





FULL CIRCLE

KELLY CLERY & JUSTIN FINKELMAN

September 1, 2018 Chicago, Illinois | Photographed by Carasco Photography

As Kelly Clery walked into the ice skating rink where she had spent most of her childhood, she looked around for her former figure skating coach who she was supposed to be meeting. As Kelly made her way over to the ice, she realized it was pitch black. "All you could see were candles lit up around the entire rink," she describes. "My favorite song, 'I'll Be' by Edwin McCain, was blasting over the loudspeakers... it took

a second to process what was going on, but I looked to the center of the rink and saw Justin standing on a red carpet with rose petals and candles surrounding him." Her boyfriend of three years had also arranged for their family and friends to be present, sitting in the stands, and cheering loudly as he bent to one knee. "It was the most magical proposal, and I was completely shocked," affirms the bride-to-be.

RESOURCES

Beauty

Amanda Diedrich for Blohaute - hair
Elise Brill for Leesi B. - makeup

Bridal Gown
Ines Di Santo

Bridal Salon
Ultimate Bride

Bridal Stylist
The Wedding Dresser

Bridesmaid Gowns
Joanna August

Catering
Limelight Catering

Consulting
Kara Superfine Events

Entertainment
The Gold Coast All Stars

Favors
Stan's Donuts

Floral Design
HMR Designs

Headpiece
BHLDN

Invitations/Paper Goods
Clementine Ink + Paper

Jewelry
Dana Rebecca; Joel Singer Jewelry
Manly Bands

Lighting Design
FROST Chicago; HMR Designs

Live Event Painter
Brush & Heart

Photography
Carasco Photography

Rentals/Linens
BBJ Linen; Nüage Designs
Tablescapes Ltd.

Shoes
Christian Louboutin

Signage
Neon Design

Veil
Debra Shirley Millinery

Venue
Bridgeport Art Center

Videography
Character D Films



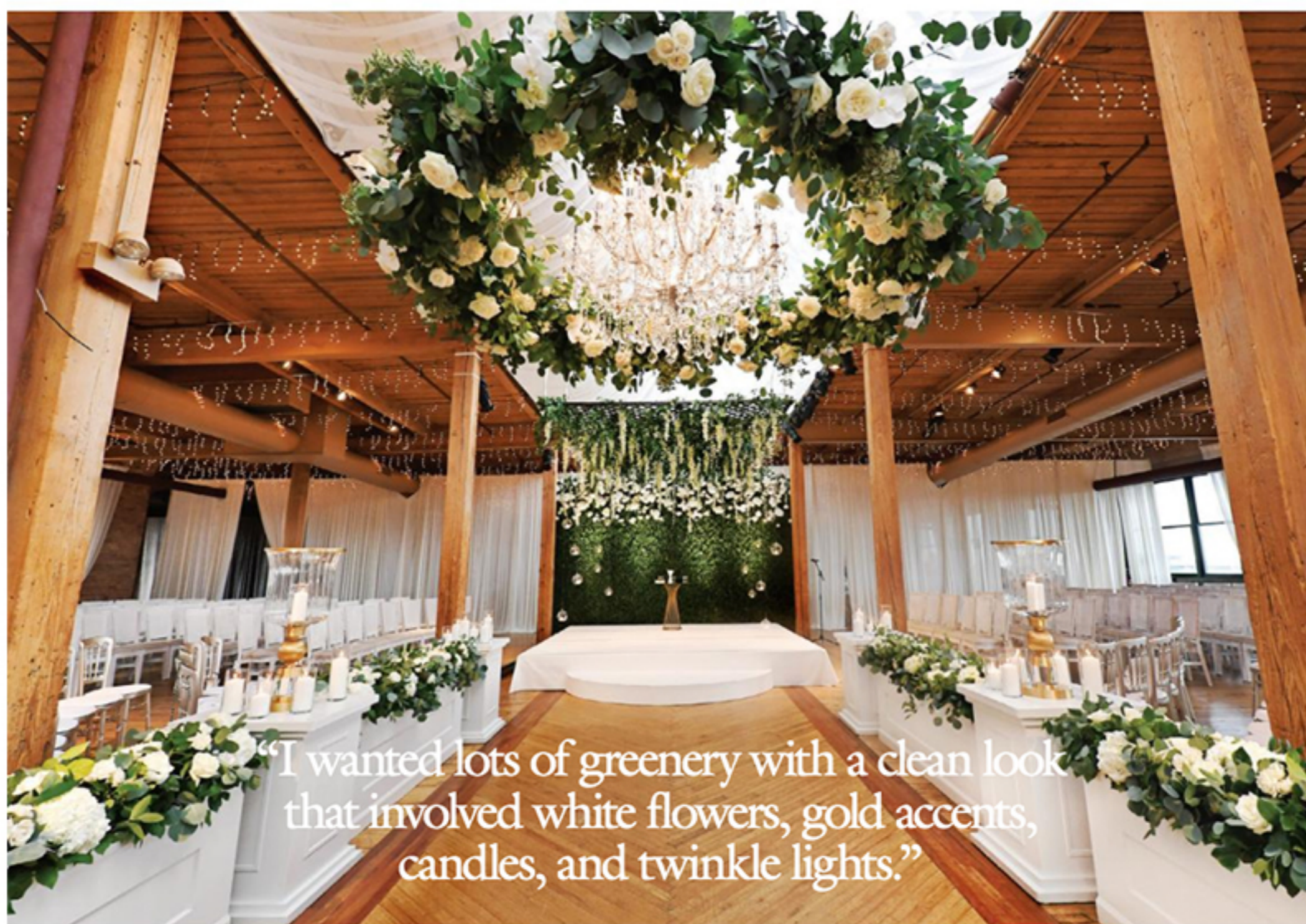


The newly engaged couple knew they wanted a celebration that incorporated rustic elements, and thus searched for a venue that fit within their desired aesthetic. Kelly and Justin settled on a local art center, which provided a lovely blank canvas. The location also highlighted design details made of wood and brick, complementing the rustic-chic vibe that the bride sought. "I wanted lots of greenery with a clean look that involved white flowers, gold accents, candles, and twinkle lights," she illustrates.

A monochromatic seating area was arranged for the ceremony,

decorated with understated garlands of greenery, vanilla blooms, and candles. A sparkling chandelier bedecked with a wreath of blossoms was suspended over the aisle, and a romantic chuppah showcased glass-sphere votive candles, verdure, and cascading wisteria. The bride looked stunning in a strapless mermaid gown with layers of chiffon at the skirt. She carried a soft bouquet of garden roses, lisianthus, ranunculuses, freesias, phalaenopsis orchids, and touches of green foliage. The stems were gathered and bound in antique ivory satin, leaving the ends exposed.





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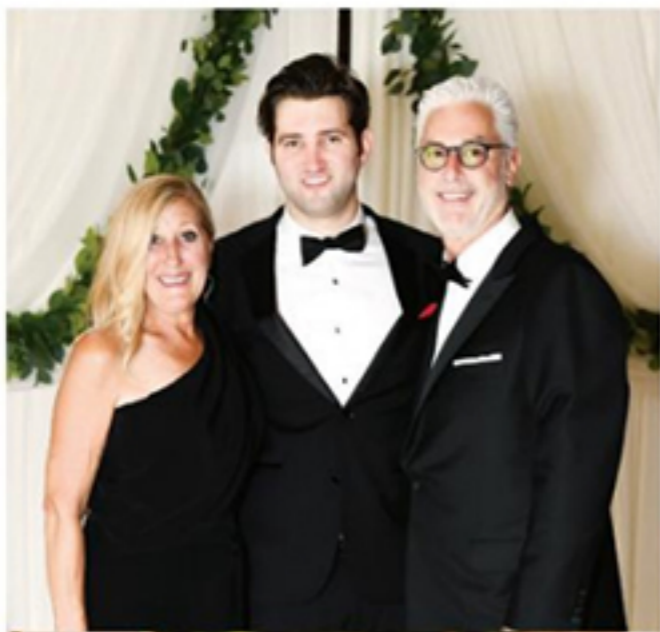
Kelly's father obliged the couple's wishes and officiated the nuptials. "Having my dad marry me and Justin was the best decision we made, as it was an extremely personal ceremony," expresses Kelly, noting they also had a rabbi incorporate Jewish elements into the ceremony to honor Justin's religion. "Standing up under the chuppah with Justin and my dad was a surreal experience... you could feel the love in the room."

The rustic-chic ambience continued into the reception space. Twinkle lights were affixed across the entire ceiling to create the appearance of a star-filled night. "They were absolutely amazing!" says the bride, who had also arranged for the creation of a lighted neon sign that read: The Finkelmans - EST. 2018 -. "We thought it'd be fun for people to take pictures in front of the sign."

Tables were decorated with alternating sets of gorgeously crafted centerpieces, including a variety of textures and layers: glass vases with floral arrangements of roses, hydrangeas, lisianthus, phalaenopsis orchids, and foliage; glass hurricanes with gold-leaf etching, crystal globe candlesticks, ribbed votive candles, and antique bullion candlesticks. A seated four-course meal was served to guests, and later a full dessert bar in lieu of traditional wedding cake.

After the hora, the couple and their loved ones danced the remainder of the night to songs performed by The Gold Coast All Stars. "They were so good!" Justin raves. As for the bride: "I changed into my pajamas and really let loose. The entire crowd created a circle around me and Justin dancing," remembers Kelly, who reveals she wouldn't change a thing about the big day - except maybe worry a little less about the details.







It's the important memories Kelly wants to keep reliving in her head. First: getting into her bridal gown with her mom's assistance. "She is my best friend and support system, so having her help me into my dream dress was special." Second: having her father involved in the wedding. "My dad and I are incredibly close. He was diagnosed with leukemia at the beginning of the year, so having him present and healthy was a terrific feeling." Last: the vow exchange. "Our handwritten words read aloud were so unique and personal."

Justin echoes her sentiments, "Realize that the day will be about the moments and the people, rather than the food and the décor." He confirms that what others say is true – the day goes by much too fast – and emphasizes: "Help out your future wife where you can, but also just enjoy the ride."
NICOLE PALACIOS