



THE MAKING OF
10 22 2022



THE PROPOSAL



Crosby Farm Regional Park

We both had a day off from Target and hadn't been able to spend time together. We dressed up and planned to go get food, look at houses (just driving around for fun), go for a walk. I remember waiting in the car before we left because Sam said he "forgot" his sunglasses (he had a pair in his cup holder). We got Indian food, sat and talked while we waited for our food to be cooked. It was a really nice sunny day so we sat outside. We went to a park to walk around at Sam's suggestion. We were chatting and Sam starts slowing down so I say "Why are you walking so slowly, are you okay?" He quietly says "I'm okay." We end up at this bridge and he stops at the front. I asked him why he stopped and he said "I don't know." So I asked if it was to let the bike pass? He said "Yeah." He awkwardly shifted from foot to foot for a bit and my heart was racing. Then he said we could keep walking. I was convinced that was going to be a proposal, but after we kept walking I thought I was just making it up in my head. We chat more as we get in the car and drive around looking at houses. He sees another park and asks if I want to walk some more. We pull over and start walking down the path, it's so humid, there's standing water, we're sweating, but happy to be chatting about the future together about houses and trips. We're talking about a beach vacation and he says something along the lines of "I would love to go with you, as my wife." He did the typical kneel, grabbing the ring out of his pocket. My heart is racing, I blacked out. I grabbed his face pulled him up kissed him and said yes! We walked back to the car right after laughing about how shaky we were and how nervous we felt even though we both knew that we were ready to get married. Then we started the long list of people to call. -C

We went to a park in St. Paul where we walked around for a bit and I was intending to propose on the bridge that goes over the street but I panicked and chickened out, so we left. We drove like 3 blocks down the hill to Crosby park on the river and once we got a decent enough way down the path I finally popped the question, on one knee. -S

I had one job during the proposal: hide in a bush and take photos. Unfortunately that job can only be done if the proposer tells the faux-tographer when and where said proposal is taking place. Bob and I were having drinks at Tin Whiskers (RIP) one afternoon when suddenly my phone buzzed. It was Cailee! I say to my husband jokingly "wouldn't it be crazy if they just got engaged?" A few minutes later I'm crying and congratulating my best friends on their engagement. I think Cailee is still a bit salty that I didn't take photos. Thanks, Sam. -J





SUSHI & CHAMPAGNE

Sam and Cailee called us, and told us to meet them at Wakame, a sushi place on the north side of Lake Bde Maka Ska. They didn't tell us why, but we'd been expecting a call like this for some time. Sam's a World-class procrastinator.

We called Q, and told him to meet us there. We told him his brother had called us and told us to head to the restaurant.

All he said was, "Here we go!" -T



Satay 2 Go is a little Malaysian restaurant in Apple Valley Minnesota. It's been there about 20 years. For about 16 of those years, Troy, Deb, Sam and Q have been regulars. The first time Troy went he ordered Laksa, because a Twin Cities food writer, Dara Moskowitz Grumdahl wrote about it. It was so good he went back the next day and ordered Nasi Lemak. From then on, they were hooked.

Satay 2 Go was also Sam and Cailee's first date, so it just made sense to have them cater the Engagement Party, happening at Bald Man Brewing, where Sam was a bartender. Full circle, baby. -T



AUGUST 22, 2020
AN ENGAGEMENT





Jocelyn and I had joked a year or so before the engagement about getting married on 10/22/2022 because I am slightly obsessed with even numbers and this date was very pretty. After our engagement I realized it was a perfect date. It was in the fall (still might have leaves on trees), it was during MEA, it gave us time to plan, and again the date was pleasing to me. And Sam was along for the ride at this point. -C



Sometime after the proposal, the four of us were at a brewery, and the boys were playing cornhole. Cailee and I were chatting about potential wedding dates. As a wedding planner, I love a good date. It's on every scrap of paper, sign, and party favor, so you really have to pick one that looks good. 10.22.22 was 2 years away, but it was so perfect. I feel so lucky that I was there when Cailee manifested it! -J

THE OFFICIANT

JERED TUCKER

We had dinner at Hai Hai. It was casual, it had been a while since we'd seen each other. We shared food, stories, and laughed. After dinner we went across the street to Grumpy's. I remember it was rainy and a touch cold. I got drinks. Cailee tried this lime juice in her drink instead of real limes. She didn't love it so we got her something else. After we sat there a while chatting, Sam said they asked me out so they could ask me a question.

I was stunned at first and was surprised and kind've like, "why me?" They said that I was the perfect person to do it. I was thinking in my head, what do I do? I haven't done this, wasn't sure how to start, was nervous. I told them I was honored and I'd love to do it! We hugged, kissed and did a shot. -J



We talked about who would marry us a few times. At first Sam suggested Trevor since they're so close. I was on board, I had met Trevor a few times and liked him every time. At some point we reconsidered because I wanted our officiant to be someone who knows us both as a couple and individually. Jered was there for Sam between Dating 1.0 and Dating 2.0. He welcomed me back when I felt there would be hard feelings for calling a break. We set up plans since we hadn't seen him in a while anyway and asked him to meet us at Hai Hai. We ate dinner and chatted about random things. We decided the night wasn't over and headed to Grumpy's. While Jered was in the bathroom Sam and I were deciding when and how we should ask him. He got back and I said "We have a question to ask you." He responds all nervous. "Uh oh, what does that mean?" We reassured him it wasn't scary. When we asked him to be our officiant he was speechless, he cried, we hugged, then it was business. What do I need to do? What do I need to wear? What do you need from me? I'm so happy he married us. -C

THE BRIDESMAIDS & A BRIDESMAN



Jocelyn, Grace, and Amber all were touched, excited and teary eyed. They felt so honored to be asked. I told them I just loved them so much and needed them there for my most important day.



Amber was in town visiting, it was her last day. I had her stop by the house, we were still living with Sam's parents. We were up in the office hanging out with Simba. I looked at her and said "You are my longest friendship and the reason I made it through high school. I would love for you to be a part of my day. She said yes and we hugged and squealed.



I invited Jocelyn and Grace to The Vine Room. I found them some items that might be used on the day (scarf, insulated wine glass, and a candle for their house). I had written them cards specifically for each one, maid and matron respectively. As we're drinking wine (Grace drinking Kombucha) and enjoying charcuterie I tell them I want them to be beside me at my wedding. I hand them the gifts, let them read the cards, we're all hugging and crying. We took the picture you see on Instagram.



Logan was very casual, I think I texted him to ask if he would be in my wedding party. I think I specifically used "bridesman". He said "Sure. What do I have to do?" At that point I wasn't sure, I said "Be at the wedding and the suit fittings." -C

THE GROOMSMEN



I asked Q to be my best man while we were out to lunch getting burgers. I gave him a Yeti that said "Best Man" on one side and "#1 Valet" on the other. -S



He didn't ask, just smacked the Yeti on the table. I got up and hugged him. -Q



I was excited and nervous to be Sam's Best Man. I wasn't sure what that entailed but I knew it was important to him. Important to me. Everything I knew about being a Best Man I learned from movies. No other people around me had been best men yet, Dad hadn't. I was nervous because I knew my two big responsibilities were the bachelor party and the speech and I wasn't sure what else I had to do and/or how to start w/ those two. I'm not a planner. -Q



I asked the groomsmen the same way, quick and simple. We were at a bar, and over a beer I asked them.

They all chuckled and said yes. We toasted, drank, hugged, and got on with it. Bates was the only one who seemed surprised.

And that was that. -S

THE TEAM

Food was great! We got a lot of compliments on it. I didn't eat as much as I would've liked. We were so busy being social and having glasses clinked at us. Having to kiss with potato in your mouth is not recommended. The dessert was delicious! I wish I had it boxed up to go. The pizza was cold when I got to it, but definitely gave me strength for the rest of the night. The catering staff was so nice and left me a basket of bread (at Sam's request, so sweet) so I could snack through the evening. Drink was fine. It's Wedding alcohol so it's not often quality stuff. I was a little disappointed that I had only had 1 shot of tequila (shot-ski) and by the time I was into dancing there was none left and someone was sent out to get more. They didn't get back until almost the end of the night, I got a margarita luckily. I tried their vodka soda, rum and Coke, and was fed a shot of vodka (thank you Jocelyn), chased with the sub-par rum-heavy Rum and Coke. Bad combination overall. -C



Dan was very good! He played a few songs I wasn't happy about ("Chicken Fry" is also a song I dislike) but he met my main goal. People danced. People danced all night. I had multiple nightmares about empty dance floors. Adagio in general was very responsive. We just didn't know it was industry standard to wait until the week of to meet with your DJ. Picking out music caused some anxiety since it's Sam and I's big thing. Everything had to be perfect the songs had to say this is us. I felt comforted when I heard a specific song from our list. -C



AHHHH! I'm so happy that Vanessa was one of the first people we booked! She made the process so easy and very fun. We gained a new friend because a different photographer recommended her. Sam and I immediately liked her (which is good because we shot engagement photos twice due to a faulty lens). I was crushed she wouldn't be shooting the wedding, due to unforeseen circumstances. However, she had NoWah and Iviee come in for us and it was a great match instantly (she's a good judge of character). I never felt uncomfortable in front of the camera, they were personable and funny. The photos are GORGEOUS. I'm so happy to have those images. -C

THE VENUE

When we first walked into the venue, I thought "How cool." The place is the perfect mix of classy, urban, and industrial (It used to be the Minneapolis PD's 5th Precinct). My second thought was "Will we all fit comfortably?" The venue coordinator assured me our anticipated attendance would fit just fine. I'll admit, I was doubtful. We came back several months later and they had completed some renovations, including expanding the cocktail space. I felt so much better. I loved the separate bridal suites. I loved the little patio outside - and am admittedly a little sad that we didn't use it, which is stupid on my part because it was 70 degrees out and why did I not sit out there during the day? On the day of the wedding the space was perfect. They were extremely accommodating. Add the flowers and it felt almost magical. The setup for the ceremony upstairs was about what I expected, but I had no idea what to expect for the reception. When I walked upstairs, it took my breath away. It looked... lovely. Just wonderfully lovely. -D



FIVE EVENT CENTER

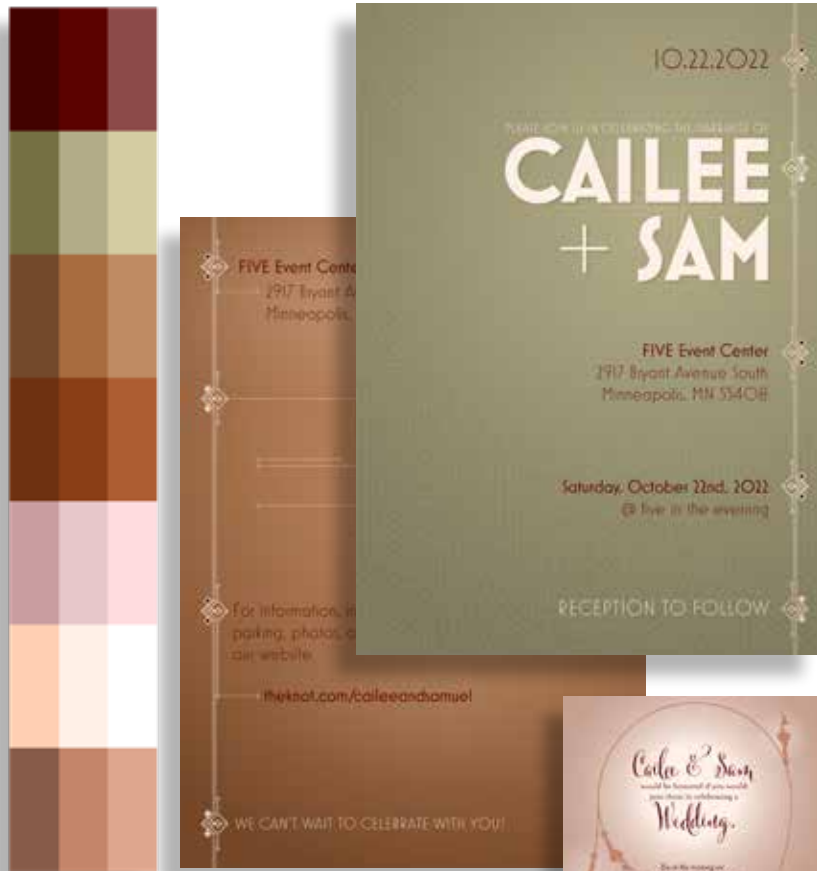
2917 Bryant Ave. S.
Uptown Minneapolis

We'd inquired at several venues. We found that most had a food and beverage minimum over our budget. Many quoted us out of our price range. We looked at the arboretum, Mill City, McNamara, Aria, International Market Square, Loring Social, JX Event Venue, Nicollet Island Pavilion, Conservatory, Abulae, there are more that I can't remember. FIVE was the first place that quoted something affordable so we scheduled a showing. They answered all our questions. They told us about how a remodel was on the way. I liked the space and could picture all our people there. We were feeling the pressure of booking a place, so we quickly decided, then dropped off a check (Deb came with). The remodel really made things perfect!

The venue really fits our vibe as a couple, it didn't feel stuffy and pretentious. It didn't feel awkward like a bad hotel ballroom. The exposed brick and wood floors played right into the romantic boho style I wanted (especially when we started agreeing on house furniture and decor. That's where Japandi came in). Having Jocelyn complete the design package really helped Sam and I to picture how it would look pulled together. We would have been so lost without her. -C



DESIGNING A WEDDING



The palette, the invitation, and some discarded ideas.

I was happy Sam and Cailee allowed me to design their wedding invitations. I find print design relaxing, and it allowed me to add something to the event. It grew into a larger design package, including a wide variety of print materials.

Cailee had chosen a color palette she liked. They were great colors, muted and versatile. I expanded the palette just a little to allow for some contrast. One big hurdle cleared.

I designed a few pieces, based on some examples of style and type Sam and Cailee had given me. I liked some of my initial designs more than others, and they agreed some weren't quite right. I was also trying to consider what the event space looked like. It has sort of a industrial, steampunk vibe, with some Art Deco inspiration. I loved it. It got me thinking about this deco idea. I explained this to Cailee, and she was intrigued.

A couple of the invitations they'd showed me were very, very simple. Nothing precious or unnecessary about them. That idea, plus our deco vibe, seemed to hit the right note. I showed them a few more invitation ideas, and they picked one. Then we were on our way.

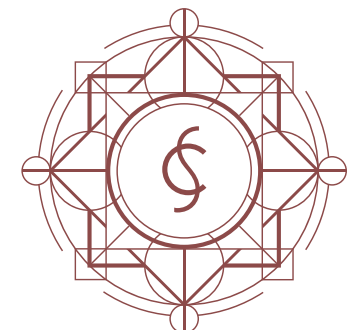
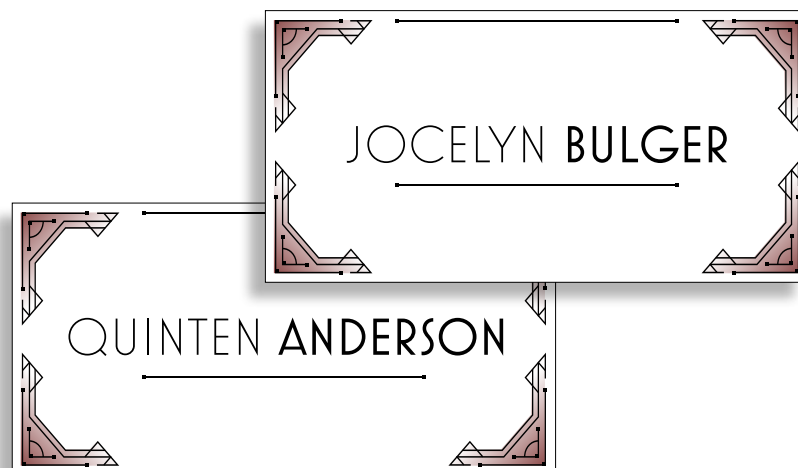
Once I'd designed a decent catalog of styles and elements, everything else was pretty easy. I loved this process, and am honored to have been able to contribute something of myself. -T



Seeing all the printed pieces was amazing! I've gotten a lot of compliments on how everything looked so good together. Jocelyn noticed we kept a color theme throughout and that the invites matched the table decor and signs. The teacher in me loved the card stock used. The table "numbers" were beautiful and the sign fit perfectly. I like that we still have those pieces after the fact to look at. It fit perfectly with our theme and the colors were great! There was a point during the invitation design when Troy was asking us "Do you like this?", "Should I change x?" And in my head I thought "Just send them!" However, I appreciated how thoughtful and thorough he was with the design. -C



The typeface we used was Mostra Nuova



A BRIDAL SHOWER

September 17, 2022

Kate, Amanda, and Jered knocked it out of the park! The food was fantastic, the decorations tasteful, and the games so fun. I loved being able to relax and watch Cailee sparkle as she talked to everyone in the room. She had an ooh and an ahh for every gift, and smiled for 100 photos. -J

Kate called 'dibs' on the bridal shower about one hour after the engagement was announced. It made me laugh and it warmed my heart. Laugh because of course she'd do that. Warmed my heart for the fact that we have such dear friends that want to be (and feel like they are) part of our family. It's truly special.

My offers to help were politely ignored. They had this, and they wanted to have it. So, all I could do is sit back and wait. Finally, Kate asked my opinion on the amount of champagne needed. Her co-hosts told her a fantastical 24 bottles. I told her about 12, she thought six. Now, her invitation did say "Boozy Brunch". Add to that the fact her list of people invited had grown to over 30 people. Anyway, we had a super fun Cava tasting at the cabin and she did end up buying a case. And we drank it all.

I was feeling a bit anxious about the number of invitations. This was ending up a super big event and I feared it wasn't what she'd signed up for. But she assured me over and over it was fine. And it was. Lots of folks, lots of gifts. Crate & Barrel boxes everywhere. And then - when it was officially over, the spouses (and the groom) showed up. In true Pope fashion, we started with a nice, classy event and ended with a sunny bash. It was perfect. Perfect. -D



The planning was SO fun! Kate, Amanda and I really had a ball, we always had food and drinks and just did it. We met at St. Genevieve initially and had champagne and oysters which I thought was fitting as Sam would love that. We went through a bunch of ideas, Amanda took notes. Kate took me home. Second planning session we met at Rick and Kate's. I hadn't been there so I followed the address she sent to me, which was wrong! It was the house next door. A shirtless hot guy answered the door and I was like, um I must have the wrong house. He asked who I was looking for and he said he didn't know who that was. I called Kate, she didn't answer, I called Amanda who was almost there. I drove away. Amanda and I stayed on the phone together until I saw her and followed her back down there. We tried cava that night and ate charcuterie. It was beautiful.

The shower was fun! I got too drunk but at least at the end this time. Ugh. Kate made like five more pounds of bacon but Rick said I didn't bring enough. It was hectic but went off without a hitch and Amanda made candles as a shower gift! Crazy! -Jered



THE HOUSE PARTY



I've never planned a coed bachelor/bachelorette party before, and I'll try my hardest to never plan one again. It was exhausting! Trying to juggle the budgets, opinions, and availability of 20 people was way harder than any wedding or event I've planned professionally. My goal was to plan something that suited both Cailee and Sam, brought all their people together, and followed Cailee's one rule: "no penis decorations."

Budgets were tight, so we decided to keep it local. My husband's uncle generously let us use his house in Inver Grove Heights while he was on vacation. Deb and Troy also loaned us their camper in case we ran out of sleeping space. I slowly gathered decorations for a few months before the party. I went for a neon, disco vibe. Grace built a balloon garland that we used as a photo backdrop. She then enlisted Sam Bates' help to cover the yard and house in streamers. To the yard we added a disco ball, colorful lights, a cornhole set, and a kiddie pool which I think Grace belly flopped into at some point. We also set up a Polaroid photo table to test drive the machine for the wedding day. I got some ring pops, neon lollipops, and glow sticks for party favors.

On Friday we ate way too many chicken tinga tacos and a disgusting amount of guacamole. I made batch margaritas that were a bit too strong, so the party started early. Once everyone was fed, we started the Battle of the Bride and Groom. Cailee and Sam chose teams and we played a series of embarrassing games, including trivia, a pie eating contest, a dance off, a toilet paper dress fashion show, and ending with a drunken relay race. It was awesome.

On Saturday, we woke up sufficiently hungover and I made a mid-western breakfast of egg bake and French toast casserole. We split up for girls/guys day. We ladies took Cailee to a winery and schmoozed our way into a private event room for charcuterie and flights. Then, we went to Villainy Pole Studio for a super challenging but fun pole dancing class. We were sore for days. The boys took Sam to Stillwater for a bar crawl. We all headed back to the house for pulled pork sandwiches and the party resumed. I rented a karaoke machine and set it up in the living room. Grace and Q ensured we were all thoroughly entertained, and they graciously let the rest of us butt in for a song or two. Everyone wore bright wigs and neon outfits, perfect for Polaroids. -J





Jocelyn deserves the world! She almost single-handedly planned and executed all group and bachelorette activities. She asked us a few questions to build a theme. She asked for activities I wanted to do. She bought and prepared a ton of food for everyone. She booked our class. It was so fun to celebrate with our wedding party. I loved having the wig night and renting a karaoke machine instead of going out and paying money for a room. It was so fun! We partied in the comfort of our own space while not worrying about others hearing our absolutely terrible singing. You can tell Event planning is her thing. -C

Jocelyn and Bobby rocked, and Jocelyn is a Superhero.

I'm not proud. I feel I should've contributed more, but the party was incredible. The best part was Wig Karaoke. I think I sang 21 songs.

In Stillwater, The Boys got incredibly lucky. Everytime we walked in a place; Feller's, Velveteen, River Siren, we were told they didn't have room for us, "Except for..." some room or table that was private, or just for us. It was great.

I got to know Sam and Cailee's friends, and now they're my friends. It was incredible.

Zach was with me all the way. Whenever I struggled, he was there to support me or give advice. Except when he was catica- tonic... -Q



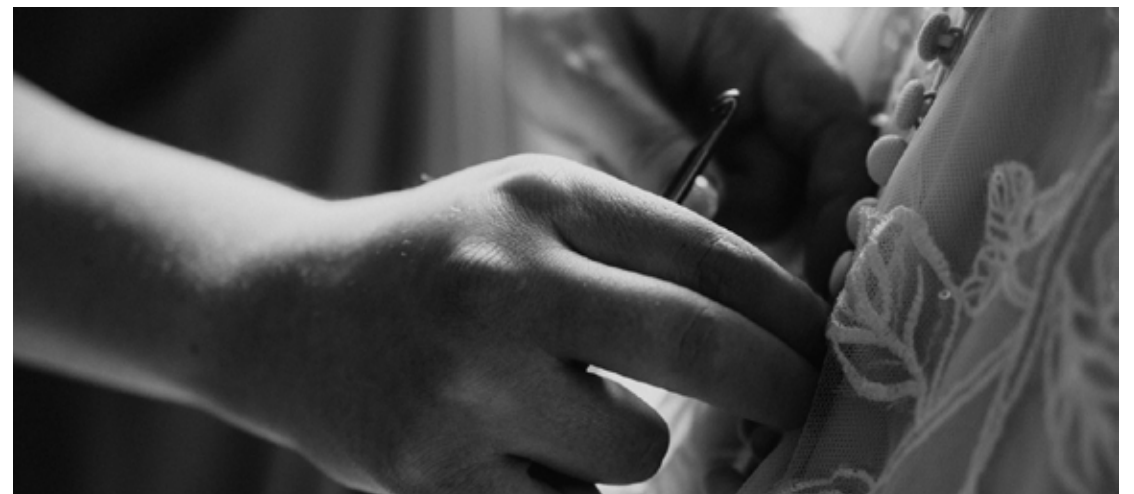
FINDING THE DRESS



It comes back to feeling uncomfortable about being the center of attention. I am a people pleaser and will choose what I think other people want. I was scared for people to stare at me and maybe convince me to get a dress I wasn't sold on. Jocelyn suggested we head to a bridal shop together before "the whole group is going to watch and fawn over you" dress parade. She made the appointment at Posh Bridal in Hopkins. They were a small shop, relatively in my price range, and had what I was looking for. Jocelyn and I drove together from her house. We had two associates help us during the appointment; one to grab dresses one to help me into them. We started by sitting on the couch talking about what I wanted in a dress (romantic, doesn't have to be pure white, sleeves maybe, and pretty details). We talked about budget and started the process of pulling and trying on dresses. My dress was the first one I put on. I walked out and Jocelyn almost cried. I almost cried, the associates were gushing. I tried on probably 6 in total. I have the other pictures. I went back to the first and didn't want to take it off. I called my mom hoping she would answer to see if she could come look at the dress. I called and asked if she was busy. Then asked if she could meet somewhere. It was important. She asked if it could wait until the next day, she was out with friends in Saint Paul and the bar was loud. I'm talking loudly into the phone until I hand it to Jocelyn and we use FaceTime. My mom looks at her phone and said I'm on my way. She drove down to Hopkins she looked at the dress and said I'll buy it for you. She wouldn't let me help pay. Then I had to wait over a year to show Sam. -C



"You look so beautiful! Is this the one?" I asked.
"I think it's the one!" Cailee said tearfully.
"Your mom and Deb are going to kill me!" -J





ALTERING THE DRESS



Some brides have Dress Regret. They put it back on and realize it's not what they wanted. They sell it on Bridal Facebook groups and head out to buy another. Some brides go through multiple dresses buying and selling the "one". I never had regret. I loved it every time. I didn't want to take it off every time. I wanted another excuse to wear it again. Posh suggested Amazing Alterations. They have worked together before, they were well established and trusted. The first visit was Jocelyn, my mom, and I. We sat in their gaudy waiting area (Crystal chandeliers and royal purple velvet couches). I felt skeptical. We waited over an hour past our appointment time. They saw me for about 15 minutes and quoted me \$300 more than I had thought. However by the second appointment it was worth it. My dress fit like a glove. I was asked all the right questions to get it right and the owner modified the hem to keep the lace details, but shorten it so I wouldn't trip. They were thorough in teaching Jocelyn and Deb how to bustle the Dress. We were known as the fun group by our second visit (Jocelyn brought bubbles). -C



PICKING THE SUIT(S)



Going to Milbern's for the suits was fun and so easy. We went in for a consultation and told them I wanted to wear something very fall and green and she went nuts. We were there for about an hour finding all the best combinations. They had a beautiful green suit, a custom order that had been returned. It was the one.

We found out later that the man and woman helping us were the mom and son of the family that owned Milbern's. -S



"Hi, I'm here for a fitting?" I asked, walking into Milbern's. (Don't know why I asked.)

"Groom's Name?"

"Sam Anderson."

He hummed and typed for a moment and said, "You must be Troy."

"Uh, yep."

"Follow me."

I followed him into another area. He looked me up and down and asked, "How tall are you, what do you weigh, and what is your waist size?"

"I'm 6'0", I weigh about 215, and my waist size is 36."

"No," he replied. "You're 6'1", you weigh 220, and your waist size is 34."

He measured and weighed me. I'm 6' and 3/4". I weigh 220, and my waist size is 34.

Freaky. -T



"My son, who's far more sartorially knowledgeable than I am, said about 'this' much of my shirt should be visible past my coat sleeve. "Is this the right size shirt?" I asked, pointing out that it seemed like there was way too much shirt cuff showing.

"Well sir, um, gentlemen with slender wrists and...small(ish) hands usually use the second button on the shirt cuff."

Ouch dude. Ouch. -T



THE OFFICIAL OFFICIANT

I actually started taking voice notes in my phone when I thought of something so I wouldn't forget. I had so many just, random thoughts. I purposely didn't read and sample scripts so that it would be uniquely me and them. The idea of having a dinner party came about while I was having people over and I thought wow this is like planning a wedding, just really quickly. I threw the idea by Sam and Cailee in passing and they didn't hate it, so I went with it and just expanded on it. I wanted to tell stories about me knowing them and wanted them to be able to speak themselves. I really love how it turned out. -Jered



Oh wow, what to wear? I had tons of ideas, too many ideas. Kilt, tuxedo, suit, priest, pope, jumpsuit, all crossed my mind. I started buying things and trying them on and taking them back, nothing seemed right. Danny was a great help bouncing ideas off him and having him be my eyes while I tried stuff on. I bet I bought 4 sport coats alone before I found the one I wore. I had bought a hounds-tooth tuxedo shirt I loved and was making the outfit around that, but then found the hounds-tooth jacket I eventually wore. They didn't go well together. I had velvet pants I wanted to wear. I had Sam and Cailee over for dinner and showed them what I wanted to wear and they were instantly on board and loved it. They recommended a shirt color, I had one that exact color so it was perfect! -Jered



Once I sat down to do it, I wrote it in about 1/2 hour but I let it simmer and came back to it several times.

Hmmm, what didn't make it in? I read a few sample scripts after I'd written mine that had a bunch of more traditional things in it and I wondered if I missed something people would have wanted to hear, but then I thought, it was authentically me!

I literally thought getting licensed was going to be hard so I procrastinated longer than I want to admit. When I actually did it, it took 5 minutes and it was done! -Jered

THE MATRON OF HONOR



Jocelyn in our group is known as a funny friend. And she's very heartfelt. She's kind, caring, and genuine. I loved the way she roasted us. Her jokes were so funny and the way she talked you could tell how well she knows us individually and together.

-C

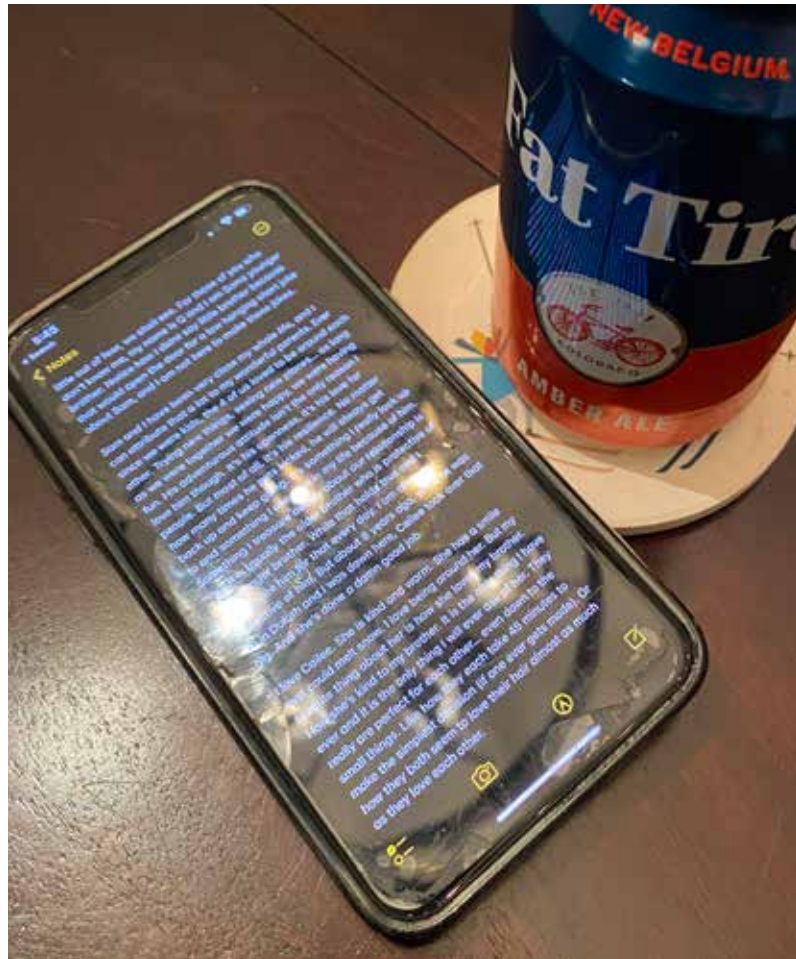


If I learned one thing during this wedding, it's that I need to get better at delegating. The entire week/day of the wedding is such a blur because I didn't stop running around. But I loved every minute of it! Picking up all of the things, meeting Cailee's new family, seeing her shine at all the events, getting spray tans, making sure she was fed and watered and sitting in indirect sunlight - all of it.

On the big day, I was in "go" mode from 7 AM to 8 PM. I just couldn't say no, I was such a control freak. I had to actively remind myself that the coordinators could handle the event planning side, and that I needed to stay with Cailee and make sure she was happy. Being busy was good though, because I didn't have time to panic about my speech until after the ceremony was over. But then I had to cram 8 hours of panic into 2 hours. It was horrible! When Q was done giving his stupid amazing speech and handed me the mic, I took 5 deep breaths and got it over with. It went smoothly, aside from some tears. I immediately started drinking after that, and the rest of the night was a pleasant blur. -J



THE BEST MAN

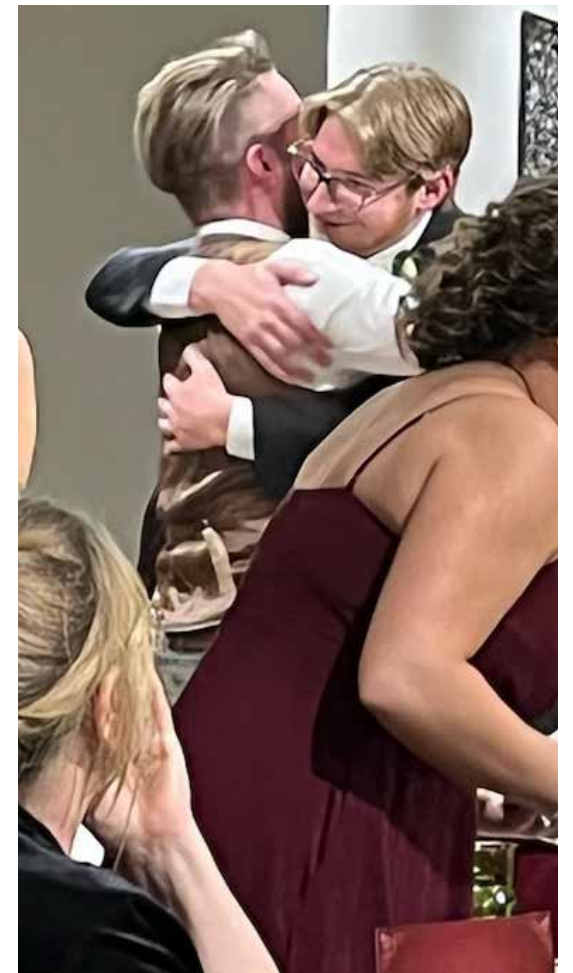


I was nervous from the moment he asked me to be his Best Man. I like talking to people, not at them. I don't like not being able to converse, a one way convo is not my thing. I wanted it to be great. I wanted my speech to be something Sam and Cailee would be happy with. Honestly, to me, my thing was that I was talking to them, everyone else was just eavesdropping. I was worried that most people expected me to be funny, but most of what I wanted to say wasn't funny. It was mushy.

The actual writing of the speech, once I started thinking and writing it, took me three or four days. Then I practiced it like 400 times. During the actual wedding day I wandered off about six times to practice the speech alone. (Editor's note: Sam poured the groomsmen a glass of scotch and wanted to give a toast. Q was nowhere to be found. Sam Bates went upstairs to look for him. He came back and reported that he heard Q in one of the bathrooms rehearsing)

I feel I said everything I wanted to say, although I wish it was funnier. I wanted 60 mushy/40 funny, ended 80 mushy/20 funny. -Q

Q's speech was so heartfelt and sappy. I loved it! I was prepared for 5 minutes of roasting and a "love you guys" at the end. Watching Sam tear up was so sweet. I can't wait to get the video back to watch his speech again. That moment when he completely forgot the next part, peeked at his phone, and continued the rest of the speech unphased was amazing. I'm happy to have another brother who is so sweet. -C



Q - Thanks bro. I love you and I could not have asked for a better Best Man. You did a great job. The Bachelor Party was wicked, and thanks for all your help.

Your speech hit me a lot harder than I thought it would or was expecting. -S

THE FATHER OF THE BRIDE



My Dad's guitar playing was beautiful. I felt happy he would play for me again after the "my hands don't work as well as they used to/ I'm not as good as I was/ I haven't played in forever". He played so well. Growing up he would play songs for my brothers and I. When he would play songs he particularly liked he would close his eyes and his shoulders would shrug in time with the music, like he did when he played at the wedding (he'd sing at home, but too nervous at the wedding). It was sentimental that he played songs from when I was a baby/toddler. Many people told me they were in tears. I saw Logan tear up and heard that Max had teared up too. Very sweet. -C

THE FATHER OF THE GROOM



I DECIDED MONTHS AGO I'D BETTER DO MY SPEECH THIS WAY...

I wanted to say something. Something meaningful. I also wanted what I said to not get lost in the delivery. A cartoon version of myself seemed the best idea. And it also seemed like something a little unusual. It felt like me. So I asked Sam and Cailee what they thought of a video instead of a traditional speech. They quickly agreed. I shudder to think what would have happened had they not...

I was nervous right up to the end. Several people asked me why I was nervous to deliver a speech that was prerecorded. It's a good question. I wasn't nervous about the execution, I was afraid how it would land. I made this in a dark corner of my house, alone. How would it play to an audience? In my effort to say something to Sam & Cailee, have I made something that would distract, or seem self-serving? I really just wanted to say something without the distraction of my twitchy, sweaty corporeal goofiness.

I think it took me about 120 hours, over a few versions. The final rendered version is labeled "WeddingSpeech_v8", but I think it was probably more like four or five versions. The first one was just animated type. It was a clever example of kinetic type, but it seemed boring when I watched it. After talking to Deb, I decided to turn Troy into a skinny cartoon. I'm glad I did.



the lip-synch shapes

THE T-SHIRTS

Quite a few people asked me about the changing T-Shirts in the speech. I thought it'd be funny, but I didn't think anyone would actually notice. The one I get asked about most is "Crash the Heim's". Here's the story: Deb and I had been drinking at Rick and Kate's, and gotten too drunk to drive, so we walked home. Almost exactly halfway between their house and ours is the Heim's. We invited ourselves over and had another, unnecessary drink. While walking down County Road 11 we were listening to music and began dancing down the sidewalk, to the occasional horns of passing cars.

I've always thought that one of the keys to whatever relationship success Deb and I have had is that we have fun together. We enjoy one another's company. And I think it's important that Sam and Cailee have fun together. "The best stories you'll tell are about having fun together, so write a lot of them."

"Pssst... Hey. Hey. Oh yeah, you're f&cked."

-My cousin Marty, after hearing Q's speech



Your speech, which I know you labored over, was perfect. It felt like you. Witty, mushy, funny. I've had friends tell me they loved the video so much they wish they could show their own kids and take your advice with them. I've shared the link. The detail of changing shirts and the connection to your own marriage was great. I thought I would cry during the ceremony and that would be the biggest mess I would be. Nope I cried during all three speeches.



A QUICK BREAK IN VEGAS



I feel so lucky to be included on the family trips. Travel was pretty rare growing up. It was a special thing or luck of the standby seating. I was lucky enough to have a previous trip to compare. I felt safe the whole time. The pool wasn't overcrowded. I could enjoy a drink and try some gambling. Sam and I had a blast on the trip. I thrive on looking forward to events. I had the bachelorette, bridal shower, Vegas, the wedding. It charges my self-care battery sitting in the sun near water. The pool day was my favorite. Hanging out with everyone enjoying the warmth. Deb's kindness in taking me on a spa day was so wonderful. A message was exactly what I needed. I was told I was very tense and needed to go more often (I don't carry stress in my body, what do you mean?!). I can chat with Deb forever, so exploring the spa features together gave me the quality time I enjoy with the people I love. The show was so funny (I particularly enjoyed Troy's reactions). The performers were so impressive! Going home at the end was both relieving after all the sights, sounds, and smells. And sad, having to go back to real life and stop hanging out with you all. I'm happy that I can always be completely myself around you guys. -C



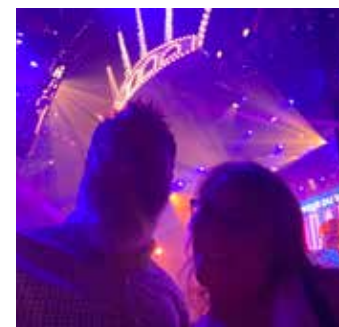
The bachelor/bachelorette party was probably the start of Our Wedding Season. It was our little trip to Las Vegas in September though, that felt like both a little break and the launching of Wedding Season in all its fast-moving intensity.

The previous Christmas, The Pope's had given to their kids, Amanda and Sam, a family trip to Vegas. They asked if we would like to join. So Deb, Sam, Cailee, Q, and I joined Kate, Rick, Sam, Amanda, and Amanda's Boyfriend Jack in Vegas for a long weekend. We were also joined by Mike and Julie, Kate's brother and sister-in-law, and Jered and Jered's friend Danny.

We ate a lot, drank a lot more, saw a Cirque show, spent a day at the pool, and an afternoon at the Caesar's Palace Sports book. It was a great weekend, and I think we all needed it. We knew we'd get back to a great long list of things that needed doing. -T



Vegas was awesome! I loved being able to be with everyone before all the chaos. It was great to be able to do grown-up things in Vegas. And to be able to do it all with Cailee. -S



REHEARSAL AND A SAKE TASTING



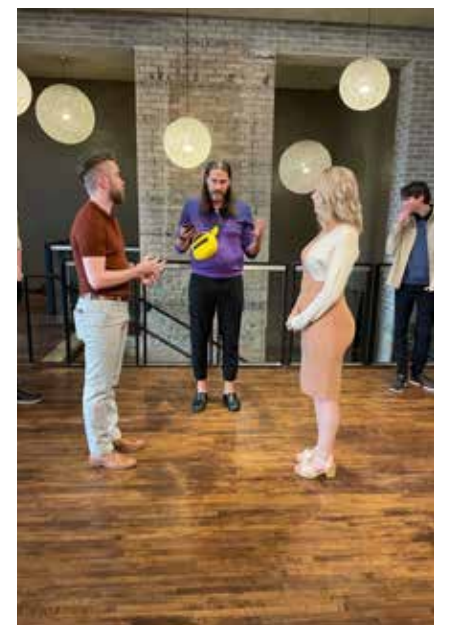
That evening felt very whirlwind. I felt more concerned with the rehearsal itself. I was starting to feel nervous about the wedding a couple of days later. I wanted to make sure to talk to everyone, eat food, and pass out my bridal party gifts. The food was delicious. I liked everything I ate. The drinks were good, no hangover from how juice-like they were. I found the restaurant to be a bit dark and noisy when talking to the older guests. It was so fun to see people from out of town mingling with the wedding party. My dad's side enjoyed the food. I liked that Jered mingled with my grandparents. I was happy that even though I left to get a spray tan and came back people were still happily chatting. -C

A sake tasting was exactly what I'd wanted. It was so me; a little fancy, a little hipster, and a little pretentious.

But seriously, I loved it. It was fun, delicious, and informative. -S



Dinner was great, though I got a bit too drunk... -S



FAMILY AND A COUPLE GATHERINGS



At this point I wanted to stay home. The combination of school stress, last minute wedding tasks, the constant socializing, and heavy lack of sleep had made me grumpy. By the time I got to Troy and Deb's house I was feeling better. I liked being able to socialize before the wedding so I didn't feel bad that I couldn't spend time with people during the reception. We had beautiful weather all weekend which made spending time with people outside even better. In between parties we packed, feeling panicked since we didn't make a list and pack beforehand. So we were running around hoping everything made it in a bag. We got to Jered's and were happy to see more family and friends. Both of your houses are so cozy and great for hosting. Sam and I kept joking about how many friends Jered had over, they were known as Jered's friends. I got some time with the wedding party. It was great to have a curfew, giving Sam and I some quiet time. The impromptu hang-out at the hotel was so fun. Sam and I were starving from under-eating. Not surprising, Jocelyn ordered Buffalo Wild Wings for us, of course. We all talked, drank, and ate. A perfect night before. Sam and I had enough time to prepare for the next day and I could calm down enough to sleep. -C



We had folks coming from out of town. From Denver, Cheyenne, Memphis, Dallas, Conway, and San Francisco. The family had gone through a lot over the past couple years, including the passing of my dad. Thanks to COVID we were not able to have the big family gathering we would have liked. But, instead we were able to celebrate the forming of this new family, and I felt truly blessed that so many were able to make it out. We felt it really important to find time for all of them.

It was a busy weekend between a Thursday night Groom's Dinner (and party), Friday Lunch at our house, a Friday Night Open House at Jered's, The Wedding Day, and then a Sunday brunch.

The fun started Thursday night when the Cutters, Clarks and Hanson joined the Groom's Dinner After Party. A few particular memories:

- I love that the Bride and MOH, dressed in their wedding party clothes, left to get their spray tans and returned in their super casual clothes looking like they just spent three days on a beach.
- The sake tasting was so very Sam and so very fun.
- The "conversation" between my drunk cousin and my drunk son (Sam) that was spoken in a language only these two drunks could understand. Or not.
- Seeing my sister let loose a little and just enjoy time with her family. -D





Our dear friend Trish and her son Connor came to stay for a couple weeks leading up to the wedding. They were a great help, in more ways than one. A few days before the ceremony, we blew off a little steam throwing axes. We're all really good at it. Really. Super good.





IN MEMORIAM



We thought it important to remember grandparents no longer with us.

We'd had made glasses with an "SC" monogram on them, as gifts to our guests. In them, we placed a couple sheets of paper, tied with a ribbon. One had a link people could use to upload photos, and a link to a playlist of music we love on Spotify.

The other sheet remembered those four grandparents:



Alma Cutter



1941-2003

Sam's grandmother Alma was a beautiful, steely-eyed boss, and may have been the only person her husband The Colonel ever deferred to. She never left the house not looking her best. She very often wore a certain ring, a ring that always makes her daughters think of her.

Today that ring will be worn by her new Granddaughter-in-law Cailee.



Colonel Earl Cutter



1939-2021

Sam's grandfather Earl was a Colonel in the United States Air Force, working in it's missile programs, the Inspector General's office, and maybe a few things we're not at liberty to discuss.

Like his grandson, he also loved to ski. His skis are here, holding a few shot glasses...

Today, Sam's wearing a pair of The Colonel's cuff links.

The Colonel and his beloved wife Alma never missed a chance to dance to "Proud Mary" by Creedence Clearwater Revival. So if you hear it, we're sure they'd appreciate your presence on the dance floor.



Larry "Papa" Anderson



1946-2011

Sam's grandfather served in Vietnam in the mid-sixties. While deployed, he purchased a guitar. Playing that guitar brought him peace, and rarely did a day go by that he did not do so. If you see it, please feel free to play a few chords and say "Hi" to Papa. Please, though, treat it gently, it's taken a few punches.

(BTW, it was Sam who gave him that name)



Fred "Goofpa" Labernik



1917-2010

Cailee's great-grandfather Fred was lovingly called "Goofpa" by her mother Sarah. Goofpa was an avid ballroom dancer and a cheerful man. Please celebrate Goofpa by dancing with us tonight.

Goofpa will be joining us tonight through his class ring, worn by Sam.

IN MEMORIAM



"HERE WE GO"



I was getting into my head about everything and was getting nervous. There was a lot to do so I was happy to do anything to get my mind off it. When I got dressed it really started to hit me. I was really sweaty. I kept reading the script over and over again and rethinking what I wrote and if I needed to adjust. -Jered

The day of was surprisingly calm and very pleasant. Although, I shouldn't be surprised as we had the Queen of All Wedding Planning on our side.

I loved our caravan of wagons down Lake Street. Charlie was The Man, providing our lunch. Michelle was a rock star, I so appreciate her adaptability (although she didn't have a spot in the bridal suite, she made a corner work) and willingness to come to the rescue for everyone. The ladies all seemed to have this sense of calm and happiness to be there. The guys – well, they were the guys. Like they always are. Also adaptable – they forgot a speaker so jammed to Nintendo music in their suite. And then, watching the place transform – the flowers were remarkable – it was really cool to be there as it all came together.

My plan for the day was to simply be there as needed. I didn't want to get in the way, I wanted things to go smoothly for everyone and I wanted to be sure Cailee and Sarah got some of those special moments.



I am touched that I was able to be there while she put on her dress. I will forever have the image of the beautiful bride standing there with the window light shining on her like an angel, hopefully getting one or two moments with her own thoughts. -D



THE CEREMONY



I'm so honored to be here to officiate the wedding of my nephew Samuel Cutter Anderson and Cailee Cassandra Labernik-Hiller.

Being asked to officiate this ceremony was both exciting and easy. I can't explain the feeling of giddiness and love that went through me when Sam and Cailee asked me out to drinks one night over a year ago, and I didn't realize how easy it would be to become an officiant, so if you like what you see today, look me up after!

Any wedding is a point in time of a life lived together. The joy and happiness of today are balanced with all the other emotions that Sam and Cailee have felt and will feel going forward. We are lucky to witness this day together.

Anyone in attendance that doesn't like to eat, have conversation, like to party?

Weddings are like a well-planned dinner party. There is menu prep, going over the guest list, practicing the meal, food prep, shopping, picking out an outfit, cooking, table setting, seating arrangements, decor, music, and so much more. All the things you can possibly think of before the dinner party. I've been lucky enough to be part of this dinner party prep. You are all now seated at the table. Food is coming later, don't panic!

I have so many memories of watching Sam grow up. He has been inquisitive, goofy, challenging, and a confidant. We've vacationed together both right in town and as far away as Spain. A couple of my favorite memories include being on a cruise and watching a very young Sam and Q gobble up caviar by the spoonful at the Champagne bar and Sam and I flying to Spain together, talking on the flight at night, exploring Madrid during the day, walking endlessly around, taking it all in together and talking about life.

I've been wracking my brain on when I first met Cailee. It was at a family function somewhere along the way. She was shy, but outgoing in a way that made me want to know her more. She has become a close and dear friend, and now family. We've bonded over our Slovenian heritage, squirreled away together at parties and chatted, and laughed over drinks.

These two are the yin to each others yang.

Sam and Cailee will now exchange vows. They have shared some vows in private already. We will hear their public vows now.

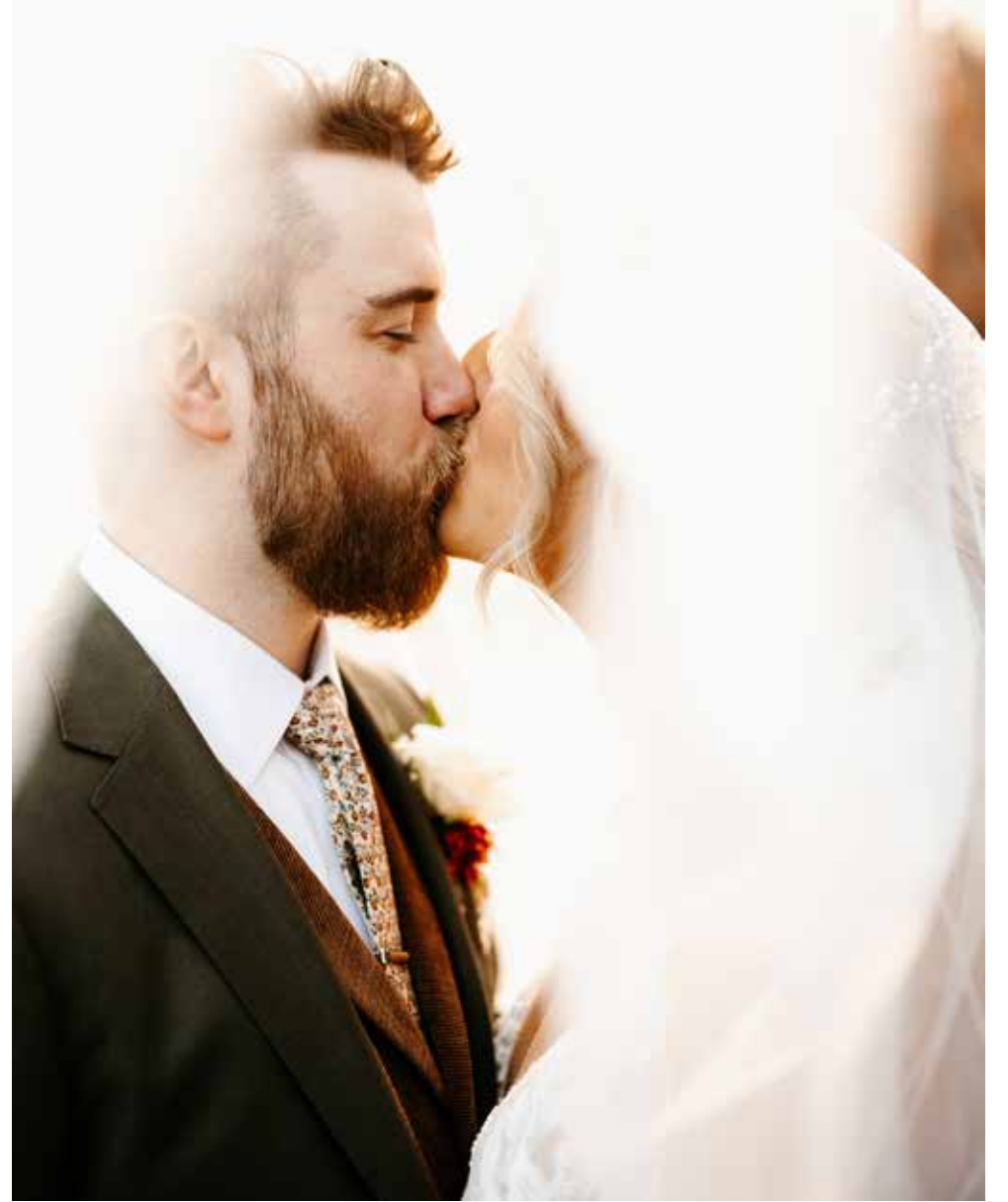
Cailee please begin.....

Sam now your turn.....

Thank you for sharing with us! Now may I have the rings?

Wedding rings can take on the meaning of what the couple wants. There are countless examples of what they mean throughout time, both religious and non-religious. To Sam and Cailee these rings mean commitment, strength, and love.







THE CEREMONY



It was so smooth. This was the huge attention moment. Everyone sitting/standing and staring at me. I don't need to be the center of attention and often don't like it. I feel like I have to present a certain way. I didn't feel that way when I walked out. Taylor fluffed my dress, fixed my veil and I waited to catch my breath and let the song play (definitely should have worked on timing at the rehearsal but I was too flustered). Three steps in I felt the veil tug at my hair and fall out. I paused and kept going I was already in line of sight, it didn't matter. Everyone says you feel less nervous when you see your other half the day off, but I was more comforted when we met in the middle of the aisle. He was there I wouldn't trip, I felt safe. I loved the ceremony length, it was authentic and captured us perfectly. We didn't use extra words. Our vows were written and private so the spark notes version was short and sweet to keep our full vows between us. The ceremony was short enough I didn't have time to cry (I normally do at weddings, I just didn't cry until after the ceremony). According to Logan he liked that we were both swaying as we stood listening to Jered. Of course we were fidgety but it came across as sweet. Just like that Jered said okay kiss (not really) and we were walking back up the aisle married. I had the sweetest moments with my brothers once we left the crowd. Logan hugged me in one of those hugs where you go to move away but they're not done. I noticed he felt like he was crying and he was. He hugged Sam too and I felt they had finally connected completely. Q I knew was mushy but we hugged and it was just so nice to take a moment with our wedding party to celebrate what had just happened. -C



I thought the ceremony went great! I wanted to surprise everyone and thought that really worked out. I got tons of lovely comments and kudos about it after and throughout the night. I was like "oh man, it was so short", but Sam and Cailee said it was perfect and they wanted it short so that was all that mattered. -Jered



The ceremony Jered wrote was perfect. Succinct, intentional, fluff-free, and funny. It was so Cailee and Sam! Megan, my other bestie who I have forced Cailee to be friends with, timed it and the entire thing was 11 minutes from processional to recessional. Shortest ceremony I've ever witnessed, we didn't even have time to ruin our makeup with tears. I'll never forget Cailee's veil falling off and her cute little "oh well" shrug, or watching Deb and Troy to see who would break first, or Bob squeezing my hand right before letting go so I could go stand beside my girl. When it was over and we had all recessed behind the wall, we were a puddle of flowers and tears. Cailee and Sam were forced into an impromptu receiving line as we all hugged each of them before heading down to the party. -Jocelyn





THE RECEPTION



Time flew by! Holy cow. It went so fast that I wish I could go back in time and just revel in a few of those special moments.



We received so many great comments from the guests. But what I loved the most was how "personal" it felt to them. Almost intimate. From the flowers, to the speeches (each one had such a special touch), to the memorial sheets to the overall setting. Guests continue to tell us how it felt like they were not only part of Sam and Callie's special day – but also part of a family celebration. -D



BRUNCH AND FAREWELLS



I woke up with a five-alarm hangover. Apparently, when you're the Father of the Groom, and you walk too closely to the bar at the reception, people hand you drinks. The next morning I couldn't find half my suit, my keys, my phone, or the parking ticket for my truck. It turned out that Q had my suit coat. Deb, or someone else, had found my phone, and my niece Callie had put my keys and the parking ticket in my suit pants.

Deb had headed home about an hour earlier to start getting the house ready for the few dozen people potentially coming over for a brunch. Due to some unforeseen circumstances, I was going to have to cook. I drove home, a mere husk of a human, trying desperately to get into a cooking mood.

However, I walked in the house and found my nephew Trevor had already taken care of about 90% of the food, despite his own hangover.

It was f%*king heroic. -T



We were happy to host a brunch on Sunday so our travelers had a place to land before they headed back home. I had big plans of a very brunchy brunch – but quickly learned that unless you cater it, it's really hard to have brunchy things ready when you spent the night before at a hotel. So – we had breakfast tacos. Which is funny because we had lunch tacos on Friday. Hopefully folks know we eat more than tacos (barely).

Trevor was the Man of The Hour, making it home in time to help with the cooking. And also, making a nice batch of Hatch Green Chili at the grooms request. Which was such a huge hit – I was afraid the groom wasn't going to get any.

It was a great way to spend some time with family – to extend the celebration just a little further and to start the relaxing after a whirlwind leading up to the big day. Deb's Uber Service started at 3am Monday and ended at 10am. Deb was on the couch by 10:30 and didn't move for days. -D



And then it was over. Just like that. Two years of excitement, joy, stress, and anticipation. Done. Over. We've all been touched by the outpouring of love and support from everyone, humbled by it. We're very lucky people.

Sam and Cailee were together for almost eight years when they got married, they'd already begun building a life. Now they get to get on with it, with some simple, but very profound changes.

And all of us in the Labernik-Anderson Family have a new day to add to our Great Days Catalog, those core days, foundational days that change us. Days we'll remember forever. Some are awful, some are quietly monumental, and some are Great. 10/22/2022 was a Great Day. -T



