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Modern Luxury Regional Sales Offices:

ASPEN

503 East Hyman Ave., Suite D
Aspen, CO 81611
970.300.3071
Contact: Alan Klein

ATLANTA

3280 Peachtree Road, NE, Ste. 2300
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CHICAGO

33 W. Monroe St., Suite 2100
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Contact: Michael Elliott

WASHINGTON, DC

4400 Jenifer Street NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20015
202.408.5665
Contact: Peter Abraham



Audit Bureau of Circulations
Member

To subscribe: modernluxury.com

To contact the editor: amills@modernluxury.com

OUR OFFICES ARE LOCATED AT: 33 W. MONROE ST., STE. 2100 CHICAGO, IL 60603

PHONE: 312.274.2500 | FAX: 312.274.2501 |

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SOMETHING NEW

WRAP PARTY
Bridesmaids-to-be are sure to love the soft mix-and-match dress trend. Bella Bridesmaids is a one-stop shop for these latest designer collections that embody the style of the moment.

SWEET REPEAT

This new line of bridesmaid dresses will dazzle beyond the wedding day.

"We have fashion-forward clients looking for bridesmaid dresses that translate into wearable pieces after the wedding," says co-owner of Bella Bridesmaids Erin Wolf. "The **MAID** collection, by celebrity wedding planner **Yifat Oren for Rory Beca**, marries great taste with a ready-to-wear mindset, so the look works for both the wedding day and weekends beyond." Beca and Oren's designs are arriving in Chicago at Bella Bridesmaids' showroom in early July. With the six-piece collection employing double silk georgette and various on-trend colors such as blush, silver, royal and onyx, these fresh and fun gowns will never collect dust in the closet. Wolf can't wait until the Harlow deep V-back gown (\$271) and the Jones fishtail wrap gown (\$267) are in the store (and neither can we!). "Now, bridesmaids can have a beautiful piece for their friend's wedding day, and then post-occasion, they can wear it again and again," says Wolf. | E. Delaware Place, Ste. 200, 312.943.0344, bellabridesmaids.com —Bianca Smith

The Buzz

BOUTIQUE NEWS Bella Bianca Bridal Couture has expanded its salon and now boasts double the space, private gown shopping, as well as new designers such as Romona Keveza's Legends collection, Adrianna Papell and Galia Lahav. 12 W. Maple St., Ste. 2, 312.787.2377, bellabianca.com **Belle Vie Bridal Couture** is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year and is expanding its eveningwear selection with a custom line designed by owner Amanda Bonnell called Audrey Grant. The collection features classic silhouettes, and rich fabrics and jewel tones, with a part of proceeds going to local children's charities. 34 E. Oak St., 312.751.2222, belleviebridalcouture.com **JEWELRY** Marshall Pierce & Company has a new location on Michigan Avenue. 980 N. Michigan Ave., marshallperce.com **Tiffany & Co.** has renovated and expanded its Michigan Avenue location. Look for a brand-new collection called Masterpieces, due out this fall. 730 N. Michigan Ave., 312.944.7500, tiffany.com **Parisian jewelry brand Les Néréides**, known for whimsical high-end fashion jewelry, just opened its first U.S. location downtown. 108 N. State St., 312.255.7042, lesnereides.com —Andrea Mills



SET AGENDA Expert planner Hope Weis makes sure you are a guest at your own event.

Burning Questions

How long does it really take to plan a wedding? Planner to Chicago's elite, **Hope Weis**, is celebrating 21 years in the business this year. She is a master of making the seemingly impossible happen, regardless of the timeline so we wanted to know:

You can book your dream venue this year, but the only date available is four months away. What should you focus on?

It's always nice to have the luxury of time, but if you work with a planner that has a lot of experience, they will have relationships with the city's top vendors and the resources to quickly assemble a high-quality team. The gown, officiant, band and photographer are the top of the list to tackle first.

Your dream venue's first available date is over a year away, and you take it. How do you plan in advance but not have your wedding look "so last year"?

Make selections that are elegant and timeless. Don't follow trends!

What is the biggest change in weddings in Chicago from when you started to today?

The biggest change is the ability to personalize your wedding to your tastes. There are [fewer] rules and more options. The focus now is toward entertaining your guests as you would in your own home with more of a residential elegance and feel. *Hope Weis Consulting, 847.940.1741, hopeweisconsulting.com*



SCENE
chicago weddings

SHAUN RAJAH & JASPER NOWELL

October 12, 2014

The Drake

Photography by Bortewagner Photography

THE COUPLE With Shaun hailing from Malaysia and Jasper growing up in Montana, the two credit their happenstance Chicago meeting as a "real-life fairy tale." And on New Year's Eve 2011, the couple got their happily ever after when Shaun proposed at The Drake's NYE Gala.

THE DETAILS The couple, along with 250 of their friends and family, reconvened at the sentimental location three years later for their lavish

bash. Inspired by the halls of Versailles, a harpist accompanied the wedding party while it made its way through the opulent French Room, and an cappella group performing "The Rose" by Bette Midler accompanied the grooms' entrance.

THE PARTY Guests filled the Drake Room for a lively cabaret-themed cocktail reception—complete with a dancing flapper and a cigarette girl passing vintage candy. Mixologist Adam Seger crafted a signature cocktail aptly titled Windy City Bromance, and guests delighted in a delectable menu inspired by both Western and Eastern traditions. Ballet dancers from Visceral Dance Center accompanied the couple during their first dance; the lyrics to the song were printed on the back of the menu cards to encourage a singalong. The evening ended on a sweet note as Shaun serenaded Jasper with Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You," and guests left with adorable marshmallow-kiss cookies. —*Bianca Smith*



Clockwise from top: Shaun and Jasper pose with their pup and ring bearer, Paloma, in front of their custom-designed seating chart board by Caitlin Cole Design; Ryan Basile of Double Trip Press created a program book cheekily dubbed "First Big Gay Wedding Guide" for guests; gold, champagne and ivory touches sparkled on mirror-topped tables.

What We Learned "Think of the season when it comes to color, flowers, lighting and dress code. Also, think out of the box, like having room rates for guests, valet parking and a menu that appeals to the crowd," says Shaun.



From left: Royal-blue and gold-leaved flowers popped on the marzipan- and fondant-covered fruitcake by Elysia Root; adorable flower girls in dresses by Brian K Osburn awed as they walked down the aisle holding bouquets of lollipops.

WEDDING RESOURCES

- Photographer Bortewagner Photography, bortewagner.com
- Planner Melissa Phillips of Simply Perfect Events, simplyperfecteventschicago.com
- Grooms' Suits Franc Lloyd, francelloyd.com
- Rings Lester Lampert, lesterlampert.com
- Invitations & Program Ryan

- Basile of Double Trip Press, doubletrippress.com
- Menu Design Peggy Lambert of Erickson Design, ericksondesign.com
- Cake Elysia Root Cakes, elysiarootcakes.com
- Candy Buffet Chicago Wedding Candy Buffet, chicagoweddingcandybuffet.com
- Cotton Candy Spin Spun,

- spin-spun.com
- Harpist Keelin Schneider, harpistkeelin.com
- Band Steve Biossat, chicagolivemusic.com
- Sway Chicago, swaychicago.com
- Flowers & Decor Shaadi Creations, shaadicreations.com
- Boutonniers Mangel Florist, mangelflorist.com

SCENE
chicago weddings

STEFANIA SPILOTRO & GIANCARLO PRESTA

October 4, 2014

Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel

Photography by Jaime Campanelli Photography

THE COUPLE Giancarlo says he knew right away after he met Stefania during her 26th birthday celebration at Moe's Cantina in River North that one day, she would be his girlfriend. With one prediction down, on the day of the proposal, Stefania called Giancarlo to tell him about the strange dream she had had the night before—she dreamt that he had proposed! Good guesses or great instincts proved true when he took her out to dinner at Spiaggia and popped the question during an after-dinner walk on North Avenue Beach.

THE DETAILS A sentimental moment for all was during Giancarlo's speech thanking his late grandmother, Romana, whom he believed played a part in leading him to Stefania. What's more: Stefania borrowed Romana's necklace—which had also been worn by Giancarlo's mother on her wedding day—as a token of Romana's presence.

THE PARTY All 350 guests braved the unseasonably chilly October weather for an elegant reception at the Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel. Planner Michelle Durpetti enlisted Northern Greenhouses to fill the space with white orchids, calla lilies, roses and hydrangeas—a fresh pop that brightened the day and transported guests from the blustery temps outside. Revelers partied until 2 in the morning with help from DJs JOJO & GIZEP. After that, the couple jetted off to Hawaii where they warmed up on the islands of Kauai and Maui. —BS



Clockwise from above: Giancarlo admires Stefania in her classic strapless Monique Lhuillier gown; the bride playfully poses with her bridesmaids, who donned turquoise blue one-shoulder Jim Hjelm gowns; Angelo Caputo's Fresh Market provided delicious sweets, like these dapper chocolate-covered tuxedo strawberries.



What We Learned

"We woke up to unseasonably cold weather and snow on our wedding day but it was still beautiful. No matter how difficult or stressful the planning may get, just keep in mind you are meeting your best friend at the altar and you will be motivated" says Giancarlo.



From left: The striking interior of the Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel made for an elegant backdrop to the couple's extravagant reception; a sparkling letter "P" topped the five-tier all-white cake.



WEDDING RESOURCES

Planner Michelle Durpetti Events,
durpettievents.com

Photographer Jaime Campanelli Photography,
jaimecampanelli.com

Invitations ToLu, tolu4u.com

Floral, Lighting & Decor Northern
Greenhouses, ngfloral.com

Rings Joel Singer Jewelry

Bride's Gown Monique Lhuillier, Ultimate

Bride, ultimatebride.com

Bridesmaids' Dresses Jim Hjelm,

Cenzina Originals

Groom's Tuxedo Emanuele Tuxedo Rentals &
Sales, emanueletuxedo.com

Sweet's Table Angelo Caputo's Fresh Market,
caputomarkets.com

DJs JOJO & GIZEP, jojoandgizep.com