



ODE TO JOY

THIS WASHINGTON, D.C., COUPLE
HAD A LONG ROAD TO THE ALTAR,
BUT WHEN THEY ARRIVED,
THEY CELEBRATED WITH A WEDDING
WORTHY OF THE JOURNEY.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATE HEADLEY
TEXT BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS



SWEET THINGS

Rob Lockwood, in a tuxedo from Men's Warehouse, and Alison McLaughlin, in a dress by Oscar de la Renta and a Vera Wang veil, outside the private Washington, D.C., club where they wed.

Opposite A charm with a photograph of her late father graced Alison's bouquet, which included white peonies, sweet peas, mother-of-pearl garden roses, and eucalyptus.



CAPITAL ELEGANCE

1. Rob's boutonniere was an ivory spray rose with greenery. 2. Letterpressed invitations by Chere Berry Paper included a gold-fool monogram, painted beveled edges, and toile envelope liners. 3. Alison beamed at her mother. 4. A stately private club was the wedding site. 5. Welcome boxes—including chocolate bars and pink bubbly—featured the same toile used in the invitations. 6. Bridesmaids carried bouquets of mother-of-peach garden roses, 'Venetia' roses, 'Majolica' spray roses, and white peonies.

They say a silver lining of going through tough times is learning who your real friends are. Alison McLaughlin, a senior project manager for *U.S. News & World Report*, and Rob Lockwood, a media consultant, met when both were students at George Washington University, and had been dating for two years when her father suddenly passed away in 2014. That was when she learned who her future husband was. "It was really hard, and Rob was there for me and my mom so much," she says. When she first heard the news, he picked her up and drove her to her family's home, ordered lunch

for everyone, and stayed with them—while still giving them the space they needed. "After that, I knew I could count on him no matter what." Not that Rob himself ever had any doubts. He'd been smitten from the start with Alison's beauty and smarts. "There were no stumbling blocks. I liked and loved her more every day," he says.

Unfortunately, Alison's father's passing wasn't their only challenge. Six months after their November 2015 engagement, then-28-year-old Alison learned she had breast cancer. Rob was by her side as she underwent

chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation—going to every appointment, staying positive about the future, and curling up with her to binge-watch her favorite TV shows. "It made me even more confident in our relationship, because if he was so brave and supportive when I was very depressed, why wouldn't we make it through anything?" she says. The wedding was another source of hope. "Thinking about it helped me get through," Alison says. When their planner, Allison Jackson of Pineapple Productions, heard about the diagnosis, she took all but the fun decisions off the bride's

plate, providing necessary moments of joy. Four months before the wedding, Alison finished treatment and was cancer-free.

On April 29, 2017, 120 of the couple's friends and family members gathered in a Washington, D.C., private club where Alison's father had been a board member; its Beaux-Arts style was the ideal backdrop for the classic French-blue-and-white celebration the couple wanted. Radiant, Alison walked down the aisle to "Dear Theodosia" from the Broadway musical *Hamilton*, a personal favorite of hers; it was played by

a string quartet that included her aunt and two cousins. Later, everyone feasted on filet mignon and confetti cake, danced the night away to a live band—to songs like Stevie Wonder's "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours"—and rejoiced in the occasion. "It was all so beautiful. Everything went how I hoped it would," Alison says.

As for Rob, he most cherishes the moment when he first saw his bride in her wedding dress. "I choked up," he says. "She was as beautiful as I'd ever seen her. She really, truly, looked like herself again."



“
 Rob got pretty
 emotional when he was
 reading his vows,
 which was so cute. He
 joked, ‘This is why
 there’s no social media
 allowed!’ It was a
 beautiful moment.
 —Alison



SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED

1. The couple shared vows they wrote themselves, followed by traditional vows, before exchanging rings. 2. The ceremony programs were flat-printed and bound with gold cords; the backs of the programs named people who'd passed away and couldn't be with them at the wedding, including Alison's dad. 3. The escort-card table was decked out with blue-and-white Canton and chinoiserie vases and a profusion of cherry blossoms, an iconic Washington, D.C., bloom; mirrored risers were set out to display calligraphed envelopes holding escort cards and, later, sweets. 4. Alison smiled with some of her bridesmaids, who wore French-blue dresses by Thies.

GRANDEST GESTURES

5. Crystal bowls, filled with flowers, and blue glasses adorned the table. Hemstitched napkins were embroidered with the couple's monogram. 6. Four custom banquettes, slipcovered in toile, with slate-blue dupioni-silk pillows, edged the room. 7. Amaryllis Floral & Event Design made French-blue raw-silk chair covers for the bride and groom, also bearing their monogram. 8. Alison and Rob developed these cherry-blossom mule cocktails—made with vodka, Luxardo cherries, and Bermuda ginger beer—as their signature drink. 9. A 32-foot-long head table ran nearly the length of the room, with a mirrored inset top and toile skirt, crystal candlesticks, and three tall glass risers with hydrangeas, mother-of-pearl and 'Vendela' roses, and tulips.



TOILE AND TWIRL

1. Buttercream Bakeshop made custom toile-patterned sugar cookies, mimicking the exact pattern of the envelope liners. 2. Sorority sisters of the bride mingled at cocktail hour. 3. The couple's first dance was performed to Ed Sheeran's "Perfect," which had been released just a month before the wedding. Alison, upon hearing the song, had the hunch it would become a popular wedding-song pick. "I was like, 'Let's be the first ones to do this,'" she recalls. 4. The wedding cake, also by Buttercream Bakeshop, included tiers of both confetti and devil's food cake with vanilla buttercream frosting, and was adorned with a gum-paste monogram in gold.

ALISON AND ROB'S CLASSIC ROMANCE

"We generally agreed on everything. Unless you really care strongly about something, let your bride have her way."

—ROB, A VERY WISE MAN

By the Numbers

537

Days between Alison and Rob's engagement and their wedding

8

Versions of their monogram the stationer sent the couple to select from

5

Number of times they practiced their first dance

11

Taste tests to perfect their signature cocktail, the cherry-blossom mule

75

Bottles of rosé Champagne in custom labels for the welcome boxes

3,017

Stems of flowers in the ceremony and reception

125

Yards of blue-and-white toile fabric used in tablecloths and to upholster the banquettes

TOP-SECRET PROPOSAL

Rob wanted to surprise Alison, so he ordered an engagement ring from a jeweler in Arizona, then hid it inside an alligator head that he kept on a bookshelf. "I knew she'd never go looking in the alligator's mouth!" Rob says. To pop the question, he asked a filmmaker friend to arrange a fake event at the Jefferson Memorial. It was a very rainy night, and Alison wanted to stay home, but Rob convinced her to go. "I ended up kneeling in a puddle," he remembers. The moment she said yes, their best friends appeared. "I don't even remember what he said. I was so excited and so happy!" Alison recalls.

ALL ABOUT THE DRESS

Alison knew she wanted a ball gown—in a space as grand as her wedding venue, a dress with presence is all but required. She visited salons with her mom, maid of honor, and a bridesmaid in tow, and "I've never had such an enjoyable experience trying on clothes!" she gushes. It was her friend Kelly who spotted the Oscar de la Renta gown with iridescent hand-sewn lace that she ultimately chose (from another bride's "no" rack!). Though her mom encouraged her to think it over, "I knew that was it," says Alison. "It felt very unique. I loved the lace, the train, and the sweet-heart neckline. I never second-guessed it!"

THEIR MARK

THE BRIDE WANTED A CUSTOM MONOGRAM TO APPEAR THROUGHOUT THE CELEBRATION. "I LOVE WHITE, HONEYMOONS WHERE TWO LETTERS ARE INTERTWINED, SO I ASKED OUR STATIONER FOR THAT," SHE SAYS. "IT MADE IT PERSONAL AND TIMELESS—AND I LOVE THE INTERLOCKING LOOK, WHICH IS A LITTLE MORE CLASSIC THAN WHAT EVERYONE'S DOING NOW, WITH A SMALL INITIAL AND A BIG INITIAL."

HONEYMOON DISPATCH

The couple were determined to head to paradise for their honeymoon two weeks after the wedding. They decided on Four Seasons Resort Lanai (fourseasons.com/lanai), on a 140-square-mile atoll known as Hawaii's last unspoiled (read: crowd-free) major island, where activities include golfing and private sunset sails—the latter of which made for an evening the couple will never forget. Alison and Rob loved that the resort staff seemed to always know their names; eventually, so did a major celebrity they met by chance. "When we got to the resort, I said, 'This looks like a James Bond hangout,'" Rob says. "The next day, we ended up talking to Pierce Brosnan and his wife. He gave us an informal blessing on our marriage! 'Love, happiness, peace!'"

SOURCES

Event planning and design: Pineapple Productions. **Floral design and décor:** Amaryllis Floral & Event Design. **Photography:** Kate Headley. **Videography:** Bowen Films. **Officiant:** Maureen Byrne. **Ceremonies:** Stationery. **Choreo:** Berry Paper. **Calligraphy:** Stacy Shapiro. **Cake and cookies:** Buttercream Bakeshop. **Music:** String Attack, Jukebox. **Rentals:** QC Rental, La Tavola Fine Linen, Tabletoppers, Inc., Table Manners. **Bride's gown:** Oscar de la Renta. **Bride's accessories:** Vera Wang (veil), Marchesa (earrings), Schmitt Jewelers (engagement ring), David Yurman (right-hand ring), Carter (bracelet), Kate Spade (shoes). **Hair:** Christophe. **Makeup:** Leah Margolis. **Bridesmaid dresses:** Thivie. **Groom's tuxedo and menswear:** Men's Wearhouse.

See The Guide for more details.

Chris grinned as he posed, in a tux by Alton Lane, with his bride and children. Petals from Hannah's Mira Zwillinger gown were sewn onto Kate's dress.



HANNAH DAVIS & CHRIS HARLAN

JUNE 10, 2017 / NORTH GARDEN, VIRGINIA

Love of wine and sunsets led Chris Harlan and Hannah Davis to dream of wine country for their June afternoon wedding. But instead of the famed vineyards of California or beyond, the once long-distance couple sought that ambience closer to home, in the vineyards near Charlottesville, Virginia.

Home—and, more important, family—were the driving themes for their wedding. The two met while on a summerlong project in Dallas for the management-consulting firm where they both worked. They found themselves spending more time together as the project wound down, and what became their first real date ended with Hannah and Chris—a single dad of two young children—flipping through family pictures on his phone and talking about life. “Once we crossed that line, we were suddenly seriously dating,” says Hannah.

After the project ended, Hannah returned to New York City. Over the next two years, she and Chris traveled to each other nearly every week. She grew close to his children, Jack and Kate, and eventually moved to the Washington, D.C., area, where he had relocated.

A cheerful fabric print by Schumacher called “Citrus Garden” inspired the aesthetic of the day, beginning with the stationery and custom family crest by Cheree Berry Paper.



Chris proposed in December 2015, with a three-diamond ring inspired by a costume ring the kids had found for Hannah. “I researched the meanings of three-stone rings: past, present, and future; friendship, love, and fidelity; me, you, and family,” he says.

Though the wedding venue, Pippin Hill, was part vineyard, the children’s involvement showed from start to finish. During the ceremony, 7-year-old Kate recited a reading she had chosen based on values they all share as a family. At the reception, a tepee dubbed “Jack & Kate’s Place” was stocked with treats and activities for little ones. And they chose a restaurant for the day-after brunch that had space for a family game of soccer, one of the kids’ favorite sports.

It was as important to Hannah as to Chris that the kids share the spotlight. “She was truly selfless in this regard,” he says. “At the ceremony, when all eyes were understandably on Hannah, she delivered unique and heartfelt vows to each of the children and to me, so that all in attendance knew that this was a moment to celebrate our family officially coming together as one.” — Kelly Killian

SOURCES Location and catering: Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards; Event planning and design: Simply Chic Events; Flowers, décor, and custom furnishings: Beehive Events; Photography: Ryan Ray; Videography: Monchetti Weddings; Officiant: Reverend Bill Cochran; Stationery: Cheree Berry Paper; Calligraphy: Anne Robin; Calligraphy + Design: Cake Sweet Fix; Music: Nation, Elan Artists; Rentals: La Tavola Fine Linen; Party Rental Ltd.; Perfect Settings; Tepee and custom stage: Skyline Tent Company; Bride’s gown and veil: Mira Zwillinger; Hair: Remona Soleimani; Makeup: Leah Margosis. See the Guide for more details.



Beehive Events gathered lush early-summer blooms—including peonies, garden roses, spirea, and viburnum—into centerpieces.

A 30-foot canvas tepee, stocked with games, coloring pages, and candy jars, provided a hideout for kids all evening.



The bride's sisters, Becca (left) and Sadie, were both maids of honor (along with Kate). Sadie's wedding had been just months earlier, so she and Hannah shared many vendors and readings.



A custom-made runner of "Citrus Garden" fabric draped a long center table for the wedding party. Chandeliers were brought in to balance the rustic charm of the reception space.



“
Many brides want the light to shine brightest on themselves on their wedding day, but Hannah made sure that family was the clear focus of the celebration.

—CHRIS

”



Kid-size refreshments and fancy paper straws were in abundance at the "kids' bar."

The two-flavor, lemon-adorned cake by Sweet Fix included sea-salt-caramel buttercream—a nod to a gelato flavor the couple shared on their first date.

