BRIGHT STUFF

NOT THE TYPES TO HOST A LAVISH BALLROOM AFFAIR, THIS BROOKLYN DUO THREW AN UPBEAT AND TOTALLY LAID-BACK FLORIDA BACKYARD PARTY FILLED WITH THEIR FAVORITE THINGS: FRENCH FRIES, FRIENDS, AND FESTIVE POPS OF RED.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHRYN BARNARD
TEXT BY MEGAN DEEM









IN THE SUMMER of 2009, somewhere along I-95 between Baltimore and Brooklyn, graphic designer Katie Evans began to suspect she wanted John Reeves to be her copilot for longer than just the drive to New York City. The two met through a mutual acquaintance in their home state of Florida when Katie was in high school and John was in college. They were friends throughout her college career, but by the time they talked about dating, "I was going to New York for a job," she says, "and John was still studying in Florida, so we said we'd wait until he graduated." In the meantime, he agreed to help her move. It was in the U-Haul, she recalls, that "I said I wanted him to be my boyfriend—right then."

The first year, they had a long-distance relationship. "I'd come up to visit, and we'd meet in Madison Square Park, near her office," says John, now a sales manager. Their park dates became a tradition,

and one year after John followed her to the Big Apple, he knew it was where he wanted to propose. On a blustery October day in 2011, he managed to get an unsuspecting Katie to join him for a walk there and had a friend hide nearby to snap photos. Before John could pop the question, though, park security came over to warn the pair that someone was taking their picture. "I was shaking my head, trying to cut the guys off," John says. Luckily, Katie didn't catch on. The proposal went off without a hitch, and the guards even swung by after to offer congratulations.

Right away, the newly engaged couple put down a deposit on an event space in a Brooklyn park, "but as things progressed, I realized how expensive it was going to be," Katie says. "My parents were in town at the time and said, 'Let's have it in our backyard." On November 3, 2012, Katie and John did just that, gathering in Palm Beach Gardens with 115 of their closest pals and relatives for their brief but heartfelt nondenominational ceremony, officiated by a family friend. Then the homespun hilarity began: A DJ rocked tunes from a playlist the duo had drawn up, and a food truck parked in the yard served fried chicken, BBQ ribs, truffle fries, and cornbread. "It was a fun, casual, nonfussy party," Katie says. "And that's exactly what we wanted."

RED-LETTER DAY

1. One of John's nephews held the rings on a polka-dot pillow housed in a lacquer box. 2. Miniature pinscher Frankie, one of the bridesmaids' pets, acted as flower "girl," wearing fresh blooms.

3. The bride clutched white David Austin roses, carnations, freesia—and her father—as she walked down the aisle.

Opposite: Katie designed the bold red, aqua, black, and white suite, which included a fold-out schedule of events.











SCARLET FEVER

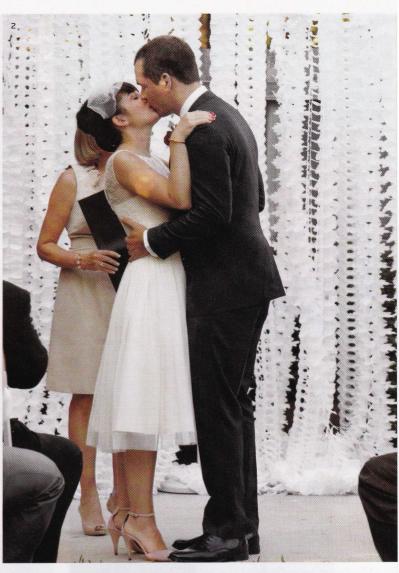
1. The bride's mother sewed a striped heart flag that hung from the house, marking the wedding's location. 2. Katie asked her 'maids to

wear knee-length red dresses. **3.** Pre-ceremony, a beverage station offered decanters of lemonade, water, and iced tea.

4. Quirky-cute photo-booth props that Katie found on Etsy added whimsy to instant prints, of which attendees received two-one to keep, and one to affix in the guest book with colorful washi tapes in various on-palette patterns.









PLACES, PLEASE

1. At the rehearsal dinner, Katie gifted Kate Spade sailor-knot bracelets to her attendants, mother, John's mom, and the officiant to

wear the following day, along with a note thanking each for helping her "tie the knot." 2. The new Mr. and Mrs. sealed it with a kiss in front of hanging paper

garlands from Shop Sweet Lulu. **3.** John gave his guys gray ties from J.Crew. 4. The couple posed with the groomsmen, including John's four brothers.









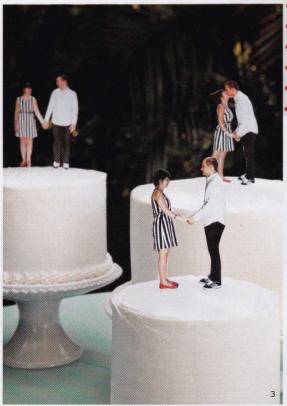
BACKYARD BITES

1. A bridesmaid devised signature drinks, such as the Love Lobster (rum, pomegranate, club soda, and lemon) and Dos Flamingos

(tequila, grapefruit, club soda, hibiscus tea, and lime). Festive napkins read "Bottoms Up." 2. Truffle french fries made the rounds during the cocktail hour. 3. Waiters brought crab-

cake sliders from a retrochic food truck. 4. Katie designed a giant menu showing partygoers what to expect and had it hung on the side of her parents' garage.









POST-VOWS PICNIC

1. After the 4 P.M. ceremony, string lights illuminated robin's-egg-blue-swathed tables. 2. "I get hungry during long ceremonies, so we put

goodie bags of chocolate chip cookies and pretzels out with the programs," Katie says. **3.** Custom cutouts made from the pair's engagement photos topped six wedding cakes—each one a different flavor. **4.** Rows of vases from Michaels and Goodwill stores were filled with peonies, dahlias, and ranunculus to act as centerpieces.

GOURMET

LAST STOP

Katie kicked up a heel as she kissed her groom; their food truck provided an impres-sively on-palette backdrop.

KATIE + JOHN'S

GET RED-Y GUIDE

By the Numbers

1.064

Miles between the pair during their longdistance first year (Coral Springs, Florida, to New York City)

4

Diamonds John looked at before choosing one

 $2^{\frac{1}{2}}$

Years from first date to engagement

356

Days from "Yes!" to "I do!"

5

Minutes the ceremony lasted

6

Hours the entire backyard bash went on

70

Degrees Fahrenheit on the day of the wedding

55

Number of red vases that lined the carport wall to create a photo backdrop

6

Cakes: red velvet; chocolate Heath bar; vanilla with lemon filling; double Dutch hocolate; marble with raspberry filling; and butter pecan

THEIR PLAYLIST

PROCESSIONAL

Jose Gonzales, "Heartbeats"

RECESSIONAL

The Beatles, "Here Comes the Sun"

FIRST DANCE

Band of Horses, "No One's Gonna Love You"

Logistics

THE ACCOMMODATIONS The couple blocked out rooms for guests at the Marriott (marriott.com) and the Hilton on Singer Island (hilton.com).

THE REHEARSAL DINNER Family and the wedding party gathered in the Evans' backyard and ate at the same tables and chairs set out for the wedding. "We had it catered by C.R. Chicks, a casual chicken place," says Katie (crchickswpb.com). Then they met up with friends at the Tiki Waterfront Sea Grill in West Palm Beach (200 E. 13th St., 561-845-5532).

ACTIVITIES Katie and John suggested renting bikes or convertibles and exploring Palm Beach. However, since many guests had come from the East Coast, which had just been ravaged by Hurricane Sandy, they were content to sit on the beach and soak up the sun.

JOHN'S MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT

"I had seen Katie in the dress already, but when she started coming down the aisle, it was the best. She looked beautiful, and watching her dad get a little choked up—it was powerful."

THE READING

At the ceremony, the officiant, Katie's best friend's mother, recited a quote that's been attributed to both Dr. Seuss and Robert Fulghum:

We are all a little weird and life's a little weird. When we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall in mutual weirdness and call it love.

29

We had everyone
download the
Wedding Party app,
which is like
your own personal
Instagram that
no one can see
unless they have
the password.
People posted
photos all weekend,
which was a
nice way to share
the moment, but
also keep it private.

"

KATIE, ON THEIR TECHY FIND (WEDDINGPARTYAPP.COM)

The Need for Speed

Early on in the planning process, Katie and John agreed that the ceremony would be less than 10 minutes, keeping their guests (and the potentially hot, muggy Florida weather) in mind. "I've only been to a couple of weddings as an adult," Katie says, "and both were two-hour ceremonies." John was on board with an express ritual, too, saying, "People who know us know how we feel about each other. I just wanted to have a quick ceremony—and then let the celebration begin!"

SOURCES

Catering Curbside Gourmet Photography Valerie Noell Videography Wedit Printing Stationery HQ Cakes Lorene's Loving Oven

Music DJ Ross of Scratch Weddings Rentals Classic Party Rentals Bride's gown Elizabeth Dye Bride's accessories Sarah Gabriel (veil); Kate Spade (bangle); Barneys Co-Op (shoes) Hair Rachael Rufrano Makeup Melinda Soltis Groom's suit and men's ties J.Crew Wedding bands Catbird

Dog collar and leash DogWalkies Ceremony garland Shop Sweet Lulu Photo booth Memory Booths