

→ 2019 ←

Weddings

Northeast Vermont & Northern New Hampshire

The Caledonian-Record, The Orleans County Record & The Littleton Weekly Record

Inside



Austin & Elizabeth Brock - pg. 4

ON THE COVER:
Austin and Elizabeth (Maxwell) Brock at The Barn at The Top of The World, Derby, Vt.
Cover Photo by Don R. Whipple of Whipple's Studio.



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**Randy & Jacqueline
Friend - pg. 16**

Our Couples

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.



**Jessica & Timothy
Hopkins - pg. 24**



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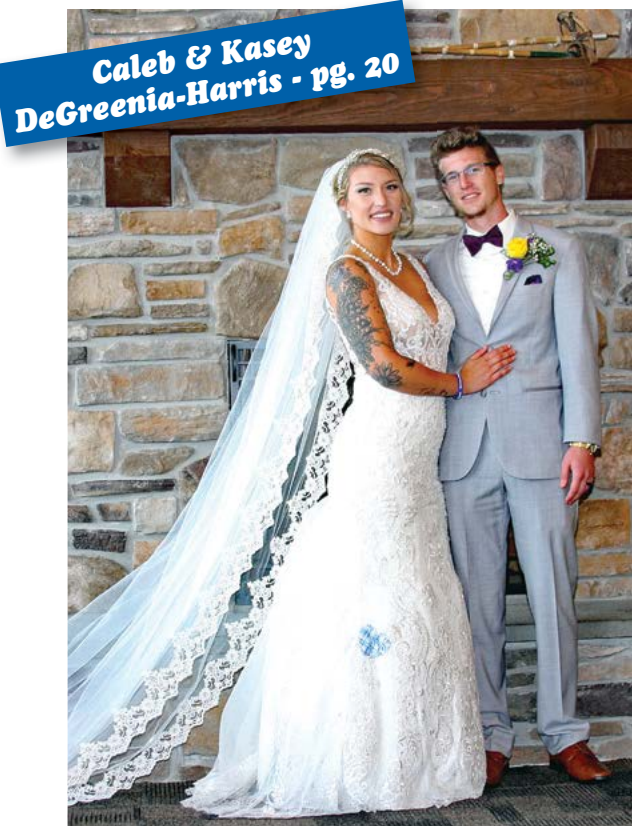
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Molleur - pg. 26**

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

Josh and Devin Molleur – Melanie Molleur
Austin and Elizabeth Brock – Don Whipple
Brandon and Hannah Cochran – K&E Photography
Randy and Jacqueline Friend – Lily Pond Photography and K&E Photography
Jason and Kristopher Di Guilio – Brendan Hill
Timothy and Jessica Hopkins – Jordan Royer
Joshua and Karla Hastings – Jasmine Newland
Caleb and Kasey Harris – Melanie McGregor
Justin and Natalie Perkins – Distinctive Image Photography

Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

Austin and Elizabeth (Maxwell) Brock

Finding a way into Dad's heart

Elizabeth met Austin when she was 16 and he was 21, and she knew her father didn't like the idea of her dating an older man who no one in the family knew. But events conspired to bring him around ...

"My dad had a heart attack on Easter just before I met Austin. And my parents had their own business. My dad having his heart attack completely changed everything – he was weak and not able to do much anymore.

Austin was doing little miscellaneous jobs for people and didn't have a steady job. Austin came to the house and introduced himself and shook his hand. That impressed my parents. But he also

asked my parents if they had any work he could do. So that whole first summer, Austin helped my parents. That helped grow the relationship between him and my parents and accepting the relationship and that age didn't matter once they got to know him."

Her non-Christmas wish

I love Christmas and everyone knows that. I had always told Austin that I didn't want to get engaged on Christmas day or my birthday or any special day. I wanted my engagement to be its own holiday, its own day. That's why he did it on Dec. 2.

We had picked out our Christmas tree that day and we were decorating it. I thought we had it all done and was putting my boxes away. When I turned around he was on one knee. It was just the two of us in our house and he asked me. I don't like all the attention on me, so that was the way I wanted it to be.

It was exciting to tell people at Christmas that there was news to share!

The Details

Ages: 27 and 23
Started dating: June 2012
Engaged: Dec. 2, 2017
Wedding date: Aug. 18, 2018
Wedding venue: Top of the World, Derby
Wedding budget: \$20,000
Number of people invited: 145
Number of people who attended: 110
Bar: BYOB
First dance song: "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran
(Our interview was with Elizabeth)



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Staying organized

I used The Knot app for my guest list. It also had a time line of month-by-month and week-by-week what you should be getting done. I didn't stick to it exactly, but it was a good reminder of when to order flowers, or time to get the cake taken care of. That was really helpful.

I would write any detail that I needed in that app so it was in my phone and in my computer, anywhere I looked.



Accidental wedding crashers

When pictures were being taken after the ceremony, bussers were bringing appetizers down to us. One of them said, 'Do you know anyone by the name of ...?' No one had ever heard of them.

Apparently this family came with two children and looked at the seating chart and said, 'We don't have a seat!' They were at the wrong wedding! Someone said later they knew they didn't belong because they had kids with them, and we had no children at the wedding.



Guinea pigs for a new venue

We thought 8/18/18 was a cool and catchy

date. We got engaged in December and in January started trying to reserve things, which only gave us 7 or 8 months. Everything fell into place for that specific date. As it turned out, it was the most popular day of the year for weddings. In town there were six weddings that day!

The barn was moved from Irasburg and rebuilt at this location. 2018 was the first summer the place was up running. It's not super well-known yet, but I think it's a really nice place with a really good view and I think it's going to be booked every single weekend. We were the guinea pigs.

... continues on next page



Everyone loved the venue! There's only so many places to get married and everyone has been to all of them, so having a spot that no one had ever been to before with that view – we were very happy.



Floral frugality

I wasn't about to spend \$3,000 for flowers that were for a day. We got our flowers at Price Chopper in Derby. I was very impressed and it wasn't anywhere near as expensive.

They made my bouquets and the boutonnieres, and the flowers on the arbor. Those were all pre-made.

Then from there I just had baby's breath and some roses in Mason jars for the centerpieces. Those came as loose flowers and we had a family friend who helped us assemble them.

But the meal – we want to put on a good meal for people. And we want nice pictures that we can always look back on and be happy with. There are things people won't remember the next day, but there were things we wanted to remember forever. We wanted good entertainment, good food, and good pictures for us. Everything else – the decorations, the flowers – I tried to not stress too much and not spend too much on them.



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In favor of a first look

We told our photographer that we don't want people waiting for the meal – we all know what it's like to be a guest and just waiting for the pictures to finish up.

We told him that 45 minutes would be great, an hour at the max. He said an hour would be his absolute max.

We did a first look before, so that saved us some time. All we had to do after the ceremony was family and wedding party.

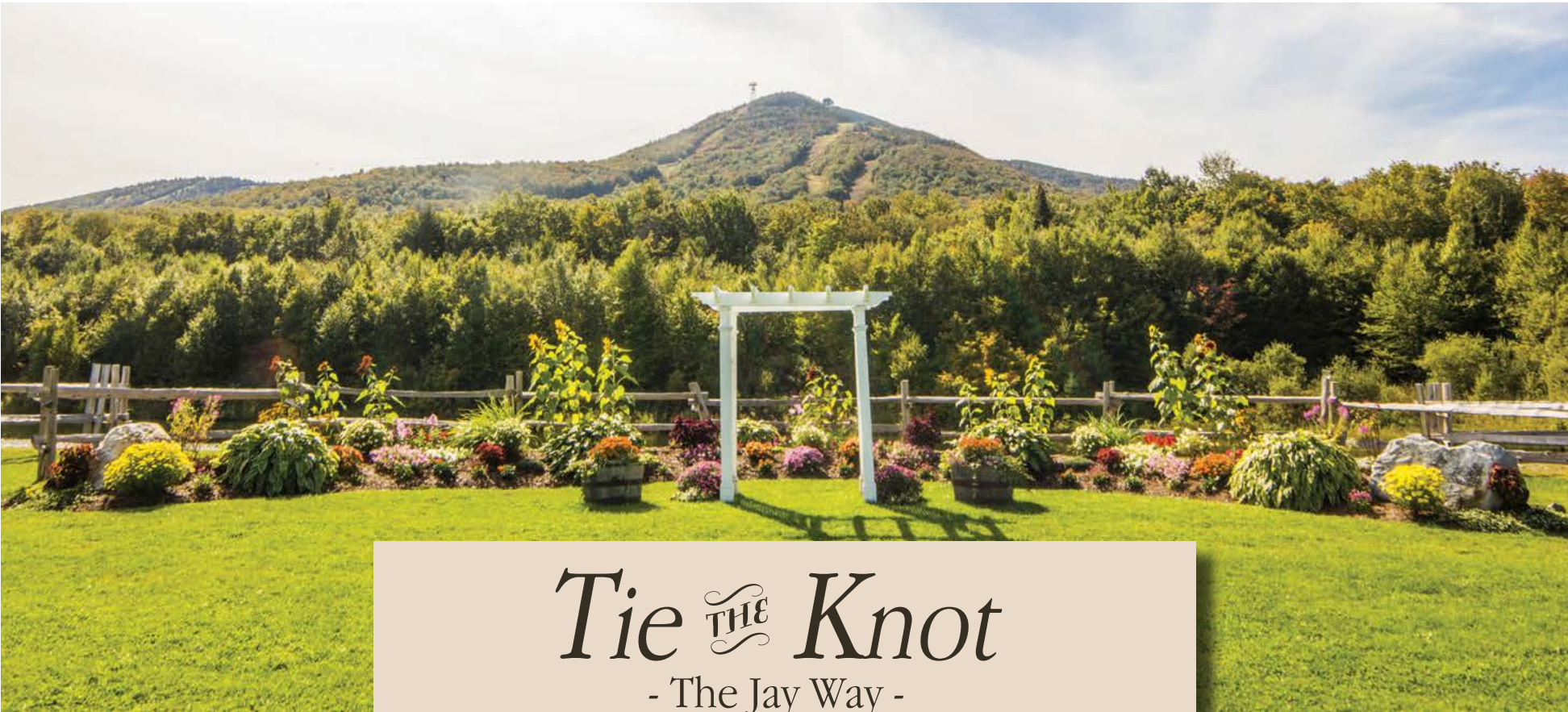
I think the photographer talked us into the first look. He's done a lot of weddings and he said they make for some really good and emotional pictures. It felt a little weird thinking about it, but as soon as I saw him that day, so many butterflies and nervousness left my body so I felt a little bit less tense. Then I had to walk down the aisle in front of people, but I think I would have been a lot more tense if it had also been the first time seeing him. And

the pictures are some of the best ones too.

It didn't take away from the feelings walking down the aisle. Austin was still emotional. You're still walking down the aisle, it's still a big deal. I would recommend it.

Advice as you plan YOUR big day

I tried to not focus on the small things. People seem to stress over things that no one really is going to remember the next day or pay attention to. The guests are there for you and to see you get married and celebrate. Enjoy the whole planning process and don't rush it by and don't dwell on things that don't matter. Spend your time on the big things and enjoy the whole planning process. It flew by so fast and the came day and went and I wish we could relive the day!



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Photography Advice From A Pro

Many of our couples identified the photographer as the aspect of their wedding they'd be most willing to splurge for, because images of their big day will last forever.

We spoke with photographer Bill Rutherford of Northern Lights Studio in Lancaster, New Hampshire, to get some tips for how to get the best wedding photos with the least stress.

The Record: How far in advance of the wedding day should a couple reach out to photographers?

Rutherford: Anywhere from nine months to a year in advance. Typically, a couple selects the venue first and to lock in the venue you have to have your date. But sometimes we'll get a call and someone will say, "I really wanted you to photograph the wedding and we've selected such and such a date." And sorry, we've already booked that date. If there are specific vendors you want to work with, keep that in mind before locking anything in with the venue.

The Record: How much time should a couple expect to spend with you in advance of the wedding day?

Rutherford: Normally there are a couple meetings that take place when people work with me.

Typically, we're going to do a 15 to 30 minute phone meeting as an introduction.

All our packages include an engagement session, so we've got another phone meeting to plan for the engagement session. Then we've got a two or three hour engagement session.

Then for actual wedding planning, there are a couple meetings. The second one is reviewing the itinerary, going over the couple's family and who specifically they want pictures of. Normally that's an hour-long meeting.

The Record: What are good ways to minimize the time the couple has to spend away from their guests taking photos?

Rutherford: First looks are terrific because it gives you a chance to do a lot of the creative before the wedding when things aren't so pressed for



Kyra Grasso (Photo by Bill Rutherford)

time.

Another possibility is to get back together the day after to do some creatives. That means getting back in the dress, the hair won't be quite the same. But you can spend two or three or four hours taking photos for wall hangings and artwork.

The Record: What should a couple look for in a potential photographer?

Rutherford: Look at the reviews, look at their online galleries. Make sure your style matches. There's a lot of variation.

You want a photographer who is going to spend some time getting to know you. It's not like buying a new washing machine. Your photographer needs to get to know the couple so they can tailor the images to what the couple loves and appreciates. I'll say to a couple, tell me a couple things about your fiancé that you appreciate – a couple physical things (keep it clean!) Maybe the lady will say, I like his chest and his strong arms and the way he makes me feel safe. And maybe he'll say, I really like her eyes.

So now knowing that, I put them out in a grass field with beautiful scenery behind him. And I have him put his arms around her and she lays her head

on his chest looking up at him. When they look at that picture in the future, he'll notice her eyes and how she's looking at him and she'll notice his arms and how he's holding her.

The Record: What about getting a friend or family member to take photos?

Rutherford: I can't even tell you the stories I've heard about amateurs or even worse yet the uncle with the camera – the wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime event. There are no do-overs. You want to make sure you have an experienced professional who is used to working under stress. Someone who has backup gear. I hear amateurs showing up with one camera. What if something happens to the camera halfway through the wedding – it's a piece of electronics. Then what?

There's a lot going on the day of, the couple is excited and worried. You want a photographer who is going to help calm you and be able to deal well under pressure and handle anything that might come up. And then someone that's going to be attentive without being in your face all the time. Someone who is going to be paying attention and capturing images without taking over. Someone who is going to be a guide.

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Justin and Natalie (Dyne) Perkins

Old friends

We've known each other for about 16 years. We lost touch and then reconnected back in 2015. It started as a friendship and quickly blossomed into a relationship.

I was going through some really tough emotional things – the loss of a friend who had passed away – and he had gone through a divorce a few years prior and had never been able to talk to anyone about it. We found each other attractive emotionally and reconnected. He has the biggest heart of anybody that I know.

The Details

Ages: 43 and 37
Started dating: November 2015
Engaged: April 2017
Wedding date: Oct. 6, 2018
Wedding venue: Inn at Mountain View Farm
Wedding budget: \$15,000
Number of people invited: 120
Number of people who attended: 115
Bar: Limited cash bar
First dance song: "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran
(Our interview was with Natalie)

Getting the kids involved

He sat me down on the couch one night. We had his 10-year-old son over, so he had him help. Justin sat me down on the couch and Everett was hiding behind him with the ring in his hand.

I was very, very surprised. We'd talked about it in the past and I really didn't think marriage was an option with everything he'd been through with his divorce. I was okay with that – having him and the kids was enough.

When Everett opened up the box and it was upside down and it was so endearing!

The master binder

One of the first things I did was buy a wedding planner so I could keep everything in there. It was a 3-ring binder that gave me all the different options. *[Editor's note: Natalie was using The Knot's Ultimate Wedding Planner & Organizer]* Some people have a videographer and a photographer, and a musician for this but a band for that. So it was the best way to keep me organized.

I also downloaded a step-by-step app from The Knot that I put in my phone so I could check things off daily. I knew what I had to do because it set up a time line as to when things needed to be done by. That was really, really helpful.

Daddy's girl

I lost my father when I was about 18 years old and I had a wedding dress from being previously engaged. It was the only wedding dress my father ever saw me in. After all these years, I couldn't bear to throw it away or get rid of it.

I was going to get a new dress, but when we talked about it, Justin he thought it would be appropriate for me to wear that dress. Nobody had ever seen the dress, so it wasn't a huge thing. He has a good heart.

It was very special. I was going to go out and just get a new one, but after I talked to him about it ... because after all these years I couldn't bear to throw it away or get rid of it.

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Creating a vision

The most fun part of planning my wedding was the time I spent with my bridesmaids and my girls. They kept me entertained.

One of my bridesmaids set up an evening where we did vision boards – she made it as a whole big surprise girls’ night! We had no idea what we were walking in on.

Knowing the right questions to ask

The most stressful part of planning was all the little details you don’t find out until after the fact.

We had a contract with the venue. Where they said that they provided water glasses, we didn’t know that they didn’t provide dishware. They provided glasses but they don’t necessarily provide water.

It’s not the venue’s fault – they probably assume that everyone would ask, but I didn’t think to.

We chose their limited cash bar. They offered three white wines and three red wines and a variety of beer or cider. To have a full bar with hard liquor was extremely expensive. Everybody seemed very happy with that.

(See our interview with the Inn at Mountain View Farm for more insight into the right questions to ask)

Vendors can help keep costs down

I spoke with Jessie at All About Flowers and she guided me so we could save some money. She did a print out of how many boutonnieres, how many corsages, what was going in what. I talked to her about the centerpieces – I did mason jar center pieces for them with a little burlap. I even had it written down – what goes in what jar. How many of this goes in here. We came up with some really great centerpieces.

Special touches

I think the most time consuming thing I did was burn our initials into wood slices for every table. And putting together the little keepsakes – an antique key that was a bottle opener. We stamped each one. We had to tie the twine on every single key – that took a lot of time.

First look

We were extremely happy we did the first look photo shoot. It took so much pressure off from doing it after the ceremony! We were able to enjoy some of the cocktail hour with our guests.

... continues on next page

Their local vendors

- Flowers – All About Flowers
- Food – Topic of the Town
- Cake – Bentley’s Bakery (Natalie and Justin were so pleased with their chocolate with peanut butter filling cake that they’ve decided to get the same cake for their one-year anniversary!)
- Hair & makeup – Fusion 134
- DJ – Peak Entertainment



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It was one of my bridesmaid's ideas. I was immediately on board with it but I wanted to talk with Justin beforehand. I didn't want to convince him to do something he didn't want to do, but he was all for it. When you're in the mix of all of it, it flies by so fast you don't even know what's going on and who's doing what where. So it gave us more time with our guests.

After the ceremony I think we had our photos done in about 25 or 30 minutes because we did most of the formals beforehand.

Advice as you plan YOUR big day

Nobody is going to look back and remember any little snafu that happens, they just remember the happy times. I was stressing myself out with what had to be done and what had to be placed where. At the end of the day it didn't matter – everyone was up and dancing. They weren't sitting at the table long enough to nitpick little things.

Toward the end of the reception, one of the straps on my dress let go. My maid of honor had put together an emergency wedding day kit, so we were able to stitch it right up. Expect things to go wrong – it will happen, but everybody is there to help you out.



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Joshua and Karla (Degreenia) Hastings

Staying organized

Google Documents saved my life!

I had a separate page for every different thing – one for music, one for food. I had a row for each band that I quoted, each DJ that I quoted. Then underneath I had a column of how much it was going to be, how many people were a part of that so I'd know how much to tip them.

It was all there, on me at all times.

I'm not really a fancy, shiny person, and I'm a cheap shopper. The first dress was only \$300. I lucked out that my second dress was only \$350. It wasn't as awful as it could have been, but it was still an expense I wasn't expecting.

I still have the first dress. I'm trying to sell it.

Seeing it come together

Seeing everything coming together was the best part for me. I'm a planner. I knew everything wasn't going to be perfect ... but it actually ended up being perfect!

The caterer showed up, the band played all the songs we wanted them to, there were no issues between guests. Seeing it all come together was really exciting.

What they would do differently

I thought that the RSVP cards were the biggest waste of money. You send out the invitations with RSVPs in them and stamps on them. Only a quarter sent them back! Everybody else told me they were coming.

I kept a Google spreadsheet, where I was like – did I send it out, did I get it back? Who haven't I heard from? I had to message people and I was talking to them. That was definitely the most stressful part, getting a final head count.

I wouldn't send out RSVPs – I don't know how I would get a head count, but I'd just talk to people and find out if they were coming or not. If you do send an RSVP card, don't send a stamp with it. That was an extra \$70! It was crazy!

The Details

Ages: 28 and 33

Started dating: 2014

Engaged: June 7, 2017

Wedding date: Oct. 6, 2018

Wedding venue: Tempson Barn

Wedding budget: \$10,000

Number of people invited: 200

Number of people who attended: 200

Bar: Cash

First dance song: "Grow Old" by Florida Georgia Line

(Our interview was with Karla)

Unexpected expense

I bought my dress through a flash sale online. I didn't try it on, thinking I'd do the whole to-do with all my girls when I picked it up. When I tried it on, it didn't fit. I had to buy another dress! But I liked the second dress I got better.



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Perfect setting

We chose to spend our money on the venue. It was the view – we wanted that peak foliage, country, rustic feeling.

The Tempson Barn is new, but the view and how they had everything put in – all of the beams and stuff for the bar, it was just the perfect setting. Lots of wood and not really classic modern, it was more country rustic, so it felt like more of what I wanted.

I saw a photo of it on Facebook and I said, “That’s it!” I called Tina Simpson and I said, “I need to put a deposit down on the barn.” She said, “You haven’t even seen it yet!” I said, “It’s okay I’ll see it, but I know I want it.”

Two photographers

We had the ceremony outside of the Tempson Barn, then after the ceremony we walked into the barn and everybody followed us. We cut out the side door for photos. Then everybody was inside the barn, hors d’oeuvres were set up, the bartenders were there. Everybody mingled and we had music playing. It worked out really well.

The photos took 45 minutes. We had key shots planned out in advance and we had two photographers. One was doing the guys, one was doing the girls, then we got together to do group shots and family photos.

It was easier having two photographers, for sure. We had a lot of candid photos from the reception. One was taking shots of us dancing and one was taking stills of the barn and the centerpieces.

Their local vendors

We had a lot of friends helping us out. Living and growing up in a small town, I knew a lot of people who did a lot of things. The photographer was a friend, the band was a friend so she cut us a deal, the hairdresser is a friend. We ordered our invitations on VistaPrint, which was a lot cheaper.

Food – Sodexo

Hair & makeup – Pure Envy

Advice as you plan YOUR big day

Let people help if they offer. I did a lot of things on my own because I didn’t want to relinquish control and it was a lot of unnecessary stress. Everything was just fine. I didn’t want people to help because I wanted it to be perfect, but if people helped I think it would have been perfect and I wouldn’t have had to stress about it.



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Randy and Jacqueline (Garand) Friend

Choosing a ring the easy way

It was the morning of our son's birthday party. I was in a tizzy getting ready. Randy went out to pick up breakfast. He came back with the ring that I wanted. Not only did I get breakfast delivery, I also got a proposal!

At the time I was working at a jewelry store so I was looking at that ring all the time. Lucky him! When he went into the store, he knew which one I wanted because my co-workers let him know. It was really easy for him because he couldn't make the wrong choice.



Pushing boundaries

I knew he was the one because he pushed me past the boundaries that I had set before. I was really closed off and had a wall up with anybody else in my life. Not just in romantic relationships, but with friends and family too. I've always had a wall and communication was always my biggest struggle. If I had a big emotion, I just kind of shut down.

In the beginning I was closed off with him but I got to a point where it was like, if you don't communicate this is the end. When I thought about that, I was able to push past it.

He has grown as a person too tremendously. We consider the future and the lives that we want to have together. We have the drive, commitment, and respect for each other.

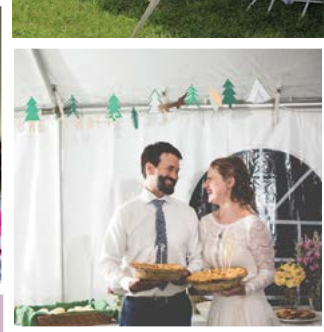


Real life

We had already had a baby. Having a baby throws you into real life – this is what married couples do. Going through the trials and tribulations of having a kid, and the things that any couple goes through in those years, we knew that we could make it through together stronger.

The Details

Ages: 33 and 29
Started dating: 2013
Engaged: 2016
Wedding date: June 30, 2018
Wedding venue: Tempson Barn
Wedding budget: \$25,000 to \$30,000
Number of people invited: 200
Number of people who attended: 150
Bar: Open with alcohol purchased in advance
First dance song: "How Long Will I Love You" by Ellie Goulding
(Our interview was with Jacqueline)



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So why not go for the rest of our lives? We weren't having babies together just to do it!

Staying organized

I did everything as early as possible. I kept notes in my phone. I used the Zola app to keep my guest list and it also provided a time line guideline to follow as far as when to book things, where you should be at what point during your wedding planning stages. I relied heavily on the Zola app. And any side things I would make notes in the Notes app on my phone.

When dreams turn to nightmares

The first dress I tried on was my dream dress. It was my dream dress. But my first dress was ruined by the seamstress. I was left to find a new wedding dress four weeks before the wedding. It was a wedding nightmare. I tried on 14 more dresses. The dress that I actually chose was the sister dress, unknowingly, to my original dream dress. So the dress that I chose was the same designer, just the next season of my original dress. Because it was the next season's dress, it cost more, plus emergency alterations made

it much more expensive. The seamstress tried to report it to her insurance company, but they refused to pay because it was her fault. She refused to pay for it.

My advice would be to use word-of-mouth referrals. We used word-of-mouth referrals for our other vendors and were happy with all of them.

The quiet moments

My favorite moment of the day was after everybody had left. After a long chaotic day, at the end of the evening it was just my husband and I and members of the bridal party. We pulled out chairs and put them in a circle and just laughed and hung out. It was the most laid back part of the day.

Advice as you plan YOUR big day
Breathe. Soak in all of the moments. Really try not to stress out. The day is going to come, regardless.

Their local vendors

- Flowers – Artistic Gardens
- Food – Freebird Catering
- Photos – Lily Pond Photography and K&E Photography
- Hair – Envy Salon
- DJ – Mike LaBounty
- Wedding coordinator – Jennifer Kirchoff Layne



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Budget Worksheet

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	Budgeted	Vendor Estimate	Actual		Budgeted	Vendor Estimate	Actual
Apparel				Photography/ Videography			
Bridal Gown	_____	_____	_____	Formals	_____	_____	_____
Veil/Headpiece	_____	_____	_____	Candids	_____	_____	_____
Alterations	_____	_____	_____	Extra Prints	_____	_____	_____
Bride's Shoes	_____	_____	_____	Photo Albums	_____	_____	_____
Bride's Hosiery	_____	_____	_____	Videography	_____	_____	_____
Bride's Garter	_____	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____	_____
Jewelry	_____	_____	_____	Total Photography:	_____	_____	_____
Groom's Suit	_____	_____	_____	Music			
Groom's Shoes	_____	_____	_____	Ceremony Music	_____	_____	_____
Engagement Rings	_____	_____	_____	Cocktail-Hour Music	_____	_____	_____
Wedding Rings	_____	_____	_____	Reception Music	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Sound System Rental	_____	_____	_____
Total Apparel:	_____	_____	_____	Dance Floor Rental	_____	_____	_____
Flowers/Decorations				Other	_____	_____	_____
Bridal Bouquet	_____	_____	_____	Total Music:	_____	_____	_____
Bridesmaid Bouquets	_____	_____	_____	Favors & Gifts			
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	_____	_____	_____	Total Gifts:	_____	_____	_____
Reception Decorations	_____	_____	_____	Stationery			
Lighting	_____	_____	_____	Save The Date Cards	_____	_____	_____
Candles	_____	_____	_____	Invitations/RSVPs	_____	_____	_____
Balloons	_____	_____	_____	Programs	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Seating Place Cards	_____	_____	_____
Total Flowers:	_____	_____	_____	Menu Cards	_____	_____	_____
Reception				Thank You Notes	_____	_____	_____
Venue Rental	_____	_____	_____	Postage	_____	_____	_____
Table/Chair Rental	_____	_____	_____	Guest Book	_____	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____	_____	Reception Napkins	_____	_____	_____
Drinks	_____	_____	_____	Calligraphy	_____	_____	_____
Linens	_____	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____	_____
Cake	_____	_____	_____	Total Stationery:	_____	_____	_____
Favors	_____	_____	_____	Other Expenses			
Staff And Gratuities	_____	_____	_____	Wedding Coordinator	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Rehearsal Dinner	_____	_____	_____
Total Reception:	_____	_____	_____	Engagement Party	_____	_____	_____
Ceremony				Showers	_____	_____	_____
Site Fee	_____	_____	_____	Salon Appointments	_____	_____	_____
Officiant Fee	_____	_____	_____	Stag/Hen Parties	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Brunch	_____	_____	_____
Total Ceremony:	_____	_____	_____	Hotel Rooms	_____	_____	_____
Transportation				Other	_____	_____	_____
Limousine Rental	_____	_____	_____	Total Other Expenses:	_____	_____	_____
Out-Of-Towners	_____	_____	_____	Grand Total:			
Parking	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____				
Total Transportation:	_____	_____	_____				

Booking Advice From The Venue

When Natalie Perkins mentioned that she didn't know all of the right questions to ask when making a contract with her venue, we reached out to Marilyn Pastore at the Inn At Mountain View Farm to provide some tips on things to think about while talking with a venue.

The Record: Natalie mentioned that when she rented glassware she wasn't aware that dishware was separate, and she was surprised that water wasn't included. Can you break down how that usually works?

Pastore: We have glasses because we provide alcohol service, and we have water glasses. The caterer usually brings the dishes. If there's a smaller caterer that doesn't have the dishes, the couple would rent the dishes and silverware they need.

We don't have running water in our barn, so we bring in jugs of water. We charge a small fee for that. We usually have some fancy water available near the bar that we make up – usually it has some fruit in it, or a lot of people want lemonade. We charge by the jug for that.

The Record: What are some of the options for alcohol service at a venue?

Pastore: We charge people on the basis of consumption. Some venues have a set price per person, but we always find that much too complicated. It's better that people have the freedom to choose what they want to serve.

The best way to do it is first to know how many people are coming. We can estimate how many glasses is standard that you could plan for. If you wanted to limit the amount of alcohol, you could have a mixed bar. It could be open during reception hour or dinner, and then it could be a cash bar after that.

If you really want to limit the cost for alcohol, I would say don't have any open bar for alcohol. I think having just wine and beer limits it. Sparkling water is very nice. Prosecco instead of champagne is less expensive – that's a good way of having something festive for a toast but not spending as much as champagne.



Natalie Perkins at the Inn At Mountain View Farm. (Distinctive Image Photography)

The Record: Any other tips?

Pastore: With rehearsal dinners sometimes people will order take out from an area restaurant and our staff will serve the food. We have hotel pans and then our staff will service it and clean up afterwards.

It makes it a lot less expensive than having a caterer come in if it's a limited number of people.

If somebody comes to us with a problem or question we'll come up with a solution. We like being challenged like that!



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Caleb and Kasey DeGreenia-Harris

In Dad's memory

My husband said, 'I want to get married at Burke Mountain.' And I was like, 'Oh my god! I wanted to talk to you about that!'

My dad, Denny DeGreenia, died last December on Burke Mountain. He'd worked there for 25 years. So it was a wedding and also a celebration of my dad's life. We got married where my dad died. It was an emotional but amazing time.



Dad was there

My dad died on a Sunday and we were supposed to go home the following weekend. My husband was actually going to ask my dad for permission to ask me to marry him. My dad knew that and he'd talked to my mom about it. So he'd already told my mom that he was going to give him his blessing, he just didn't get to do it.

We had a chair for him at the ceremony. We had a table laid out with collages and cool stuff at the reception. The woman who married us at had spoken at my dad's funeral, so it was really special. During the ceremony she spoke about my father, and when she did there was a big gust of wind. It was like he was there for me.

The Details

Ages: 24 and 23
Started dating: July 22, 2017
Engaged: February 2018
Wedding date: Sept. 22, 2018
Wedding venue: Burke Mountain
Wedding budget: \$25,000 to \$30,000
Number of people invited: 265
Number of people who attended: 250
(Our interview was with Kasey)

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Their local vendors

Flowers – All About Flowers – we ordered loose flowers and my mom and a friend put them together

Food – Burke Mountain

Cake – Baylow Cakes

DJ – Green Mountain Entertainment

I had a piece of his favorite shirt cut out and put on my dress. It's a blue heart, which was my dad's favorite color.

Visiting the site

Burke Mountain was amazing. Anything we needed, they went above and beyond. I called Mary, the event planner there, so much throughout the experience.

I wanted to go to the place where my dad passed, the exact spot. And she was totally willing to make that happen. She said, 'Anything you want to do.'

I was driven up by a family friend. I had a lone personal minute with my dad right before my wedding.

A goofy kind of love

It was literally love at first sight. The moment I met him, I knew he was the one. He was super goofy. I met all his friends and it felt super comfortable. Like I'd known him my whole life. I'm such a goofy, funny person and he is the same way.

The perfect dress, take two

The second dress I tried on was so beautiful. But it was the first place we went to and my mom wanted me to try on more dresses.

We took a trip two weeks later to Massachusetts and Mom said, 'Let's go try on some more dresses.' I tried on the exact same dress and I didn't say anything to my mom. And she said, 'Oh my gosh, I love it!'

I told her it was the exact same dress. And she said, 'No it wasn't!' But I think the first time I tried it on they didn't have my size, so it was huge on me. The second time they had it in my size, so she was able to see exactly what it would look like.

Getting the number

There were people who said they were coming and didn't. But then I had people who wrote two and brought six! We found room for people – luckily my mom is a planner, so she really did that part of it. She said, 'This is not what you should be worried about. We'll get through it.'

Priorities

People said, 'You're getting married so quick!' But I knew Caleb was the one and I didn't want to lose anybody else before we did this.

My grandfather was diagnosed with cancer. I wanted to do it so I had the remaining people I loved with me to enjoy it. I didn't want to just get it over with, but I wanted it done because I wanted everyone to be there.

I didn't really worry about money. You never know when you're going to go and money is money. I want people to have that memory. With my dad's passing, it opened my eyes to how small money really is.

Seeking the groom's input

I would ask Caleb his opinion and he would be like, 'I don't care.' It's weird to say the stressful part was my husband didn't care. But I wanted it to be us, not just me. I wanted people to see him in it as well. But as soon as I said, 'That's stressful for me, that doesn't help,' then he was able to talk to me about it.

Dressing up the room

We went over the top with decorations. I wanted the room to not look like a meeting room, so I bought so many decorations! I didn't realize that I had to then put them all up.

I went over the top with party favors. I wanted people to have stuff from our wedding. I had coozies and matchbooks and bubbles and sunflower seeds. I think that's awesome – four or five months down the road, to pick up something from your friend's wedding. It brings you back to the memories of the day.

Favorite moment

Seeing Caleb for the first time, walking down the aisle. He said, 'I'm not going to cry.' And he did. It was a really emotional moment for me – just seeing him that first time. We didn't do a first look. Seeing how emotional he was, it was one of my favorite moments from the day.

Advice as you plan YOUR big day

Ask for help. Don't wait to get stressed out and THEN ask for help. Reach out to your bridesmaids and your mother or your husband's mother. Get the support before it's too late and you're stressed.



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Trying on wedding gowns can be an exciting time. It can also be overwhelming to walk into a store with so many options.

We spoke with Robin Gallagher, the owner of Betty Dee Fashions, to get some specific advice about how to make it a great experience.

The Record: How far in advance of the wedding date should a bride be trying on dresses?

Gallagher: A year ahead is a good time. Some of the designers take six months for the dresses to come in. And then you need to allow time for alterations to be done. And then you want it ready ahead of time – you don't want to be down to the day before the wedding and wondering if your dress is ready.

Some of the companies have priority orders that come in quicker, but that's more expensive.

The Record: How much time do they need to allocate for fittings and alterations?

Gallagher: I think a bride should come in at least a couple months before the wedding.

If it's an April, May or June wedding, I recommend that they get their alterations done in January or February. The seamstresses aren't as busy during those months. I ask them to come in for fittings in January and February, too, so they can get it done before the prom rush.

Seamstresses is a dying art. It's intricate work. There's only so many and there's less and less out there all the time, which is another reason for the bride to start early.

The Record: We spoke with one bride whose seamstress ruined her dress. Are there questions they can ask potential seamstresses to vet them?

Gallagher: I would want referrals. And always check reviews.

The Record: What should they have decided before coming in to visit you?

Gallagher: It's a good idea to know your budget. That way the consultant will respect what you're looking for and keep you in that price point.

If someone tells me she's got \$200 or \$300, I'm going to show them products in that price range. If they want to have a better budget, I'm going to show them dresses in their budget. Knowing your budget saves everybody time.

The Record: What guidelines do you have for various body shapes?

Gallagher: If someone is small, you have to be careful not to overwhelm them with too much fabric.

If someone is a plus size, they feel like they need to wear something big to hide and actually a lot of times the very opposite is true. You want it to slide over the body but you don't want it to be too tight. If it slides over the body, a lot of times it shows off the curves they have and they're shocked at how beautiful they look in something fitted. It takes inches off of them. Not too small, but something that hugs the body without hugging too tight.

The Record: What suggestions do you have for brides the day of trying on dresses?

Gallagher: Come in with an open mind. Even if you think a dress on the hanger is ugly, try it on. Sometimes the ugliest dress on the hanger is the prettiest dress on the body and sometimes the prettiest dress on the hanger is the ugliest dress on the body.

— Don't bring too many people. It's too many opinions and it's confusing. I would want to bring people with me that would give me their honest opinion and also knows my style and would be looking for what would look best on me and not what would look best on them.

— Your friends mean well, they really do. But they just have different taste. Go with your heart.

— It's helpful if they go on the internet or Pinterest and find out what they like. If they come in the store with pictures, we know what they like and we start pulling what they like. It helps us know what to show them.

— It's not a bad idea to wear the proper undergarment when you come – a strapless bra (preferably a strapless and backless) and a pair of Spanx. That makes a difference on how things fit.

— If they've got a wish and a vision of what they want, I try to give them that vision. Once they try it on, it may or may not be what they want and then we go from there. Let's get it out there now so we can deal with it.

— Trust your consultant. I tell them I'd like to pick something out for you. But I always save my pick until after they try on what they like, what their friends like, what mom likes. After that I've seen what looks good on them and what doesn't look good on them. I know my stock and what looks good on people.

Picking The Right Big Top

Renting a tent is not an every-day occurrence for most people, so we got on the phone with Wayne Gooley of Northern Vermont Tent Rental to get the scoop.

The Record: What does a couple already need to know before they contact you?

Gooley: Usually you need a rough number of people and an idea of what they want to do inside so we can figure out how big the tent should be: if they want a dance floor; whether they're doing a DJ or a band; whether it's a buffet or a sit-down dinner; if they're going to have a cake table, card table, gift table, sweetheart table, or a big head table.

Sometimes the caterer requires a tent for a kitchen.

A lot of times we do a computer-aided design of the inside to give them an idea of how much room they'll have.

The Record: Are there guidelines for how much space is needed?

Gooley: For the dance floor, a guideline is two to four square feet per person dancing, with half the people dancing at once.

For a band, you'll have to ask the band how big an area they want. Some of them jump around and might require a bigger area. A DJ usually just needs an eight-foot table.

For banquet tables, it's roughly 10 square feet per person seated. For round tables it's roughly 12 to 14 square feet per person.

The Record: How far in advance do they need to reserve a tent?

Gooley: Nobody knows their numbers until three or four weeks before, but if they're looking for something then they might not be able to find it. As far in advance as they can, reserve what they think their maximum size will be. Then three to four weeks before they can reduce it down.

The tent is a sectional because they're so big and heavy. We lay a cotton drop cloth down and put it together. You lace the ends to the middle pieces – the middle makes it longer or shorter.

The Record: How many tent options do you carry?

Gooley: There are three different styles and about 15 different sizes. There's traditional style with a straight top roof. Century tent has a pagoda-style ceiling. Sailcloth style has a queen center pole and a king center pole that are different heights. Sailcloth have natural-style poles, so that's popular.

The Record: What do couples need to know about the day of tent set up?

Gooley: Make sure the lawn is mowed be-



fore we get there. Make sure we can drive fairly close. Sometimes we have to walk a few hundred yards. With several tons of stuff, walking that far isn't good.

There should be somebody from the wedding party there. They might change their mind about where they want the dance floor

or something.

The Record: Anything else?

Gooley: Make sure you're working with a company that is insured. If something happened to the tent and you got hit in the head by a pole or something happens, somebody has to pay.



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Timothy and Jessica (Gallant) Hopkins

Slow burn

We first met in 2009 when TJ was away on leave from the Army. He was in Afghanistan and he came home for Christmas, and I had stayed for Christmas break at Lyndon State. He kept asking me out on dates and I would

push him away. I'm a little more shy.

We dated for a while in 2012. I decided I was going to move back to Rhode Island and he wanted to stay in Vermont. I didn't want to do long distance, so we broke it off.

We saw each other again at a party in 2015. We left that night together. I said, 'I think we should

date again.' He said, 'Okay.' I said, 'I'm going back to Rhode Island.' He said, 'I'll come with you.'

We've been together ever since.

Getting Dad's permission

TJ said, 'I know you're the girl I want to marry, but I have to ask your father's permission. Let me figure out the ring situation, but we're going to get married.'

My father died very unexpectedly. I liked to go to my father's grave alone. TJ knew that, so he made up a story to get me there.

He had the ring and asked me to marry him right in front of my father's grave. He said, 'I wanted to ask your father's permission and I wanted him to be here for this.'

He's the one

He's such a caring person. I never wanted children before I met him, but I saw how amazing he is with children and how bad he wanted them. I said okay, we're going to have kids. It was the best decision I ever made.

Adjusting the dress

It was literally the first dress I tried on. I tried on three dresses after that, but I went back to the first. I was a little self-conscious because I had just had my son. We ended up having to take the dress down four sizes.

I really liked the way the dress fit on me. There were things I wanted but the dress I liked didn't have, like a sweetheart neckline and a different belt. The seamstress said she could change them for me.

Choose a point person

The most stressful part of planning was that my bridesmaids kept coming at me with so many questions. I was getting overwhelmed. I told my maid of honor, 'Tell the girls if they have questions they need to be directed to you. I can't handle 20 texts at once, I need to get just one.' She really brought the girls together and made them a team.

The Details

Ages: 36 and 30

Started dating: On and off since 2012

Engaged: December 2015

Wedding date: July 29, 2017

Wedding venue: Family home in Lyndonville

Wedding budget: \$30,000

Number of people invited: 250

Number of people who attended: 220

Bar: BYOB

First dance song: "In Case You Didn't Know" by Brett Young

(Our interview was with Jessica)





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Instead of doing real flowers for the bridesmaids, we got paper flowers. They really looked like real flowers and they're great gifts for the girls. My bouquet was real, but all the girls' were paper.



Tickles in the stomach

My favorite memory is standing in the guest house with all the girls and myself and my uncle, watching the guests arrive. There was a tickle in my stomach knowing that I was going to walk down the aisle to the man I'm going to spend the rest of my life with. He cried hysterically when he saw me. I wiped the tears from his eyes and I knew this is the rest of my life, right here.

Their local vendors

Flowers – Artistic Gardens
Food – Apple Cheddar Catering
Photos – Jordan Royer
Tent rental – Scenic Tents

Advice as you plan YOUR big day

Do things slow. If you're out and you see a piece of decor you like and it's on sale, grab it! Don't wait until the last minute. Financially, doing everything at once is very overwhelming. Space it out and pay for things little by little.



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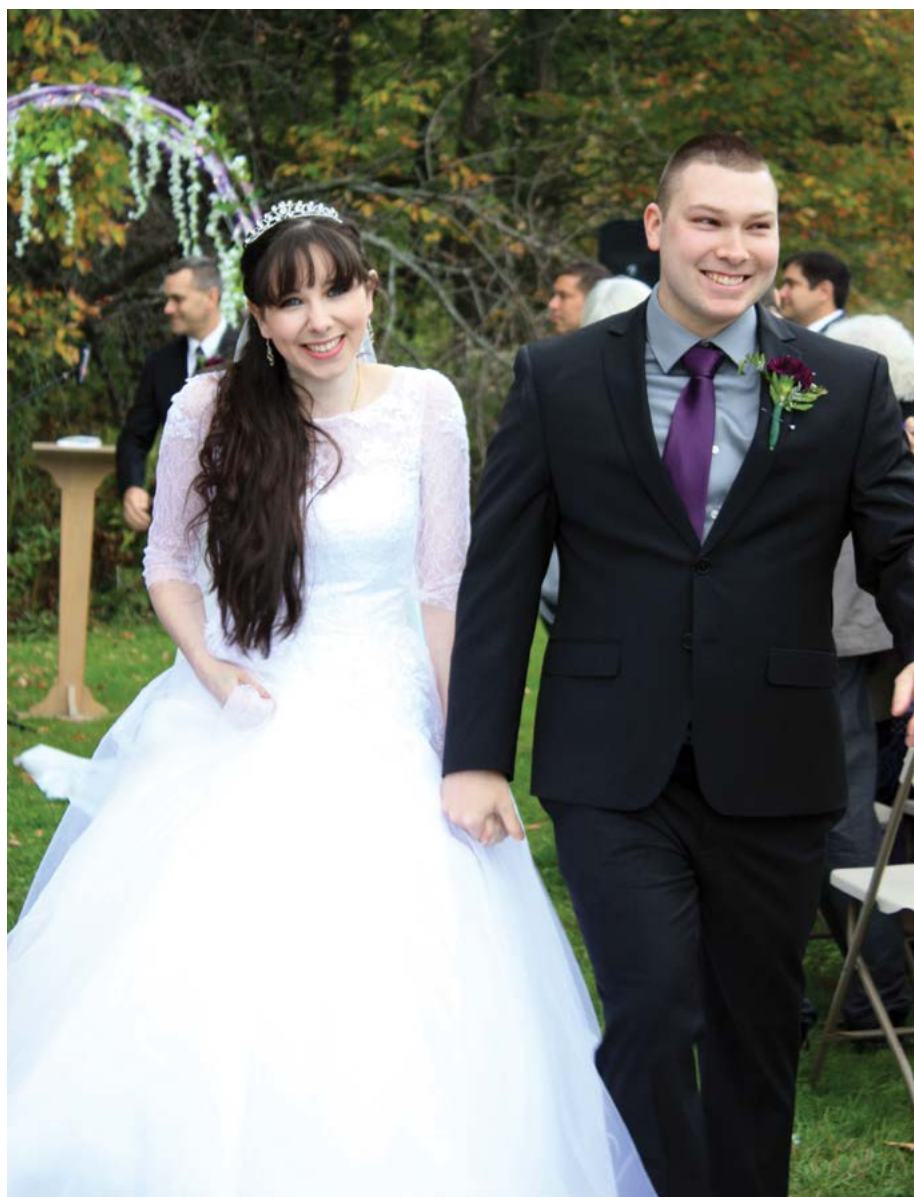
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Josh and Devin (Guertin) Mollieur

Legal love

The couple met when Devin was a high school senior and doing an internship at the St. Johnsbury Police Department, where Josh worked.

"We spent a lot of time there and became friends. We found out we had a lot in common and complimentary personalities," Josh said. "But because of the age difference, it wasn't feasible to start a relationship. It took a couple years. When Devin was out of school, it grew into a relationship."

"I knew right away, as soon as I met him, that he was the one I wanted to be with,"

Devin said. "But with the age difference, I understood his reservations of starting anything."

"I'd just gotten out of a pretty lousy relationship, so I was in the mindset of wanting to wait anyway," Josh said. "I kept trying to find something wrong with her. There's gotta be a catch! But the more and more time we spent together, I realized that what I was what I got with her."

The Details

Ages: 29 and 23

Started dating: Jan. 2014

Engaged: Jan. 2017

Wedding date: Sept. 30, 2017

Wedding venue: A family home in Walden

Wedding budget: \$3,000

Number of people invited: 150 people

Number of people who attended: 70 people

Bar: BYOB

First dance song: "When You Say Nothing At All" by Alison Krauss

(Our interview was with Josh and Devin)

Engaged ... or confused?

"I took her to Sarducci's in Montpelier, which is where I took her for our first official date. It was her birthday, so I let her believe that's all it was, a birthday dinner," Josh said. "Between dinner and dessert, I told her a bunch of things about how I felt about her and what she meant to me, and then I did the traditional thing of getting down on one knee and pulled out the ring and asked her to marry me. There was a half-second of hesitation so I was afraid she was going to say no!"

Devin explained: "I was shocked, that's all. I definitely wasn't expecting it. We were both really sick with a head cold, so when he was sitting there all silent at dinner, I thought it was because he was sick. So when he got down on one knee, it took my brain a second to process what was going on. Then I was super happy and I hugged him."

Someone to trust

After a series of failed relationships, Josh was wary to trust. But that's how Devin won him over.

"She seemed like someone I could trust. She told me that, but I thought, 'No, there has to be something.'"

But then Josh went to the police academy to go from part-timer to full-timer and it required an extended separation with very little contact.

"The way that she stuck around, she didn't run off during that separation," Josh said. "The things that she did to help take care of me and my household – she obviously wanted to stay with me forever."

Devin feels the same. "I could trust him and rely on him for things that I needed. He was always there when I needed him. That's what I look for in someone – being able to listen to me, no matter what I say."

Staying organized

Devin stayed organized by using the "The Knot Ultimate Wedding planner & organizer Binder edition."

"It's got tabs for the guests, the dress, the food. It's all in there," she said. "I had that for months and months while planning. It was with me all the time, no matter where I went just in case something occurred to me. That kept me organized, which was good because I'm not a very organized person."

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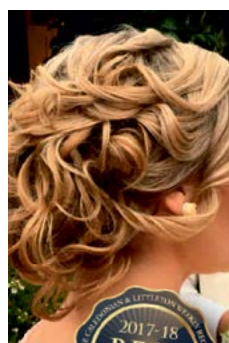
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Their local vendors

Devin and Josh were able to keep costs down by asking friends and family to help with many aspects of the wedding. Their family made the food and cake, Josh's aunt took photos, a member of the wedding party did Devin's hair and makeup, and a family member was the DJ.

Flowers – Price Chopper

Tent and rentals – Abbott Rental



Favorite moments

"The big gut punch for me was when she came out in her wedding dress," Josh said. "It was the first time I'd seen the wedding dress. Seeing her with makeup and her hair all done up and in the dress – it made the situation very real. Gosh, she was just so beautiful. I might have shed a tear or two. It was definitely the happiest day of my life."

"The father-daughter dance was prob-

ably my favorite memory," Devin said. "The whole day was wonderful. But everyone was crying, and dancing with my dad – I'm a daddy's girl and we've gone to father-daughter dances and we love to dance. It was a very bittersweet moment and it was amazing."



Advice as you plan YOUR big day

"Don't stress out over the little things," Devin said. "The day will be perfect as

long as you're marrying the one you love and the one you're meant to be with."

Josh agreed. "We have a couple friends that are engaged and planning their weddings now and they get very stressed out over minor details. I try to tell them to relax because once the day comes and everything comes together, it's going to turn out fine. What's important is being there with your loved ones and celebrating the union."

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Jason and Kristopher Di Guilio

Inviting an entire community

We used Google and social media. We put a Google form on Facebook media with a picture of the save-the-date and a link. If people wanted a save-the-date card, they could put their address in and I would print labels. It worked out really well.

It was a community-based event, rather than us agonizing over a list of folks. We heard from a ton of people via a Facebook event and then we had a pretty good estimate of how many were going. Then we let people know, this is how many places we have left.

Then the dates got away from us and invitations – well, we messed it up. You have two busy guys and things got away from us.

We asked people to RSVP via social media and used the save-the-date as their invitation and apologized profusely.

There were about 120 people there and we had slots for about 120. We did the food in a really flexible way so we could accommodate

about 140 and if 100 people showed up, they'd have lots of food. We tried to build it with some flexibility in mind.

The Details

Ages: 46 and 28

Started dating: 2015

Engaged: 2016

Wedding date: Dec. 30, 2017

Wedding venue: Camp Farnsworth in Thetford

Wedding budget: \$6,000

Number of people invited: It's complicated ...

Number of people who attended: 120

Bar: BYOB

First dance song: "A Thousand Years" Boyce Avenue acoustic cover

(Our interview was primarily with Jason)



Not love at first sight

We met through mutual friends.

I found Kris really annoying. I thought he needed to insert himself into my conversations and always needed to be present. He always had to metaphorically leap into the center of the room and say, "HERE I AM." Come to find out it was because he was trying to get my attention in a really obvious way and I didn't realize it. He said he liked me for a long time and I just didn't notice. He was incredibly patient with me.

When we started dating, I just sort of liked him, but I didn't like him like him.

The one day I was talking about clay – I'm a potter, it's one of the things I do. I was going on and on and getting really geeky about it. I apologized for going off on a tangent. And he said, "You don't have to apologize, you're excited about it." That was the moment I realized he was interested and excited because I was, not because he was getting anything out of it.

Defying logic

How did I know he was the one? I wish I could give you a really good intellectual answer. I just had to trust my gut. Logic says that he wasn't the one. We have vastly different backgrounds. We have an age difference. We might have had an economic difference in earning. But it was just deeper than that. I felt really safe with him.

A group effort

For planning I used a Google Doc and all the people in the wedding party had access to it. As people thought of things we hadn't covered, they'd put it in. That's how we separated the tasks.

It's non-traditional – two guys, so any assumptions about who does what in the wedding party, we had to make sure that we had direct conversations so that nothing got missed or assumed.

Everybody pitched in. This would not have been what it was without the wedding party and the larger community – the flowers, decorating, clean up. One of the members of the wedding party folded 1,000 paper cranes.

Clothing kerfuffle

We did really gorgeous black suits instead of tuxes.

The ladies were frustrated that we didn't make a decision about dress colors. We gave them the latitude – we picked a color scheme and then they could wear what they wanted within the scheme. But we should have made the decision a couple months before we did to give them time to get the dresses.

But that's two guys for you. Because we just go to the store and get a suit.

When the ladies in the bridal party said they needed a decision about the colors, they weren't joking and we should have taken them more seriously.

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Wedding upcharge

We went to a local florist, but when they heard gay wedding, prices went way up. We looked at the available flower places local, and tried to keep it local. But when they hear wedding, the prices go way up. So we ordered through Sam's Club and they delivered. Kris' sisters put the arrangements together. We ended up with far more flowers than we needed, but it wasn't terribly expensive.

A non-traditional wedding

I'd love to say we were just two people getting married, but there's no bride so there goes 2/3 of what people expect at wedding. There's no bouquet tossing, or garter thing. So we had to take each step and decide what we were going to do with it – whether we would keep it or discard it. I found that really fun.

Just from the walking in part – who will walk with us? Our dad can't give us away, we're our own people. And we don't have dads. We decided to walk with our moms, but they're not giving us away, they're just escorting us.

We didn't worry about the male/female balance of the wedding party, nor did we worry about making people go in couples.

We had two aisles rather than one, so we each had a person walking up at the same time.

Then we got up to the front and neither one of us are particularly religious in a traditional sense, so we forewent the priest or a religious figure. Instead we had the president of Vermont NEA, who is one of my good friends, marry us. He's a justice of the peace.

We went online and looked at ceremonies and we chose the best elements of the ceremonies we saw. We made an oath to each other to be the shield at each other's back and protect and honor and all the traditional things.

We incorporated some handfasting elements, so our hands are being tied – one know from the officiant and another knot from each of our best men. It is a way of them cementing – not approving, but holding us both accountable for our relationship in front of the community.

Love and wedding photos

We decided to not do posed photos at all. I am absolutely in support of it. There's a couple photos of the whole wedding party standing in front of the pond, but there was not that moment where we run off to do photos and everyone is at the reception waiting. The candid photos are spectacular. We didn't want prom photos. We wanted love and wedding photos.

You're not in Kansas anymore

I can't see color. Kristopher wanted me to be able to see his eyes and the color that day. So he bought me color-blind correcting glasses. In some of the early photos I'm wearing my sunglasses – just seeing his eyes and experiencing them. He often reminds me that he gave me color and changed my world.

Advice as you plan YOUR big day

I would advise them to not be afraid to identify things that are non-negotiables. It doesn't matter the effect on family or community, it's their day. Nobody gets to control that wedding except them. It doesn't matter what anybody else expects or thinks.



That doesn't mean be a diva or entitled about it. It's going to be impossible to keep track of the day once it starts, so having our best men be responsible for things that day helped. My best man kept me on a schedule and let me know when things were.

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The Details

Ages: 30 and 24
Started dating: 2014
Engaged: February 2017
Wedding date: June 2, 2018
Wedding venue: Tempson Barn, Lyndonville
Wedding budget: \$10,000
Number of people invited: 150
Number of people who attended: 150
Bar: Open bar
First dance song: "Die For You" by Thomas Rhett
(Our interview was with Hannah)



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Brandon and Hannah (Morris) Cochran

Don't lose the ring!

We'd been dating for three years. We went out to my family's hunting camp to shovel the roof off. When we were snowshoeing back out, he got down on one knee and asked me to marry him.

He said he was terrified the whole time that he was going to lose the ring while we were shoveling the roof. Or that I would see the bulge in his snowpants pocket.

I said yes immediately. It was time. Everyone was pushing him to do it. I wouldn't have waited much longer.

My little sister was about five and she made him a list of what he needed to get in a ring: it needed to be a princess cut and 1 carat. She made this handwritten list for him of what I needed for a ring. I must have been talking about it and she heard me.

Tips from an obsessive organizer

I have OCD like crazy so I'm an incredibly organized person! I planned and organized everything with no problems.

I would plan as much as you can ahead of time. Get all the big stuff out of the way at least a year in advance and chip away at the little stuff way ahead of time, so when it comes down to it you don't have much to do. The week before the wedding all you have to really do is get there and set up.

I had one big checklist and I just make lists. Keep it simple. Don't make things too complicated. Take care of the main thing you need, but don't overdo anything else. Nobody remembers the details. They remember the food and music. Don't stress yourself out over the little things – nobody remembers them.

Choosing the Tempson

We knew we wanted the Tempson Barn. It's very budget friendly and I knew I wanted an outside ceremony and a big barn with open floor plan and plenty of room for a dance floor. We could stay onsite because they have a house for rent on site. It was perfect for us.



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Day-of-wedding stress

When you're getting ready that day, getting your hair done, you're not at the venue. You're not at the venue being in control of what's going on and setting up.

I had my cousin step in and make sure the vendors knew where to put things and make sure any last minute decorations went up. I highly recommend designating someone who knows what needs to go on. If it's not you it's really hard. It's better if it's someone who has been through the whole entire planning process with you.

Choosing where to spend money

I did a lot of things myself – hand making the invitations, hand making my decorations. Keeping things as simple as possible.

We were going to bake the cupcakes ourselves, and I decided to pay somebody to do that because of the convenience of not setting it up ourselves on the day. You have to weigh out whether it's worth the time compared to worth the money and knowing what you can handle as a stress load.

I didn't spend a lot on decorations and flowers. I feel like flowers get thrown out the next day so why spend a lot of

money on them? Unless it's something that can be saved or preserved, it wasn't something I wanted to spend a lot of money on. I didn't spend oodles of money on my hair either, because you're just going to take it down at the end of the night.

Where I spent a lot of money was on the photographer because those are things you'll have forever. And food – every time I walk away from a wedding, I have comments about the food. If I walk away from a wedding hungry, there's a problem.

It was important to have good food, good photos, and good music. Those were the things that I felt couldn't be skimmed on.

Holding their liquor

We did an open bar. We have quite a crowd so it was important to me that everyone was having a good time.

We spent under \$1,000. We had certified bartenders and we provided the alcohol. We started purchasing alcohol when it went on sale up to a year before the wedding. We went when they were having rebates or sales.

It's definitely the way to go.

Advice as you plan YOUR big day

It's so important to not stress the details. I've planned weddings with friends and I think people get caught up worrying about the details. If you go into it thinking you need six candles on this table and four flowers – it's just so important to not worry about some of those things! Or hire someone to worry about those things for you.

Have a simple wedding, not a big extravagant wedding so you can just enjoy your day. I started out thinking I needed a big extra wedding and as I was planning I decided simpler was going to be so much better. You'll enjoy your wedding more if you're not so worried about every little thing.

Their local vendors

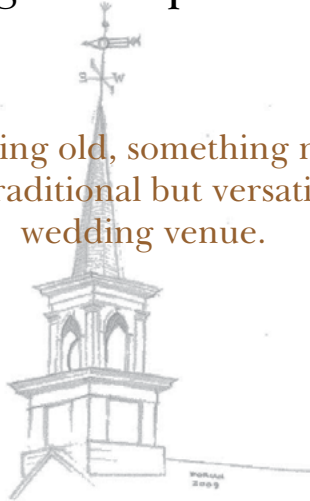
Hannah owns a local business, so it was very important to her to keep as much money as possible local while planning her wedding.

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Food – Sambels Catering
Cupcakes – Lily B's Cupcake
Photos – K&E Photography
DJ – Josh Allen



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