

# Unveiled

Our annual guide to getting wed in St. Louis—  
from the traditional to the unexpected



*Edited by Nancy McMullen & Margaret Schneider*

PHOTOGRAPH BY HEATHER ROTH; HEATHER ROTH/FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

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## Unveiled



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*Photography by Heather Roth  
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Judith Leiber Akila python crossbody clutch, \$2,295. Neiman Marcus. • Allen Edmonds McTavish wingtips, \$295. Nordstrom. • Desserts by Sarah's Cake Shop. See p. 100 for full contact information.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MEGAN THIEL-LORENZ; HEATHER ROTH; ILLUSTRATION BY YELANA BRYKSENOVA

*Real Weddings*

# Sally Warren & John Torbitzky

**DATE** October 6, 2012

**CEREMONY & RECEPTION** The groom's cousin, Nichole Torbitzky, officiated the ceremony in City Museum's Architectural Hall. The reception that followed featured bites from Hollyberry Catering and the swingin' sounds of Miss Jubilee and The Humdingers, which got everyone dancing by the end of the night.

**CIRCUS LIFE** The couple married "under the big top" with a backdrop made by the bride's parents, which they donated to the museum's Circus Harmony for use in future shows. Popcorn-box programs let guests sneak a snack during the ceremony. And the wedding party also snapped photos near Tower Grove Park's tent-like Turkish Pavilion.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MEGAN THIELE-LORENZ



*Real Weddings*  
**Haley Wagoner  
& Patrick  
McGinnis Jr.**

**DATES** October 4 & 6, 2012

**CEREMONY** The celebrations began on October 4 at the groom's family farm in Houston, Mo., Wild Irish Farms. Ruth Ellen Hasser officiated the ceremony, which took place before just 20 guests on a river bluff overlooking the countryside. The evening's dinner was catered by chef Lou Rook III of Annie Gunn's.

**RECEPTION** A second celebration, held on October 6, brought together close friends and family members to share in the festivities with the newlyweds at Old Warson Country Club.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HEATHER ROTH





# Here Comes the... Second-Guessing

You remember your wedding for the rest of your life.  
It would be nice if the memories didn't make you wince.

*By Jeannette Cooperman*



ILLUSTRATION BY YELENA BRYKSEKOVA

Whatever made us think our Jewish, Catholic, and cheerfully atheist wedding guests would belt out Episcopal hymns? We waved aside performers and chose church music, which consequently sounded like a gaggle of sick ducks. And why on earth did we agree to poached salmon in dill sauce for the buffet? After the reception, we lugged home a giant silver platter of barely touched, pungent salmon that resembled itself a little too closely. It didn't exactly set the mood.

I also wish somebody had remembered to lift my veil; the kiss would have

gone better. And whatever possessed me to break that quaint old taboo and waft about the church vestibule *before* the ceremony, hugging friends as they arrived? There are reasons for these customs.

Curious to see what other people regretted, I called around, confining myself to the happily married, lest I receive a tidge too much information.

First lesson: Choose your garb carefully. The wrong wedding dress occasions a regret far fiercer than our fish fiasco.

"I *wish* I would've worn a more body-skimming straight dress—I was very slim then!—rather than the poufy ball gown with cathedral-length

“Would I do it again?” Susan Harbaugh says. “Sure. Would I change things? Sure. Geez, it was the 1980s...big hair, big dresses, water fountains in the cake!”

train that I was talked into,” says *SLM* account executive Vickie Gray.

“I would not wear a midlength, prairie-style dress (boring!),” emails Linda Briggs-Harty. Nor would she “allow the church to keep up a doofy-looking Risen Jesus over the altar...or serve standard south St. Louis fare at the reception—mostaccioli, coleslaw, and deli meat (blah!).”

“I wish I’d worn my mother’s beautiful dress: ivory peau de soie, street-length,” copy editor Kerry Bliss Bailey sighs. “She does, too—and she made the dress I *did* get married in!”

“I would have bought an inexpensive dress. That’s the only thing I wasted money on—a traditional, overpriced dress!” says Paula Fike-Daum.

Paula Hofmann’s thinking the same way, but about the entire shindig: “I would have had a small church wedding with a cake-and-punch reception and used the savings for a down payment on a house.”

*St. Louis AT HOME* editor-in-chief Christy Marshall already has a list in her head: “I would not have ordered wedding invitations for every guest coming (I got 200 invites for 200 people), and I would have ordered place cards for everyone (I got 100 place cards for 200 people). Can’t fool *me* twice. I would have gone out to the reception site to check the seating *before* the wedding: My parents and Michael’s mom were behind a pillar. I would have found a different church where I wouldn’t have sparred with the sanctimonious chorale director over the ‘Wedding March’ (he called it ‘Hollywood music’). I would have had my nieces’ bridesmaid dresses made by a reputable dressmaker. The lady who made them put the lining on the outside, and they had to be ripped apart and put back together the night before the wedding (not even to mention that her son appeared to be...dealing...every time the girls went down for a fitting). I would have asked my friends not to smoke dope on the golf course. I

would have asked the staff not to serve alcohol to my teenage nieces and nephew (who all got blasted).” She stops for breath, smiles. “I would have done a lot differently—but I would still have married Michael.”

Psychotherapist Dean Rosen has analyzed his single regret: “I was a young man struggling to differentiate from my family and go my own way in life. I did not want my parents standing underneath the chuppah with me back then. Now I regret that I made that decision, since I see how much it would have meant to them and how much it is part of Jewish tradition. I did have my dad stand with me as best man, but my mother was not pleased to sit by herself during the ceremony.”

Cindy and Kevin Bilchik wouldn’t change a thing: “We eloped, and his 93-year-old grandmother was my matron of honor,” Cindy explains. “No wedding dress, flip-flops and jeans, a wedding party of six—it was perfect.”

Shawn Liefer, on the other hand, says, “I really, really wish Pinterest was around when Curt and I got hitched! It sure would’ve been more creative than the crepe-paper bells I had hanging from my dance hall’s ceiling.”

But Pinterest can create problems, too, warns wedding planner Kristin Weis, because couples see ideas and get misled about how much they’ll cost. (One of her brides adds that Pinterest “can also be your worst enemy when you compare your wedding elements and personal touches to others” or feel compelled to DIY every detail.) Many couples also regret long guest lists, Weis says, especially when their parents slip in second cousins the bride and groom have never met. Because they’re spending so much per guest, they then have to skimp on important elements: “They end up hiring a friend who takes photos but is not a wedding photographer, or a DJ when their crowd is the size for a band.”

Weis also warns eager young clients not to start planning the minute they get engaged if they’re not going to marry for 18 months. Pick out a dress that early, and you’re bound to see a new style that you prefer, about six months too late.

Planning too fast can sting, too: Writer Nancy Fowler wishes she’d remembered to get a videographer for her hastily planned 2006 wedding in Vancouver, British Columbia, so their families back home could see the ceremony. “For gay and lesbian couples, there’s always the struggle between leaving home to tie the knot legally—with little or no family there—or having a pretend wedding here, knowing it’s not recognized anywhere,” she says. She and her fiancée, psychotherapist Cindy Betz, found a photographer and an officiant online, bought white roses at a flower market, and drove to a park. When an informal soccer game spilled into their outdoor church, the kids and parents stopped to watch and applaud. Other than the missing videographer, their only regret came in the U.S. Customs line: They had to declare themselves single, “which was a sad welcome back to U.S. reality.”

Protocol can tangle even the smallest logistics: Alice Dames can’t imagine why she assumed those who did not return the RSVP card would not attend. “Forty extra guests showed up, including an old family friend who decided to bring her entire family. Thankfully, we had more than enough food”—but seating was such a squeeze that guests who *did* know what those four letters meant wound up leaving early because they couldn’t find a chair.

Kate regrets not practicing her rehearsal-dinner and reception speeches, not making a shot list for the photographer, and not keeping gift lists after she’d sent the thank-you notes; she’s been racking her brain to remember who gave her the gifts she now treasures.

Laura Higgins Evelev has a simpler regret: “I would not have gotten married outside in St. Louis in July.” Triple digits. Enough said.

“Would I do it again?” Susan Harbaugh says. “Sure. Would I change things? Sure. Geez, it was the 1980s...big hair, big dresses, water fountains in the cake!”

“Maybe,” muses Susan Cole, “we should have stopped the guest who was dancing with one of the tablecloths on his head.”

# Beyond the Big Day

Five nontraditional parties can help bring friends and family together. *By Nancy McMullen*



The engagement party, bridal shower, bachelor and bachelorette parties, and rehearsal dinner all are tried-and-true celebrations. But many brides and grooms are establishing new traditions for celebrating this momentous time in their lives.



## BRIDESMAIDS' LUNCHEON

**1** Typically held a few weeks before the wedding to show appreciation for the bridal party, this event used to be a more traditional part of the wedding calendar, and it's seen a resurgence in recent years. If any of your bridesmaids don't know each other, a luncheon is a great way to introduce them before they begin working together to plan events like your bridal shower and bachelorette party. Whether you go for lunch at a local restaurant, such as Blondie's Coffee and Wine Bar (1301 Washington, 314-241-6100, [blondiestl.com](http://blondiestl.com)), a catered soiree in your back yard, or even a cooking class, your maids will appreciate the gesture of thanks.

## GROOMSMEN GOLF OUTING

**2** Many grooms have been known to shake off their nerves on the golf course before the ceremony, but why not arrange a group golf outing for some bonding time before the big day? Get the groomsmen and the male members of the bride's and groom's immediate families together for a little friendly competition. You don't have to be a country-club member to play—try a scenic public course such as the

Norman K. Probstain Golf Course (6141 Lagoon, Forest Park, 314-367-1337, [forestparkgc.com](http://forestparkgc.com)).

## CRAFT NIGHT

**3** Tackling do-it-yourself projects for your wedding and feeling overwhelmed? Enlist the help of your bridal party during a craft night a few months before the wedding. Set up a station for each project, including detailed instructions and ready-to-assemble materials, and make it fun with bite-size appetizers, plus a favorite wedding-themed movie in the background. Your projects will get done a lot quicker, and you'll get to bond with friends and family in the process.

## WELCOME PARTY

**4** If you're organizing a destination wedding or have a lot of out-of-town guests, consider throwing a welcome party a couple of nights before your big day. It's

a much-appreciated way to show your gratitude to guests traveling long distances (and often paying big bucks) to be there. Host the event somewhere that provides a taste of the city, such as a pizza party at Pi (6144 Delmar, 314-727-6633, [restaurantpi.com](http://restaurantpi.com)) on the Loop or an ice-cream social at The Fountain on Locust (3037 Locust, 314-535-7800, [fountainonlocust.com](http://fountainonlocust.com)).

## MORNING-AFTER BRUNCH

**5** The morning after the big day, many couples opt to host a small get-together with select friends and family to reminisce, open gifts, and even share a sneak peek of photos and video from the night before. Do double duty with your wedding décor—ask family members to grab a few flower arrangements or centerpieces after the reception, or bring along any extra flowers from DIY florals. Consider hosting the event at a venue with a private room, such as the Boathouse Forest Park (6101 Government, 314-367-2224, [boathouseforestpark.com](http://boathouseforestpark.com)).



# World Wide Wedding

## FIVE TIPS FOR CREATING A STANDOUT WEBSITE FOR YOUR BIG DAY

**1** If you want an easy-to-remember domain name (e.g., trishandandrew.com), register it early—odds are, you're probably not the only Trish and Andrew getting married in 2013.

**2** Decide what features you want on your site. For example, if you want to let people RSVP online, make sure the RSVP form for your website asks for all the information you need. And test all of your site's features before you send the link to friends and family.

**3** Instead of just listing all the members of the wedding party on the site, explain why each person is important to you. It'll make the wedding party feel special and help introduce them to your guests.

**4** Make your website's design cohesive, echoing the themes and colors you have planned for your big day. Don't choose a pretty-in-pink site with flowers when your wedding colors are red and black.

**5** Don't skimp on the details. Pixels are (nearly) free. If you have a dress code, go into more detail about how you define "black-tie," for instance. And give your guests information about the city where your wedding will take place. Suggest places to eat, shop, and relax that are important to you as a couple. —*N.M.*

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# A Bolt Out of the Blue

At these lickety-split weddings, cake is just an afterthought. *By Sheri Dalin*



here's the Vegas wedding, the quickie wedding, and now, the guerrilla wedding.

Consider it the lightning round of matrimonial mergers. A couple and an officiant show up ready to go at a particular location. Three minutes later, vows have been read, the "I dos" acknowledged, and the deal sealed with a pronouncement of husband and wife.

But what do you do about the two witnesses who must sign the marriage license?

That's easy, says officiant and guerrilla wedding practitioner Carolyn Burke. "We find them," she says. "It can be any random people." Passers-by are almost always willing to do the deed.

"Once, when I was doing a wedding at the Arch, the witnesses had the same anniversary—on St. Patrick's Day—as the couple I just married," says Burke, a Kirkwood resident who got her credentials from the Universal Life Church.

"But if we're at Forest Park, I won't ask anyone who is running," she says. "They don't like to stop to be witnesses."

Burke began offering guerrilla weddings by accident around Christmas three years ago. She married a couple in the Grand Hall of Union Station. Only later did she discover they should've gotten permission first. After that, she officiated a wedding on the balcony of a couple's room at the Marriott St. Louis Union Station—*overlooking* the Grand Hall.

She's willing to orchestrate a guerrilla wedding just about anywhere in town...with one exception.

"I won't do it at the Missouri Botanical Garden. I used to work at the garden," Burke says.

But she's willing to do one at the Saint Louis Art Museum. Just talking about it thrills Burke, who has a streak of rebel impishness. The museum folks are decidedly *not* thrilled about the idea. "We would prohibit that," says museum spokesman Matt Hathaway.

The trend may have begun in New York City, Burke says. With venue costs growing exorbitant, couples simply began showing up at their fave location and having the officiant conduct vows so quickly, no one would have time to tell them to leave—or pay up.

"Saving money is definitely a part of it for a lot of couples," says the Rev. Cindy Brinkop, a minister with The Soul-Esteem Center in Maryland Heights. "They'd rather spend their money on something else, like a house. They don't understand spending \$20,000 on a wedding... They care more about the simplicity of the ceremony, and they don't need to be the center of attention."

Some guerrilla or eloping couples will hire a photographer or videographer to record the event. Burke allows up to 10 guests for these superspeedy ceremonies. More than that risks a run-in with the uniformed set.

Brinkop hasn't yet performed a guerrilla wedding, but she's willing. "If two people are happy, then go for it," she says. "I don't see any reason to put any confines on it."

Of the 80 weddings she performs a year, many

are elopements. Often, she's marrying a couple from out of town with St. Louis ties. These happenings take place in parks, in bowling alleys, at City Museum, and quite a few bars. *Bars?*

"A lot of people get married in bars," she confirms. "That's where all their friends hang out and where they spend every Friday and Saturday night, so why not?"

Burke, who once married a couple in a Steak 'n Shake, specializes in "eloping in your hometown." But Brinkop is cautious about couples in a hot hurry to marry. "It could be a red flag that a couple is running from something: a past, a disapproving parent," she says. "I believe that if the couple is very young, we as ministers have a responsibility to ask a simple question we might not normally ask: 'Are you prepared to live with the consequences of this decision for the rest of your life?'"

So if guerrilla weddings are trending today, what's on the horizon?

"I haven't done a flash-mob wedding yet," Burke says, smiling. "But I'd like to."



ILLUSTRATION BY YELENA BRYKSENOVA



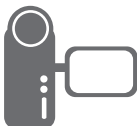
## How to Use the Web to Amp Up Your Wedding

**Hashtag it.** Create a Twitter hashtag for your wedding (e.g., #JandAwedding) and put it in the program. Guests can tweet pics and status updates from the reception, and the next day, you can search for your hashtag and see your friends' memories and favorite moments in one place.



**Get appy.** Make a smartphone app for your wedding. Sound too hard to do? Check out appycouple.com, where you can easily create an interactive wedding website that's accessible both online and through the free Appy Couple program for iOS and Android.

**Dream in digital.** Use organizational tools in the cloud, such as Google Drive, Dropbox, and Pinterest, to maintain and share important information, including RSVP lists, a schedule of when payments are due, or galleries of inspirational images.



**Film the date.** As an add-on (or even an alternative) to traditional save-the-dates, many videographers are now offering save-the-date videos. You can post the video on your wedding website, then include a link to it on printed save-the-dates or in a save-the-date email.

**Film the day.** Have Web-savvy friends or relatives who can't make it to the wedding? Ask a friend to use an online video-chat service, such as Skype or Google+ Hangouts, to discreetly broadcast the proceedings live from a smartphone or tablet. —*DM*

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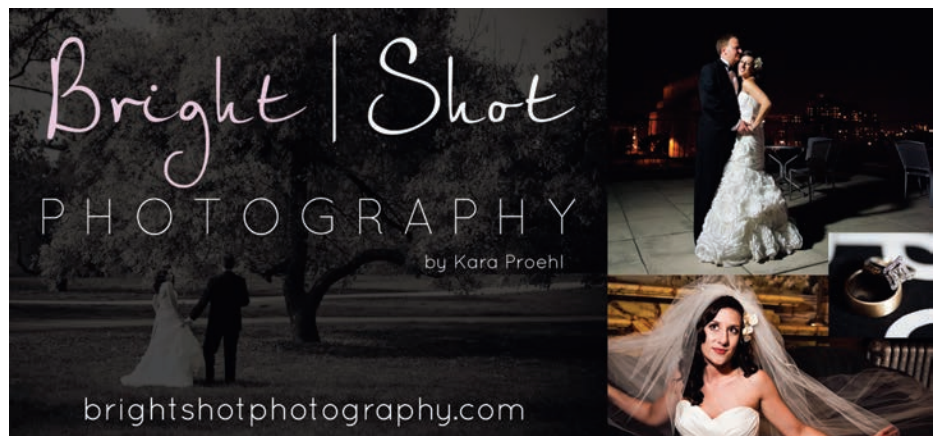
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### the MINT LOOK

*"The world is like a little marsh filled with mint and white hawthorn." —Mary Mac Lane*



Elizabeth Fillmore Deco satin crepe V-neck gown, \$3,960. Fleur De Lis Bridal Boutique, 8109 Maryland, 314-721-2457, fleurdelisbridal.com. • Miguel Ases jade-and-crystal bracelet, \$394; Coralina Leets gold-and-mint drop earrings, \$180; Deepa Gurmani mint-beaded gold clutch, \$288. Vie, 9660 Clayton, 314-997-0124. • Manolo Blahnik Carlyne slingbacks, \$865. Nordstrom, online only, nordstrom.com. • Dessy Group men's duchess satin tie and pocket square, price on request. The Ultimate Bride, 1115 S. Big Bend, 314-961-9997, theultimatebride.com. • Alfred Sung peau de soie bridesmaid dresses: one-shoulder, \$180; sleeveless, \$200; strapless, \$205. Town and Country Bridal Boutique, Plaza Frontenac, 314-991-5400, townandcountrybride.com. • Geranium Rock Candy gold bangles, \$12 and \$20. Geranium, 28 The Boulevard—St. Louis, 314-296-3547, geraniumjewelry.com.

# Tie the Knot IN STYLE

We captured 2013's top trends to inspire the look and feel of your big day, from shoes to desserts, decor, and more.

*Photography by Heather Roth  
Fashion Styling by Jan Leach, Givens*



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Styling by Katie Fogerty, Kate & Company, 314-403-2018, kateandcollc.com. • Linens courtesy of BBJ Linen, 856 Hanley Industrial, 314-447-9200, bbjlinen.com. • Flowers courtesy of Bloomin' Buckets, 9844 Manchester, 314-961-4040, bloominbuckets.com. • Desserts courtesy of Sarah's Cake Shop, 10 Clarkson Wilson Center, Chesterfield, 636-728-1140, sarahscafestl.com, and Bissingers, 32 Maryland Plaza, 314-367-7750, bissingers.com. • Macaroons courtesy of Mike Shannon's Steaks and Seafood, 620 Market, 314-421-1540, shannonsteak.com. • Paper courtesy of Vellum, 120 W. Monroe, 314-909-1640, velluminc.com. • Rentals courtesy of The Aries Company, 4940 Northrup, 314-664-6610, ariescompany.com. • Space provided by Lumen, 2201 Locust, 314-241-5757, lumenstl.com.



the RUSTIC LOOK

*"I long for the countryside. That's where I get my calm and tranquility." —Emilia Clarke*



Elizabeth Fillmore Milla crocheted lace gown and capelet, \$3,960. Fleur De Lis Bridal Boutique, 8109 Maryland, 314-721-2457, fleurdelisbridal.com. • Prada suede cutout lace-up heels, \$890. Neiman Marcus, Plaza Frontenac, 314-567-9811, neimanmarcus.com. • Draped Cairo brass—and—plated chain earrings, \$58. Scarlett Garnet, 2619 Cherokee, 314-540-0300, scarlettgarnet.com. • Cole Haan Air Liam Chukka leather wingtip boots, \$109.97. Nordstrom Rack, 1585 S. Brentwood, 314-785-1030, nordstrom.com/st/nordstrom-rack-brentwood-square. • Jocelyn cashmere scarf with raccoon pom-poms, \$319. Vie, 9660 Clayton, 314-997-0124. • Styling by Katie Saeger, Simply & Forever, 6290 Ronald Reagan, Ste. 128, Lake Saint Louis, 314-809-9870, simplyandforever.com. • Flowers courtesy of Bridget Weible, Flowers to the People, 2317 Cherokee, 314-762-0422, flowerstothepeople.biz. • Catering courtesy of Butler's Pantry, 1414 Park, 314-664-7680, butlerspantry.com, and The Trolley Track Cookie Co., 955 Executive Parkway, Ste. 106, 314-275-8855, trolleytrackcookies.com. • Paper courtesy of Ten Four Paper, julie@tenfourpaper.com, tenfourpaper.com, and Cheree Berry Paper, 314-533-6688, chereeberry.com. • Rentals courtesy of The Aries Company and Plum, 636-698-4344, theplumstyle@gmail.com. • Space provided by Lumen.

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the MODERN LOOK

*"Your words are my food, your breath  
my wine. You are everything to me."  
-Sarah Bernhardt*

Austin Scarlett strapless taffeta bridal gown with hand-painted skirt, \$7,300; Amsale red strapless bridesmaid gown, \$290. Town and Country Bridal Boutique, Plaza Frontenac, 314-991-5400, townandcountrybride.com.  
 • Ali and Bird red beaded necklace, \$98; KM2 Claudia crystal bridal belt on gray ribbon, \$140. Cha Boutique, 9666 Clayton, 314-993-8080, shop-cha.com. • Boss woven silk tie, \$95; Hugo Boss Cedrik square cuff links, \$95. Nordstrom, multiple locations, 314-255-2000, nordstrom.com. • Adam Foster 18-karat gold, sterling silver, and diamond cuff, \$8,000. Adam Foster Fine Art Jewelry, 9 N. Central, 314-771-3390, fosterjewelry.com. • Styling by Kristin Weis, Kristin Ashley Events, 618-946-0936, kristinashleyevents.com. • Flowers courtesy of Becky Huffman, Becky Huffman Flowers, 126 S. Main, Columbia, Ill., 618-281-7091, 314-368-7760, beckyhuffmanflowers.com. • Linens courtesy of BBJ Linen. • Catering courtesy of Hollyberry Catering, 284 East, 314-968-9239, hollyberrycatering.com.  
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the DECO LOOK

*"They slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered."* —F. Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*



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Olia Zavozina Diana lace wedding gown, \$4,900; Meg Jewelry Jeri beaded bird-cage veil and fascinator, \$475. Simply Elegant Bridal, 1004 Olive, 314-241-8201, [simplyelegantbridalstl.com](http://simplyelegantbridalstl.com). • Millianna pearl-and-crystal bracelet, \$345. Vie, 9660 Clayton, 314-997-0124. • Nina Evelixa gold satin peep-toe pumps, \$69; Jenny Yoo Dylan one-shoulder silk shantung bridesmaid dress, \$285. Bella Bridesmaid, 13428 Clayton, 314-205-1191, [bellabridesmaid.com](http://bellabridesmaid.com). • Marilyn Schiff gold earrings with navy crystals, \$35. Cha Boutique, 9666 Clayton, 314-993-8080, [shop-cha.com](http://shop-cha.com). • Satin bow tie, \$55; Salvatore Ferragamo Antoane patent-leather formal loafers, \$595. Neiman Marcus, Plaza Frontenac, 314-567-9811, [neimanmarcus.com](http://neimanmarcus.com). • Styling by Yara Holt, Plume Events, 314-814-7637, [plumeeventplanning.com](http://plumeeventplanning.com). • Flowers courtesy of Frankie Peltiere, Festive Atmospheres, 8314 Olive, 314-481-1501, [festiveatmospheres.com](http://festiveatmospheres.com). • Linens courtesy of BBJ Linen. • Cocktails courtesy of Joy Grdnic, The Fountain on Locust, 3037 Locust, 314-535-7800, [fountainonlocust.com](http://fountainonlocust.com). • Paper courtesy of The Invite Loft, [jlynn.stratman@gmail.com](mailto:jlynn.stratman@gmail.com), [theinvite loft.com](http://theinvite loft.com). • Rentals courtesy of The Aries Company. • Space provided by Lumen. 📍