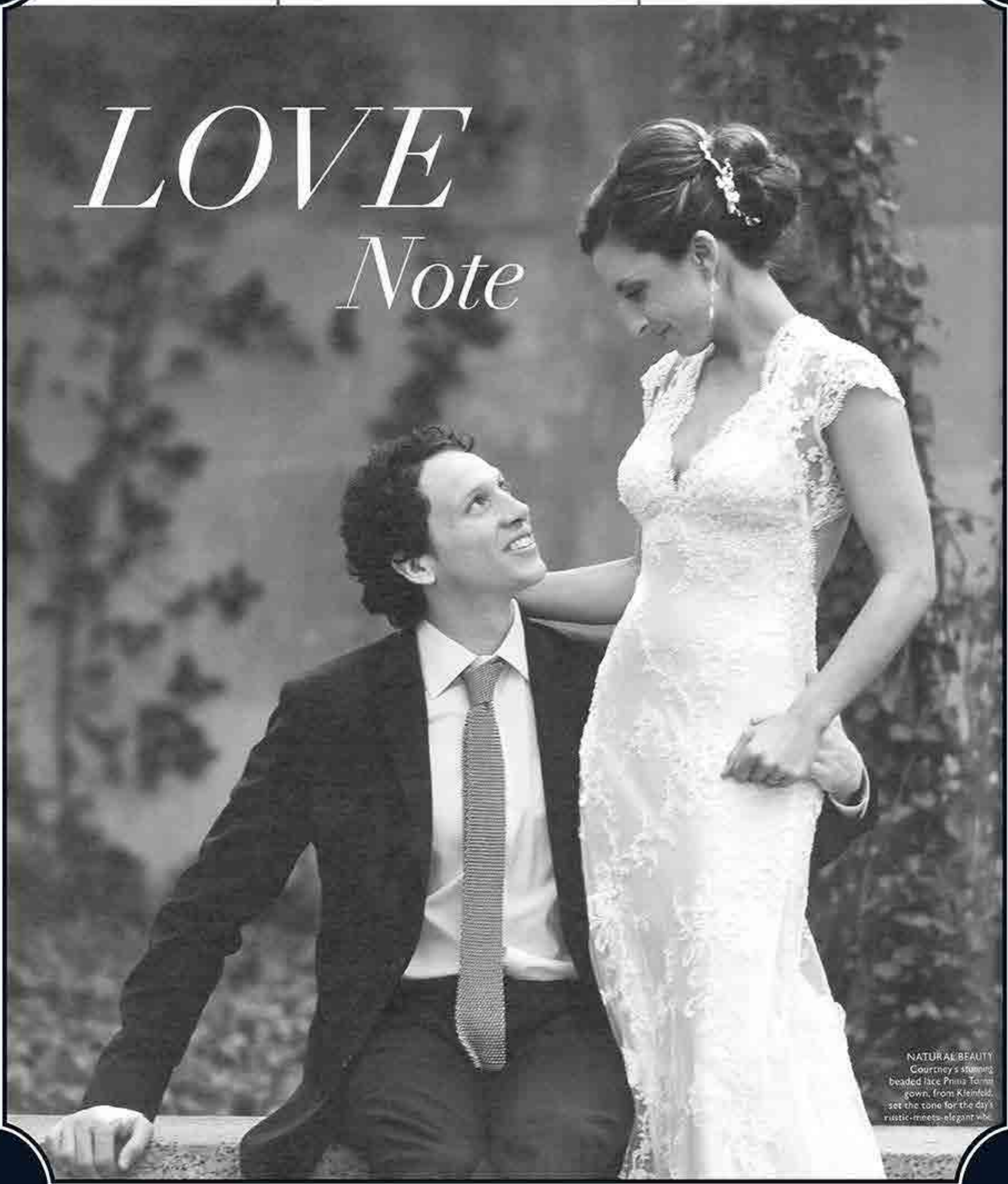


# *LOVE* *Note*



**NATURAL BEAUTY**  
Courtney's stunning  
beaded lace Priscilla Torral  
gown, from Kleinfeld,  
set the tone for the day's  
rustic-meets-elegant vibe.



An industrial event space is transformed into a whimsical wedding scene for an intimate, pretty and fun soiree.

COURTNEY ALLEN AND MATTHEW WEINSTEIN were both living and working in New York (she a grad student at Columbia University and an intern at the United Nations; he a controller at a large hedge fund), but it took a mutual friend's wedding in Washington, D.C., for their paths to cross. When they finally did, it was instant fireworks. "I found out later that he pointed me out at the wedding to a friend of ours and said, 'That's the girl I'm going to marry,'" Courtney recalls. While the engagement was something Courtney was expecting, the actual proposal was a complete surprise. After a special day together that included yoga, a trip to a museum, dinner and live music, the couple came home to an apartment that Matthew had plastered with pictures of the two of them together. On the back of each picture was a note. The final note read, "I have just one thing to ask," and she looked up to see Matthew holding the ring, a simple but sparkling diamond eternity band that would set the stage for the wedding ahead—a simple yet elegant affair.

The couple enlisted wedding planner Jesse Deckard to help them carry out their vision of an urban yet rustic event. The recently opened Morgan Manufacturing was their venue, a large industrial space with one area that Deckard set up to look like an intimate chapel, while another, he outfitted with long communal harvest tables. Mango and teal accents were mixed in with tones of blush and cream, and the tables were draped with gold sequin runners and loaded with tea candles and garden blooms. Cafe lights contributed to the overall glow and romance in the space. With the perfect light of a fall sunset streaming through the warehouse windows and illuminating Courtney's transparent train, the couple said "I do" to breathtaking effect. A seasonal menu by Food for Thought followed, along with dancing late into the night. The evening was by all accounts magical and the perfect note to kick off a lifetime of happiness. ■

### What We Learned

*"Take a little private time for you and your spouse after the ceremony. Your wedding day goes by so fast, [so] it's a good way to help you slow down. Jesse had our favorite drinks waiting for us in a private room (Brooklyn Lager for him, Champagne for her) and some appetizers for us to eat. It was a special moment for just the two of us," says Courtney.*



Clockwise from top: Jesse Deckard of Bliss Weddings & Events warmed up the industrial space with cafe lights, plus a mix of cream, mango and teal accents, and tables filled with candles and centerpieces of varying heights; the bride's bouquet fit the elegant part of the couple's theme with its lush blooms and dusty green succulents; the ruffled two-tier vanilla cake, with raspberry filling and organic flowers, was made by the bride's cousin; centerpieces were a mix of different flowers in Mason jars; place settings with the menu in the couple's main colors—turquoise and gold—and succulents perfectly convey the elegant yet rustic theme.

### The List

**Venue** Morgan Manufacturing, 401morganmfg.com

**Planner** Jesse Deckard, Bliss Weddings & Events, blissweddingsandevents.com

**Bride's Gown** Pnina Tornai, at Kleinfeld, kleinfeldbridal.com

**Flowers** HMR Designs, hmrdesigns.com

**Hair & Makeup** Ramsay Marston, ramsaymarstonhair.com; Joshua Graham, Façade Makeup Artistry, facademua.com

**Invitations** Cheree Berry Paper, chereeberrypaper.com

**Catering** Food for Thought, fftchicago.com

**Music** Gentlemen of Leisure Band, gentlemenofleisureband.com;

**DJ** Robert Nicpon, robertjnicpon.com

**Linen** BBJ, bbjlinen.com



Traditional elements make the cut, but the modern touches are the MVP's for this memorable wedding.

CLASSIC QUESTION: "Where'd you two meet?" Classic answer: "In a bar." But it's not often that a college night out with friends while home for the holidays spurs a lifelong romance—especially when the couple in question first met because each was pursuing a friend of the other. However, all it took was a little bit of time and a fateful swap, and the two were head over heels—a fact easily proven by Ashley's long-distance phone records while she studied abroad in Spain. "To the dismay of my parents," she says, "we were talking all the time, and my phone bills were really high."

It turns out it was money well spent. Ashley, now a sports marketing consultant, graduated and moved back to Chicago, where the relationship took off for the next two years. Aware of her love of the *Top Chef* TV show, Greg, who works as a TV ad-sales exec, surprised his beloved with a themed cruise for her birthday. Before sailing, the couple had a few nights at Miami's SLS Hotel, where he popped the question.

His perfect planning was almost spoiled by the hotel's snafu of delivering the roses, card and Champagne a day early, but Greg leapt in front of Ashley "like a damn ninja," grabbed it all and told her it was a surprise. The next day, he topped everything with his romantic proposal, and when she saw him on one knee with ring in hand, Ashley was happily shocked.

A year and a half later, under a traditional Jewish chuppah, they exchanged vows. An elegant chandelier and vine tiebacks added a contemporary touch, and oversized floral planters created an intimate space for the ceremony at The Ritz-Carlton Chicago. "My dad always dreamed of walking me down the aisle to 'Here Comes the Bride,' so

# CLASSIC

## With a Twist

A VINEYER MAKER  
Greg Brantman couldn't  
take his eyes off his  
beautiful bride, who  
stunned in Vera Wang's  
Katharine gown.





### What We've Learned

*"Don't be scared to voice your opinion but be sensitive to your parents and in-law's requests. Try to remember that they have waited for this moment for a long time, too," says Ashley.*

we compromised," Ashley explains, with a few bars of the time-honored tune followed by "A Thousand Years" by Christina Perri.

Day-of coordinator Nicki Eisenstein of BCR Events describes the reception as "very lush and beautiful." Instead of a fall color scheme for their October nuptials, they added a springtime lightheartedness with centerpieces of roses in assorted ivory, peach and blush hues, and lots of candles.

The couple's first dance, to a modern take on Elvis' "Can't Help Falling in Love," kicked off the fun. "We danced together all night with all our friends around us," Ashley says. Souvenir "Ashley and Greg" sunglasses upped the celebratory mood, which carried on to an afterparty in the hotel's art deco-style bar, Deca—a perfect reflection of the evening's classic yet modern union. ■



Clockwise from top left: Bejeweled place cards featured calligraphy by Karen Garber; tables were decked out with lots of candles and lush floral arrangements in peach and cream; the bride's mom, Terrie Neiman, did all of the planning for the wedding and worked with HMR Designs on the decor scheme that transformed The Ritz-Carlton Chicago for the ceremony; a stunning view of the aisle; Ashley's "most perfect" engagement ring and the wedding bands; the bridesmaids all wore stunning beaded gowns by Adrianna Papell from Bella Bridesmaids.

## The List

**Venue** The Ritz-Carlton Chicago,

[fourseasons.com](http://fourseasons.com)

**Day-of Planner** Nicki Eisenstein,

BCR Events, [bcrevents.com](http://bcrevents.com)

**Bride's Gown** Vera Wang Chicago,

[verawang.com](http://verawang.com)

**Flowers** HMR Designs,

[hmrdesigns.com](http://hmrdesigns.com)

**Bridesmaid Gowns** Adrianna Papell,

[bellabridesmaids.com](http://bellabridesmaids.com)

**Catering** The Ritz-Carlton Chicago

**Cake** Alliance Bakery,

[alliance-bakery.com](http://alliance-bakery.com)

**Hair & Makeup** Courtney Tippin

and Emily Bailey at Salon Soca,

[salonsoca.com](http://salonsoca.com); Kelly La Banco,

[kellylabanco.com](http://kellylabanco.com)

**Music** The Ken Arlen Orchestra,

[arlenmusic.com](http://arlenmusic.com); Nicholas

Barron and Cheryl Wilson,

[nicholasbarron.com](http://nicholasbarron.com)

**Videography** Jeff Goldstein,

Xpress Video Productions,

[xpressvideoproductions.com](http://xpressvideoproductions.com)





# SAMANTHA MAXFIELD & MATTHEW LERNER

October 18, 2014

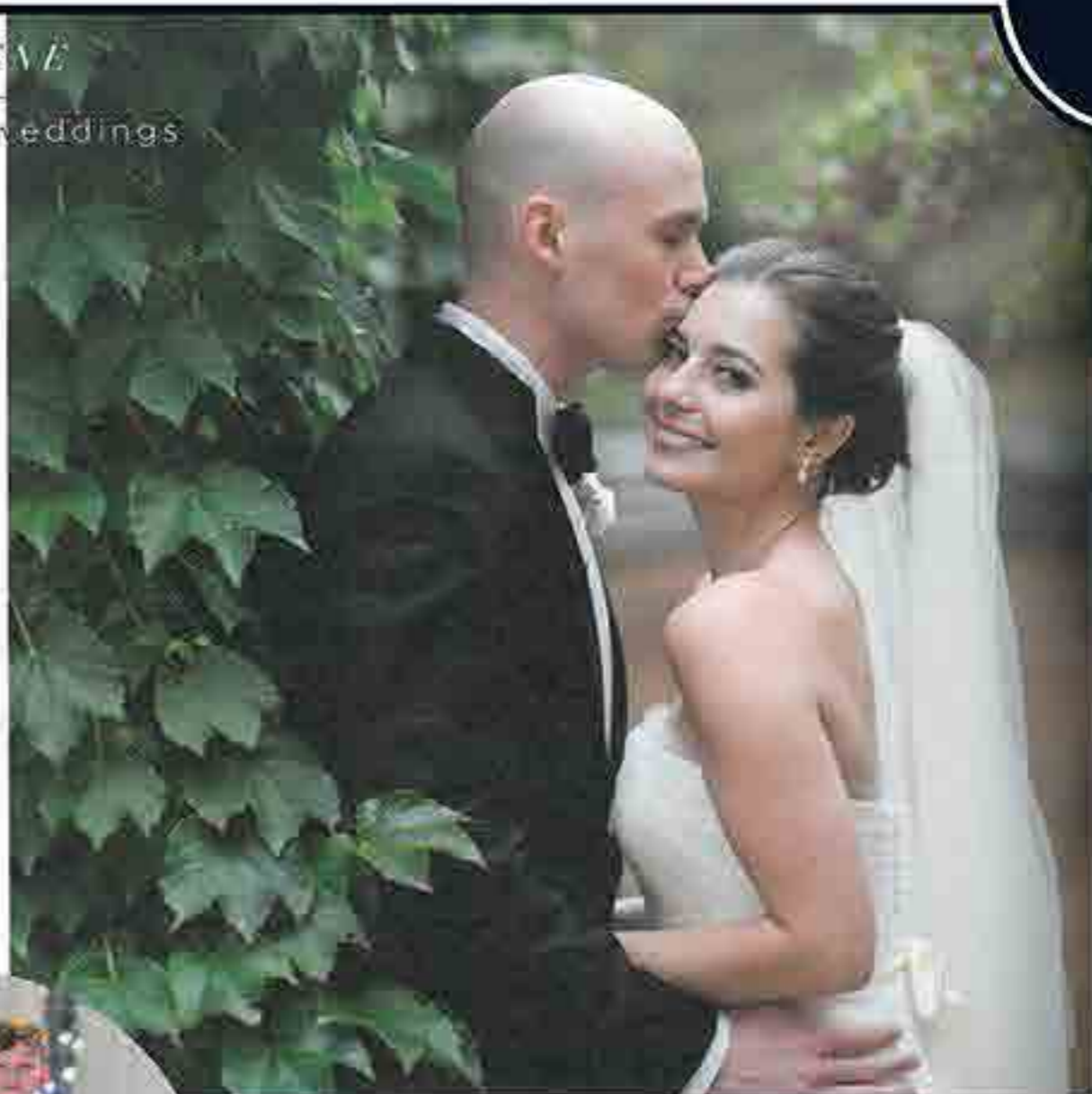
Café Galileo's at Adler Planetarium

Photography by Jeremy Bustos, Studio This Is

**THE COUPLE** When Matthew received an email from a friend with Samantha's number under the subject line "Your Future Wife," he acted fast. A first date turned into a yearlong relationship, and on the day they closed on their first home together, Matthew popped the question with an oval diamond solitaire ring. As email fate would have it, Samantha said yes.

**THE DETAILS** Matthew's uncle officiated the wedding, while painter Steven Stoll captured the couple's first dance in real time on canvas. They ditched the traditional guest book in favor of postcard messages to be sent throughout their first year of marriage.

**THE PARTY** Wedding planner Kara Superfine and the team at HMR Designs used blush, gold and soft ivory to transform the otherwise stark architectural space into a scene of sophisticated warmth. Against the backdrop of Lake Michigan and the sparkling city skyline, gold and crystal chandeliers illuminated high ceilings while candles set tabletops aglow. When things heated up on the dance floor, guests cooled down with mini ice cream cones—adding a sense of play to what Samantha describes as, "the most magical day ever." The feeling continued at their honeymoon to an overwater bungalow at the St. Regis Bora Bora. —LO



Clockwise from above: Samantha and Matthew never could have guessed that they'd find "the one" in their email inbox; Rachel Silverberg of HMR Designs transformed the raw glass-enclosed Café Galileo's into a warm glowing venue; an adorable suspender-clad sign-bearer announced the bride's arrival.



## What We Learned

"Have a rough concept of what you want your wedding to look and feel like, but don't have rigid expectations," says Sam. "We had open minds to appreciate the advice of our vendors, but enough of a guiding concept to allow us to be decisive."



From far left: The couple's three-tier textured buttercream cake was accented with blush garden roses and pink ranunculus; HMR Designs created an assemblage of roses and dusty miller foliage to line the aisle and tables.

### WEDDING RESOURCES

Planner Kara Superfine Events,  
theheartoftheoccasion.com  
Flowers & Decor Rachel  
Silverberg, HMR Designs

hmrdesigns.com  
Bride's Gown Vera Wang  
Chicago, verawang.com  
Groom's Tuxedo Armani,  
Nordstrom, nordstrom.com

Rings Steven's Jewelers Inc.,  
Jewelry Jenna Plonka,  
Clementine Ink + Paper,  
clementineink.com  
Catering Food for Thought,

foodforthought-chicago.com  
Cake Cake, cake-chicago.com  
Entertainment BBJ, bbjfin.com  
Music Bocca Kaufman Orchestra,  
beccakaufmanorchestra.com



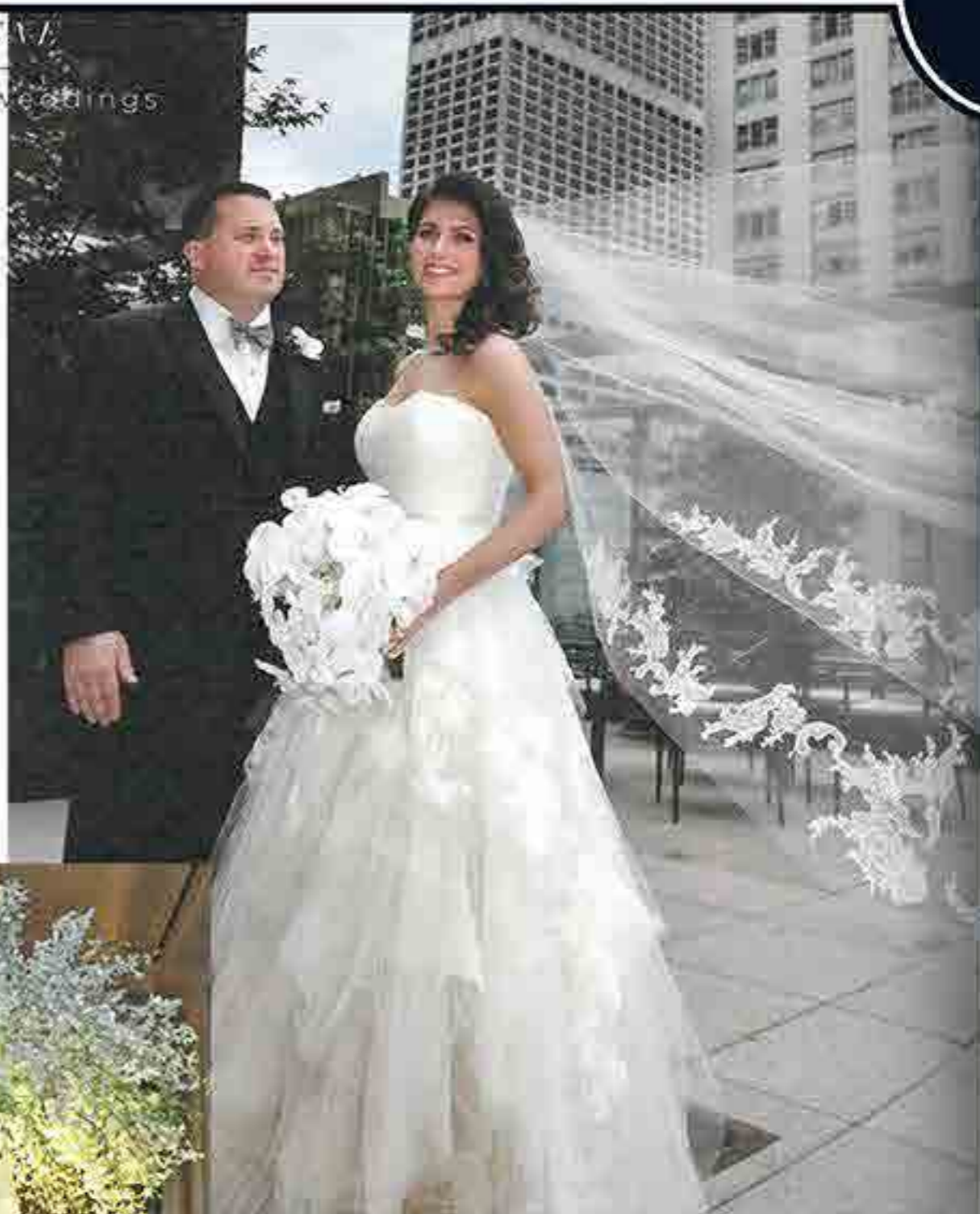
# MEGAN ROGERS & BRIAN OGAN

June 31, 2014  
The Peninsula Chicago  
Photography by KingenSmith

**THE COUPLE** While working at a hospital in Champaign, Ill., Megan and physician Brian hit it off at a department outing to see Journey in concert, and they haven't stopped believing in love ever since. "We had begun planning for our wedding without actually being engaged! We knew we would always be together," Megan says. After a long courtship, Brian proposed to Megan following a high-end evening of romance at Lincoln Park's L20.

**THE DETAILS** Family and friends traveled from all over the country to celebrate the couple at The Peninsula Chicago for an interfaith Christian and Jewish ceremony to honor both families. The dreamy scene was set with shades of ivory, soft pink and gold accents.

**THE PARTY** Wedding consultant Hope Weis worked with John Hensel of HMR Designs to create a setting of utmost glamour: Tall crystal vases displayed billowing arrangements of white and cream roses, hydrangeas and orchids surrounded by neoclassic silver candlesticks. In lieu of a cake, Brian and Megan worked with The Peninsula staff to create a dessert table filled with meringues, macarons and creme brulees for guests to nosh on while taking a break from the dance floor. —SP



## What We Learned

"No matter how stressful things may be, enjoy every moment. It's your time to shine!" Megan says.

Clockwise from top: Brian with Megan, dressed in a stunning strapless Vera Wang gown, posed in true Windy City fashion; the couple decided on a sweets table featuring miniature desserts in place of a traditional cake; guests arrived to find their place cards nestled below this billowing arrangement.

From above: HMR Designs assembled towering 40-inch-tall crystal vases of white blooms; the couple's wedding bands rest on a scalloped and engraved invitation created by Hannah Handmade.



### WEDDING RESOURCES

Photographer: KingenSmith,  
kingensmith.com

Planner: Hope Weis,  
hopeweisconsulting.com

Invitations: Hannah Handmade,  
hannah-handmade.com

Bride's Gown: Vera Wang Chicago,  
verawang.com

Hair & Makeup: Renee Feldman,  
reneefeldman.com; Shannon O'Brien,  
shannonobrienmua.com

Groom's Tuxedo: J. Hilburn by  
Caroline Shaw

Music: Ken Arlen Orchestra, arlenmusic.com

Flowers & Decor: HMR Designs,  
hmrdesigns.com

Videographer: I Do Films, idofilms.com