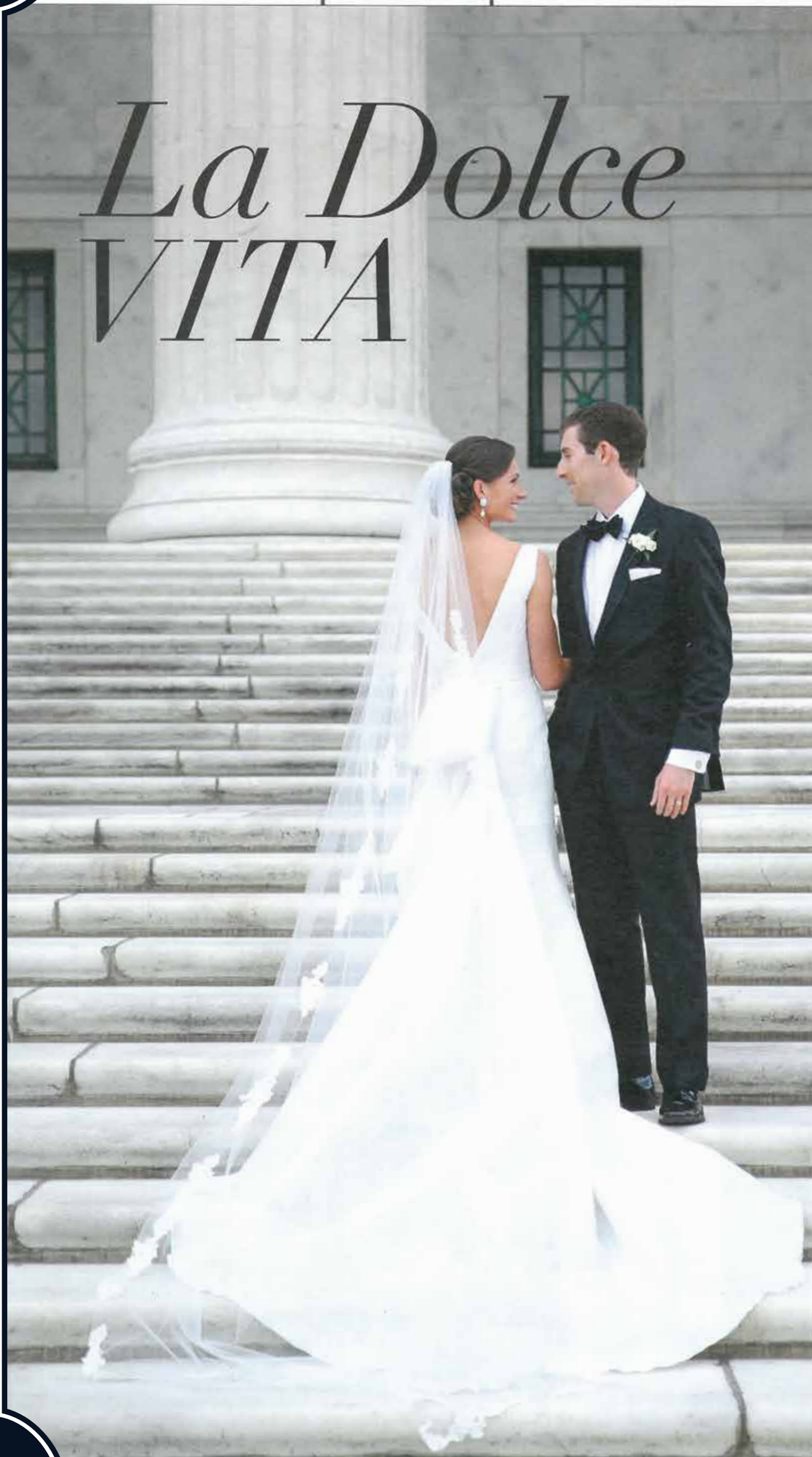


La Dolce VITA



The Field Museum sets the stage for an intimate wedding, celebrating one couple's love for each other and the Italian heritage of two families.

KACEY SISCA AND DAN MARTINO crashed a few weddings before perfecting their own. With permission, they “put on cocktail clothes and sat in the back for 15 minutes,” says Kacey, who chose her band, The Party Faithful, that way. Their guerilla-style research paid off, as they knew which experts to call when it was their turn. After a ceremony at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, guests took over the Field Museum, which, with the help of wedding planner Chrissy Magliano of Big City Bride, was transformed into a spectacular ballroom with an ivory, blush pink and gold theme. It was a truly Italian affair that honored tradition, as well as Kacey's grandmother, who had recently passed away. Two of the old, new, borrowed and blue items were hers—a blue opal ring and an old handkerchief embroidered with her initials. Surrounded by the beauty of Lake Michigan, the venue brought together two gregarious Italian Catholic families and gave them a signature Chicago experience. Each place setting had baguettes with little trays of olive oil, butter and Parmesan. Traditional Italian almond cookies and lemon knots sat atop the tables, complemented by rich espresso. White paper



napkins were inscribed with the words “Dan Martino,” with phone digits scrawled beneath them: a nod to the couple’s introduction at a New York patio bar. Their band choice proved to be valuable, as they played all night—guests even danced between courses. While rain pattered the rooftop and lightning lit up the sky, Frank Sinatra’s “Strangers in the Night” made for a poetic first dance. Capping the union off, the pair honeymooned in Sicily—just as Kacey’s grandmother and grandfather had done so many years before. ●

“ *What We Learned*
“The train of my dress was one that could come on and off easily and it came off in the church! Luckily my maid of honor was close by and fixed it on the spot but I would suggest to practice walking in your dress ahead of time,” says Kacey.

Clockwise from top right: The bride’s pretty Kate Spade shoes and her grandmother’s pearl-drop earrings; to add coziness and more seating to the giant Field Museum space, the team created vignettes for lounging with contemporary furniture from HMR Designs; Kacey looked breathtaking in a sleek Pronovias gown and lace applique veil; the bridesmaids’ blush gowns by Joanna August carried on the blush theme, while the groomsmen wore suits by Calvin Klein; the room was filled with towering centerpieces of hydrangeas, roses, peonies, ranunculus, apple-blossom stocks and Cymbidium orchid blossoms in shades of ivory and blush.

The List

Venue The Field Museum, fieldmuseum.org

Planner Chrissy Magliano, Big City Bride, bigcitybride.com

Flowers & Decor HMR Designs, hmrdesigns.com

Bride’s Gown Pronovias, Mira Couture, miracouture.com

Bridesmaids’ Dresses Joanna August, Bella Bridesmaids, bellabridesmaids.com

Groom’s Tux Custom, Tom James, tomjames.com

Invites Sarah Drake Design, sarahdrakedesign.com

Catering Food for Thought, fftchicago.com

Cake Alliance Bakery, alliance-bakery.com

Music The Party Faithful, greatlifemusic.com

Videographer Wholehearted Wedding Film Co., wearewholehearted.com

Linens BBJ Linen, bbjlinen.com; La Tavola, latavolalinen.com

Furniture Hall’s Rental, hallsrental.com

Hair & Makeup Hair: Magnificent Brides, magnificentbrides.com; Makeup: Juli Valdez



CHICAGO WEDDING

Lauren & John

JULY 11, 2015

Hotel **SWEET**



Two free-spirited lovebirds had their dream wedding at the Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago.

WHEN PLANNER Frank Andonoplas of Frank Event Design met with a beautiful redheaded bride and her dashing beau, two words came to mind: eclectic whimsy. Andonoplas could instantly sense that there was nothing stuffy or traditional about Lauren Brashears and John Rogalski, who met through mutual friends and made an instant impression on each other.

"She had on bright red lipstick, and for days after, all I could think about were these floating red lips," says John. Some three years later, he kissed his bride at a deliciously out-of-the-box wedding at Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago in July.

At the end of the ceremony, a recessional inspired by the bride's favorite Christmas film, *Love Actually*, saw the couple dancing down the aisle to a surprise performance of the Beatles' "All You Need Is Love." And the reception—which had decor inspired by watercolors—had more surprises in store.

In lieu of escort cards, guests found their table numbers at an acrylic seating chart decked with floating flowers. After the reception, some attendees—"the party animals," says Lauren—moved to an afterparty in a smaller ballroom. She changed into an Alice + Olivia pantsuit to dance to DJ Michael O'dea. There were late-night snacks, roulette and blackjack tables, and, not surprisingly, the party went on until the wee hours of the morning.

When guests finally went to sleep that night, they hung cheeky signs on their hotel-room doors: "Do Not Disturb: We Partied too Hard at the Brashears/Rogalski Wedding." The couple will check in to more hotels later this winter, when they take their honeymoon in Thailand and Hong Kong. ■

“ *What We Learned*
"John and I made a promise to each other that we wouldn't drink until the reception on our wedding day—and boy, were we happy we did that," Lauren says. "We were both able to stay in the moment and be completely present during the most important part of our day, the ceremony."



Clockwise from top: The bride was dressed in Anne Barge; Frank Andonoplas enlisted HMR Designs to help create a wow-worthy setting filled with lavender orchids, calla lilies, hydrangeas and ranunculus; Lauren hired wedding dresser Caroline Shaw for the day to help with her breathtaking Anne Barge gown; inspired by watercolor paintings, the tables shimmered with pale shades of violet amid mirrored tabletops and crystal; the bride's solitaire cushion-cut engagement ring rests atop a lavender macaron—a sweet favor for the wedding guests.

The List

Venue Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago, trumphetelcollection.com

Planner Frank Andonoplas, frankeventdesign.com

Flowers & Decor HMR Designs, hmrdesigns.com

Bride's Gown Anne Barge, Belle Vie Bridal Couture, belleviebridalcouture.com

Bridesmaids' Dresses Annabelle dress from Jenny Yoo, jennyyoo.com

Groom's Tux Nicholas Joseph Custom Tailors, customsuitsyou.com

Invites Pioneer Announcements, Frank Event Design, frankeventdesign.com

Cake Cake Sweet Food Chicago, cake-chicago.com

Music Ceremony & Reception: Al Sofia Music, alsofia.com; Afterparty: DJ Michael O'Dea, O'Dea Entertainment, odeaentertainment.com

Videographer Larry Wayne, Evolution Films, larrywayneevolutionvideo.com



At Long **LAST**

A Chicago couple finally says “I do” with a **grand wedding** nearly **two decades** in the making.

SPARKS FLEW when Todd Alley and Will Bercik were first introduced by a mutual friend and co-worker at the Atlanta-based health care technology company where they both worked in the mid-1990s. And as the pair watched the marriage equality debate play out across the country over the course of their 19-year relationship, they decided to move to Chicago with the idea that Illinois—Will’s home state—would pass the law long before Georgia ever would.

When it did, Will quickly moved to plan a dramatic proposal during a trip to Las Vegas, where he reserved a stretch limo and a perfect dinner table in front of the Bellagio Hotel’s famous dancing fountains. Their server nearly let the cat out of the bag, but Todd remained clueless until Will pulled two ring boxes out of his pocket. “It was a beautiful time with much laughter and many tears,” says Todd.

Sixteen months later, the couple were married at the Trump International Hotel & Tower with a spectacular reception with an ivory-and-silver theme. “The first words that come to my mind are ‘romantic opulence,’ says planner Michelle Speight. “Their home looks like a magazine feature, so the inspiration for their wedding came from their passion for decor,” she adds. Several custom design elements were brought in, such as the sensational step-and-repeat floral wall by HMR Designs that featured their monogram in silver; custom bars; opulent centerpieces; and custom lampshades that flanked the head table and bars. “When you get to know Will and Todd, you quickly realize their



love for each other and that they love to share each experience with their family and friends,” Speight explains. Their three dogs served as flower girls and ring bearer, complete with designer dresses and a tux. Will and Todd wrote their own vows, and the ceremony included a reading by their goddaughter and niece, who had written a college essay about the experience of having an uncle who is gay. Some of Todd’s family from Atlanta weren’t able to make the trip, so they were called in on Skype before the wedding began and during the ceremony. All of the guests who attended were seated in the round. “It was the best way to represent the circle of support we’ve been surrounded by on our journey to our wedding day,” says Will. ■

“ *What We Learned*
“Hire a wedding coordinator you connect with and who can see and feel the vision of what you’re trying to achieve. And once you’ve picked vendors who fit your vision, trust them to do what they do best,” says the couple.

Clockwise from top right: The table settings showcased the evening’s palette of silver, ivory and gray with lush florals and pale-pink accents; Will and Todd both wore modern succulent boutonnieres; guests enjoyed a four-tiered elegant cake by Cake Sweet Food Chicago; the grooms pose with their attendants, dressed in stunning strapless gowns by Janique and smart suits by Michael Kors; Rishi Patel of HMR Designs transformed the Trump International Hotel & Tower into a glowing wonderland filled with flickering candles and tall centerpieces of hydrangeas, vendela roses, Tibet roses, quicksand roses, Majolica spray roses, Phalaenopsis orchids, Dendrobium orchids and chrysanthemums.

The List

Venue Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago, trumphotelcollection.com

Planner Michelle Speight, personalizedeventsbymichelle.com
Flowers HMR Designs, hmrdesigns.com

Grooms’ Suits Will: Tom Ford, tomford.com; Todd: Tom Ford, neimanmarcus.com

Bridesmaids’ Gowns Janique, nicolethomasoccasions.com

Groomsmen’s Suits Michael Kors, Savvi Formalwear,

savviformalwear.com

Invites Magnificent Milestones, magnificentmilestones.com

Cake Cake Sweet Food Chicago, cake-chicago.com

Music Reception: Nadia Christine Duggin; DJ: Okyne Medialab, okynemedialab.com

Furniture Tablescapes, tablescapes.com

Linens BBJ Linen, bbjlinen.com

Hair & Makeup Rosemary Monica, rosemarymonica.com

