fresh fruit and vegetables can add a whole different dimension of texture and color to floral arrangements and other décor throughout your wedding,” says Michael J. Skaff, owner of Skaff Floral Creations in Hinsdale, Illinois.

To put a garden-fresh feel on your event, consider these inspirations:



Bridal bouquet featuring sprigs of dill.

Beautify the bouquet

Make your bridal bouquet pop and give it a welcoming scent with simple elements like parsley, sage and rosemary. Skaff says that any vegetable or fruit will do, depending on your taste.

“For a fall wedding, we used miniature baby eggplants and baby pomegranates to create a purple jeweled tone. You can also incorporate Brussels sprouts or red kale that complement nicely into a bouquet,” he says.

Entire branches with miniature lemons, limes, pomegranates and other fruit on them are also popular, Skaff notes.

Go small though, he adds. “This will definitely draw attention to the bouquet, which is great, but for a bride, I wouldn’t use a large branch or a huge piece of fruit. Instead, little delicate and tiny fruits and vegetables can be combined with flowers to make a gorgeous yet not overpowering arrangement,” he says. ▶



Seasonal wreaths make for stylish ceremony décor. This wreath is made of laurel leaves, roses and lemons.

Live up the ceremony

Whether you're exchanging vows at a house of worship or an alternative venue, Skaff says there's plenty of opportunity to add fruits and veggies. On church doors, he suggests placing wreaths featuring succulents with fresh items that coincide with the season. For

summer weddings, try adding berries and in the fall, consider acorns.

"For winter weddings, you could go for a Williamsburg feel and use lots of walnuts and lemons and limes," Skaff says. "It's up to your imagination and how much color and uniqueness you're comfortable with, but there are no limits."

This wedding table centerpiece features a glass pillar filled with apples.



Add dimension to centerpieces

Avoid cookie-cutter centerpieces by incorporating fruits and vegetables into a display of any size. Keep it interesting by making each table different. For instance, Skaff suggests kale and eggplant at some tables and pomegranates and Brussels sprouts at others.

Jennie Bellisario, owner of Bellisario Florist in Birmingham, Michigan, suggests incorporating fruits and vegetables into the vase of varying sized arrangements with a fresh floral on top.

"You can also submerge fruits and vegetables in water with a floating candle on top," she says.

An added perk of this approach is cutting costs. "Fruits and veggies are a bit more cost-effective than some flowers, so it's a way of adding a fun focal point to your arrangements while also saving money," Skaff adds.

Get crafty with cake

Adding edible fruit to a wedding cake with light-colored frosting adds color and elegance, says Skaff, and can help evoke the season. "For a fall wedding, we added beautiful dahlias and raspberries and blackberries to the cake. Nuts and figs can also give a fall harvest feel," he notes.

In the summer, citrus fruits, such as lemons, limes and oranges, can do the trick.



For a vibrant look, accent the cake with brightly colored fruit. Here, a "naked wedding cake" is accented with oranges.



Sow love: Seed packets or cards make for a fresh, festive favor.

Make favors a favorite

To stand apart from the commonly given candy favors, consider giving apples or other fruit as a favor, if they're in season and go with your theme. "We've also seen personalized fruit and vegetable seed packs," Skaff says. "My friend who's a farmer did this as a symbol of growing love." //

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THE SKINNY ON *undergarments*

Q&A: Lingerie boutique owner discusses the importance of comfortable and effective bridal foundations

“What do makeup, a house and marriage have in common with a wedding dress? The proper foundation!” says Shelly Manougian, owner of the intimate apparel boutique Bella Intimates in Rye, New Hampshire.



Shelly Manougian

North of Boston Weddings magazine spoke with Shelly about wearing the correct undergarments for dress fittings and on the day of the wedding. A nationally recognized bra fit specialist, Shelly reveals the importance of wearing the perfect

piece underneath.

Why should brides care about wearing the right undergarments?

Comfort is most important. Wearing the right undergarments will allow the bride to enjoy the most important day of her life. The proper undergarments will allow her to be camera ready by enabling her to look and feel beautiful on her wedding day.

Are there any common misconceptions about certain types of undergarments?

Yes, a big misconception is that the bride needs a long-line bra. This is not the case, however. Nine out of 10 brides leave my shop with a strapless bra along with some type of shapewear item. Many times women think they need a long-line bra for tummy support. But a vast selection of shapewear products is available, which will provide the bride comfort, with a seamless and flawless look.

Another misconception is that the bride should wear a white foundation (undergarments) under her gown, which unfortunately doesn't work with all gowns.

Shapewear: Should brides have them? What shapers are most popular?

A torsette piece is very popular with brides for the reason that it allows a woman to



wear her own bra size, while customizing the amount of compression on her waistline. Every woman should own a torsette; it provides shaping and clean lines under the dress and helps offer a flawless look.

What types of undergarments are helpful to wear when dress shopping?

A properly fitting bra is one of the most important items to have while dress shopping. I would suggest a strapless bra or a convertible bra, since this will give the bride more options of dress styles, and a realistic idea of how she will look in the dress on her special day.

I've had bridal salons mention to me the frustration of some brides when it comes to the gown fittings due to the brides not having the proper foundation at the time of fitting. Don't wait to the last minute to select undergarments; sometimes these items may need to be ordered ahead of time. Purchase the items

for under the dress about a month before the last fitting.

I have also had brides share with me how upset they are because they didn't like the way they looked in their wedding pictures due to wearing the wrong bra. Remember, your wedding pictures are something you will have forever. They should put a smile on your face, not upset you.

How many different kinds of undergarments should a bride bring along when she tries on gowns? Any specific colors?

I would suggest that the bride keep it simple and not over think it. The most important undergarment for the gown fitting appointment is a proper-fitting bra. A shapewear piece or seamless panty is also nice to have.

What kind of fabric should they be made out of?

The type of fabric is limited but the color is optional. I would highly recommend a nude-tone bra, which can be worn under anything.

What should the bride wear on the day-of? Should the bride bring along extras?

1. When getting ready for hair and makeup, a nice silky robe allows the bride the opportunity to slip into her gown without disturbing her hair and makeup as much.

2. If the bride is going to wear hosiery, I would suggest bringing an additional pair in case of an accidental snag.

3. Many of our brides often choose to introduce "a touch of blue" with a panty item for good luck.

What are the staple undergarments to have handy on the day of the wedding?

1. A proper-fitting bra.
2. Seamless panty or shapewear.
3. Extra pair of hosiery.
4. Silky robe to wear while having makeup and hair done. A silky robe also photographs beautifully, perfect for candid photos of the bride.
5. Double-sided tape for fashion emergencies.
6. Stain-treating towelettes.

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THE DETAILS: PHOTO AND VIDEO

CAPTURING UNIQUE MOMENTS

4 ideas to try at your wedding

Photography/videography is one of the biggest expenses you run into when planning a wedding – the average spent on photo/video totaled more than \$4,000 in 2014, according to The Knot – but it's also worth it. At the end of the wedding day, you'll have gorgeous, professional photos and videos to look back on for the rest of your life.

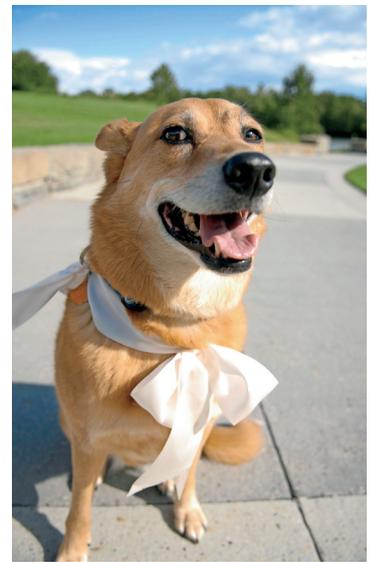
But that doesn't mean you only have to rely on your professional photography. Consider one of these photo/video ideas to capture unique moments from the big day.



2. The action video

GoPro cameras have been used at numerous weddings for humorous effect – just search YouTube. Perhaps the most well known is the couple who affixed a camera to a bottle of Fireball, the novelty cinnamon whiskey, and passed the bottle(s) around during the day, capturing all the guests taking a drink.

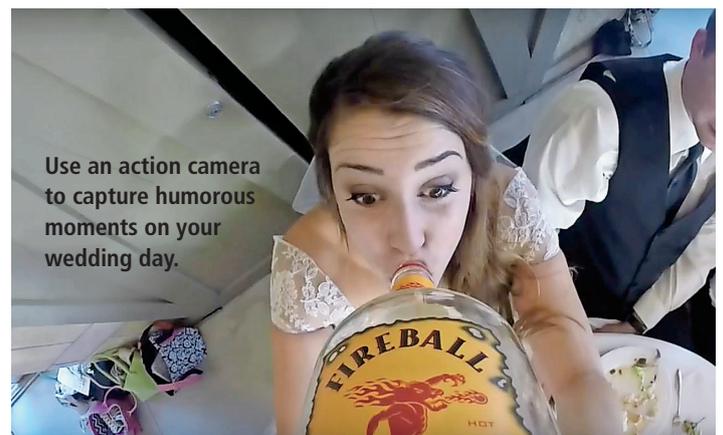
Are you going to have a dog as the ring bearer? You could mount a camera on him. Want to know what the bouquet toss is like from the flowers' perspective? Secure a camera in there. Any element of the day you want to capture in a unique way, you probably can with a mini action camera.



Fido the Ring Bearer would make a good point of view for a GoPro video.

1. The selfie

Wedding selfies are so ubiquitous that in her Fall 2016 Bridal runway show, designer Reem Acra sent a model down the catwalk with a white, crystal-encrusted wedding selfie stick, which now sells for \$500 at the designer's New York boutique. Of course, you don't need to spend \$500 to get a great wedding selfie. Just rely on the expertise of your professional photographer. When doing portraits, let him or her know you want to snap a great wedding-day selfie; ask them to help you pinpoint a great backdrop and to help you frame your shot. Just don't arrange to do so at the altar.



Use an action camera to capture humorous moments on your wedding day.

3. The instant camera

Want a way to document all of your wedding guests without just having them sign an old, staid guest book? Add a photo element.

Set up a table with the blank journal book and an instant-print camera – think a Fuji Instax or any number of Polaroid models – and have someone snap pics of the guests (this is a great job for a younger sibling or cousin). The guest can then write a message while the photo develops. Later, you can assemble the photos into the book alongside the messages, creating a unique memory and keepsake from the day.

4. Aerial videography

Aerial videography is another great way to get a unique video perspective of your event ... if it's allowed (be sure to check with your venue). Emerging drone technology has lowered the hurdle for everyday couples who'd like to have aerial footage of their event.

"For our wedding productions with budgets in the low six figures, we film our aerial cinematography shots from a helicopter," says Justin Fone, a San

Francisco-based videographer. "We started using a drone as a way to democratize the look of aerial cinematography shots ... at a fraction of the cost." Despite being more affordable than traditional aerial video, it's still a new technology and service, so expect to pay perhaps a couple hundred dollars per hour of flying time. And be careful. Another popular YouTube wedding video shows a drone flying into the groom's head (he wasn't seriously hurt). //



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How to
watercolor
your wedding

hannah-baxter.com

Trending on dresses, cakes and invitations, watercolor-inspired details add a romantic, ethereal look to your day

Watercolors and weddings: Could there be a more perfect match?

This vintage medium, whether printed on dresses or hand-painted on cakes, gives traditional wedding elements a fresh, lively feel. Here's how to incorporate the trend into your day.

Dresses: Wash and wear

After several seasons of wedding gowns in soft pastels that cheerfully ignored the directive that brides must walk down the aisle in white, watercolor-themed dresses are the latest rule-breaker. Fashion designers are having a Monet moment, and painting everything from delicate florals to wide-brush strokes on silhouettes like sheaths and ballgowns.

While couture designs often feature hand-painted details, brides on a more modest budget can get in on the color-wash craze by wearing a dress fabricated with a silk-screened print.

For whom is a watercolor-inspired gown intended?

"The look works for a bride who has an edge and isn't afraid to use color," says Lisa Fuhrman, a stylist and bridal consultant at New York-based retailer Kleinfeld Bridal. "She's confident and wants to make a statement but in a soft, romantic way."

While many of the dresses are fitting for a garden or afternoon affair, like Lazaro's sherbet-colored, floral print ballgown, and Elizabeth Fillmore's long-sleeved lace top and A-line skirt, others are black-tie ready, says Fuhrman. Dress in point: Mark Zunino for Kleinfeld's dramatic sheath with hand-painted, black abstract shapes.

Cakes: Picture this

From fabric to fondant, the watercolor trend is giving an



artful edge to wedding cakes, too.

Bakers like Jenna Johnson of Gateaux, a bakery in

Plymouth, Minnesota, are treating each frosted tier of a cake

to a different watercolor hue, or painting pretty wildflowers or stained-glass panes on fondant. Brides' favorite shades? Pink and green with a pop of gold.

The theme works with different wedding vibes. "People associate watercolor cakes with the boho-chic trend that is going strong right now," says Paloma Efron of Coco Paloma Desserts in Austin, Texas, "but you could create a romantic look, as well, with watercolor flowers."

To stay on budget, artwork should be kept simple: Order a cake painted in a watercolor wash and add fresh flowers or metallic accents. "Once you get into hand-painted designs and flowers, the cost goes up, since that requires more skill and time," Efron says. Or DIY the cake. Through its Evil Cake Genius line, Gateaux bakery offers a stencil kit that allows you to create your own edible watercolor work of art, like this elegant "painted rose" cake (right).



Invitations: A colorful way with words

Why are watercolor invitations so trendy?

"Watercolor is naturally a very romantic art form, with its loose feel and blended colors, making it a perfect fit for wedding invitations," says Ashley Austin of Fine Day Press in Austin, Texas. Graphics can be anything from lush florals to washes of color to detailed illustrations.

This versatility means it can work for different wedding styles – formal occasions to casual,



backyard weddings, says Allison Krosnick of Hand-Painted Weddings.

Pastels – soft pinks, peaches, sky blues and minty greens – are favorites, but according to Austin, brighter tones, like saturated hot pinks and deeper indigo blues, are edging their way in.

“A more graphic take on the watercolor trend is black and white,” she says, “and this typically has a more modern feel – think elegant, art gallery reception – and is usually paired with minimal designs like lines and dots.”

Pre-designed styles are more affordable than custom designs, and many stationers offer a variety of graphics, colors and prices.

Couples who want a one-of-a-kind invitation are often inspired by their wedding’s venue, location or season. “Or if the couple is open to it, I love incorporating aspects of their personality, hobbies, or even their engagement story,” Krosnick says. “Paper is a fun way to include personality in your wedding.”

**Live event artist:
Paintings come to life**

The hot new reception trend? Hiring a live-event watercolor artist to paint a special wedding moment like the first dance or cake cutting while it’s happening. Philadelphia artist Lisa Howell-Baxter says it takes her about four hours to sketch the surroundings then paint the scene. Guests watch her every brush stroke.

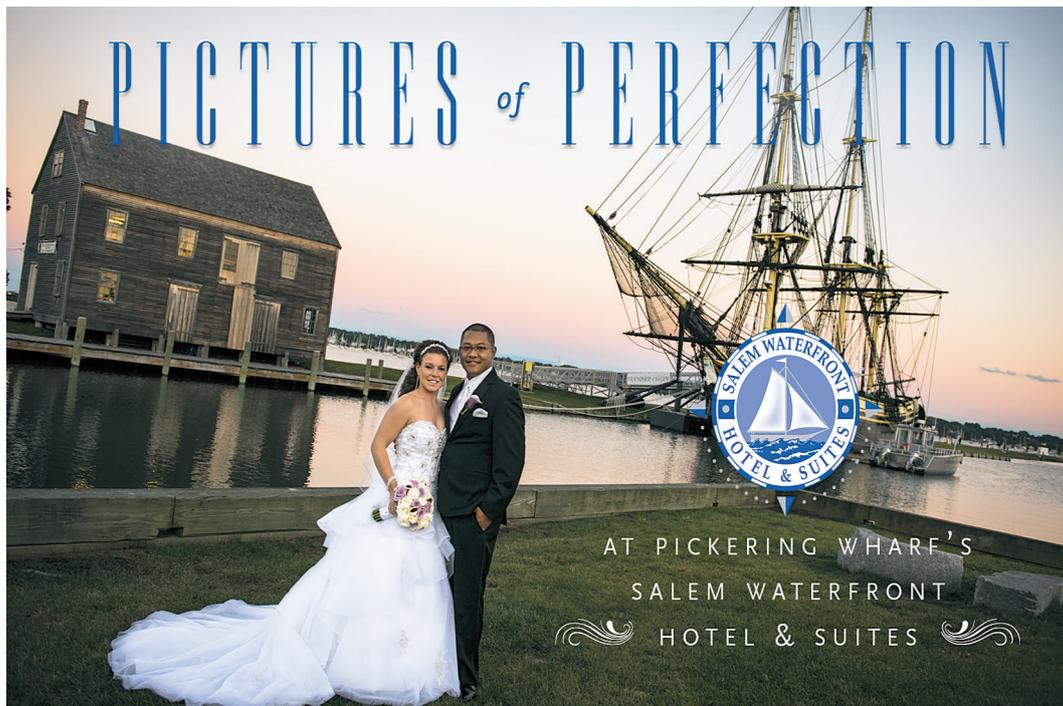
“There is a fascination among the guests to witnessing a work being created live during the event,” she says. “It adds to the entertainment.”

Watercolor is often the medium of choice because it’s quicker to use than oil or acrylic, but there are challenges, too.

“There is no ‘erasing’ of paint or ‘covering up’ once the paint is on the paper,” says Howell-Baxter.

Some artists finish and frame the painting before the last song is played, while others make final touch ups back at their studio before delivering it to the bride and groom.

Some artists also do quickie (5 to 10 minute) portraits of guests, which they take home as a memento. It beats scented soap as a favor by a long shot.



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Sweet '16

This year designers are giving brides of every style a lot to love. From sleek and sexy new silhouettes to updated takes on classic styles, these are the looks brides will be rocking down the aisle in 2016

Bridal designers rocked the runways last year with envelope-pushing looks heralding 2016's spring and fall seasons, putting the heat on brides to commit to those pre-wedding workouts because ab fitness will be an imperative.

Designers broke with demure tradition, offering 21st-century brides options such as skin-baring styles with illusion panels, plunging fronts and backs, cropped tops and newer silhouettes, including shorter dresses and slimmer, drape looks.

"The biggest trend we're seeing is the sleek, almost '90s silhouettes," says Xay Vongphachanh, creative director at Waters, based in Dallas. "Think Carolyn Bessette Kennedy's wedding dress, where the focus was its impeccable cut."

The body-conscious styles ooze sensuality and dreaminess with the help of lace, embroidery and inventive textural applications. Lace's importance as a romantic element was heightened even more when human rights lawyer Amal Alamuddin wore an Oscar de La Renta ivory tulle gown, appliquéd with 14 yards of Chantilly lace for her marriage to George Clooney in 2014. If the more provocative creations don't work for brides, they can seek comfort in the world of lace.

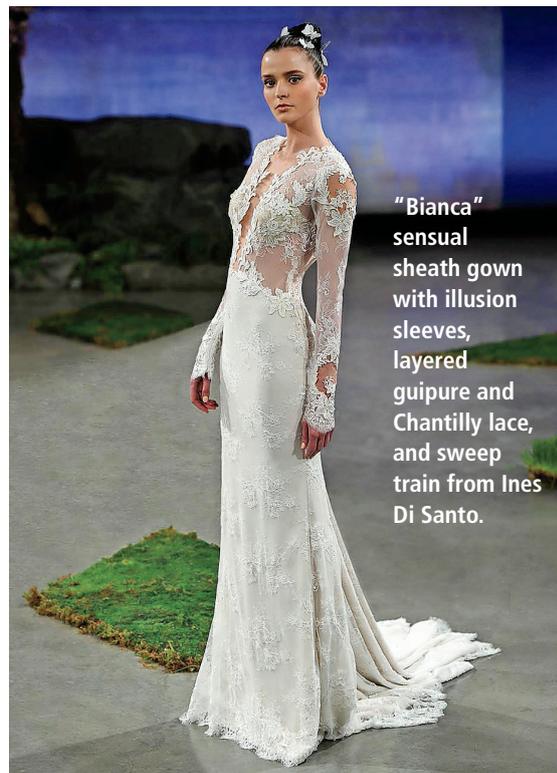
"Lace is still big — all over, cut out, appliquéd," says Lea-Ann Belter, a Toronto-based bridal gown designer. "That soft and romantic look is really popular."

Strapless gazar A-line wedding dress with architectural bodice and drape cutaway skirt from Angel Sanchez.





"Blythe" silk Chantilly lace sheath wedding dress with open back and embroidered tulle overlay from Monique Lhuillier.



"Bianca" sensual sheath gown with illusion sleeves, layered guipure and Chantilly lace, and sweep train from Ines Di Santo.



For spring, Monique Lhuillier showcased a silk Chantilly lace sheath gown with an embroidered tulle overlay. Ines Di Santo offered a sensual lace sheath with a deep V-neck, and illusion sleeves accented by appliqué cuffs. Reem Acra's Chantilly lace gowns channel Old World charm modernized with seductive illusion necklines, such as her body-conscious V-neck gown with a transparent lace bodice and sleeves.

It's hard not to notice those transparent designs that can make wedding guests do a double take with barely there fabrics and peek-a-boo cutouts. Designer Galia Lahav's edgy looks include a floor-length column featuring cutout paneling at the waist. Reem Acra covers the right spots with a strapless dress with a sheer embroidered panel overlay and a re-embroidered lace deep V-neck dress with a carved-out midriff.

“Azalea” silk white and nude Chantilly and re-embroidered lace racer illusion neckline sheath, with crisscross back and feather overskirt from Monique Lhuillier.



“Bright” sleeveless pink Mikado Mermaid gown, with rich embroidered treatments in pastel hues, with detachable train from Ines Di Santo.



The lines blurred between transparency and lingerie with Vera Wang, whose spring line was the most daring among designers. The designer, known for frothy confections, stripped down her looks – literally – to give new meaning to the blushing bride. Models wore sheer Chantilly lace gowns paired with matching ivory lace bra and panties or contrasting black undies, like the sheer lace midriff gown with diaphanous drop-waist skirt.

Another jaw-dropper of the season were the gowns with plunging necklines, both front and back, that overshadowed the bonanza of sedate looks, such as scoop, bateau, halter and off-the-shoulder styles. Perhaps designers took inspiration from another celebrity, Kim Kardashian, who wore a white Maison Martin Margiela dress, with winged sleeves and a cleavage-baring, cutout front to her pre-wedding dinner at the Chateau de Versailles in 2014.

Ines Di Santo’s restrained sleeveless pink Mikado Mermaid gown is offset by a wide, plunging V-neck. Augusta Jones offers a sleeveless ballgown with a sheer lace appliqué on a low back. The backside of another Augusta Jones A-line gown features appliquéd lace on a skin-colored illusion panel plunging down to the tailbone.

Bosomy looks were a staple at Reem Acra, who included an embroidered wedding

“Brides are still asking for the A-line gown. They don’t want strapless. They want off-the-shoulder, cap sleeves or shoulder straps. They’re ready for a new version of it.”

LEA-ANN BELTER

Left, a “Joie” nude tulle A-line wedding dress with a sweetheart neckline and embroidered floral overlay from Carolina Herrera.



Vera Wang showcased lingerie-inspired designs for 2016.

dress with a plunging neckline and silk chiffon skirt in her line. Monique Lhuillier's Chantilly and re-embroidered lace-sleeve sheath gown features revealing décolletage.

For brides wanting to flaunt their carefully selected heels, designers also dotted the runways with dresses featuring thigh-high slits and shorter, flirty numbers, some with detachable skirts. They were mixing form with function to help brides cut loose on the dance floor, something Kardashian was rumored to do on her wedding night after she changed into her second wedding dress, a white Balmain mini.

Highlights include Sarah Seven's Bedford strapless lace gown with a front slit, and Yumi Katsura's short V-neck dress edged with embroidery and a side ruffle. Monique Lhuillier's rendition includes a sleeveless illusion sheath gown with an embroidered bodice and flowing chiffon skirt slit to the thigh. Ines Di Santo showcased an asymmetrical lace mini-dress with a detachable tulle overskirt scattered with lace appliqués.

Right, "Caracas" illusion tulle georgette V-neck sleeveless wedding dress with freesia lace motif from Willowby by Watters.






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Short V-neck dress with embroidered edge and side ruffle from Yumi Katsura.



"Radiant" playful beaded lace mini with asymmetrical skirt from Ines Di Santo.



"Fairy" silk white and champagne sleeveless illusion embroidered bodice sheath gown with flowing chiffon skirt from Monique Lhuillier.

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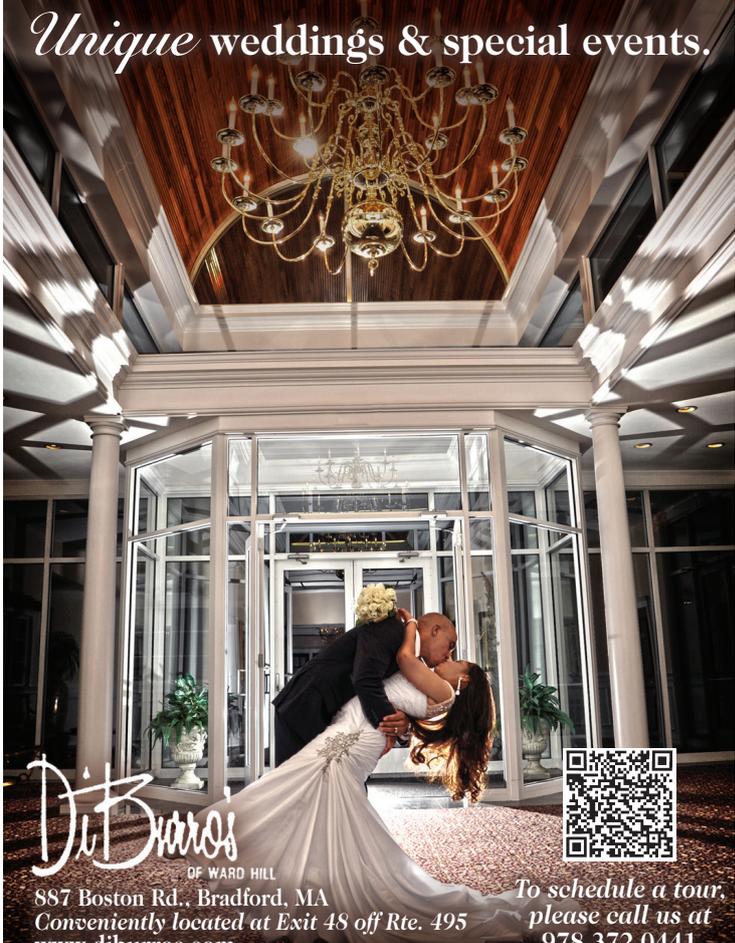




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Classic A-line dresses got a boost of modernity as designers sought ways to put a fashion-forward stamp on the evergreen look.

Techniques ranged from pairing the skirt with a crop top to adding more flair to the gown, such as 3-D florals.

“The straight A-line that was popular in the past is unappealing to today’s brides,” says Watters’ Vongphachanh. “The skirt has to have layers of soft net and special interest features such as horsehair trim.”

Reem Acra wowed with a re-embroidered lace crop top and a frothy cascade tulle skirt. Marchesa offered an A-line ballgown with floral embroidery and a 3-D tulle skirt.

Kelly Faetanini created an alençon lace strapless modified A-line gown with floral sequin underlay and feather skirt. Oscar de la Renta kept it youthful with a strapless A-line tea-length dress with a floral appliqué skirt, and Carolina Herrera kept it classy with a nude tulle A-line wedding dress with a sweetheart neckline and embroidered floral overlay.

Angel Sanchez is another designer playing with the A-line silhouette, redefining its form with printed organza and ethereal chiffon pieces. For spring, he’s offering a strapless gazar A-line wedding dress with an architectural bodice and drape cutaway. He also has a floral gauze A-line gown with an embroidered lace waist and tiered skirt, and a backless gown with a gauze A-line skirt with three-dimensional beaded sleeves.

“Brides are still asking for the A-line gown,” Belter says. “They don’t want strapless. They want off-the-shoulder, cap sleeves or shoulder straps. They’re ready for a new version of it.”



Illusion tulle boatneck sleeveless gown with lace appliqué on the front and on a low back. Teamed with a full ballgown skirt and train from Augusta Jones.

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Photo graphs by Susan



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Real Weddings

A jolly
proposal

Anneke Sharp and
Eric Beaulieu

Page 30

A ray of
sunshine

Brianna Healy and
Nicholas Gagalis

Page 36

Brimming
with affection

Monica Berube
and Randall Thibault

Page 42



“I fell in love with her courage, her sincerity, and her flaming self respect. And it’s these things I’d believe in, even if the whole world indulged in wild suspicions that she wasn’t all she should be. I love her and it is the beginning of everything.”

F. Scott Fitzgerald
“The Great Gatsby”

Anneke Sharp and Eric Beaulieu share a moment together after their wedding ceremony in Ipswich.



Real Weddings

Anneke Sharp
and Eric Beaulieu

September 5, 2015

Ipswich, MA

Anneke and Eric take a moment to give each other gifts before the ceremony.

'Santa Baby' ...

forgot to mention one little thing ...

a ring

By GAIL MCCARTHY

Photos by AUBREY GREENE PHOTOGRAPHY

Anneke Sharp received the Christmas gift of her dreams.

Anneke, who was dressed as Mrs. Claus, stood in front of the towering Christmas tree at Dock Square in the center of Rockport, as her then-boyfriend, Rockport's Eric Beaulieu, who was dressed as Santa Claus, proposed to her. The story and photo from that day in December of 2013 went viral.

Anneke thought they were stopping to take a photograph for a holiday card because Eric was a corpulently costumed Santa, and she donned her red elf-like shoes, with upturned toes, and an iconic Santa buckle overtop her red dress with white-tufted accents. But when Eric got down on one knee and pulled out a tiny green ring box, Anneke stood silent in disbelief as he waited for a reply from his stunned girlfriend, who was momentarily at a loss for words.

"I was very excited. I think I must have looked at him like six times, wondering is this real," Anneke recalled.

The couple, who were accompanied by two "elves" for the photo shoot, cherish the December holiday season, making the timing of this engagement proposal



The bride's accessories were from Haute Bride. She wore a statement belt in rose gold with Swarovski crystals.

apropos.

It now became time for Sharp, who works at a bridal boutique, to plan her own wedding.

THE BRIDE

Anneke Sharp, 26, bridal consultant at Vows Bridal Outlet in Watertown. Grew up in Old Lyme, Connecticut.

THE GROOM

Eric Beaulieu, 25, firefighter/paramedic for the town of Newbury. Grew up in Rockport.

HOW THEY MET

The couple met at a Fourth of July cookout. "We had mutual friends that vacationed in Rockport who had brought me up," Anneke said.

THE PROPOSAL

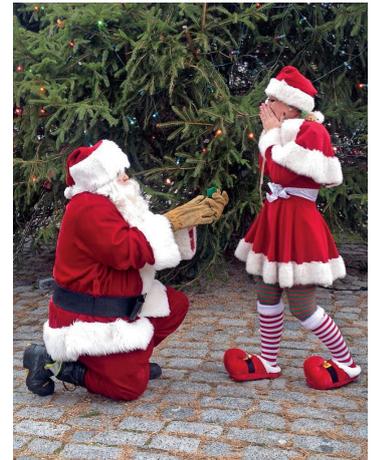
The couple dressed up as Santa and Mrs. Claus to share the spirit of the season for the annual holiday children's party for the Rockport Fire Department, prior to which they spread their good cheer at nearby Den Mar nursing home and rehabilitation center.

"We are both big family people, and we like the festive season and the music and the magic of Christmas," said Eric.

Stopping for what Anneke thought was a Christmas card photo, Eric, dressed in a Santa costume, knelt down on one knee and proposed to Anneke.

EARLY PLANNING

"Originally we were thinking of a winter wedding because of our Christmas engagement. But as we started planning we both found Labor Day weekend to be the perfect time. The first big decision was the venue. Since I am from Connecticut, we needed to decide if the wedding was going to be in



Courtesy photo

Eric proposed to Anneke in front of the Christmas tree in Rockport in December of 2013. The couple loves the Christmas season.

Connecticut or Massachusetts," Anneke said. "After visiting The Hellenic Center in Ipswich, it was an easy decision. Our venue is truly a hidden gem on the North Shore. Since I have been in the wedding industry for about seven years, the planning was very fun!"

APPROXIMATE COST OF CEREMONY AND RECEPTION

Around \$45,000.

WHO PAID

"We're very lucky that both our families helped us pay for the wedding. It was a combined effort with Eric and my family along with us."

THE BRIDAL PARTY

Maid of honor: Avery Sharp
Bridesmaid: Heather Eldridge
Best man: John Beaulieu
Groomsmen: Ajay Sharp and James Erwin.

THE INVITATIONS

All the invitations and save the dates were handmade by the bride.

COLOR SCHEME

Blush and gray. “I have always loved how soft and romantic the blush and gray combination is. One of my favorite colors is blush. It goes along with my love of rose-gold. Eric was also very big on wearing a gray tux so it was easy when it came to our colors.”

THE BRIDE’S DRESS

► **Vows Bridal Outlet, 130 Galen St., Watertown; bridepower.com**

Design: Lana by Hayley Paige

“My gown search was most likely unlike most brides’. Since I have been in the bridal industry for over seven years I have seen thousands of dresses. During this time, I have only ever loved one dress. ... the designer Hayley Paige has always been one of my favorite. I had seen the Lana dress come out on the bridal market and instantly loved it.”

After Eric and Anneke got engaged, a friend gave her a wedding magazine. “Sure enough, about 20 pages in, there was a two-page spread of the dress. I knew then that was the dress.”

“I went shopping with my mom and sister and let them pick out some dresses for me to try. But when I tried on the Lana gown, it was perfect. I loved how different it was, the layers of ruffles, and the fact that it was blush was a bonus. One of my favorite things about the dress was the geometric design that was on some of the layers.”

SOMETHING BORROWED, BLUE, OLD AND NEW

“I had a few things. One of my favorite things I had made before the wedding was a bridal robe. A good friend of mine owns a store in Connecticut called Beneath the Gown. She is super talented. She had used fabric from my gown, my mother’s gown, and a handkerchief that my great grandmother had hand-tatted. So in my robe I had new, old, and a blue embroidered ‘Mrs. Beaulieu.’”

“I also had one my grandmother’s pin on my flowers and garter. The bottom of my shoes were also blue. Also new – the dress! Looking back I guess I didn’t have something borrowed, however I did have a six pence in my shoe.”

THE ATTENDANTS’ DRESSES

► **Vows Bridal Outlet**

Design: Brescia by Watters

“I had gone shopping with both



(Inset) The bride’s bouquet was a combination of white O’Hara garden roses, champagne Sahara roses, mini calla lilies, white cymbidium orchids with pink throats, and silk lily of the valley. The stems were wrapped in fabric from her gown and secured with her grandmother’s pin.



Anneke’s hair comb was rose gold with Swarovski crystals. She wore a Hayley Paige London veil.

of my ladies and told them to try on whatever they wanted. Ironically they both picked the same dress. It fit perfect with the over-all concept we had for the wedding. The dresses were purchased from Vows Bridal Outlet where I work. The dresses featured a lightly beaded lace top with an English net bottom. Perfect for the romantic feel we wanted, and best of all, they both felt great in them. It was very important to me that they each feel great.”

THE GROOM AND GROOMSMEN'S OUTFITS

► **Men's Wearhouse;**
www.menswearhouse.com

Style: Gray tuxedo, Black by Vera Wang

“The groom was in charge of this department. He had always said he wanted to wear a gray tux. The choice was easy going to Men's Wearhouse since our family was between Connecticut and Massachusetts.”

THE ACCESSORIES

► **The White Dress by the Shore, Clinton, Conn.;**
www.thewhitedressbytheshore.com

Bride's accessories: Haute Bride
Veil: Hayley Paige London



Eric wore a gray Vera Wang tuxedo with a blush tie. Here, he poses next to the 1948 Mac fire truck the couple had parked in front of The Hellenic Center.

“Oh how I love my accessories. I had purchased all my accessories through The White Dress by the Shore. They were all rose gold. I chose to accessorize my gown with gorgeous chandelier earrings, a statement belt, and a hair comb – all in rose gold with Swarovski crystals. I also had the Hayley Paige London veil. I believe that every girl should have

a cathedral-length veil because how many times in your life do you get to wear one!”

BRIDAL PARTY HAIR AND MAKEUP

► **Hair by Emily Reale;**
www.facebook.com/EmilyRealehairstylist

► **Makeup by Jeannie Vincent;**
jeanniev.com

“I let the girls choose the look of their hair and makeup; I wanted them to feel the best they could. For my hair I knew I wanted it half up, with loose curls, again something soft and romantic. For my makeup I knew I wanted statement eyes. We stayed with the rosy tones.”

FLOWERS

► **Celia's Flower Studio, Gloucester;** 978-879-4490,
www.celiasflowerstudio.com

“My bouquet was a combination of white O'Hara garden roses, champagne Sahara roses, mini calla lilies, white cymbidium orchids with pink throats, and silk lily of the valley (added as a sentiment for the bouquet my grandmother carried at her wedding). The stem was wrapped with fabric from my gown with

my grandmother's pin. The bridesmaids' bouquets were white O'Hara garden roses, blush Sophie roses, with pops of icy lavender spray roses. Their bouquets had a bit more color than mine.”

SPECIAL ELEMENTS

“During our ceremony, we had a 'wine ceremony' where we put a bottle of wine and letters we had written to each other in a special box. We will open it on our 25th wedding anniversary. With one exception: If we ever hit a rough patch, we are to unlock the box, read the letters and drink the wine. At that point, we would write new love letters to each other, replace the bottle of wine and lock them in the box until we need it again or hit our anniversary. It creates a love time capsule.”

THE CAKE

► **I Dream of Jeanne Cakes, Tewksbury;** 978-869-6013,
jtcakes.com

I Dream of Jeanne Cakes created both the wedding cake and the groom's fire truck cake.

“We had a vanilla cake with passion fruit buttercream (only the best flavor in the entire world!). The cake was decorated with the



The bridesmaids wore Brescia gowns by Watters, which featured a lightly beaded lace top with an English net bottom. The groom and groomsmen wore Vera Wang tuxedos

geometric design from my dress as well as a few orchids, with a Swarovski crystal 'B' on top. I had a groom's cake made as a surprise for Eric. It was a chocolate cake with raspberry buttercream, made to look like the antique fire truck we had outside – a 1948 Mac.”

FAVORS

French macaroons, blush and white, from I Dream of Jeanne Cakes.

PHOTOGRAPHER

► **Aubrey Greene Photography;**
aubreygreene.com

“I have known of Aubrey for quite some time, when choosing a photographer she was the first person we went to. Her amazing photos and her easy demeanor was essential for deciding that she was the best person for us.”

VIDEOGRAPHER

► **Brian J. Productions;**
www.brianjproductions.com

THE REHEARSAL DINNER

► **Ipswich Clambake;**
www.ipswichclambake.com
The couple had a clambake catered by Ipswich Clambake at Scout Hall in Rockport.



The groom's cake, which resembled an antique fire truck, was chocolate with raspberry buttercream.

THE CEREMONY

► **The Hellenic Center, 117 County Road, Ipswich;**
www.helleniccenter.com,
978-356-4742

“Our ceremony was at the reception venue, the Hellenic Center. We both had decided that an outdoor ceremony was exactly what we were looking for, and the venue had the perfect space right off the back deck that was ideal. Rick Perry from Gloucester Weddings was our officiant. He was so easy to work with.

“Eric suggested we go look at The Hellenic Center after we decided the wedding was going to be in Massachusetts. It was the perfect venue for our outdoor ceremony. The inside reception space was



The couple's wedding cake was vanilla with passion fruit buttercream, decorated with a geometric design, a few orchids, and a Swarovski crystal "B" on top.



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so romantic and perfect for everything that we had wanted. At the end of the night, the entire bridal party, my parents and Eric and I had hopped on the back of the fire truck and rode it back to the hotel.”

MUSIC FOR THE CEREMONY

Classical music, including “Pachelbel’s Canon,” and the acoustic version of “A Thousand Years.” The ceremony sound and music was done by Sound Advice of Gloucester.

THE RECEPTION

An awesome time with friends and family, complete with a photo booth and s’mores bar.

RECEPTION MUSIC

Mix of jazz, country and today’s hits – a little something for everyone – with “White Christmas” thrown in to commemorate the couple’s engagement.

DJ AND PHOTO BOOTH

▶ **360 DJs & Photo Booth Rental, Gloucester;**
www.360photoboothrental.com



Anneke and Eric walk down the aisle after their wedding ceremony at The Hellenic Center in Ipswich.

ACCOMMODATIONS

▶ **The Wylie Inn and Conference Center, 295 Hale St., Beverly;** wyliecenter.com

HONEYMOON

The couple traveled to Italy. “We visited Florence, Tuscany, and Sorrento. Best two weeks ever! Would go back in a heart beat. Eric and I have always dreamed of going to Italy. When

it came to deciding where to honeymoon it was an easy decision. We both knew that the honeymoon was a once-in-a-life time experience, so we decided if we were going to do it, we were going to go on the trip of our dreams. We both decided on the locations. We started in Florence, continued all over Tuscany, and ended our trip in Sorrento. It was the best way to spend the first two weeks

as a married couple!”

OVERALL HIGH POINT

“Getting to marry the love of my life and celebrate with all of our friends and family!”

OVERALL LOW POINT

The couple couldn’t think of one.

HOW’S MARRIED LIFE?

“Fantastic. We just moved and remodeled a new house. We’re looking forward to all life has in store for years to come.”

ADVICE TO THE BRIDE-/GROOM-TO-BE

“Often times things seem like they are so far away, but before you know it, they are gone. Enjoy all the planning, and every once in a while, take time with your fiancé to do something non-wedding related. Go out on a dinner date and don’t talk about anything wedding. Just enjoy each other and remember why you love the person you are going to marry. After all, the wedding is happening because two people fell in love.”



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Real Weddings

Brianna Healy
and Nicholas Gagalis

∞
July 18, 2015

∞
Derry, N.H.



©Michael Curran photo

SHEER *bliss*



THE BRIDE

Brianna Healy, 25, digital asset associate at Hill Holiday. Grew up in Southern New Hampshire.

THE GROOM

Nicholas Gagalis, 29, social media coordinator at Nizhoni Health Systems. Grew up in Winchester.

The couple live in Reading.

HOW THEY MET

Brianna and Nick met while getting their undergraduate degrees at the College of Communication at Boston University.

THE PROPOSAL

“I am very hard to surprise, so Nick knew he had to propose at a moment when I would otherwise be distracted. That’s why he decided to propose the day we moved into our first apartment together. Our families helped us with the move, and after they left, he handed me a small fortune cookie-shaped box that he gave me while we were dating. Over the years, he would put sweet/romantic fortunes inside of it whenever he wanted to cheer me up or just because. His expectation was that I would slide the fortune out of the box, read the personalized message, and then he would open it to reveal the ring. Instead, I opened the box without reading the fortune, saw the ring inside, and exclaimed, ‘Really?!’ I know that he got down on one knee, asked me to marry him, and put the ring on my finger, but honestly the whole moment is pretty hazy after I realized what was happening. I can’t remember exactly what he said, but what I do remember is that I had truly never been happier than I was at that moment,” Brianna said.

THE ENGAGEMENT RING

A round solitaire diamond set in a gold band, inset with smaller diamonds. The ring is a family ring that was gifted to Nick by his aunt.

EARLY PLANNING

"We started planning very soon after we got engaged," Brianna said. "We were engaged on Jan. 1, 2014."

APPROXIMATE COST OF CEREMONY AND RECEPTION

The entire wedding cost less than \$25,000.

WHO PAID

"We contributed what we could, and the rest was split by both of our families," Brianna said.



Michael Cummo photo

The color scheme of the wedding was purple with an accent of burnt orange. "I have always been partial to the color purple [and] I love orange lilies and I knew I would want them to be integrated somehow," Brianna said.

law Joel Santos, Nick's cousin Bobby Campbell, and Nick's friends Christopher Tomlinson, Mike Swann and Craig Hinkle.

THE INVITATIONS

"My supervisor, Jamie Litchfield, custom designed my invitations. We wanted the invitations to be clean and modern with mixed typography," Brianna said.

COLOR SCHEME

The main color was a deep purple and the accent color was a burnt orange. "I have always been partial to the color purple, so that was an easy decision," Brianna said. "The orange was because I love orange lilies and I knew I would want them to be integrated somehow."

THE BRIDE'S DRESS

► 125 Bridal Boutique, 37 Plaistow Road,

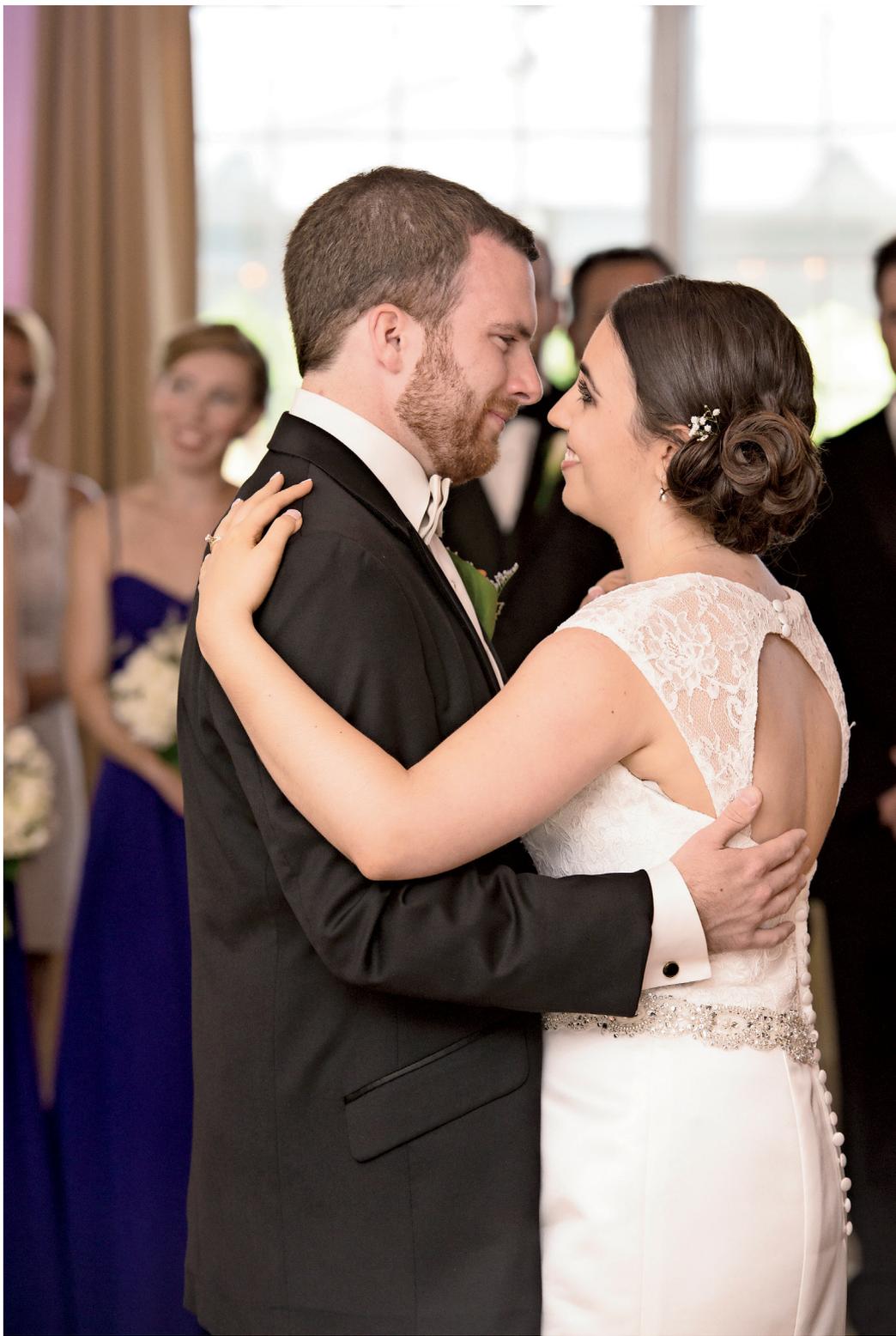
THE WEDDING PARTY

Maid of honor: Jessica Santos, bride's sister.

Bridesmaids: Brianna's sister Christie Healy, sister-in-law Kristen Gagalis, cousins Megan Healy and Julie Guzman, and best friends Lauren Paley and Elise Sarasin.

Best man: Nick's best friend Will Monson.

Groomsmen: Brianna's brother-in-



Amanda Sabga photo

The couple's first dance was to Ed Sheeran's "Thinking Out Loud." "When I first heard the song on the radio, I instantly thought of my relationship with Nick," Brianna said.

Plaistow, N.H.; www.125bridalboutique.com

Brianna bought her dress at her first appointment. Her mother, sisters and nieces were there to help.

"I originally went in expecting to get an A-line gown made completely of lace, but ultimately chose something far different than what I expected. I ended up purchasing a mermaid-style gown." The top of the dress

was made of lace, with wide lace straps and a keyhole back. The bottom was made of satin. At the waist, Brianna added a crystal belt that she also found at 125 Bridal. "I adored how unique the dress was with the contrasting fabrics, loved the keyhole back and couldn't resist the classic lace elements. The belt added even more flair to the already one-of-a-kind gown. Everyone told me they

had never seen another one like it.”

THE ATTENDANTS' DRESSES

▶ Alfred Angelo, 136 Andover St., Danvers; www.alfredangelo.com

The bridesmaids wore purple, floor-length, chiffon gowns from Alfred Angelo. “I went into the first appointment with a very open mind about what to choose for my bridesmaids. All I knew is that I wanted them to be long and chiffon. Otherwise, I decided to leave it up to each individual bridesmaid to decide which style they wanted to wear. I wanted them all to be comfortable and happy in their dresses. Coincidentally my sisters picked the same style, and all of the other bridesmaids chose another. I had expected to have seven unique gowns, and instead there were only two styles. I ultimately decided on a shade of purple called ‘Purple Storm.’”

THE GROOM AND GROOMSMEN'S OUTFITS

▶ Russo Tux, Dresses & Limousine, 149 Main St., Stoneham; www.russotuxandlimousine.com, 781-438-3200

The men wore classic black tuxedos with black bow ties. Nick wore an ivory tie to match Brianna.

“We just knew we wanted something timeless. Nick ultimately chose the tuxedo he felt most comfortable in.”

THE ACCESSORIES

“I am very minimalistic, so I wore very few accessories. I wore pearl earrings from Macy’s and, for a necklace, I wore a piece



Amanda Sabga photo

Despite cake being a low priority, Brianna and Nick still cut a cake ceremonially and saved money by getting it at a local supermarket.



Michael Cummo photo

Each guest received a favor box filled with truffles.

that Nick gave me when we first started dating. It’s a single pearl on a thin gold chain. He gave me the actual oyster that contained the pearl as the gift, and then took me to a jeweler to have it made into whatever I wanted.”

SOMETHING BORROWED, BLUE, OLD AND NEW

Something old: Engagement ring

Something new: Brianna’s dress



Michael Cummo photo

Brianna embellished her dress with a crystal belt. “The belt added even more flair to the already one-of-a-kind gown,” she said.



Amanda Sabga photo

The invitations were custom designed by Brianna’s supervisor Jamie Litchfield. The engagement ring, a round solitaire diamond, set in a gold band inset with smaller diamonds, is an heirloom of the groom’s family.

Something borrowed: Her mom’s slip

Something blue: Toenail polish

THE BRIDE'S HAIR AND MAKEUP

▶ Vanity Hair Studio, 33 Deer St., Suite 3A, Portsmouth, N.H.; www.vanityhairstudionh.com

“I had my hair and makeup done by stylists from Vanity Hair Studio. I had an updo that had my hair swept to one side. The only accessory in my hair was a

touch of baby’s breath ... a last-minute addition that came from a bouquet my dad bought for me the morning of the wedding. For the makeup, I decided on a fairly natural look with neutral tones that mostly focused on emphasizing my eyes.”

BRIDESMAIDS' HAIR AND MAKEUP

Some of the bridesmaids used Brianna’s stylists, while others did their hair and makeup themselves.

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FLOWERS

► **Coady Florist, 1540 Cambridge St., Cambridge; cambridgeflorist.com**

“My bouquet had large white lilies, light purple roses and orange calla lilies. The bridesmaids carried white hydrangeas with purple caspia. The men wore calla lily boutonnieres.”

THE CAKE

“Cake was honestly a low priority for us. We decided this would be one part of the wedding where we would take an opportunity to save some money. The cake we cut was actually from a local Hannaford Supermarket. It had a chocolate-ganache outside and the inside was chocolate with a raspberry filling. The cake served to the guests was prepared by Brookstone Park in Derry, N.H. It was a basic half-chocolate, half-vanilla cake.”

FAVORS

The couple purchased little bridal gown- and tuxedo-shaped boxes from the Dollar Store and filled them with Lindt Truffles.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

► **Michael Cummo Photography, michaelcumphoto.com; Amanda Sabga, amandasabga-photography.com**

“Michael Cummo was the principle photographer, assisted by Amanda Sabga. I met Michael in the photojournalism program at Boston University. I chose him mainly because I always respected his work while we were in school, but also because I knew the fact that I knew him personally would put me at ease and make for more natural-looking images. I always felt he had a knack for catching beautifully candid moments.”

THE REHEARSAL DINNER

“We had the rehearsal dinner at my in-laws’ house in Winchester. We had a backyard get-together. It was a quaint and cozy gathering the night before the wedding, and it was exactly what we needed to relax before the big day.”

THE CEREMONY

► **Brookstone Park, 14 Route 111, Derry, N.H.; brookstone-park.com**

“We chose Brookstone Park because we loved the tented outdoor patio. Not only did it guarantee that we could have an outdoor ceremony despite the weather, but it also meant that we could have the outdoor ceremony we wanted while still keeping our guests comfortably out of the sun.”

“The ceremony was officiated by one of our best friends from college, Jaime Pangman. ... We knew long before we were engaged that he would officiate. The ceremony he prepared was so personal and it made for a really wonderful and unique wedding ceremony.”

MUSIC FOR THE CEREMONY

The parents and the bridal party walked down the aisle to an instrumental version of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” “My mother-in-law’s favorite movie is the ‘Wizard of Oz’ and I wanted to pay her tribute somehow during the ceremony. I walked down the aisle to an instrumental version of the song ‘I Choose You,’ by Sara Bareilles. The first time I heard the song, I knew it was the one I would walk down the aisle to.”

THE RECEPTION

The reception was also held at Brookstone Park. “We chose Brookstone because both the indoor and outdoor spaces were beautiful, which was important in case it was raining the day of the wedding; the price was right for us; the food was absolutely delicious; and the staff there was amazing to work with. Alex and Kasia really know what they’re doing and they take as much stress away from the bride and groom as possible. They were truly a delight to work with every step of the process.”

RECEPTION MUSIC

► **Drew Rissler of Get Down Tonight, Salem, N.H.; www.getdowntonight.com**

“Our parents and bridal party walked into the reception to ‘Fun’ by Pitbull, and we walked in to ‘Uptown Funk.’ ... We wanted to start off the reception with truly upbeat and catchy music to set the mood for the whole night.”

First dance: Ed Sheeran’s “Thinking Out Loud.” “When I first heard the song on the radio,

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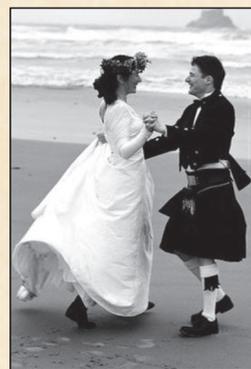
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I instantly thought of my relationship with Nick.”

Father-daughter dance: “Daddy’s Little Angel” by T Carter music

Mother-son dance: “Simple Man” by Lynyrd Skynyrd

“The overall night had a wide variety of dance music that catered to many generations. We wanted to make sure that all of our guests would feel comfortable getting out on the dance floor and have a good time. Our DJ was absolutely perfect. We didn’t give him all that much direction, but it felt like he was playing from our own music collection.”

HONEYMOON

“For our honeymoon we ventured through the Northwest. We started our trip by taking a weeklong cruise to Alaska out of Seattle, Washington. When we returned from the cruise, we rented a car and explored Seattle, Portland, and the Oregon coast. We chose this trip because ... we wanted to explore and be in the outdoors



Michael Cummo photo

Nick is lifted up by some of his friends during the reception. “We wanted to make sure that all of our guests would feel comfortable getting out on the dance floor and have a good time,” Brianna said.

and experience a part of our country we hadn’t seen before. The landscapes were absolutely breathtaking and so worth the trip.”

OVERALL HIGH POINT

“I would say the high point was the start of the ceremony. It had been raining hard all morning, and remained dark and cloudy

for most of the afternoon, but the moment I walked down the aisle, the sun came out. It was almost like something out of a movie.”

OVERALL LOW POINT

“We encountered a lot of the average wedding stresses that all brides- and grooms-to-be come across while they’re planning a wedding, but in terms of

the actual wedding day, there wasn’t a low point.”

HOW’S MARRIED LIFE?

“We’ve been a couple for seven years now and have been living together for two, so transitioning into married life has been really easy for us. We’ve always had a solid foundation, and if the past five months are any indication of the future of our marriage, we are going to have a happy and healthy marriage for many more years to come.”

ADVICE FOR THE BRIDE-/GROOM-TO-BE

“Slow down to enjoy your engagement, and try not to get caught up in all of the stresses that inevitably accompany planning a wedding. Think of the planning in terms of planning a marriage with the love of your life instead of just planning a singular day. Things will get stressful, and things will go wrong, but it’s important to stay positive because getting married to the person you love is truly the most magical feeling in the world.”

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Photography by Benoit and McCarty

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Real Weddings

Monica Berube and
Randall Thibault

September 6, 2015

Meredith, N.H.



Lakeside love

Photos by MARY LOU ROY PHOTOGRAPHY

THE BRIDE

Monica Berube, funeral apprentice at Berube-Comeau Funeral Home in Haverhill and Brookside Chapel & Funeral Home in Plaistow, New Hampshire. Grew up in Plaistow.

THE GROOM

Randall Thibault, funeral assistant at Berube-Comeau Funeral Home and Brookside Chapel & Funeral Home. Grew up in central Massachusetts.

The couple live in Plaistow.

HOW THEY MET

The couple met at Ridgewood Country Club in Moultonborough, N.H., where Randall worked as the club professional and Monica worked in the Pro Shop.

THE PROPOSAL

Randall proposed to Monica at one of their favorite spots up by Lake Winnepesaukee on Dec. 21, 2013.

“Randall asked me to go up to the lake one night for ‘work’ but actually was planning to propose. Randall had also asked my father’s permission before asking me to marry him.”

THE ENGAGEMENT RING

Monica’s engagement ring is a princess-cut diamond with two sapphires on either side, and three channel-set diamonds on both sides of the sapphires. It was purchased from Hannoush Jewelers.

THE WEDDING RINGS

Monica’s wedding band is from Gold Leaf Fine Jewelry in Haverhill. It is a princess-cut,



Melissa Berube, Monica’s sister and maid of honor, helps Monica with her veil. They had their hair and makeup done at Cascade Spa at Mill Falls.

channel-set band. Randall’s ring is a titanium band with a deer antler inlay.

EARLY PLANNING

“We booked our venue the week after we were engaged. We wanted to get married in September 2015 and our venue only had two dates available for that month and year, so we are glad we booked early,” Monica said. “The rest of the planning started right around September 2014, which is when I went to get my dress.”

THE WEDDING PARTY

“The maid of honor was my sister. Other attendants were my sister-in-law, three cousins, and four friends. My cousin’s daughters were the flower girls (ages 3 and 5),” Monica said.

“Best men were Randall’s brothers. Other groomsmen were my two brothers, my future brother-in-law, Randall’s cousin and a friend.”

THE INVITATIONS

► Paper Potpourri — Elaine Barker — 93 Broadway, Haverhill; 978-372-3861, www.paperpotpourri.com

“The invitations were simple and elegant. Our theme was very classic and the invitations were a reflection of our style.”

COLOR SCHEME

“Our main color scheme was navy. Navy is such a classic color and I knew from the beginning that I wanted that. Plus, navy is a color that looks good on any skin tone.”

THE BRIDE’S DRESS

► Cristina’s Bridal, 1 Main St., Andover; 978-470-3956, www.cristinasbridal.com

Design: Paloma Blanca

“My dress was from Cristina’s Bridal ... They are amazing! It was very low stress and really quite fun! I tried on between 10 and 12 dresses but knew almost immediately that I would choose my



Monica met Randall at Ridgewood Country Club in Moultonborough, N.H., where Randall worked as the club professional and Monica worked in the Pro Shop.

particular dress. It was in keeping with the theme of classic elegance and was very much ‘me.’ In fact, my family kept referring to it as ‘The Monica Dress,’ before I even decided on it. The staff at Cristina’s is wonderful. My alterations were done perfectly.”

THE ATTENDANTS’ DRESSES

► Cristina’s Bridal

“My bridesmaids’ dresses were also from Cristina’s. They were short navy dresses with a keyhole back. We chose a fit-and-flare style because it is flattering on most everyone. Cristina’s was extremely accommodating in handling my bridesmaid measurements. A few of my attendants were not local and Cristina’s was great about working with them.”

THE GROOM AND GROOMSMEN’S OUTFITS

► Russo’s Tux Shop, 1 Main St., Andover;
www.russtotuxandlimousine.com

“The men wore gray pants with a gray vest, and navy jacket. They wore navy and gray ties. They rented their suits from Russo’s Tux in Andover. Randall didn’t want a solid-color suit and saw this combination and really liked it.”



The bride wore a three-strand pearl bracelet.

THE ACCESSORIES

“I wore pearl earrings and a three-strand pearl bracelet. The dress had a sweetheart neckline so a necklace was not necessary.

“My ‘something borrowed’ was also my ‘something old.’ It was a handkerchief that belonged

to my late grandfather, Charlie. My mom let me borrow it for the day, which was really special. My ‘something blue’ was a blue ribbon that my father’s cousin gave to me and it had the medal of St. Anthony on it. My ‘something new’ was a three-strand pearl bracelet given to me by my aunt.”

BRIDAL PARTY HAIR AND MAKEUP

► Cascade Spa at Mills Falls, 312 Daniel Webster Highway, Meredith, N.H.; 866-719-0161, www.millfalls.com/spa

“Our hair and makeup was done as Cascade Spa at Mill Falls. My hair was a simple bun and my makeup was not very heavy or dark. I wanted a very natural look. They were very nice to work with and did a great job with all of my bridesmaids as well. The bridesmaids either had simple buns, pony tails, or half up half down. Their makeup was also very natural.”



Monica’s bouquet was all white and featured roses, lilies and other flowers.

FLOWERS

► The Green Griffin, 108 Route 125, Kingston, N.H.; 603-347-1957

“The flowers came from The Green Griffin, owned by Shannon Griffin. Shannon is so great! She is so friendly and really knows what she is doing. We met a few times to go over flowers and she had great suggestions for everything. My bouquet was all white with some roses, lilies, and some other flowers. A special touch was flowers with a pearl center. The bridesmaids’ bouquets were mainly blues and white.”



The groom's cake was a carrot cake with bride and groom deer figurines and faux birch wood frosting. The couple's wedding cake was four tiers: chocolate with chocolate-buttercream frosting on the bottom; vanilla with amaretto buttercream and raspberry jam filling on the second tier; red velvet with cream cheese frosting on the third tier; and carrot cake with cream cheese frosting on the top tier.

THE CAKE

► Jacques Pastries, 128 Main St., Suncook, N.H.; 603-485-4035, www.jacquespastries.com

"It was a four-tier cake with the bottom layer on chocolate with a chocolate-buttercream frosting. The second layer was vanilla cake with amaretto buttercream and a raspberry jam filling. The third tier was red velvet with cream cheese frosting, and the top layer was carrot cake with cream cheese frosting. The groom's cake was a carrot cake with bride and groom deer figurines and a faux birch wood frosting."

PHOTOGRAPHER

► Mary Lou Roy Photography, marylouroy.com

"Mary Roy was our photographer and was excellent. She was very easy to work with and the pictures came out amazing! She was very calm, which was really beneficial because she didn't add any stress. She also took charge, which I asked of her, to make sure that we got the shots we wanted."

REHEARSAL DINNER

The rehearsal dinner was at Monica's family's lake house in Moultonborough, N.H. "We had a huge (70 people) barbecue and lobster cookout."

THE CEREMONY

► St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Meredith, N.H.



Randall proposed to Monica at one of their favorite spots up at Lake Winnepesaukee on Dec. 21, 2013. They married two years later at a church near the lake.

Monica's "something borrowed" was also her "something old": a handkerchief that belonged to her late grandfather, Charlie. "My mom let me borrow it for the day, which was really special."



The bridesmaids wore short navy dresses with a keyhole back. The groomsmen wore gray pants with a gray vest and navy jacket.

THE RECEPTION

► Church Landing at Mill Falls,
281 Daniel Webster Highway,
Meredith, N.H.; 800-622-6455,
www.millfalls.com

RECEPTION MUSIC

Jazz music for cocktail hour and a live band for the reception. "The band actually doesn't really have a name.

Someone we work with often is their drummer."

HONEYMOON

"We're going to Bermuda, but haven't gone yet."

HIGH POINT

"The whole evening celebrating with our family and friends. The whole night was filled with

so much love. And, the commitment to spend out lived together was the best part."

LOW POINT

"It went by so fast!"

ADVICE FOR THE BRIDE-/GROOM-TO-BE

"Make sure you take a moment during the ceremony and

reception to take everything in. And, don't stress too much!"

HOW'S MARRIED LIFE?

"Married life is great! We have lived together for three years so it wasn't much of an adjustment. But changing my name and calling Randall my husband has been different."

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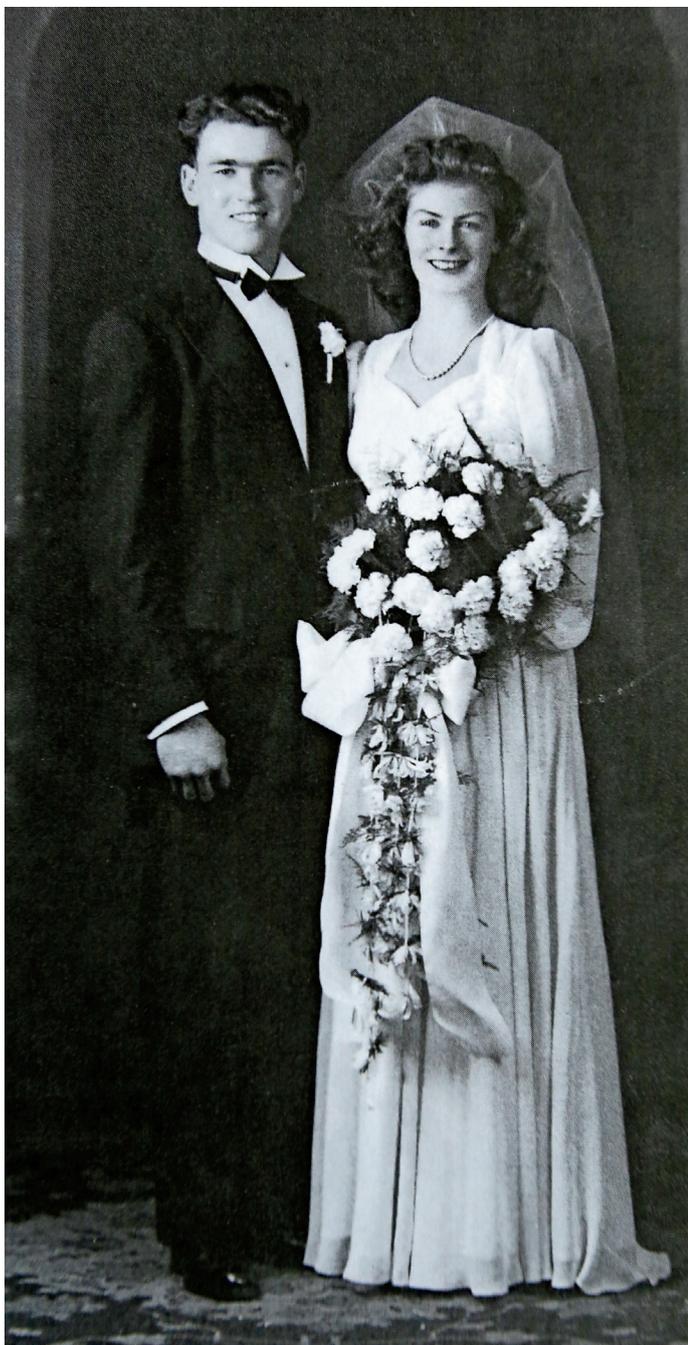
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Wedding Wisdom SWELL AT 70 YEARS



The Nerdens on their wedding day, 70 years ago.



Ken Yuszkus photo

Hope and Frank Nerden

With seven children, eight grandchildren and the recent birth of their seventh great-grandchild, Hope and Frank Nerden have witnessed a lifetime together.

“We’ve known each other forever,” Hope said. “He still makes me laugh.”

This past November, Frank and Hope celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Frank proposed in June 1945, and on Nov. 25 of that year, they married at St. Margaret’s Catholic Church in Saugus. Hope was 21 and Frank, 23. They’ve lived in Danvers, in the same house, on the same street, for 65 years.

From the Nerdens’ 70 years of marriage, Hope shares this wedding wisdom for brides- and grooms-to-be.

“Have a good sense of humor and be friends. And if you can, have a big family. Take care of each other.”

► Do you know of a couple who will be celebrating a milestone wedding anniversary in or around July of 2016, and would be willing to share their wedding wisdom? Please let us know by emailing mhoffacker@northofboston.com.

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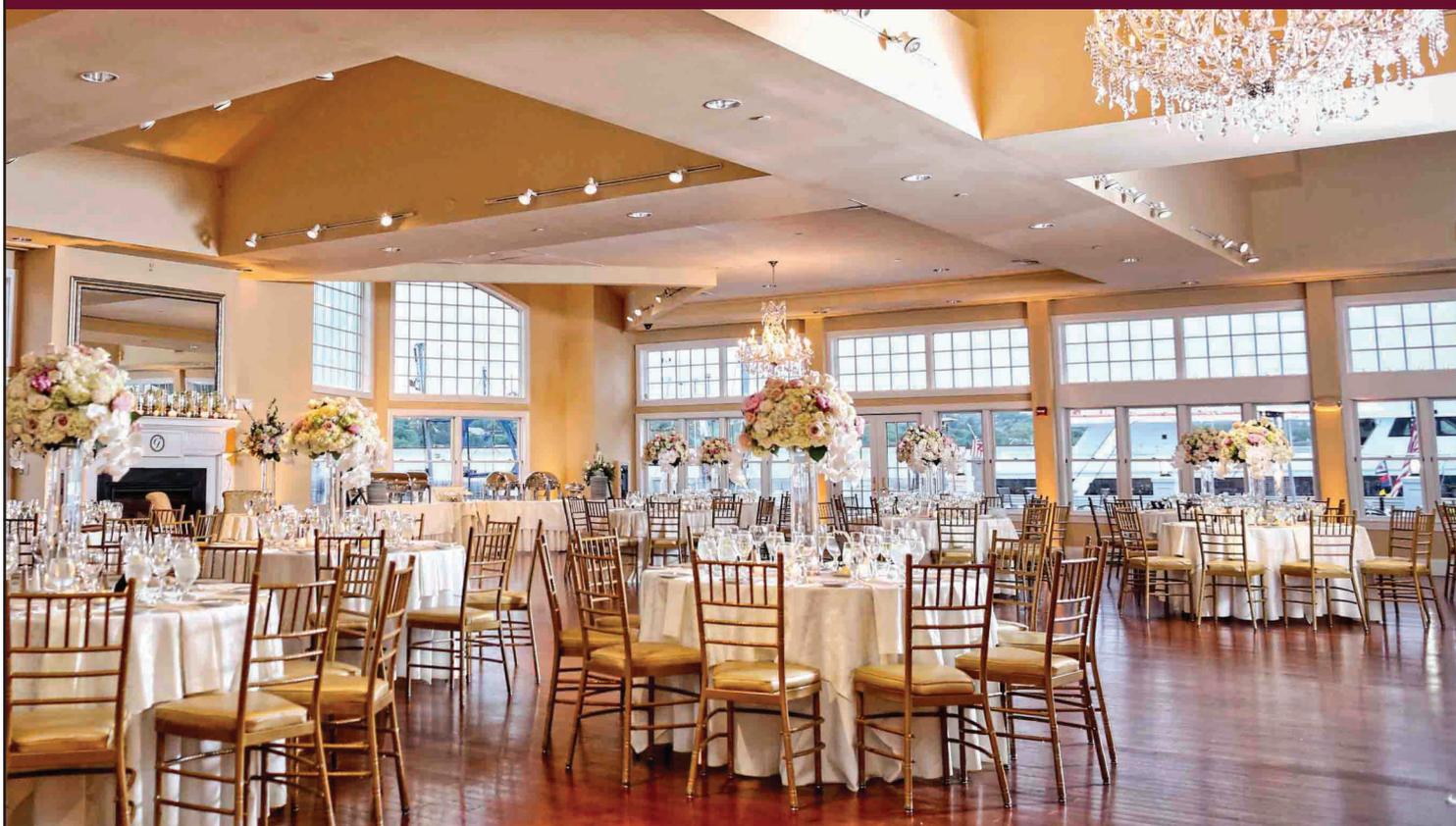
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