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make it personal

No one wants a cookie-cutter wedding. These days, the biggest buzz word is "personalization." And the good news is it doesn't matter if you're planning a wedding for 50 or 250 guests—you can still put your personal touches on all of the details. Here's how:

The Gown Don't settle until you find "the one." You'll know your dream dress when you see it; it will have "you" written all over it. Start your search on page 100. For our fashion story, we hit the streets of Miami to bring you gorgeous gowns that have unique details, like a shorter hemline or vintage touch. Are you looking for something more classic? Check out other dresses on page 92.

The Location Have your wedding in a memorable place. Our Real Weddings couples all have one thing in common: They picked a location for their weddings close to their hearts, from hometowns to favorite vacation spots. See how their destinations played a major role in the planning and style of their day, beginning on page 50.

The Décor Let your venue drive your wedding day details. On page 30, we show you how three different reception sites can lead to three very different design styles—all complete with invitations, bouquets, and even scrumptious pies as the featured dessert!

The Cake Coordinate the look and flavors of your cake with your wedding theme. Not only is your cake a perfect detail for a photo op, it's also one of the most important style elements of the day. For some amazing inspiration, turn to page 36 for our favorite cakes.

p.s. give your monogram a makeover...

Talk about a personal stamp! Alison and Joel hired a graphic designer to create a modern monogram to appear throughout their wedding. For more unique ways to use your initials, go to theknot.com/monograms



XOXO

Carley

CARLEY RONEY
Editor in Chief



seasonal & stylish

ALISON & JOEL • NOVEMBER 10 • CHICAGO, IL



love it!

A Burberry bow tie and cummerbund for the groom.



THE BOUTONNIERE A white rose, green berries, and a fiddlehead fern were pinned to Joel's lapel.

Alison Sorenson (who's 30 and works in real estate) and Joel Gershon (who's 32 and a financial adviser) crossed paths many times, but it wasn't until they signed up for a Jewish dating website, jdate.com, and met that they realized they knew quite a few of the same people. While they dated, the wedding planning seemed to just naturally fall into place. In fact, Alison and Joel reserved Café Brauer at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago four months before they got engaged and two years before their wedding day. Once he proposed and she said yes, Joel, a huge Chicago Cubs fan, started dropping a few hints that he wanted The Chicago Cubs Dixieland Band to play at their wedding. He got his wish, thanks to his thoughtful bride.





THE STATIONERY Alison and Joel's wedding style started with their stationery. Jennifer Larkin of JKL Creations designed a chocolate-brown monogram surrounded by a wreath of leaves and acorns to play up the wedding's fall season. The monogram was on everything from the ceremony programs to cocktail hour stir sticks and menus.

THE BRIDAL STYLE Even Alison's Vera Wang gown picked up the wedding's fall-like color palette, with a taupe taffeta sash tied in the back at her waist.

THE BRIDESMAID BOUQUETS A cluster of orange ranunculus tied with chocolate-brown satin ribbon added a burst of color to the bridesmaid dresses.

THE CEREMONY Alison and Joel had a traditional Jewish ceremony in the main room of Café Brauer underneath a wrought-iron huppah draped with chocolate-brown and ivory silk dupioni, vines, hydrangeas, and hanging amaranthus.

THE CENTERPIECES A trio of centerpieces topped off the square and rectangular tables, including a wooden box filled with a hedge of orange tulips; a large urn of orange, sculpted roses; and a large urn filled with a combination of orange tulips, green hydrangeas, green amaranthus, orange roses, orchids, magnolia leaves, and fern fronds.

THE CAKE The couple chose a square, ivory cake accented with chocolate-brown bands, branches, berries, leaves, and their monogram.

THE GROOM'S CAKE Joel's cake was shaped like a Chicago Cubs cap resting on home plate.

THE DESSERT Later in the evening, guests indulged in a buffet of a variety of delicious, miniature desserts, including lattice-topped cherry and apple pies, pumpkin tarts, brownies, chocolate chip cookies, and chocolate peanut butter cups.

—CV

INGREDIENTS Site Café Brauer Photography
Pen Carlson Photography Flowers Kara Hillier for
Botanicals, Inc. Cakes Take the Cake

