



*Northern Vermont*

*New Hampshire*



# Weddings



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# Weddings

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## ON THE COVER

An International Love Story

Read more about our cover-winning couple on page 4.

Winning cover photo by Beth and Matt Coleman.

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## PHOTO CREDITS

Our thanks to the couples and their photographers for allowing us to use their photos in this publication. Find a complete list of the photographers on page 31.

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# Our Couples

## THE AMADONS

Amanda, 31, and Jason, 32, of Lunenburg, Vt.

**Wedding date:** Oct. 3, 2015

**Budget:** \$5,000 for 120 people

**Venue:** The wedding was held at the Congregational Church in Lancaster and the reception was held at the Cabot Inn in Lancaster, N.H.



Jason & Amanda

## BURNS-GAGNON

Kimberly Burns, 30, and Patrick Gagnon, 32, of South Burlington, Vt.

**Wedding date:** Sept. 5, 2015

**Budget:** \$12,000 for 100 people

**Venue:** The wedding and reception were held at Jay Peak Resort.



Pat & Kim

## THE SCHATNERS

Dayna, 22, and Matt, 23, of East Burke, Vt.

**Wedding date:** Sept. 12, 2015

**Budget:** \$5,000 for 120 people

**Venue:** The wedding and reception were held at the Caledonia County Fairgrounds in Lyndonville.



Matt & Dayna

## THE BARBERS

Emily, 23, and Phillip, 26, of Lunenburg, Vt.

**Wedding date:** Aug. 30, 2015

**Budget:** \$6,000 for 110 people

**Venue:** The wedding and reception were held at a private residence in Lunenburg, Vt.



Phillip & Emily

We received dozens of entries for our bridal guide cover contest. We've selected a few couples to give you a behind-the-scenes peek into their weddings.

## VASHAW-LANHAM

Courtney Vashaw, 38, and Jessie Lanham, 33, of Whitefield, N.H.

**Wedding date:** Aug. 23, 2015

**Budget:** It's a different kind of story

**Venue:** The wedding was held at Martin Bridge Park in Marshfield, Vt.



Courtney & Jessie

## THE CAMPBELLS

Raven, 26, and Jeff, 28, of Brownington, Vt.

**Wedding date:** Oct. 17, 2015

**Budget:** \$2,500 for 50 people

**Venue:** The wedding and reception were held at Don's Tats in Brownington, Vt.



Jeff & Raven

## THE LANCTOTS

Ashley, 24, and Jason, 26, of Lyndonville, Vt.

**Wedding date:** June 20, 2015

**Budget:** About \$12,000 for approximately 150 people

**Venue:** The wedding and reception were held at Jeudevine Falls in Hardwick, Vt.



Jason & Ashley

## THE WHITES

Nicole, 28, and Dan, 30, of Littleton, N.H.

**Wedding date:** Aug. 15, 2015

**Budget:** \$7,500 for 50 people

**Venue:** The wedding and reception were held at the Cabot Inn and Suites in Lancaster, N.H.



Dan & Nicole



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# A World Away

This year's cover couple, Emily and Phillip Barber, are beginning their life together in Lunenburg, Vermont. But their love story started a world away.



Emily and Phillip were both doing relief work with a Christian missionary program called YWAM last year. "We met in Australia and then we traveled through the Philippines together," Emily said. "We were rebuilding homes that had been destroyed. We were there together for two months. It was a pretty intense environment. ... We were together all the time. We were leading big events all the time. That's how things started. We worked really, really well together and we had all the same beliefs and passions were really, really similar."

"You see each other for who you really are," Phillip agreed.

They started out bonding as friends, and then Phillip had "THE" moment.

"She was just one of my best friends and one day I looked at her and realized, oh my goodness this is *the* girl," He said. "It sounds really cheesy."

Once their mission work ended, though, real world concerns reared their heads. Specifically, Emily is from Vermont and Phillip is from England.

"Neither of us at the time were thinking at all about being in a long distance relationship," Emily said. "We're both Christian and we both prayed about it. I think God had a lot to do with it. We both prayed about it."

They were flying back and forth, but often going months between visits. And travel visas were becoming problematic, affecting how often

they could see each other. Despite his love of travel and exploring, Phillip reached the point where he was ready to make a commitment.

Emily calls Phillip "a romantic one," and his proposal plan proves it.

"We were talking about getting married, but Em was hinting it and I was a bit more forward about saying it," Phillip recalled.

In May, he booked a ticket to America and told Emily that he was going to be traveling with a friend and his phone wasn't working properly, so he'd be out of touch.

"I jumped on a plane," Phillip said. "I had my work clothes with me so I could take a picture and send it to her."

When he landed in Boston, a friend picked him up and drove him three hours north to Lunenburg. "In the morning I got Emily's sisters to take Em for coffee. Meanwhile, I stole Emily's horse."

The horse in question is known to periodically jump its fence and run into neighboring

fields. So when Emily's father (who was in on the plan) called her at M-Zo Cafe in Littleton to tell her the horse had escaped once again, Emily was irritated but not surprised. "It's a big ordeal," she said.

"My dad called and was like, Em your horse broke out again, you have to come home again to get her," she continued. "I was having a great time, so I was really annoyed."

In the meantime, Phillip had covered the horse with flowers and walked her to a field that was three miles away. The horse kept picking the flowers off.

"It was a heat wave," Emily said.

"I was in a suit jacket, sweating," Phillip said. "I had to ride the horse bareback because she wouldn't walk unless I rode her."

Meanwhile, Phillip was carrying two rings: a wooden ring he had made for Emily and a diamond engagement ring.



Phillip gets down on one knee to propose to a stunned Emily.



Phillip & Emily

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References available upon request.





Phillip and Emily's guests traveled in from around the world to attend their wedding. Rather than a traditional guest book, a friend burned a world map into a wood slab and guests signed their names near where they're from.



"The rings fell out, so I had to run back and find the rings," he said. Amazingly, he found them in the field. Then he sat in the heat and the beating sun, covered in horse hair and flowers, for most of a half hour waiting for Emily to arrive.

"So they drive up this dirt road," Phillip recalled. "All I see is Em storming up the road. I'm thinking that she's seen me, but in the meantime, the horse gets spooked and throws me off!"

It turns out Emily had seen a man on her horse, but unaware that Phillip would be there that day, she had no idea it was him.

"My dad said that one of the guys that was haying the field caught her, so I thought I was getting her from a stranger. So I saw this guy that I thought was a stranger riding my horse bareback and I was like, who is that on my horse?!"

"So Em comes around the corner and her face goes from really pissed off to really shocked to crying," Phillip said.

"He got down on one knee," Emily continued. "I said yes right away ... I couldn't get the words out. It was an emotional roller coaster for me. I thought he was in England and then there he is in on Dodge Road riding my horse."

Thanks to visa requirements, the Barbers didn't have a lot of time to plan their perfect wedding. According to Emily, "Once he was in the country, we had 60 days to get married with the visa he was on!"

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# Asking the Question

Every couple's engagement story is as unique as the people involved.

Pat and Kim had just gone to Maine to adopt their new dog. They stopped at Pat's parents' house in St. Johnsbury on their way home and that's when he chose his moment. He said, He's going to be our surrogate child, so we're starting a family together, so it would be fitting for us to create our official family. I said yes right away. Actually no, I questioned him. He talked about how happy I make him, but I wasn't sure if he was proposing because he didn't actually say the words!



Pat & Kim



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Matt & Dayna

The first time he proposed to me was when I was helping him with his race car and he put the ring on top of the ignition. I knocked it off I didn't even notice it. He was like, Oh my god, what did she just do? He picked it up and showed it to me. I was kind of in shock. Later I said to him, You didn't even get down on your knee! He kept redoing it, so he technically proposed to me about 10 times!



Jason & Amanda

I had always joked with him that I was never going to get married. One night we were laying on the couch talking and he said, Would you marry me? I said, I'd marry you someday. He said, No I'm really asking you, would you marry me? He didn't have a ring because he was scared I would say no. We got to pick out my ring together. To him, it was a piece of jewelry I would wear for the rest of my life and he wanted to make sure I absolutely loved it. We looked and looked and didn't find anything that jumped out at me. My mom and I went into Kay's one day. I found one that was absolutely perfect and the price was good. Then I discovered that was the price without the diamond! It took me about six weeks to convince myself it was okay to spend that much money on a ring. He laughs at me because we'll be driving down the road and I'll look down at my ring and smile. I adore the ring, it is fantastic.





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# Finding the One

It's a line asked by rom-com heroines everywhere: "How will I know when I've found The One?" Some of our newlyweds weighed in with their answers



Jeff & Raven

**Raven:** Growing up I didn't have the greatest self-confidence. But around him, he made me feel like I was beautiful, like I was worthy of the self-confidence. No one else has ever made me feel like that.



Dan & Nicole

**Nicole:** He's just so nice. He treated me so well compared to anybody else I'd ever met. My world revolved around him and he always had me in mind first. It felt really good to have somebody treat me that well. And really, it doesn't take much for a relationship to really work.

He had gotten out of a pretty rocky relationship about six months before. He always tells me that his heart fell into pieces and I came along and picked them back up.

He was my first serious relationship so he taught me how to love, and I taught him how to love again.



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**Pat & Kim**

*Pat:* Kim is just the perfect mix between a friend and someone I want to share my life with. She's able to fill both those roles seamlessly. It's not difficult or unpleasant. I never have to question things like, was that a red flag?

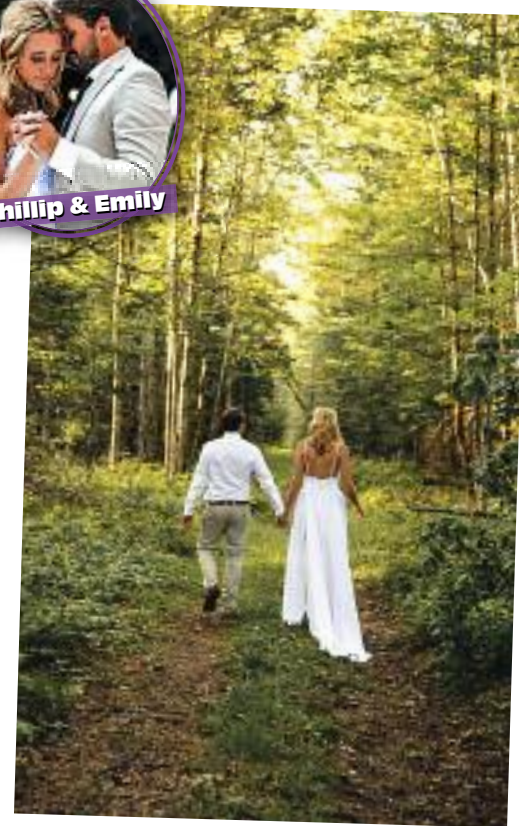
*Dayna:* We kind of clicked like long-lost best friends. We started dating and instantly I was just like, I can be myself with this person and he doesn't care.

We've had our ups and downs like any relationship, but a strong relationship works through them. We've definitely gotten closer over the years and it's helped a lot.

**Matt & Dayna**

*Phillip:* I never met someone that I loved more than her. And it wasn't just like a superficial love. We both have the same passions, we have the same ideas, and we both want the same things. And we both especially believe the same things. I was very scared about getting married and moving to America, but I can't even describe it – there was a peace about everything. I was just super happy about it all. And I knew from seeing the way she handled stuff in Australia and the Philippines, how Em handled herself in really tough situations. I knew I wouldn't want to do life without her.

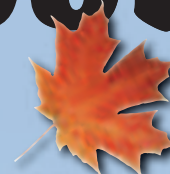
*Emily:* It was really great to start out as such good friends. We learned a lot about each other on a very real basis in that way. Getting to know him in that way and seeing his love for other people, and how much he loved his family, and his heart for God and the work that we were doing in Australia was just amazing. And seeing how real and genuine of a person he was. And honestly seeing each other at our absolute worse, how he handled that. He handled really difficult situations with a lot of maturity and strength. It was incredible and I just knew that he's exactly the kind of man that I want to spend my life with. It was great to learn that over time and helping each other through some crazy stuff.

**Phillip & Emily**

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# All Hallows Wedding

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Raven's aunt made their Halloween-themed wedding cake.



Nothing about Jeff and Raven's wedding was traditional. First, it was held at a tattoo parlor. Second, their officiant was Jack Skellington of "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

"The theme of the wedding and everything changed shape seven or eight times over the engagement," Raven said. They finally settled on their theme while watching an episode of "Four Weddings" on TLC.

"One bride was having a Halloween-themed wedding and my husband was watching it with me and he said, That's kind of a cool idea, why don't we do that? Halloween is our favorite holiday anyway and it's very us. So it was a good fit," Raven explained.



Jeff and officiant/brother Aiden wait at the end of the aisle as Raven and her father join them.

The idea had been planted. Next was planning a costumed wedding to be held on Oct. 31. It turned out to not only be fun, but good for their budget as well.

"Having a Halloween-themed wedding makes it so easy and inexpensive to decorate for because you can get Halloween stuff so cheap," Raven said. "We got some light up glittery pumpkins, Halloween twinkle lights, glow lights, and in the center of tables we had autumn leaf garlands. We put in some glow-in-the-dark light up pumpkins and owls that are glittery. For favors, we got mini cauldrons and put candy corn taffy and other candy."

They also put together kids' activity kits for the little ones at the wedding. They included a wooden ornament for each child to



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Raven's brother Aiden dressed as Jack Skellington to be the officiant for the wedding. He is seen here with his family.

color, bubbles, stamps, stickers and more. "I put it all inside a canvas bag they could color on as well," Raven said.

Raven's favorite part of the whole affair was putting together their costumes. Jeff dressed as a kilt-wearing Viking Batman, while Raven was a Steampunk version of Harley Quinn from Batman.

Raven's brother officiated the wedding and chose to dress up as Jack Skellington, a character from Raven's favorite movie. "It's so unique – you don't have to worry about dressing up fancy. Another brother was a Renaissance guy. It was so fun seeing everyone get really into the spirit of it," Raven said. "Pretty much everyone dressed up. I think there was only two people who didn't, but it wasn't a big deal that they didn't and I was still glad that they came."

They carried the theme through every aspect of the wedding, from food (tortilla chips shaped like Batman) to the vows.

"Basically we said what is said in normal vows but with very geeky quotes. I had a quote from Lord of the Rings in mine and he had Dr. Who," Raven laughed.



Raven's sister-in-law helps her get ready inside Don's Tats, where the wedding was held. "It's the family's tattoo studio," Raven explained. "We're very centered around our tattoos, they play a central part in our lives."



Jason & Ashley

"If I were to do it all over again, I'd probably have a different kind of wedding," Ashley said. "A Halloween wedding." She's always liked dressing up and found great inspiration for a costumed celebration. "When I was looking at ideas for weddings, there was this really cool picture that I saw – the guys were dressed in dark black tuxes and had super hero shirts underneath, so it was like a master of disguise." She decided on a non-theme wedding because she wanted "the romantic and sweet pictures to look back on."

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# I Do, Take Two

Last minute hurdles can upend the best laid plans. Here's the tale of a couple that had to cancel a week before their wedding and plan it all over again.

Jason and Amanda were originally planning to get married in 2014, but a family emergency just a week before the wedding forced them to cancel.

"Most of our guests are local, so it wasn't too bad in terms of that," said Amanda. "And we had our bridesmaids and groomsmen were great. They helped us get in touch with everyone."

The big variable was how much money they would lose with their vendors by cancelling so close to the date.



Jason & Amanda



To their pleasant surprise, the vendors were terrific. "We didn't lose nearly as much money as we could have," Amanda said. "Everyone was really accommodating. Our photographer even put everything toward this year."

Despite the support they had, planning their 'I Do, Take Two' wasn't seamless. "It was frustrating for me to go through the planning process again to make sure everything was scheduled."

Due to the stress of the previous year, Amanda lost 65 pounds and had to find a new wedding dress. (See Page 15.)

But once they finally got to their big day, Amanda and Jason had a very different perspective.

"Where we did have the catastrophe and basically started from scratch again, it put things in perspective about what really is important. At the end of the day, whether they loved it or hated it, we still got to get

married. We didn't have that the first time, so that was our goal. At the end of the day, regardless of what happens, we're going to be married," Amanda said.

"You spend so much time thinking about your centerpieces and those things and all of it really didn't matter," she continued. "Because we were surrounded by people we loved and who loved us. We were having a great time. It didn't make a difference at the end of the day."

The one thing that remained important to Amanda and Jason was the location of their ceremony: the Congregational Church in Lancaster, N.H. "My great-grandparents and my grandparents and my mom, they all got married there," Amanda said. "It was pretty important for us to be there. My Aunt Sandy actually married us ... Being married by a family member had sentimental value to us."



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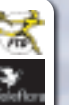
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# Wedding By A Waterfall

Sometimes a destination wedding can be in your own backyard. Look near and far to find the perfect venue.

“I originally wanted a beach wedding but then I saw the prices and I said no,” Ashley said. “My husband is a wicked outdoors person – he loves hunting and ice fishing. I found Jeudevine Falls on the internet. I was kind of skeptical about it because it was in Hardwick and I didn’t know much about it. I called and made an appointment and I fell in love with it. It had the woods for my husband and then the water for me.”

The couple rented the venue for the entire weekend and loved ones from out of town were able to camp on-site. It also meant that people who were traveling only had to find one location for the rehearsal, ceremony and reception.

“It was perfect because they could get to know where it was and you can hang out,” Ashley said. “There wasn’t a time limit for when you had to be out. It was perfect. We could do all our setting up the Friday before and leave it and not have to worry about it.”

They were also thrilled that the venue provided all the tables and chairs.

To add an element of fun for the kids that would be at the wedding, the Lancots rented a bouncy house. “It worked out perfectly,” Ashley said. “Everybody knew where their kids were. You could see them from the tent. The kids had a blast and they weren’t constantly bugging their parents and my kids weren’t constantly bugging us, so it was a win-win.”



Jason & Ashley



Kimberly and Jeramie McBey also chose Jeudevine Falls as their perfect location.

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# A Wedding Weekend

One perfect day just wasn't enough for one couple, so they built extra time into their special event to savor every moment and relax with their family and friends.

Rather than the traditional wedding day, Pat and Kim hosted a full wedding weekend at Jay Peak Resort.

"One thing we hated about weddings is the emphasis on the event, rather than all of the people who come out to show their support," they said in their entry for our cover photo contest. "We had the wedding spread out across an entire weekend. Saturday evening was the ceremony and Sunday evening was the reception. All the time in between was used to catch up and relax. The format allowed us to maximize the amount of face time we could get

with all our friends and family."

It wasn't their original plan. In fact, Kim said they originally considered eloping, "but we decided people would be mad at us if we did that."

The idea for the week-end-long affair was sparked when they attended a wedding last year for Kim's cousin. "I was one of her bridesmaids and it was in Maine and we had to drive six hours," she said. "We were excited

to drive there and see everyone, but the bride only had like two minutes to see each person. I didn't feel like I got to spend a lot of quality time with her. It was all she had time for was to say congratulations and go on. We really didn't want to do that."

They also wanted to honor the fact that people were taking so much time out of their own lives to be join them. "They're coming all this way to celebrate with us, and we wanted to show them that they're important to us, and spend quality time with them," Kim said.

Hosting the entire affair at Jay Peak offered the guests lots of activities on-site.

"On Friday, anyone who was around already, we sent a message to meet at the water park," Kim said. "My 80-year-old great aunt was doing the waterslides with me and my mom and my cousin. It was a blast!"

Patrick and his friends were playing "dueling waterslides." "It was fun because it was a bunch of adults having fun like little kids," Kim said.

At other times, guests took advantage of the golf course and walking trails. "It was a good opportunity for friends who hadn't seen each other in years to hang out," Pat said.

"People came to our room to come and get ready with me," Kim



Pat & Kim



said. "We had cocktails in the room until it was time to go to the top of the mountain for the ceremony."

On Saturday evening, after the ceremony they had a BBQ buffet and hung out at the campfires. "The reception day was Sunday. Again people got together and went hiking or walking the property or golfed or waterpark, or sitting by the pool," said Kim. "There was just so much to do that people were able to have fun and not just go from thing to thing. We got to sit and talk and spend time with people. And then we went out that night to the campfires again until the wee hours of the morning."

For Pat, having that time with friends he doesn't get to see often was the highlight of the weekend. "I'm lucky if I get to see some of them once a year, if not once every three years. That's one big thing that we really love our friends and it's unfortunate that a lot of them aren't local. So whenever we can get time with people it's ecstatic."



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# A Tale Of Two Dresses

I originally bought a dress a year before the date. I went to try it on again because I was having second thoughts and it didn't fit! [David's Bridal in Burlington] let me turn it back in. I didn't have to do very many alterations to it at all.

It was perfect because I didn't want a white dress. It was off-white. I'd had kids and I wanted to do a little twist on the traditional white gown, so that off color did it.

I put my daughter in a white dress that I got at TJ Maxx for \$5.



Ashley Lanctot has a special moment with her daughter, Lilly-Emma, before the wedding ceremony.



Jason & Ashley

Deciding on the perfect wedding gown is a major moment for most brides. This year there was a strange coincidence among three of our brides - they all ended up buying two dresses!

I bought a dress in Ohio with a friend of mine. Then I got back and found something online that I thought was more the vision I was going for. A local seamstress made it for me. She did great work but she was a bit of a procrastinator. We were finishing the dress at 11:45 p.m. the night before we had to pack up at my mother's house!

I still have the old one that I need to get rid of.



Pat & Kim



Jason & Amanda

The first dress, my entire wedding party went with me to probably four or five different places. I finally found one that I was absolutely in love with and everyone else loved. We ordered it and it was perfect.

And then the original date came and went. (See Page 12.) The weight fell away.

We went and tried on the same dress many sizes smaller, and it didn't look right anymore. I wasn't as excited about it as I was the first time.

So my mom and I went to Betty Dee's in Berlin. We low-key tried on some things and the second dress was absolutely amazing. Then Betty Dee's is where we got all our bridesmaid dresses and tuxes. They were phenomenal.

The first dress is hanging in the closet and I'm not sure what I'm going to do with it.

My dress was originally \$600 but it was on sale for \$300. And it was the last one in stock. And it fit me like a glove. That's how I knew that was the one.



Matt & Dayna



Dan & Nicole

I got my dress at Needleman's Bridal in Burlington. It was a great experience, they were fantastic. I got my dress for \$475. And it was custom-made. That wasn't a clearance rack, that's how much the dress was!

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# Unique Touches

It's the unique touches that make a couple's wedding day memorable. Here are some of the things that made our couples' days specials.



**Matt & Dayna**

We're the couple that likes to do stuff out of the ordinary. And Matt's kind of like a shy person when it comes to crowds, so I knew goofy photos was the way to go.

We did a football picture with me and the groomsmen and that was fun. And we did one where he's laying down on the ground and I'm holding up his leg and my bridesmaids are holding him down for me. And we did one where me and him were kissing and all the bridal party were making weird faces at us like that's gross.



Our invitations were Batman themed. I made them myself. My husband helped me design them on Photoshop.



**Jeff & Raven**



Sterling [Courtney's son] had his Mama Dragon, which is his stuffed dragon that he sleeps with. So we had tied a ribbon around her neck to hold onto the rings so that could be his part to bring it over to us. And then he had a dinosaur and something else. So they photo bombed a lot of the pictures. He was great - he was very huggy and cuddly and lovey that day.



**Courtney & Jessie**



**Dan & Nicole**

I've always had in my mind really cool party favors that people would remember. The one that we liked the best was we got monogrammed sunglasses for people. They were such a hit! It made for some *amazing* photos and lots of fun. There were extras so we have one picture of a guest with five pairs of sunglasses on his face.

We had a candy buffet so everybody could take what they want. The flower girl took her champagne glass and filled it with M&Ms, so while everyone else was walking around with champagne she had hers too.

For our guest book, everybody put their thumbprints on a tree and signed their name on their thumbprint. Everybody thought that was super cool.



**Pat & Kim**

We wrote our own vows, and we also included advice from family friends. We sent a mass email to the people who had RSVPed to ask for words of encouragement or advice or whatever thoughts they had. We included that in a time capsule that we could open each year on our anniversary as a good reminder of things to keep the relationship working. And we included some of those things in our vows.





# Wedding Budget Checklist

	Budgeted	Vendor Estimate	Actual		Budgeted	Vendor Estimate	Actual
<b>Apparel</b>				<b>Photography/Videography</b>			
Bridal Gown	_____	_____	_____	Formals	_____	_____	_____
Veil/headpiece	_____	_____	_____	Candids	_____	_____	_____
Alterations	_____	_____	_____	Extra prints	_____	_____	_____
Bride's shoes	_____	_____	_____	Photo albums	_____	_____	_____
Bride's hosiery	_____	_____	_____	Videography	_____	_____	_____
Bride's garter	_____	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____	_____
Jewelry	_____	_____	_____	<b>Total Photography:</b>	_____	_____	_____
Groom's suit	_____	_____	_____	<b>Music</b>			
Groom's shoes	_____	_____	_____	Ceremony music	_____	_____	_____
Engagement rings	_____	_____	_____	Cocktail-hour music	_____	_____	_____
Wedding rings	_____	_____	_____	Reception music	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Sound system rental	_____	_____	_____
<b>Total Apparel:</b>	_____	_____	_____	Dance floor rental	_____	_____	_____
<b>Flowers/Decorations</b>				Other	_____	_____	_____
Bridal bouquet	_____	_____	_____	<b>Total Music:</b>	_____	_____	_____
Bridesmaid bouquets	_____	_____	_____	<b>Favors &amp; Gifts</b>			
Boutonnieres	_____	_____	_____	Hotel gift bags	_____	_____	_____
Corsages	_____	_____	_____	Attendant gifts	_____	_____	_____
Ceremony flowers	_____	_____	_____	Bride/groom gifts	_____	_____	_____
Flower girl buds	_____	_____	_____	Gifts for parents	_____	_____	_____
Ring pillow	_____	_____	_____	Gifts for readers, etc.	_____	_____	_____
Pew decorations	_____	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____	_____
Table decorations	_____	_____	_____	<b>Total Gifts:</b>	_____	_____	_____
Reception decorations	_____	_____	_____	<b>Stationery</b>			
Lighting	_____	_____	_____	Save the date cards	_____	_____	_____
Candles	_____	_____	_____	Invitations/RSVPs	_____	_____	_____
Balloons	_____	_____	_____	Programs	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Seating place cards	_____	_____	_____
<b>Total Flowers:</b>	_____	_____	_____	Menu cards	_____	_____	_____
<b>Reception</b>				Thank you notes	_____	_____	_____
Venue rental	_____	_____	_____	Postage	_____	_____	_____
Table/chair rental	_____	_____	_____	Guest book	_____	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____	_____	Reception napkins	_____	_____	_____
Drinks	_____	_____	_____	Calligraphy	_____	_____	_____
Linens	_____	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____	_____
Cake	_____	_____	_____	<b>Total Stationery:</b>	_____	_____	_____
Favors	_____	_____	_____	<b>Other Expenses</b>			
Staff and gratuities	_____	_____	_____	Wedding coordinator	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Rehearsal dinner	_____	_____	_____
<b>Total Reception:</b>	_____	_____	_____	Engagement party	_____	_____	_____
<b>Ceremony</b>				Showers	_____	_____	_____
Site fee	_____	_____	_____	Salon appointments	_____	_____	_____
Officiant fee	_____	_____	_____	Stag/hen parties	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Brunch	_____	_____	_____
<b>Total Ceremony:</b>	_____	_____	_____	Hotel rooms	_____	_____	_____
<b>Transportation</b>				Other	_____	_____	_____
Limousine rental	_____	_____	_____	<b>Total Other Expenses:</b>	_____	_____	_____
Out-of-towners	_____	_____	_____	<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>			
Parking	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____				
<b>Total Transportation:</b>	_____	_____	_____				



# Digital Dating

As is becoming more and more common, two of our couples met through online dating sites.



Site used: PlentyOfFish

Nicole: We both had been looking for a little while. I happened to have a screen name that had to do with a football team. We're both really into sports and that's how we started talking.

On our first date, we were at a restaurant, and he spilled his water all over the table. He was so nervous and fidgety. He's pretty reserved to begin with. He says that it was absolutely 100 percent that he knew it was going to work out.

I hadn't had very much success before then, so to have a date that went really well was a great first sign.

I've got a pretty bubbly personality and he balances it out with a calm personality.



Dan & Nicole



Pat & Kim

Site used: OKCupid

Kim: He included in his profile that he was really looking forward to his niece getting older so he could play Legos with her. And I love Legos, so we struck up a conversation about that.

Our first date was in Boston. We were supposed to be meeting for just hot chocolate and we ended up traversing the city for six hours.

One of my coworkers at the time ran into us when we were on the epic first date. The next day she said, "Who was that guy? You're totally going to marry him!" And I was like, "Stop it you're being crazy."

Everything was clicking. One day when we were meeting up for a date, he saw my key chain and I had a little Lego Indiana Jones figure. He pulled out his key chain and he had a little Lego Star Wars figure on his key chain as well.

He makes me laugh and encourages my hobbies and he challenges me just enough so I'm never bored, but he knows when to back off when I need support instead of a challenge.



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# The First Dance

Trying to decide on a song for your first dance? Here are some of the songs that our couples chose for that special moment.



**Matt & Dayna**

*Crazy Girl*  
by Eli Young Band

Before you ever came along  
I was living life all wrong  
The smartest thing I ever did was make you mine

*Love of a Lifetime*  
by Firehouse

I guess the time was right for us to say  
We'd take our time and live our lives together day by day



**Jason & Amanda**

*Safe and Sound*  
by Capital City

You could be my luck  
Even if the sky is falling down  
I know that we'll be safe and sound



**Pat & Kim**



*I Found You*  
by Alabama Shakes

Well, I traveled a long way  
And it took a long time to find you ...  
But I finally found you ...



**Phillip & Emily**



**Dan & Nicole**

*Everything*  
by Michael Buble

And in this crazy life, and through these crazy times  
It's you, it's you

*Rose Of My Heart*  
by Johnny Cash

You are the rose of my heart,  
You are the love of my life.



**Jason & Ashley**

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# Advice from our couples

**I**t took a lot of work and time for each couple to plan their wedding, and they have a lot of experience to share. We asked them what their best pieces of advice were for other couples who are just starting the planning process.



Pat & Kim

Only pick a couple details to get worried about – you can't stress about all of it. Call in all your favors. That's huge and people are happy to do it.

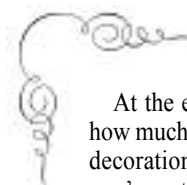
The moment it actually starts, don't sweat the small stuff because it's completely out of your control at that point. You just have to have fun with it. If there's a mistake, laugh it off, it'll make a good memory.

Pat – There were a few times when me and Kim butted heads in planning. My advice is, don't fight with your partner. This is something that's supposed to be awesome for both of you. You have enough stress in planning, you don't need to add more stress by resenting each other's decisions.



Jason & Ashley

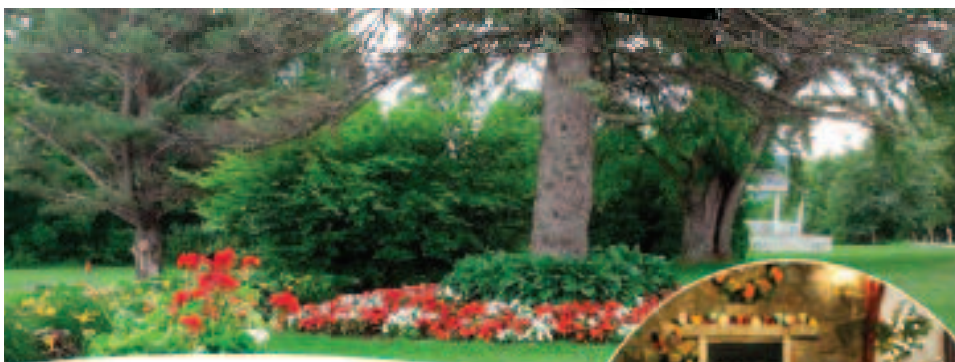
Have fun with it. There were points where I was stressing out to the point where I was freaking myself out. It's stressful, but it's not bad as you feel it is. Don't stress out and relax. It all works out.



At the end of the day it doesn't matter how much you spend on the flowers or the decorations or the food. Half the time you're not even going to remember all the details. As long as it's a day you're going to enjoy, that's the important thing.



Jeff & Raven



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As the man we get off the hook with a lot about the planning, so just being around and willing to help and interested. Serve your girl as much as you can. Be as understanding as you can. If you're getting married to the person, you should care as much as they care. It's their day. You're preparing for them as well.



Phillip & Emily



Matt & Dayna

Don't wait until the last minute. We started planning a year ahead of time and next thing you know we're down to three months, two months away. Time really does fly by when you're trying to plan something like that. Don't procrastinate.

Also, there will be some disagreements. It's best to sit down and decide together what will be best.



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# A Different Kind Of Story

When life took an unexpected turn, making a commitment became more important than planning a wedding.



Courtney & Jessie

Flowers, tablecloth colors, seating charts - these are the preoccupations of many brides in the weeks and months leading up to their wedding.

Courtney Vashaw, 38, and Jessie Lanham, 33, of Whitefield, N.H., had very different preoccupations as they thought about getting married: surgeries, radiation appointments, legal documents.

The two women had been talking about getting married for about a year when Courtney was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of cancer called Synovial Sarcoma in May 2015. Suddenly everything changed.

"It was like, well, the wedding planning has taken a definite back-seat to everything else,"

Courtney said. "We just didn't have that kind of time to be able to plan a big anything. And not a lot of energy to do that either."

They were traveling to Hanover and New York for various appointments and surgery, plus daily radiation appointments in St. Johnsbury.

"I was spent," Jessie admitted. "And I was still working. And I was going with her almost every day to radiation."

Despite the time and energy crunch that made planning a traditional wedding impossible, there were some more pressing realities on the horizon. "As we got closer to that second surgery date, there were all of these logistics of writing a will and getting prepared for something that was potentially really scary," Courtney said. "I absolutely love this person more than I have ever loved anyone in my life, other than the one who came out of me [Courtney's son, Sterling]. I want this spiritual union thing to happen. But legally and logistically, I'm a realist as well. And I wanted to make sure that she was protected and that our relationship was protected in a legal sense before going in for surgery in September. So that left a pretty small window."

During their Aug. 18 trip to New York for her final pre-surgical appointment, Courtney turned to Jessie with an idea. "I was like, you know, we can totally get married this weekend!" Courtney



Courtney reads the vows Jessie wrote for her. "We gave them to each other and we read them after the ceremony," Courtney said.



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said with a chuckle.

"She wasn't kidding," Jessie said with an answering smile.

They started talking through details - most importantly, what was the weather going to be like that weekend?

"We got home on Friday from New York and we're going through all the logistics of the surgery with my parents and trying to plan everything," Courtney said. And then she popped the big question: "Oh, and by the way, what are you guys doing Sunday? They're like, Why? And I'm like, Well we're going to get married."

The only missing link on the date was that Courtney's brother, who had just gotten married himself, was still away on his honeymoon. But everything else pointed to this being the right day. Including that it is Jessie's grandmother's birthday, which was very special to Jessie.

They called upon their friends to help - one friend got an online reverend certificate so she could officiate the ceremony. Another took photos.

The ceremony was held at Martin Bridge Park in Marshfield, Vermont, in the middle of a circle of rocks. There's a covered bridge down the path in case it rained, but luck was on their side for weather.

"I ended up with a sunburn!" Jessie said.

They had designed their rings online several months earlier when Courtney was diagnosed, so those were ready to go. There were other small wedding details that they'd been putting together for months - things like ordering Chuck Taylor shoes in their favorite colors for the reception. There definitely wouldn't be a reception this time around, but the shoes would make an appearance. "Those shoes are too cute to not wear!" exclaimed Courtney.

Neither woman went to her own high school prom, so they refer to the reception - which will



Jessie (left) and Courtney (center) with Courtney's son and "Mama Dragon" after the ceremony. This is a second marriage for both women and each brings children to the union. "We are definitely doing the 21st century family blended thing," Courtney said. "The constellation is something out of a sociology text book."

happen at some undetermined time when Courtney has enough energy to dance the night away - as their "prom."

Ultimately, they were happy with separating the ceremony from the reception. "I'd been to a lot of big weddings and weddings with a lot of pomp and circumstance and that wasn't really us anyway. And we had been talking all along, if we do our prom, do we want the wedding to be something separate anyway? Something that's pretty intimate and just ours? So the timing made the decision for us."

Besides, they said, they're not eager for the gifts that come with a traditional reception. "We're adults. We have an established house. We don't need anything," Courtney said. "If you feel like you need to do something, supporting a few of the organizations that we really care about and maybe even finding a way to turn it into a

fundraiser and a fun thing that gives back, rather than getting more stuff. We don't need more stuff."

"We don't need a toaster," agreed Jessie. "But my dancing shoes are getting anxious!"

They continue to do special little things to prepare for their "prom," things that help them to focus on something fun amongst ongoing medical appointments. "We've been putting together a playlist for at least a year," said Courtney.

## Love When Time Is Finite

After our formal interview, Courtney sent an email sharing more about how her relationship with Jessie has grown and deepened through cancer.

"Even before I was sick, I loved her so much it sometimes hurt: my face would hurt from smiling or that place in your chest that is not your heart, but should be, would ache with joy. Now we have experienced the reality of potentially losing each other, and that hurt takes on an entirely different quality. She has been a cheerleader, wound dresser, and the ultimate shoulder to cry on, as well as my partner and love. I can't tell you how many times we have cried, how many times we have wished and prayed for a long life together - just the chance to be cute little oldsters together. Love like this hurts, but for all the best reasons.

While the actually ceremony was planned quickly, the commitment was not. We have known it was the right decision for some time, but when time is suddenly finite, you don't waste it. You don't fret over linen colors or flowers, you don't worry about that perfect venue that is booking two years out. You do what is essential, and that is proclaim your love, and luckily, we live in an age where we can make it legal."

"Adding songs to the playlist, that's a fun thing. ... They're all things that are meaningful to us and that are part of our journey as people and as a couple. Like designing rings, picking out cool shoes - those are the fun things. We didn't have a lot of time to focus on picking the right napkins."

"The cancer journey has been a killer for time frame, but I think it aligns your priorities," Courtney continued. "I want to spend the rest of my life with this person, no matter how long my life is."

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**Nicquelle and Shawn Timson**

Nicquelle and Shawn took a moment to pray with their pastor before the wedding. But to keep to tradition and not see each other before the ceremony, they stayed around the corner from each other and clasped hands.



**Peter and Samantha Blanchard**

Peter and Samantha had their celebration at the North Haverhill Fairgrounds. "My maid of honor, Jordyn Tierney, did a rap speech that got everyone ready for the night!"

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Tucker and Heather Nyquist

Tucker and Heather had their wedding at the River of Life Camp in Irasburg. "The afternoon before the wedding, due to a miscommunication, the rental company did not have any dinner plates for us to use. Since our wedding was in northern Vermont and there were no other rental options near by, two members of the wedding party drove two and a half hours round trip to rent dinner plates from New Hampshire - and in doing so saved us from having to use paper plates!"



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# What they would change

After many months of planning for one day, there are often decisions that couples second guess. Here are a few of the things our couples are reflecting on.

We did the traditional dollar dance. And the one thing I wish we did instead would be a picture with the photographer. If people stood in line instead of dancing with us, if they paid a dollar to get their picture taken with us. There were people there who we didn't get our picture taken with.



Jason & Ashley



Phillip & Emily

There are little details that I kind of stressed over that didn't matter in the end. I was like, honestly we could have stressed over that or not even had it and it would have been fine.

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Matt & Dayna

I enjoyed how everything went. Everything seemed to fall in place just right. I was extremely happy with it. I wouldn't change anything about it if I could do it again.

I wish I'd had a videographer for the ceremony. Even if it had just been a friend with a camcorder, I really wish I had done that.



Jason & Amanda

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**Adrian and Allison Hahr**

Adrian and Allison had a romantic candle-light ceremony on Lake Memphremagog.



**Cameron and Amelia Tyler**

Amelia and Cameron got married at the American Legion in Groveton, New Hampshire. “We loved our wedding, especially having a huge wedding party of eight bridesmaids and eight groomsmen!”

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# Cherished memories

We asked our couples: What is your favorite memory from your wedding day?

Our flower girl, my niece, she didn't understand the concept of the flower girl, so she walked up a quarter of the way up and started walking in a circle and throwing the flowers in a circle. She emptied the entire basket before she ended up running to her mom. Everybody else said it was so cute because you could tell she didn't know what she was doing. The preparation for actually walking down the aisle, we didn't do a very good job at rehearsing it!



Dan & Nicole



Pat & Kim

I've talked to a lot of people who say, I don't remember half of the day because it went by so quickly. I feel very lucky because I feel like I remember a lot of things that were my favorite that I loved and had a good time doing.

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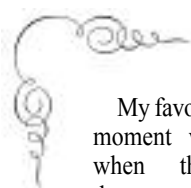
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**Phillip & Emily**

We had a massive dance party after everything. Everyone was dancing, everyone was having fun. I walked away to talk to my dad for a second and I looked back at everyone dancing. Everyone was laughing and the music – there was so much joy. It was such a great moment to see how wonderful it was to have all our friends together in one place.



My favorite moment was when the doors opened and I was walking down the aisle to him. Just the look on his face – you can just see the love emanating off him. And he was convinced that he would be the one who cried, but I bawled.

**Jason & Amanda**

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# Recommended vendors

Choosing the right vendors for your wedding can be a big job. We did research on your behalf and asked our couples which local vendors they would highly recommend for the big day.

## Venue - Jeudevine Falls

*I originally wanted a beach wedding but then I saw the prices. My husband is a wicked outdoors person – he loves hunting and ice fishing. I found Jeudevine Falls on the internet. I was kind of skeptical because I didn't know much about it. I called and made an appointment and I fell in love with it. It had the woods for my husband and the water for me.*

Caterer - Bailiwicks of St. Johnsbury  
Flowers - Artistic Gardens of Lyndonville



Jason & Ashley



Dan & Nicole

Officiant Phil Rivera looks on as Dan sees Nicole for the first time on their wedding day.

## Officiant / DJ - Phil Rivera played both roles

*It was his first time ever [officiating], so there were some little quirks, so during the ceremony it was kind of crazy. ... I'm so laid back that we just started laughing and everybody giggled about it the whole time. Phil is so high energy and he made it so much fun. It was awesome. I don't mind those little mix ups and quirks because it makes it memorable.*

Flowers - Riff's Flower Shop of Lancaster, N.H.  
Venue - Cabot Inn of Lancaster, N.H.

## Flowers - Flowers By Olga of Richford, Vt.

*She does unbelievably beautiful work. She literally takes you out to her garden and shows you the flowers. She did a test bouquet right there in the field.*



Pat & Kim



Phillip & Emily

## Caterer - Woodbelly Pizza of Cabot, Vt.

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**Caterer - Smokin' T's of  
Lancaster, N.H.**

*We didn't have barbecue. They did a homestyle lasagna, shepherd's pie. It was very, very nice.*

Flowers - Abby Watkins

Photographer - Normand Labonville



**Jason & Amanda**

Many thanks to the amazing photographers who allowed us to use their portraits throughout this guide.

**Jason Amadon and Amanda Bean-Amadon**

Normand Labonville

**Phillip and Emily (Betts) Barber**

Beth and Matt Coleman

**Peter and Samantha (Catterall) Blanchard**

Wendell Fernandes Photography

**Jeff and Raven Campbell**

Jenifer Furbush

**Patrick Gagnon and Kimberly Burns**

Kristen Peterson-Morin

**Adrian and Allison (Blouin) Hahr**

Randi Lee Photography

**Jason and Ashley (Drew) Lanctot**

April Sholan

**Jeramie and Kimberly (Barrett) McBey**

Sarah Walls Cedarbrook Studio

**Tucker and Heather (Davis) Nyquist**

Oliver Hewett

**Matt and Dayna (Roy) Schartner**

Diane Roy

**Shawn and Nicquelle (Desilets) Timson**

Richard Swenson

**Cameron and Amelia (Groveton) Tyler**

Paulette Couture

**Courtney Vashaw and Jessie Lanham**

Heather Houston

**Dan and Nicole (Parker) White**

Danielle Fields


**Food - Pig roast**

*We absolutely loved it. It was so much food! My brother-in-law had a pig roaster. So we bought a pig from Dan Houghton and we did a pig roast. We asked a family friend if he'd be willing to cook it for us and he said yes!*


Flowers - Artistic Gardens of Lyndonville

Cake - Crystal Wilkins of the Valley View Restaurant



**Matt & Dayna**

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