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MICHELLE RAU
TO JOHN ANTONINI



MEADOW BROOK HALL,
ROCHESTER HILLS,
MICHIGAN

living out a dream

by Lauren Maiman

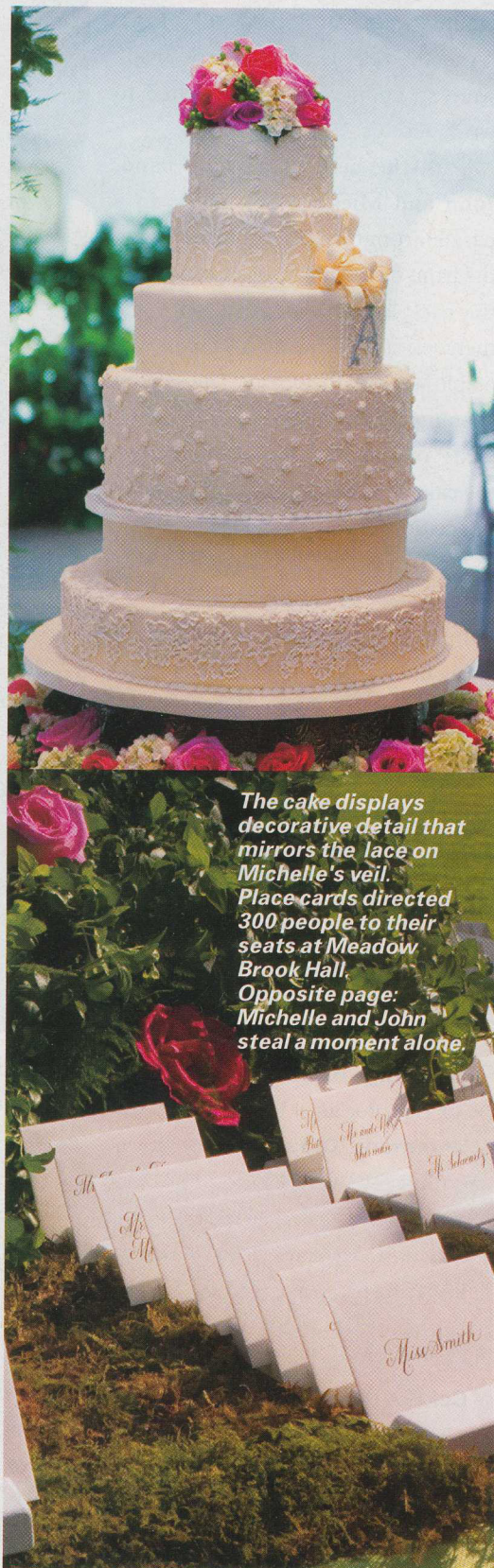
photography by Ray Anthony

What started as a clandestine, workplace romance nearly three years ago evolved into a 300-person fete when Michelle Rau wed John Antonini last summer. The pair met on Michelle's first day of work at Saks Fifth Avenue in Troy, where John was also employed. A co-worker brought them together but didn't have to do much after that. "John and I ended up talking for hours after she had left," Michelle says of their instant connection, which grew stronger as they discovered commonalities like family values and upbringing. "I was swept off my feet."

After taking their romance public ("I was so nervous to tell my boss," John says), the couple was engaged in May 2005 on a surprise trip to Maui planned by John. "I definitely didn't think it was going to happen. I knew John wouldn't ask me to marry him without my dad's permission and I thought my dad would have definitely given it away," Michelle says of the surprise of her life.

"She just burst into tears. She didn't even say yes," John says of the oceanside proposal. "After, like, five minutes I had to say, 'so is that a yes?'"

It was an absolute yes and for the next 14 months, John, Michelle and their wedding team—including both sets of parents—worked with wedding planner Carolyn Hefner of Birmingham's the China Closet to make the couple's storybook wedding come true. The bride and groom wed at St. Hugo of the Hills in Bloomfield Hills, where John's family has been members for years. The reception followed at Meadow Brook Hall



The cake displays decorative detail that mirrors the lace on Michelle's veil. Place cards directed 300 people to their seats at Meadow Brook Hall. Opposite page: Michelle and John steal a moment alone.

in Rochester Hills. "We knew we wanted to be outdoors," John says. "And the people at Meadow Brook were so cooperative and excited to work with us."

With the help of a Dixie band, John and Michelle led guests in a parade from the cocktail reception at the front of the mansion to the tent in the back. The Italian-inspired menu included stuffed filet and Tuscan vegetables as a main course. The elegant evening was accented by the newlyweds' monogram on everything from the cake to the cocktail napkins to the dance floor.

"I always wanted to live a fairytale for one day," Michelle says. "I was not a sophisticated bride. I was a little girl living her dream."

the details

Bride: Michelle Rau, 26, developmental manager for Southeast Michigan, Hospice of Michigan, Detroit

Groom: John Antonini, 29, assistant general manager, Saks Fifth Avenue, Troy

Wedding Ceremony: St. Hugo of the Hills, Bloomfield Hills, wed by Monsignor Tony Tocco

Wedding Reception: Meadow Brook Hall, Rochester Hills

Ceremony Dress: Amsale gown, Saks Fifth Avenue, Chicago. "The moment I put it on, I burst into tears. I've never loved anything more," Michelle says.

Invitations: White with a silver border, completed with their monogram, by Crane's, from Saks Fifth Avenue, Troy

Cake: A customized cake that matched the lace on Michelle's veil, by Couture Cakes, Shelby Township

Wedding Planner: Carolyn Hefner, owner of the China Closet,

Birmingham. "We put her through the mill, but she kept the whole thing together," recalls John.

Hair: Luigi Bruni Salon, Birmingham. "He was so creative," Michelle says.

Photographer: Ray Anthony, Ray Anthony Photography, Brighton. "The photos are amazing," Michelle declares.

Transportation: The bridal party and family took two limos, but John and Michelle drove in John's mother's Bentley (a Christmas gift from John's father). "That drive was so special. It was a moment alone together and the sky was pink," recalls Michelle. "It was

like God was matching our wedding's colors."

Honeymoon: Two and one-half weeks in the Mediterranean. Says Michelle: "The highlights of our trip were seeing Athens, relaxing on the island of Santorini, visiting the island of Capri, shopping for pottery in Florence, walking through Monte Carlo, and, of course, enjoying all of the fabulous cuisine."

Special Touch: Michelle wore her mother's veil, which she had restored. "I had planned to take it off at the reception," Michelle explains, "but I wore it all night. It lit me up inside."





Platinum-and-pink table settings sparkle with elegance. "We didn't even consider indoor locations," John says of the couple's desire for an outdoor reception. A Dixie land band leads guests to the back of the mansion.

Opposite page: Although she's an eastside girl, Michelle wanted to wed at John's church, so they start their lives together where they'll raise their children.

