



# A FAMILY AFFAIR

DANIELLE ZWIRN & CHARLIE FRIEND

June 2, 2012 Chicago, Illinois | Photographed by KingenSmith Photography



For bride Danielle Zwiern, one of the most difficult decisions she faced when organizing her nuptials to groom Charlie Friend was whether to host the event in her beloved hometown of New York, or his native city Chicago, where the couple resides. Rediscovering a meaningful venue that had housed numerous events for the groom's family over the years – including his own bar mitzvah – helped her resolve the dilemma, and once the location was established, planning quickly became a family affair.

## RESOURCES

### Beauty

Trisha Gertz for Salon  
Buzz - hair  
Stella Mikhail - makeup

### Bridal Gown

Monique Lhuillier

### Bridal Salon

Ultimate Bride

### Cake

Cake Sweet Food Chicago

### Calligraphy

Hannah Handmade

### Catering

The Standard Club

### Consulting

Susan Davidson and  
Robbin Shapiro for The Party  
People

### Entertainment

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus  
Larry King Orchestra

### Floral Design

Kehoe Designs

### Honeymoon

The Peninsula Hong Kong;  
Four Seasons Resort  
Chiang Mai; Four Seasons  
Tented Camp Golden  
Triangle; Four Seasons Hotel  
Bangkok; Phulay Bay, A  
Ritz Carlton Reserve

### Invitations/Stationery

Hannah Handmade

### Lighting Design

Frost Chicago

### Linens/Rentals

Kehoe Designs

### Mothers' Gowns

J. Mendel  
Monique Lhuillier

### Photography

KingenSmith

### Registries

Bloomingdale's  
Crate and Barrel  
Material Possessions

### Shoes

Jimmy Choo; Prada

### Venue

The Standard Club

### Videography

Xpress Video Productions



“Everyone in both our immediate families really chipped in to help us create the perfect wedding weekend,” effuses the bride. The groom’s mother contributed her knowledge of interior design and was instrumental in crafting the overall look and feel of the weekend, while his sister served as the matron of honor, providing invaluable advice and support. “I have adored Charlie’s family for years,” states the bride. “But the wedding-planning process brought us even closer.” Her own mother, an artist, hand-painted the couple’s ketubah. In addition, Danielle made one special trip home so that her grandmother Pearl could help her make a final decision on her wedding dress. “I couldn’t pick it without her approval,” the bride admits.

As for the groom, he readily contributed to the musical and culinary aspects of the evening by selecting the playlist for the band, as well as the menus for the cocktail hour and sit-down dinner. However, his primary goal was to make sure his bride received the day of her dreams. “It was important to me, first and foremost, that Danni was happy with all aspects of the wedding,” he affirms.

Though she had originally contemplated an open-air ceremony, the bride chose instead to avoid the possible weather hazards of an alfresco event and transform the Grand Ballroom with dramatic floor-to-ceiling drapery so as to create the impression of an elegant backyard tent. A custom-made bronze sculpture of four trees was covered in vanilla-hued azaleas and served as the couple’s chuppah, further conjuring the sense of the outdoors while glistening chandeliers were suspended above for glamorous effect.





The sizable wedding party consisted of 24 of the couple's dearest friends and family members. Bridesmaids wore black floor-length dresses of their choosing, while groomsmen were clad in dapper tuxedos. The bride dazzled in an ivory gown that featured a sweetheart neckline and stunning embroidery. She carried an equally breathtaking bouquet of stephanotis flowers, each bud boasting a single pearl in its center to honor her grandmother. The duo continued to pay homage to their relations by incorporating significant items into the service, such as a family heirloom bible and the wedding band of the groom's maternal grandfather. Vows written and exchanged by the couple offered a final personalized element to the heartfelt ceremony.

As the newlyweds shared their first kiss as husband and wife, the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus emerged from behind the designated altar to perform a celebratory song, a joyful surprise planned by the couple themselves. "The audience was in complete shock!" exclaims the groom. "It was an unbelievable moment executed to perfection and everyone loved it."





“Guests commented that they could feel the love we have for each other, and that was the best compliment of all.”





Cocktail hour was held in the venue's living room and offered an array of decadent hors d'oeuvres and frosty beverages. Guests then located place cards in a grassy boxwood-hedge display and proceeded through an entryway framed by an impressive wall of greenery and azaleas. Inside the dining area, flowing fabric cascading from the walls and ceiling once again disguised the space of the ballroom. Customized tables covered in a creamy lacquer showcased metallic-rimmed charger plates, lucid candleholders, and arrangements of coral peonies in mirrored vessels. "We wanted the look to be modern, sleek, and clean," explains the bride. "Using a monochromatic single flower kept the design simple but striking."





Their classic, snowy-white wedding confectionary was adorned with intricate piping, as well as a few scattered peonies, and featured alternating layers of banana cake with peanut butter frosting and coconut cake with coconut-cream filling. “I had a slice of each,” admits the bride. Following warm speeches and a memorable first dance encircled by family and friends, the party continued well into the evening.

Chicago turned out to be the perfect host city for the duo’s once-in-a-lifetime weekend, and every aspect of their day surpassed their expectations, from the flowers and the food to the décor and the dancing. However, there was one moment in particular that both bride and groom designated as the highlight of the evening. “One of the best memories I have was right after the ceremony when Charlie and I had a glass of Champagne, just the two of us,” recalls the bride of their first time alone as husband and wife. The groom couldn’t agree more. “We discussed how much we meant to one another,” he remembers. “It was truly special and something I will never forget.”

ALISON BONN

