

Real Wedding



ABC member planner: Mary Dann-McNamee, Mary Dann Wedding and Party Coordinators, Los Angeles.

Photographer: New Image Photography.

ABC businesses: Godfather Films, Ladyhawk Events, and Your Dream Day.

Other businesses: Heidzillas, The Hillbrook Club, Jonathan Koslen Photography, Lasting Impression Rentals, Heatherlily Inc., Cakes By Nadine, Classic DJ Service, Al Mr. Limo, and Arra Beauty Salon.

The couple: Tim was the last of seven children to marry. He grew up in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, but had been living in Manhattan Beach, Calif., for 20 years. He and Sharise dated for over a year when, at 40, she became pregnant, so they planned a destination wedding in winter in the groom's hometown within 60 days.

Inspiration: They wanted something simple and inexpensive. Inspiration came from my own experience when I was 40, pregnant, and wanted my wedding emphasis to be on family. Naturally, I felt a strong bond with the couple. When we met in December, I planned to get them started and find an Ohio planner to finish. But things progressed well, and they asked if I could stay on in Ohio.

Style: The wedding was simple and organic. The bride wanted to ensure the stems of the flowers were visible through the glass vases. She wanted

warm, low lighting, and the family gathered in one room with comfortable seating arrangements. The videographer was also important to capture the family time. There were over six hours of toasts in the two-day period.

Color palette: Earth tones such as champagne, green, and white with gold accents.

Budget: Approximately \$40,000.

Guest count: 180

Most unique design element: The placement of the cake was in an atrium-type alcove with residential furniture around it. When we cut the cake, the family was able to come in close and sit comfortably. It felt intimate.

Biggest challenge: The first challenge was weather. On Friday, the airports were snowed in for at least eight hours. Thankfully, all guests were inside before the snow hit, but it still presented some transportation issues. Another challenge was planning from Manhattan Beach with only one trip to the location 30 days before the event.

Impressions: In my 20 years of planning weddings, I've never experienced a more thoughtful and talented group of guests. Over 15 people wanted to give toasts and sing songs. It was a challenge to keep the timeline and allow everyone time to speak, but it made for a very special wedding for the bride and groom.

Hindsight: There are a lot of great vendors throughout the country. I couldn't believe the high level of service from really great professionals located 35 miles from Cleveland. It increased my faith of high standards in service even if you are not at a luxury hotel. ♦♦