

→ 2020 ←

Weddings

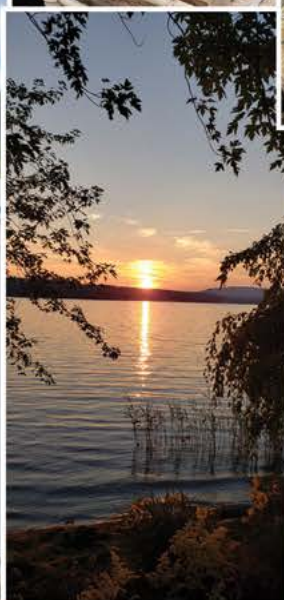


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ON THE COVER: Tyler and Lauren Davidson at their wedding on a family farm in Newbury.

COVER PHOTO BY: Emily Esslinger of Golden Aura Photography - Keene, New Hampshire.

Editor's Note

We had dozens of entries in this year's cover photo contest. We chose a handful of entrants to interview for a behind-the-scenes peek into their courtship, wedding and the planning that went into their big day.

We loved talking with all our married couples and vendors! Throughout this publication, their quotes have been edited for length and clarity.

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Tyler and Lauren (Tomlinson) Davidson

You started dating when you were 17 and had been dating for four years when you got engaged. How did you know you were ready to make the next commitment?

Tyler was going through the police academy and I was in my senior year of [college] and we were under a lot of stress. But things were still working really well. We were supporting one another a lot. That sealed the deal.

Life is going to get tough, but we seem to be really helpful and supportive and loving. I don't think that is going to change at all.

You had a Christmas engagement – what was that like?

Tyler brought his mom

to pick out a ring for me. I had no idea! He asked my dad, which was really nice, which I also had no idea about.

My family was going over there for dinner and presents. Tyler and his mom had it planned that when I got there, we were going to take some pictures, but it was really a video and he was going to propose in front of the tree.

We got there late because there was a storm, and he was really stressed. I could tell things were off. We have a really funny picture that was taken right before he proposed and he looks like he's going to get sick to his stomach!

He asked with my family there, and his family and continues next page ...

The Details

- Ages:** 24 and 24
 - Started dating:** November 2013
 - Engaged:** Dec. 25, 2017
 - Wedding date:** Aug. 17, 2019
 - Wedding venue:** Family farm in Newbury
 - Wedding budget:** \$28,000
 - Number of people invited:** 268
 - Number of people who attended:** 232
 - Bar:** Limited open bar
 - First dance song:** "Dance With Me" by Morgan Evans and Kelsea Ballerini
 - Wedding colors:** Mauve, dark blue
- Our interview was with Lauren*



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Continued from Page 5

actually a few friends that had popped in. It was kind of a big deal. It was nice. I was really surprised.

You had an almost two-year engagement. What made you choose that length of time?

Honestly, financially I wish we would have chosen longer because you don't get to plan a wedding all the time. We're going to do this once.

But I'm a big date person – I like the look of numbers. I didn't like 2018 and we were going to be making a lot of shifts. So we found a 2019 day that we liked.

Honestly, my ideal date was Aug. 8, of 2020. But it might be too long to wait. August 2019 was the sweet spot of not too short amount of time, but long enough.

Did Tyler participate in planning the wedding?

We tried to talk at least once a month about budget and what needed to be done. It's really hard to plan a budget when you've never had a wedding before!

The very first thing we did was we went over what was important to us and what we saw for our wedding day, so that we could mesh together our ideas. We were really well on the same page.

What apps or websites did you use during planning?

Pinterest, which everyone told me to stay away from. They said it would give me a mixed sense of reality – that things on Pinterest aren't achievable in real life. But I'm glad that I used it because we ended up doing a lot.

I also used The Knot and a lot of Googling.

Did you know you wanted to use family land or did you look at venues before deciding?

We didn't look at a lot of venues, and I wish we would have.

I was set that I wanted something different than what everyone else had. I don't want to have a wedding where five other friends had it in the past year.

We thought it would be a cheaper way to host it. But oh my god, it's not!

We didn't have a very clear idea of everything we'd have to bring in.

You think if you're paying for other people to do it, it's going to be more expensive. But then you realize that no, you're bringing everything to you.

We tell people we had a tented wedding and they're like, "Oh it's cheaper!" And I say, "It was not cheaper! Do not have a tented wedding if you're looking for cheaper!"

But it was wonderful. My grandma came up to me and she was so happy and emotional. She said, "Your great-grandpa would love this." I know how much it meant to them for us to have it there.

What did you do for your flowers?

That was the best experience of my whole entire life! I would recommend it to every single bride - Cedar Circle. It was amazing.

We went two days before the wedding - you go and pick flowers. I brought all my bridesmaids and we picked flowers. It was the most therapeutic thing.

They brought us buckets of these flowers and we got to combine and make all the flowers. We brought the mason jars to put them in. They were in the next room making my bouquet and I got to tell them exactly what I wanted. It was amazing.

Where did you splurge?



Food was important to Tyler and photos were important to me. Plus we splurged on the fact that we had 232 people. If you combine the meal and \$3 per chair, you spend a lot on a single person coming to your wedding.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Worrying about missing something and how everything is coming together.

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Wedding dress shopping

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

ferently?

Not really. But I guess you can always cut back on numbers.

Did you have post-wedding blues when it was over?

Yes. I cried in the tent in my dress all alone! But the day everyone showed up to help us clean. That was really nice. And then we went to P&H for breakfast.

When you look back, what's your favorite moment from the day?

Our vows. It was really special that we wrote a

continues next page ...

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little bit to each other. It meant a lot that we took the time out of our scheduling and planning and working to do that.

What advice do you have for couples who are just starting to plan their weddings?

I liked that we sat down in the beginning and got on the same page. It's easy to get caught up in it all, so I would really think about the parts of your wedding that are important to you. Work around those because you don't want at the end of the day to be disappointed that you didn't do something that you really wanted.

Tips For Finding The Perfect Plate

Because TWO of our brides scheduled their wedding dates around Willy's Catering of East Burke, we reached out to talk to Chris Willy and get the lowdown on what you need to know when choosing a wedding caterer.

What should people be looking for when they're interviewing caterers?

Make sure they're showing you things in your budget. If your budget is for an entree, an app, and a salad, don't request six appetizers, four entrees and expect it to be a low price point.

When you're comparing caterers, make sure that you're comparing apples to apples, and not apples to oranges. Make sure that you know everything is included and there aren't hidden fees so you're hit with a big rental bill or something like that on the day.

Ask for total transparency, because some people will just give you the food costs and not include taxes or gratuities. Make sure that the percentage of the gratuity is in the contract that you're signing. Somebody could say it's 15 percent today, but then charge 20 percent the day of.

Service fees – you might be hit with a service fee for the waitstaff or the kitchen staff. We do have a service fee, but it's right up front when they request the original quote. It's a percentage of the food cost.

The things to look for are service fees, rental fees, taxes and gratuities.

How else can people keep costs down?

Do a collaboration with the caterer. We allow people to bring in snacks, or do their own appetizer, or do their own desserts. If you have it at your house, you can do your own bar. That's a big cost.

Do you recommend buffet or sit-down meals?



It's whatever the bride and groom want.

We like to lean toward plated because you get a presented meal placed directly in front of you that's a full portion size. When you do a buffet, it doesn't matter how it's served or how clean you try to keep it. By the 30th person, sauces have spilled, things have been dropped. It tends to look a little chaotic. With plated, everybody's getting that beautiful presented plate right in front of them.

What is something you wish people would do that you don't usually see?

A lot of people just do the steak and the fish or the comfort meals. I wish more brides and grooms would do the food they like, and not what they think their guests would like, or what mom and dad want. A lot of people will want to do chicken, but they'd lean more toward the Oriental cuisine. Branch out and try different cuisines!

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Adam and Lynzy (Guyer) Birchard

How did you get engaged?

Adam is a canine handler and his first canine dog, Chico, is retired and lives with him. Adam put the ring on Chico's collar and had him come in the room and surprise me.

I knew Adam was the right person for me because he loved me no matter what. I felt like I could truly be myself around him, there wasn't

anything I needed to change. Even on my bad days – or on the really, really good days – he still was there for me.

How did you choose the date for your wedding?

During the summers I work for Willy's Catering out of East Burke. I knew that no matter what I wanted to have them be our caterers, and I really wanted to get married in 2019. Oct. 19 was the only day that Chris and Carrie had left that also worked for the Alerin Barn, which was my dream wedding location. When that fell into place, it was such a blessing.

I'm lucky that I get to see all the different venues because I cater!

You had six months to plan your wedding – was that enough time?

It was perfect! I think I would have overthought things if it was any longer. It made me hold to specific timelines for booking things and getting things done.

Did you do a wedding website for your guests?

I used The Knot, and it was helpful because I

continues next page ...

The Details

Ages: 33 and 28

Started dating: New Year's Eve 2015

Engaged: March 2019

Wedding date: Oct. 19, 2019

Wedding venue: Alerin Barn

Wedding budget: \$20,000

Number of attendants: 4 bridesmaids;
7 groomsmen

Number of people invited: 175

Number of people who attended: 114

Bar: Mixed open (wine and beer) and cash
(mixed drinks)

First dance song: "Tenerife Sea" by Ed Sheeran

Wedding colors: Emerald, wine, teal, pink

Our interview was with Lynzy



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Continued from Page 8

got to do my registry and wedding website right there. No matter whether you do paper invites or RSVP digitally – which is how we did ours – you have to track people down anyway. But for the most part it was successful.

Where did you make decisions with budget in mind?

I've been in many different weddings and I always get whatever dress my friends asked me to get. But I've spent \$300 on a bridesmaid dress, and I wanted something where my friends wouldn't have to spend a ton of money and also I could pick the colors that I liked. So all of my bridesmaids got their dresses on birdygrey.com, and all of their bridesmaid dresses are \$99. I picked four different colors and the girls could pick whatever style they wanted.

We did all of the flower arrangements on our own. We ordered our flowers through Bloominous.com. All the plain flowers came and we put them together into the bouquets and boutonnières and corsages and whatnot. I spent as much for all of my flowers as some of my friends have paid for just bouquets.



What personal elements did you include in the styling of your wedding?

For our centerpieces, we used wood slabs with antique bottles that came from our family barn. We put flowers in those.

For wedding favors, Adam made coasters for everyone! Some were birch and some were cedar. He branded our wedding crest into all of them.

Were kids wel-



come at your wedding? Was that an easy or hard decision?

No, and it was easy. We have a lot of friends with young kids. We wanted it to be a night where they could just relax and have fun and not have to worry about their children.

Were there any unexpected things that happened on the day?

One of my bridesmaids had a dress malfunction and her zipper broke! She used some wardrobe tape to tape the sides over so it looked like an open back. And I had given all the girls a shawl as one of their gifts. So sometimes she wore the shawl!

I think some people would have been extremely angry about it, but I really didn't care. I have a hilarious photo with all of our backs to the camera!

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Having to make quick decisions because sometimes I like to think about things for a bit longer. But a lot of times I needed to make a decision *right now*.

continues next page ...

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What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

All the details! I'm definitely a detailed type of person. So pulling together all the things that I had pictured having in my wedding – and doing that with Adam, too. It was cool to see that at first he really didn't care. But then he started to have input and want to help with little details, too.

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

Dancing longer.

Did you have post-wedding blues

when it was over?

Yes. Our honeymoon is in February, and I'm really excited to leave the cold and go somewhere tropical. But I also kind of wish I could have done it right after the wedding to just relax together, because it is so much work right up until the day. Adam and I both had Sunday and Monday off, and then we went right back to work.

When you look back, what's your favorite moment from the day?

When Adam and I got to have the special time together to do our first look photo.

Also, my grandparents were able to be at my wedding. They've had such an impact on my life and just getting to spend that special day with all the people that raised me and helped me.

What advice do you have for couples who are just starting to plan their weddings?

Plan with your partner. Make the big decisions together.

If you're fortunate enough to be close with your family, a lot of people love to help. I think it makes it really special when you walk around at your ceremony or reception and see the different touches from different family members. It's just as big a day for them as it is for you.



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Scenic Tent (our couples rented tents) in Lyndonville, Vermont
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Erica Wheeler from Fresh Salon in Littleton, New Hampshire
Fresh Salon in Littleton, New Hampshire
Marion Nelson from Tanglz and Toez Salon in Lyndonville, Vermont
Samantha Gandin from The Hair Suite in Woodsville, New Hampshire
Tiffany Johnson from Silver Scissors in St. Johnsbury, Vermont



MAKEUP

Courtney Derrington of Tease Hair Salon in Woodsville, New Hampshire
Emily Trahan in Lunenburg, Vermont
Fresh Salon in Littleton, New Hampshire
Katie Smedley from Shear Sensations in Lyndonville, Vermont

HORSE & CARRIAGE

Paul Ruta of Black Horse Farm in Marshfield, Vermont

WEDDING COORDINATOR

Courtney Clark in Bradford, Vermont

Many thanks to the photographers who created the amazing images we've used throughout this publication.

- Elizabeth and John Abbott** - Randi Lee Photography - Coventry, Vermont
Elizabeth and Wade Baillargeon - Lisa Bean Charron
Lynzy and Adam Birchard - Emily Elisabeth Photography - Nantucket, Massachusetts
Jessica and Drew Blanchard - Sheri Compagnone of Evelyn Rose Photography - Rhode Island
Lauren and Tyler Davidson - Emily Esslinger of Golden Aura Photography - Keene, New Hampshire
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Wade and Elizabeth (Audette) Baillargeon

How did you meet?

Through a mutual friend. She decided we would be a good match.

We didn't start dating immediately – I fought it for about a year!

But I realized he was truly genuine and he wasn't going to change on me. He makes me laugh in all circumstances, even when I want to cry. And he's always up for an adventure.

You dated for a long time before getting engaged. What made you decide this was the right time?

It's kind of a sad story.

We bought an old farmhouse in Newbury that we

were renovating. The goal was to get married there. We just gutted it, it's just four walls right now. But we couldn't wait until it was done.

Technically, our engagement was when I hung up the phone after finding out my dad's cancer was getting really significant, and we needed to get a jump on things. It wasn't a traditional "let's get engaged, let's get married."

How did you choose the date for your wedding?

We cater for Willy's and it was the first weekend that was available. It was the soonest we could possibly do it.

How did you keep yourself organized during



planning?

I had a little notebook. I would just write something down as I was thinking about it, and then flip back through it trying to figure out where I'd written it!

As a more mature first-time bride, did you have an idea of what your dream wedding would be?

Initially, I thought I was giving up a lot. But I couldn't have asked for a better wedding. What I thought was going to happen and what did happen were miles apart. And what did happen was so much better than anything I could have imagined.

I thought that all my friends would be there and it would be a big party and lots of dancing. It ended up being really close family, a lot of laughs and all the right people. It was just the close family – small and intimate. That's what made it perfect.

Also, a lot of us stayed right at the inn. We were able to check in Thursday and stay through Sunday and spend a lot of time with family.

What were some of the personal touches you

continues next page ...

The Details

Ages: 57 and 49

Started dating: Fall 2012

Engaged: June 2019

Wedding date: Nov. 2, 2019

Wedding venue: Village Inn, East Burke

Wedding budget: \$5,000

Number of people invited: 75

Number of people who attended: 70

Bar: Mixed (open for beer and wine, cash for everything else)

First dance song: "You Make It Easy" by Jason Aldean

Wedding colors: Not specific, but there was a general fall theme

Our interview was with Elizabeth

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included in your ceremony and reception?

My nephew is the one who married us, which was pretty cool.

The cake was a maple tree stump with our initials carved in it.

All our time is spent outside, so we had the ceremony outside, even though it was November. When we first woke up there was frost on everything. But by the time the chairs were set up, the sun was hitting the ceremony spot just right and it was perfect.

The music was all from my iPod, and honestly I downloaded a lot of it the night beforehand.

You kept to a pretty tight budget. Where did you allow yourself to be a little extravagant?

We knew what we really wanted to do with the food, so we decided to just make sure that we did that part right. And getting the rooms at the inn – it wasn't extravagant by any means, but we decided to move in Thursday night and stay there for the weekend.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Hoping the weather wasn't going to be too cold

for my dad, because I really wanted it outside.

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Really, all of it was fun. There really wasn't anything that wasn't fun about it. We enjoyed choosing the cake!

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

I wouldn't change a thing.

Did you have post-wedding blues when it was over?

Yes, very much so. The next day we were just down. Wow, it's really all over. Because it had been such an amazing day, we'd had so much fun. Everybody was just thrilled. So then to just be like, well now what?

When you look back, what's your favorite moment from the day?

My dad walking me down the aisle.

What advice do you have for couples who are just starting to plan their weddings?

Keep it simple and follow your heart. You don't need the big crazy stuff – any of it. At the end of the day, you can't see everybody and you can't talk to everybody. Having it small like that, we were able to talk to everybody and spend time with everybody.



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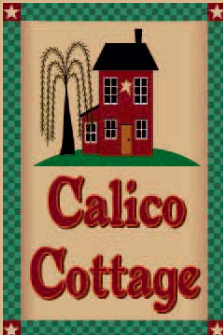
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John and Elizabeth (Bora) Abbott

How did you meet?

John moved to Lyndonville his eighth grade year. We had English class and history class together freshman year.

We met at the Caledonia County Fair, and then we got to know each other for a few weeks. Actually, he had to decide if he wanted to be with me or his ex-girlfriend.

Our senior year I heard from someone that he was going to do a promposal and a proposal. I told him that would be cool. Then he decided not to do that.

But after a couple years of dating, we knew that we would be together for a really long time. So after senior year, we were just like, "Okay!"

Some of our friends were like, "Wow, you're 17 and 18. Why would you do that? What about college? What about living your life?"

We were like, "This is how we want to live our life!"

How did you know that John is the one you want to spend your life with?

He makes me happy — the happiest I've ever been. He knows how to handle me at my worst, he can help me when I'm having a really hard time. He's my rock, really.

Also, a big part of it is that I want to have kids. So seeing him throughout the years with my younger sisters and his little cousins — that's a big aspect for me, to see that he'd be a good dad.

Who helped with planning the wedding?

I talked a lot with my mom and mother-in-law to keep it all in line.

I tried to get John involved, but he just really didn't care. He was like, "Whatever you want, I'm happy with."

The Details

Ages: 21 and 20

Started dating: September 2013

Engaged: June 2017

Wedding date: Aug. 17, 2019

Wedding venue: Backyard wedding on family land in South Wheelock

Wedding budget: Under \$5,000

Number of people invited: Almost 200

Number of people who attended: Between 100-150

Bar: BYOB

First dance song: "I Don't Dance" by Lee Brice

Wedding colors: Navy, burgundy

Our interview was with Elizabeth

continues next page ...



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Continued from Page 14

How did you stay organized?

I used a notebook.

And I used Zola.com. I was able to put together my guest list on that – that's what I mostly used it for. I made a website for out-of-town guests to look at and see what there is to do around town. I liked the website aspect of it, and then it would give me a countdown to the wedding. That was really nice.

How did you choose the bridesmaid dresses?

We went to David's Bridal and I told them that I wanted a certain color and to choose between

two or three different types of fabric. Then I let them pick out their own dresses in any style they wanted.

What were some of the personal touches you included in your ceremony and reception?

We had a little table at the ceremony that had pictures of loved ones that had passed away.

We also had a bunch of sunflowers because that's my favorite flower.

I know it was important for you to keep costs down. How did you do that?

My dad made the arbor. We cleaned out the barn at my grandma's house and we had the food in there. We had a potluck, so that was all homemade.

We did our own centerpieces. A family friend made our cake.

I did my own hair and makeup.

We did our own music – my dad has these high-tech speakers and we used my phone.

We wanted to make it as rustic as possible without spending a lot of money. The only thing I wanted to spend a lot of money on was the photographer and my dress.

How did you schedule photos through the day?

John and I did a first look before the ceremony. I'm glad we did that.

We did the bridesmaids and my photos before the ceremony, and then we did our couple photos before the ceremony. And then after the ceremony we did all the wedding party together and the family pictures.

How did you handle alcohol?

We did BYOB. Everyone was really respectful and no one was mad that we didn't have champagne or anything. It worked out awesome.



What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

How involved everyone in my family was – it was nice having the help from both sides of the family. It was just too much – the aunts and the grandparents wanted to help and trying to find a job for every single person was stressful for me.

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Seeing it all come together in the end – actually putting stuff up, setting the arbor up and getting it decorated. And decorating the barn, putting all the stuff together the day of the wedding.

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

Invite less people! It wasn't very intimate. I didn't get to talk to a lot of the people that did come – they just kind of left. I think if it was less people, it would be easier to get to talk to them and enjoy the time with them.

Did you have post-wedding blues when it was over?

A little bit. We didn't get to do the dollar dance. There were a lot of different things that didn't happen that we were expecting to happen. But in the end, it was a beautiful day and it was awesome.

When you look back, what's your favorite moment from the day?

Being able to talk to my cousin. He passed away three days after the wedding. After the ceremony he came up and hugged me and he said "I love you." And someone told me he was crying, so that touched my heart. Being able to have those memories.

What advice do you have for couples who are just starting to plan their weddings?

Definitely keep yourself organized. Talk to as many people as you can for advice, even if you don't take it. And enjoy yourself. I know it's stressful, but it's your one day.

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Robert Ryan and Theresa Marie (White) Rouelle

What was your first date?
I was friends with his sister before I knew Robbie. She had been trying to set us up for a while. He needed a prom date his senior year, and that's when she was like, "You guys are finally going to meet!" So without even knowing each other, she convinced Robbie to ask me to the prom.
We agreed this was just a prom date. But within a month both of us were like, "We don't really want it to just be a prom date anymore."

We met each other twice before prom – one was his meeting my family, and the second was me meeting his family.

How did you know you were ready to get married?

We talked about marriage, and we knew that was the end goal.

We both went to Lyndon State (now Northern University). Robbie always said he wanted to wait until we're officially out of college before we got engaged. So he proposed two weeks before I graduated college. And then we took off

across the country on a four-month road trip!
We hit 38 states. We camped in our car and tent camped and connected with family members across the country. It's one of the best things we could have done.

Why did you choose to have your wedding on family land?

Both of us are very low-key people. I didn't want a venue. I had been to a few land weddings. Personally, I think they're more low-key and fun. So we decided that family land was more our type of style.

I wanted to get married Oct. 5, but a cousin picked the sixth and I didn't want conflict for my family having to choose. So I decided on the 12th. I was so disappointed because I thought we would miss peak foliage. But honestly, the 12th was warmer and more colorful than the week before!

Did you have a wedding theme?

It was fall and rustic.
For the ceremony, a friend had an arch that they donated to

The Details

Ages: 24 and 24
Started dating: May 2013
Engaged: May 2018
Wedding date: Oct. 12, 2019
Wedding venue: Family land in Barnet, Vermont
Wedding budget: \$10,000
Number of people invited: 270
Number of people who attended: 194
Bar: BYOB
First dance song: "Making Memories Of Us" by Keith Urban
Wedding colors: Burgundy, champagne gold, emerald green, navy blue

Our interview was with Theresa

continues next page ...



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Continued from Page 16

us. The ceremony was lined with sap buckets with flowers and pumpkins.

At the reception, all the centerpieces were fall-themed and different so no table was set the same. And I took all the centerpieces home and now I have them to use in my house.

How did you choose clothes for the wedding party?

The groomsmen went to Men’s Warehouse with the color. We said they don’t have to rent a jacket or pants, they could just buy black dress pants if they wanted. They could buy dress shoes that they could keep. They only thing we asked them to rent was a vest of the color we gave them, and a bow tie.

For the girls, I chose burgundy with my sister in champagne. I wanted them to pick their own style of dress. I’ve seen weddings where I felt like one girl might look better than the other just because the style they chose worked on one body type but not the other.

I told everyone I wanted them to be in a different dress and it was first come-first served. They tried on the color I asked, and I asked for long dresses, but as far as the material I didn’t care. And they had to go to David’s Bridal so all the colors match and there was no different shading.

What were some of the fun things you did on the day?

We had big games outside the tent - giant Connect Four, giant Jenga, and cornhole. We also had a cider bar and cider donuts station.

On my dad’s side of the family, all the cousins put on a cousin dance for the bride and groom - it’s kind of a gift to the bride and groom. But this wedding was the first wedding where the bride and groom were part of it! Robbie and I came in at the end of the dance, so it shocked the guests who knew it was coming.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

The guest list. Because we had a land wedding, there was no limit on people and we both come from big families.

When we first started drafting the list, we hit over 300 people and I stopped. We can’t do that! How do we do this? We ended up deciding that we could each pick about 115 because I wanted our sides to be about the same. That’s still 230, and we ended up inviting 270.

We lucked out that quite a few people said no.

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Bonding with the family. On the Wednesday before the wedding, I decided that I wanted all the silverware wrapped in napkins. I don’t know why! At first we were going to just lay them out, but then I said no, I wanted them wrapped in bows with a napkin.



My mom, my sister, my nana, one of my aunts, and I all got together and sat in the kitchen wrapping silverware. That’s what’s fun – those moments.

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

We wanted extra lighting around the tent, so I put my mother in charge of wrapping lights around the tent. The day of the wedding, the lights around the tent didn’t work. No one noticed it but us, but we put a lot of energy into that.

Did you have post-wedding blues when it was over?

Yes. All the emotions hit me – the wedding day and how perfect it went, then the honeymoon and feeling like you left paradise. And I was



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doing laundry and all of a sudden I just burst into tears!

You spend so much time thinking and planning, and then it comes and goes and you’re like, “What do I do with my free time?”

When you look back, what’s your favorite moment from the day?

We had a horse and carriage to bring the bridesmaids and myself to the ceremony. I remember getting up into the carriage beside [the driver] and he said, “Take this all in, because it’s pretty amazing.” That was amazing.

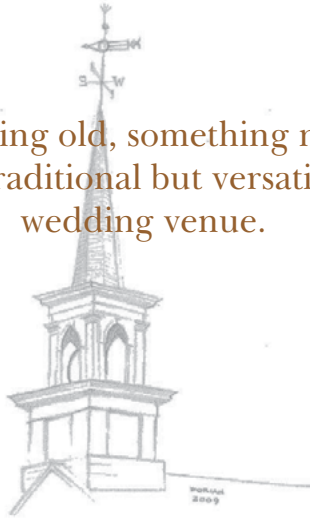
What advice do you have for couples who are just starting to plan their weddings?

Do a budget. If you don’t have a budget – things add up like crazy.

Also, depending on what type of person you are, think outside the box and don’t necessarily do traditional. I think I had a beautiful wedding, but I didn’t do things traditionally. Prioritize what’s important to you.

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Drew and Jessica (DelFarno) Blanchard

The two of you dated for seven years before getting engaged. What made you think this was the right time?

He swore he'd never get married!

I'd been throwing out many, many, many hints [about getting married]. But as long as we were together, I was totally fine with it.

But then we were both in his cousin's wedding. And after that, he started getting the idea in his head, but didn't really say anything to me. His boss' wife jokingly said, "When are we having your wedding? September 2020?" And he came home and just started going on the computer and looking at wedding stuff.

There was no down-on-one-knee proposal. We just talked about it, and we said, "All right, let's do it!"

Do you get any push back from your families that you're six years older than Drew?

Not at all. When I first met him, I didn't realize how young he was. He already had his own place to live, he had a steady job. He wasn't some 20-something-year-old kid. He was responsible. And I have two kids from a previous relationship, and he's taken on my kids like they're his own.

When he met my family, they all loved him. They asked how old he was and then I told them, and they couldn't even tell. He's very mature for his age.

Did you have a theme for your wedding?

I actually wanted a Halloween wedding, and he did not. So we compromised and chose the beginning of fall.

Since I was a little girl, I thought I would get married on Halloween and everyone would dress up in Halloween costumes. I would be the Corpse Bride from "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

I own everything you could of from [the movie]! We had a cake topper made of Jack and Sally. My garters were made with Jack on them. My head table had a cutout that said "Mr. and Mrs." and it was Jack and Sally.

I had that little bit of Halloween in there.

What was your dress shopping experience?

It was me, my mom, my daughter, and my two maids of honor. I had them each pick out a dress for me that they wanted me to try on. The very last one that I put on – I thought, "I'm not going to like this dress." And as soon as I put it on, I fell in love with it.

What personal touches did you include in your wedding day?

A friend of mine passed away a few years ago. He was my best friend and I have his ashes. I swore that if I ever got married, he had to be there in some way, so I brought them. I didn't have them out in the open, but he was at my head table. He was right where I could see him but nobody else could.

And we had a popcorn bar, which was awesome. We rented a popcorn machine and had all the different flavors and mini red-and-white continues next page ...

The Details

Ages: 30 and 36
Started dating: 2011
Engaged: 2018
Wedding date: Sept. 7, 2019
Wedding venue: Lyndonville Fairgrounds
Wedding budget: \$11,000
Number of people invited: 200
Number of people who attended: 160
Bar: BYOB
First dance song: "Beautiful Crazy" by Luke Combs
Wedding colors: Red and black

Our interview was with Jessica



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Continued from Page 18

popcorn boxes.

Why did you choose the Lyndonville Fairgrounds?

They were cheap! And it's pretty.

We also had it for four days. That way we had time to set up everything and people were allowed to camp. Because it's so big, we could bring campers or tents. That way nobody would drink and drive.

What were some of the money-saving decisions you made?

We didn't do appetizers, we just did the meal.

For the place settings, we bought plastic red and black plates and silverware in bulk on a website.

How did you incorporate your kids into the wedding?

My youngest son is seven, and he stood up front with my husband and the best man. And then my daughter was one of my bridesmaids. My oldest son walked me down the aisle with my father.

Kids were welcome at the wedding and we rented a bouncy house for them. Plus, at the fairgrounds, they have a swingset and a teeter totter and slide.

Did you do a first look photo?

No, we didn't. I wanted to, but he didn't. I'm glad that we didn't because the look on his face – everybody saw it. And they were like "Oh my gosh!"

I guess it might have calmed us down more.

But when we were saying our vows, I got more choked up and I feel like I wouldn't have if we had seen each other first.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Doing the guest list and the seating chart.

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Everything else! Meeting with the caterer and trying different types of food; getting new stuff in the mail and getting excited; going to do our dresses. It was all just fun!

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

I probably would have had my wedding earlier in the day. We had it at four o'clock and I would do it earlier so it stayed light a little longer.

Did you have post-wedding blues when it was over?

A little. I wished that it wasn't over. I was like – we need to do this again!

When you look back, what's your favorite moment from the day?

Our first dance. It was like nobody else was there. We were talking and laughing – it was just the two of us.

What advice do you have for couples who are just starting to plan their weddings?

Listen to each other's ideas. Don't just go with what you like, what you think you want, because it's not always what you really want.

Topping It Off With A Tasty Treat

Janessa Newton is the visionary behind the cakes at Addison & Alice Bakery Co. in Lyndonville. We asked her what couples should think about when deciding on their wedding cake (or cupcakes!)

What are your first questions for couples when they come to you?

Right off the bat, I want to know their vision and their style so that I can make it come to life. I love planning parties, so I want to hear everything they have to say about their day – it doesn't even have to be about the cake.

You can browse through Pinterest and it can get overwhelming! It's like a black hole.

The most common thing I hear is simplicity – a clean, romantic cake. The most popular right now is a bohemian vibe – white with very simple greenery, or fresh fruit. I've done a few more romantic traditional cakes, but right now the most common thing I'm getting is simplicity. It gives the vibe of their wedding.

What questions do couples ask you?

I get a lot of questions on servings. I think a lot of brides have a vision that they want all these different pastries, or a ginormous cake. But they might have a lower amount of guests and not need that much, and they set their budget higher than they can afford. I like to work with brides and show them a more realistic goal. I want their vision to come to life exactly how they want it, but I think that's really stressful for them. They come to me worried that they're not going to get everything they want for their budget, but I can often make it happen for less.

Is there a good rule of thumb for calculating how much cake you need?

I've been doing this for over nine years, so I have charts that I created that work really well.



Cupcakes prepared by Addison & Alice Bakery Co. in Lyndonville. (Courtesy Photo)

An 8 inch cake feeds roughly 20 to 22 people, but that's for birthdays. With birthday cakes, people usually cut pretty hefty pieces. For weddings they're usually cut smaller, so you can stretch your budget further for weddings. That's a general rule of thumb I've always used everywhere I've worked.

Why do you enjoy making cakes?

Making cakes brings out all of my creativity. It's all about someone's vision and I love putting that on to a cake. It makes me very happy and I love seeing the joy on people's faces when they get their pastries.

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Anthony and Dayna (Jewell) Skelton

How did you meet and start dating?

ANTHONY: Originally we met when Dayna was an intern with Lyndon Rescue and I was working there part time. She was 16, but we didn't start dating until she was 20. That's when she ended up moving into the apartment next door.

DAYNA: We became close friends and then started dating. We knew once we started dating it would probably be serious.

ANTHONY: Her life is really well put together. She's far more mature than she appears to be.

DAYNA: I knew I was ready for a serious relationship. I'm very family oriented.

How did you keep yourself organized during planning?

DAYNA: The Knot and Google Documents.

ANTHONY: We did a lot of the mailing list – keeping track of who we sent out invites to on The Knot. When it came to organization – songs, the plan, who had RSVPed – we used Google Docs. I also found a template online for a Google Doc for the budget, so we kept track of it in there.

Where did you find the bridesmaid dresses?

DAYNA: Amazon! I wanted to make sure they could wear them again.

What were some of the personal touches you included?

ANTHONY: We didn't do a lot of personal touches, but her

family helped out a lot making the centerpieces and stuff like that. We wanted to give it a rustic country feel. And we did a sand ceremony during the ceremony. It was more low-key than extravagant.

And Dayna got me a pocket napkin that says:

"Today I walk down the aisle,
towards our future life together.
Good days, bad days, fun days, lazy days,
With my whole heart,
I promise you forever."

What choices did you make to stay inside your budget?

ANTHONY: We were pretty scrupulous. We did all our invitations on VistaPrint because it was pretty inexpensive. When it came to her wedding dress, she didn't go all out on it. I think probably the biggest cost was the venue fee, which was actually pretty cheap compared to many of the other wedding barns out there.

It was \$3,500 for the weekend.

DAYNA: And they had a little house on the property that was free for us to use. It really worked out.

We had one other place that we'd originally booked our wedding. But we just found it ended up being too expensive because you had to use their catering and it was outrageous prices for food. But then I was looking online for different places and Creek Hill Wedding Barn popped up and we went and checked it out.

Also, we got our decorations off of Amazon or Etsy – we were trying to say, what's a reasonable price for this?

Were kids invited to the wedding?

DAYNA: We said siblings and immediate cousins. It wasn't that we didn't want them there, it was just a space-limited thing. And we wanted the parents to be able to go and have a good time and not be worried about their kids.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

DAYNA: Seating arrangements

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

DAYNA: Seeing everything come together was exciting. The night before and the day of – having everybody together.

Did you have post-wedding blues when it was over?

DAYNA: Not really. It really was beautiful.

When you look back, what's your favorite moment from the day?

ANTHONY: Watching her first walk



down the aisle. She was mesmerizing.

DAYNA: I don't know that I can pick a favorite moment. The ceremony was very short and sweet, so I really liked that. Then later it was fun dancing and getting to see everybody. I liked it all.

What advice do you have for couples who are just starting to plan their weddings?

DAYNA: We did a lot of buying little things here and there to soften the blow when it came closer to the wedding, which I think was helpful.

ANTHONY: Book your venue early because they book up very fast.

DAYNA: But I would also say not, because we got excited about the first venue and definitely wasted money putting down a deposit and we ended up changing things.

ANTHONY: So be sure, but pick early! [LAUGHTER]

The Details

Ages: 32 and 23

Started dating: July 2016

Engaged: November 2017

Wedding date: June 29, 2019

Wedding venue: Creek Hill Wedding Barn in Irasburg, Vermont

Wedding budget: \$11,000

Number of people invited: 150

Number of people who attended: 100

Bar: Cash

First dance song: "You" by Jason Cassidy

Wedding colors: Navy blue and yellow

Our interview was with Dayna and Anthony



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Dillon and Morgan (Trahan) Thompson

How did you meet?
Dillon and I love the gym and we met at the gym!

At first we were just working out together. He was all for getting right into dating, but I wanted to take things a little bit slower in getting to know each other. I like to play things pretty smart.

I knew that Dillon was a great guy and he loved me. It's just we come from completely different backgrounds - I have a huge family that's super, super connected. And Dillon had moved around a lot.

At the beginning, there were those kind of differences. But we knew that we wanted to be together.

What was planning your wedding like?
My mom was such a godsend! She's my best friend.

I got a lot of things off of Pinterest. I knew the colors I wanted and my mom really stepped up to the plate with helping me organize things. My dad was the doer, doing all the things to execute them for me.

On Pinterest we found everything from the napkin folding to how to put out the tables. We did a sweetheart table with a backdrop that I ended up doing DIY.

For the sweetheart table, we did PVC piping that we painted rose gold. Then we took long drapery fabric over the top and my florist did greenery on top with a branch over it. I could have spent so much on the backdrop, but I ended up spending \$12 and it came out beautifully.

We also used The Knot website. We made a wedding website for our guests there with our bridesmaids' bios and guests could RSVP. There was a link to the hotel where we had rooms blocked off.

Dillon was definitely involved. He's Mr.

Fashion, so he took over the clothes for the guys. He did a very light gray tux for everyone. The guys had leather suspenders with bow ties, and my husband did an ivory tie.

How did you find your dress?
Me, my dad, and my two sisters went dress shopping and it was the very first dress I tried on! I loved the dress, but I thought I couldn't just go with the first dress I tried on. So I spent the day trying on dresses and none of them hit me like the first one. So I went back to it and my dad was like, "Yes, this is definitely the one."

Did you do a first look photo?
I didn't want my husband to see me on the first look, but I wanted a first look somewhere. I did it with my dad and it was really nice. I loved that moment because it just slowed things down. We were able to have that moment before all of the hoopla started.

What did you do for food?
We had wood-fired pizza from Fire on the Mountain for dinner. And we had Montgomery Catering Co. do appetizers.

How did you handle your budget for the wedding?
We anticipated staying around \$30,000. We stayed in it for the most part, but in the last month there things that popped up and we had to just do it. We ended up going a little bit out of it, but not too much.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Because we're such a connected family, everybody has an opinion. The most stressful was trying to make sure that your wedding was going the way you want to do without everybody's opinion involved.

The Details

Ages: 25 and 26
Started dating: February 2016
Engaged: December 2016
Wedding date: June 29, 2019
Wedding venue: Shady Acres in Montgomery, Vermont
Wedding budget: \$35-40,000
Number of people invited: 250
Number of people who attended: 190
Bar: Open
First dance song: "When I Say I Do" by Matthew West
Wedding colors: Rose gold, light pink, ivory
Our interview was with Morgan



What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Definitely picking out the colors and being able to do the projects. Whenever we got a chance, we booked a room somewhere to see the venue and talk to vendors and whatnot. There were a lot of special moments. I enjoyed that.

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

I don't think so.
Did you have post-wedding blues when it was over?

Yes. It took up so much time thinking and

continues next page ...

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Continued from Page 21

planning and doing all the crafts. And then the day after, it was like a crash. It didn't consume my mind anymore and it was like, "What do I do with myself?"

When you look back, what's your favorite moment from the day?

Walking down the aisle and seeing Dillon and how he looked at me. And the special moment when we were exchanging our vows.

What advice do you have for couples who are just starting to plan their weddings?

Do all your research online. Have fun with the loved ones in your life when you're planning. The process goes by so fast and it seems so stressful at the time, but once it's done, you actually miss it a lot.

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Courtney Darrington does cover bride Lauren Davidson's makeup and hair for her wedding day.

Getting The Perfect Look

Our cover bride, Lauren Davidson, glows in her pictures. It's at least partly thanks to her makeup and hair artist, Courtney Darrington who owns TEASE Hair Salon in Woodsville, New Hampshire. We spoke with Courtney to learn her tips and tricks for creating a beautiful bridal look.

When somebody contacts you about hair and makeup for a wedding, what are your first questions?

Do you wear makeup every day? Because you don't want to give your bride a full face of glamorous makeup if they don't wear that every day. That's not going to portray them in the wedding photos, and they'll look at the photos and see someone different.

Lauren uses more natural makeup. So we kept it subtle, but we made her eyes pop.

So the first question is what is your makeup routine?

For hair, I like to ask what style dress they have – is it open back, high collar, lace? Do you want to have hair pieces that match the dress? Do you want to have pops of sparkles in your hair? What do you want to imagine? Do you wear your hair up most of the time, or do you like to wear it down?

I like to get pictures from them of what they like, and then they let me create something out of those pictures.

Do you do a dress rehearsal with the bride before the big day?

Yes. We do the makeup look – that is super important to do before the wedding to see if they like what it looks like, to see if it matches their bridesmaid dresses and wedding colors. You want to learn their skin type.

Same thing for hair – come in a few days before to do a trial run. That's nice because they get to see if they like it and you can make changes.

The nice thing about a trial run is I can make myself a schedule of what I need to do to stay on task. I don't want to get behind and rush through it!

How long do makeup and hair usually take?

I give myself an hour for each. It may not take that entire time, but then I have enough time to correct anything that needs to be fixed.

What about women who don't usually wear makeup and might not know what to ask for?

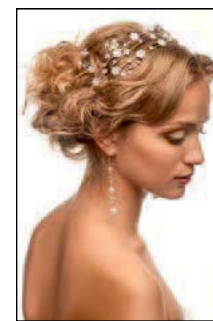
That's our job! If you don't know what you want, we can definitely give you suggestions. And it makes our job more fun because then we get to create something that nobody has ever created before.

We'd definitely do something with the eyes – mascara can make the eyes pop, and a little bit of eye shadow. You want the eyes to pop in the pictures.

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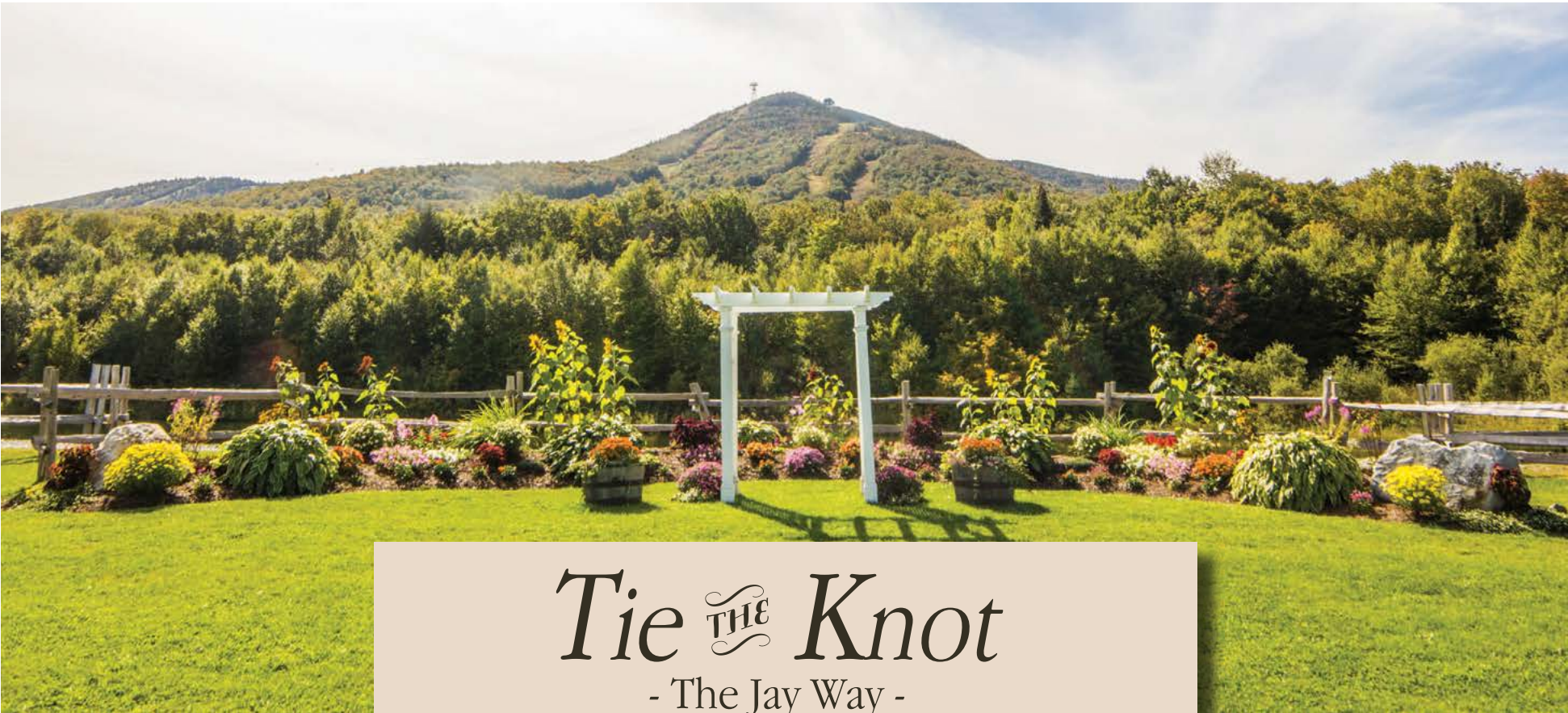
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