



KATELYN VAN ALSTYNE  
AND MIKHAIL GRABOVSKI  
JULY 5, '13  
TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

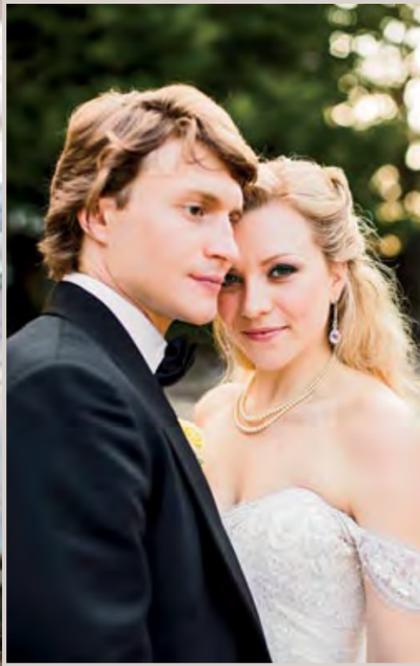
> **FEATURE WEDDING:** “Our eyes locked and everything around me became muted... all I saw was him and the love written all over his face.”



On a December evening, Katelyn was out celebrating a friend's thirtieth birthday at a popular Toronto hot spot. Mikhail was also there with a group of his friends. Katelyn inadvertently found herself playing matchmaker between two members of the respective groups. She admits her attempts at matchmaking were futile, but it did give her a chance to meet Mikhail.

“He was different than anyone I had ever met,” she remarks, “with unruly hair and a thick Russian accent. I was drawn to him immediately.” They parted ways at the end of the night but exchanged phone numbers.

Destiny took its course and their romance blossomed. Two years into their relationship, they found themselves in Belarus, visiting Mikhail's family. One morning, Mikhail



told Katelyn he had planned a full day just for them. It started off with one of Katelyn’s favorite activities—horse riding. “We spent the day touring one of the largest horse farms in Belarus,” she remembers. “I was in my element.”

Later in the day, Mikhail revealed they were going somewhere special for dinner. It turned out it was his grandmother’s house. She had prepared the most sumptuous multi-course meal with all the delicacies fit for a grand holiday. Halfway through dinner Mikhail proposed. “I wanted the most important people in my life to bear witness to our vows,” he attests. Each family member in turn toasted and welcomed Katelyn to the family. “It was incredibly touching and intimate,” she remembers.



Plans for the wedding started to unfold. “There were several inspirations that we borrowed from,” reveals Katelyn. One being the story of Anna Karenina and Russian royalty.

Their modern day Russian-Canadian fairytale theme started with invitations that included their colors of midnight blue, crimson and blush with gold accents. They used their individual horoscope constellations to make a night sky which was repeated throughout the design on the custom-made dance floor, menus and cake. Katelyn’s passion for flowers became a major focal point—all in blush, crimson and butter yellow. Every single element of the wedding was selected with a specific feeling or purpose.

For the reception, custom tabletops were created in a soft sea-foam blue and flocked

velvet. Cut crystal chargers and gold-rimmed glasses added a luxurious feel to the place settings. Chandeliers were covered in fragrant blooms and lush greenery. The entire room felt like a secret garden.

A big challenge was to make sure that every single guest felt special. Many flew in from Russia, so everything was translated for them. There was something personalized for everyone. Guests were treated to a vodka tasting bar stocked with black caviar and premium vodka brands imported from Russia. Entertainment included a classical quartet, a traditional Russian folk band, and a DJ accompanied by roaming saxophone, bongo and violin while four go-go dancers performed in spectacular costumes.





“My absolute favorite moment of the entire day,” says Katelyn, “was right before the ceremony started.” As she walked down the stairs to the chapel room, she could hear cheering and chanting. It made her heart pound and as she rounded the corner to walk down the aisle, “all I saw was Misha; our eyes locked and everything around me became muted, all I saw was him and the love written all over his face.”

After the bride and groom graciously thanked their guests for traveling such distances to celebrate their wedding, a spectacular fireworks display erupted behind them.

“We told our story using senses; each taste and smell, every sight and sound resonated with the love and energy we have for each other,” explains Katelyn. “It was romantic, and timeless and mystical.”

The couple enjoyed an extended honeymoon in France visiting Paris, Provence and Côte d’Azur.

> **Written by Yanni Tzoumas**

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Location: **Graydon Hall Manor** Toronto, ON, Canada;  
Caterer: **Couture Cuisine** Toronto, ON, Canada;  
Cake: **Cake Opera Co.** Toronto, ON, Canada; Event Design, Floral Design, Planner, Linen and Table Setting: **Melissa Andre Events** Toronto, ON, Canada; Floral Production: **Jackie O** Toronto, ON, Canada and **Sweet Woodruff** Toronto, ON, Canada; Rentals: **Contemporary Furniture Rentals Inc.** Toronto, ON, Canada; Stationery: **Sweet Peony Press** Toronto, ON, Canada; Wedding Dress and Veil: **Ines Di Santo**; Bride’s Shoes: **Gucci**; Engagement Ring: **Bulgari**; Groom’s Tuxedo: **TOM FORD**; Photography: **T.H. Jackson Huang, ikonica** Toronto, ON, Canada

