Makeup Artist for Her Moody, Intimate Nuptials in Connecticut

The editorial director of beauty and style at PEOPLE, Andrea Lavinthal had the ultimate big-day glam team.

By Sara Dickinson | Published on 01/12/24 09:20AM

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

In 2011, Andrea Lavinthal and Justin Gregory lived in the same building in New York City and met while they were doing laundry—a classic Manhattan meet-cute. To learn more about her neighbor, Andrea, PEOPLE's Editorial Director, Beauty & Style, went straight to a trustworthy source: their doorman. After learning that Justin was straight, single, and employed (he's a portfolio manager), she left a note on his door with her phone number. “It took him almost three months to text me,” she says. “Almost 13 years, seven addresses, two kids, and countless cocktails later, I still have a crush on him.”

In January 2023, Justin secured a babysitter and asked Andrea if they could spend some alone time together. After a trip to the mall ("When presented with a childless afternoon with the love of my life, I chose to schlep him to the mall to buy him new jeans!" laughs the bride), he insisted on stopping at the beach for a stroll, noting that it was unseasonably warm outside. He found a remote spot along their path before getting down on one knee to propose. "I was so overwhelmed, I got down on *two* knees," Andrea says. "We were both shocked by how much I cried. I never thought about getting engaged or what a proposal would look or feel like, so when it happened, I was caught off-guard by how emotional it was to see him kneeling down with a ring and hear him say the most beautiful words to me. We celebrated with dinner at Torrisi and he had my whole family come to Greenwich for brunch the next day. It was perfect."

The couple knew they wanted a family-only wedding by the end of the year, so they enlisted help from Andrea’s friend, planner Lauren Schweibold from Madison Events, to plan a 17-guest wedding on November 25, 2023. Lauren recommended Graybarns in Norwalk, Connecticut, where the couple held a candlelit barn ceremony with Jewish traditions and an intimate dinner reception at the venue’s restaurant, Tavern. The inspiration for the day’s décor, centered around burgundy blooms, plenty of candles, and simple linens, had a unique source: Andrea and Justin say Guns N’ Roses' music video for "November Rain" was their starting point.

Take a look at how they used a moody fall color palette to enhance the vibe of their intimate, family-focused big day in these photographs from Ruby Olivia Photography.

RELATED: How to Prep Your Skin for Wedding-Day Makeup

GRAYBARNS
ON THE SILVERMINE RIVER

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Andrea and Justin decided to host their big day at Graybarns, a historic property that was once a textile factory and speakeasy; the venue is located on a bluff overlooking a pond and river. "I considered a few other venues, but after a visit to Graybarns where I met with Olivia Savarese who oversees events, I knew it was the place," Andrea says.

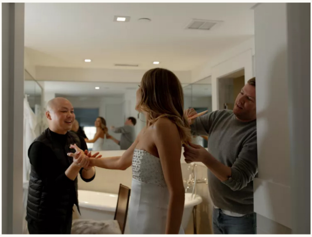


PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Andrea—a beauty expert by way of her vocation—worked with makeup artist Daniel Martin (the creative responsible for Meghan Markle's natural big-day beauty look!) to create a "duchess" glam vibe; the soft makeup paired perfectly with her wavy hairstyle with extensions, created by Tommy Buckett. "I had the best time getting ready with Tommy and Daniel," Andrea says. "We laughed and chatted the whole time and they made me feel so beautiful."

Daniel turned to one of his favorite products to get Andrea's complexion (which was already luminous thanks to a mix of pre-wedding facials) ready for the big day. "Daniel prepped me with his signature Tatcha Skin Ritual, which he said he does on Meghan Markle, Dakota Johnson, and Michelle Yeoh, among others," says the bride.

RELATED: The 10 Best Facials to Get Before Your Wedding

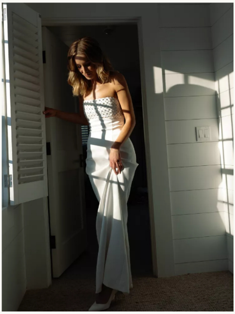


PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Andrea and her mom made a trip to Kleinfeld Bridal during a sample sale, not necessarily expecting to find her wedding dress. “I pictured crazy brides who would trample my mom to get their dream dress, but it was disappointingly civil,” Andrea says.

After trying on the simplest gowns they had, her stylist pulled a strapless column dress from a new collection by Nicole + Felicia. “It was so different from everything I had tried on,” she says. “It felt like a red carpet dress, but with a bridal twist.” The dress had embellishments on the top and a peek-a-boo detail at the bodice, which—unfortunately—caused the bride some day-of stress. "I had three fittings and by the third one it was perfect and the cut-out detail looked so cool—but for some reason on the wedding day, it kept bunching up under the bust and apparently everyone was too busy being happy for me to tell me to adjust my dress," says Andrea. "As a result, I didn’t have a single photo where you can see the dress the way it actually was. I had a retoucher work some magic on a few shots, but not all of them. I’m so bummed because that detail is what made the dress feel so 'me' but eventually I’ll get over it. And by 'eventually' I’m thinking by our 25th anniversary."

As for her accessories? She opted for white satin pumps from Sarah Flint and a custom pearl and crystal veil—made by a Kleinfeld seamstress who's been with the company for nearly three decades. "At the last fitting, I had her cut it from cathedral length to fingertip for a more modern look," says the bride. She also wore a mixed shape tennis bracelet and bezel set drop earrings from Serpentine Jewels. A bunch of burgundy blooms added a pop of moody color to her bridal ensemble.

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

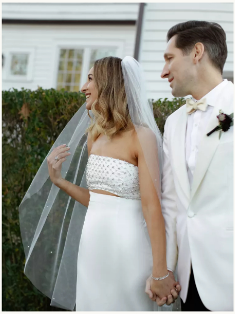


PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Justin chose an ivory Todd Snyder Italian shawl collar tuxedo with a white silk bow tie and black tuxedo pants for the occasion. He also wore cufflinks—a gift from Andrea he's treasured for over a decade. The duo shared a first look before the ceremony to shake out some of those jitters. “After 12 years, it’s nice to know that just the sight of your significant other can make you feel like you’re going to pass out (in a good way!)” Andrea says.

Justin was blown away by Andrea’s dress, which she managed to keep a secret from him during the planning process.

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

The couple's children, Saxon and Vaughn, were part of their wedding party—in fact, both kids juggled a few roles. Saxon (who wore a plaid suit jacket from Zara) served as the best man, man of honor, and flower boy, while Vaughn (in Janie and Jack) held the titles of maid of honor, best woman, and flower girl.

Before tying the knot, Andrea and Justin posed for a few portraits—both as a duo and with their kids—with their photographer, Ruby Olivia.

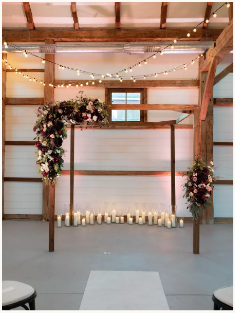


PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Andrea and Justin's ceremony took place inside a barn, where a chuppah with trailing burgundy blooms served as the focal point. "The only directive I gave to Lauren and Jessie Wilson at JW Design was 'moody fall florals and lots of candles'," Andrea says. They added clusters of glass hurricanes filled with taupe pillar candles behind the chuppah; they provided a glowing backdrop to the couple's vows.

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

> “That moment was exactly why I wanted to have a wedding."

Since a single song served as the inspiration for so much of the duo's big-day design, Andrea and Justin made music a defining part of their ceremony. The couple hired Mark Mollica to play guitar and Dylan Connor to sing during the service.

Justin walked down the aisle with his parents to “Fields of Gold“ by Sting before Saxon and Vaughn made their way down the aisle carrying woven baskets decorated with leaves and pearls and filled with white rose petals. Andrea made her debut on her parents' arms to “Ripple,” one of her favorite Grateful Dead songs. “That moment was exactly why I wanted to have a wedding,” she says.

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Ahead of their nuptials, the pair's officiant interviewed them for three hours to craft a personalized ceremony script and intentional vows. "One of the best moments of the ceremony was when Saxon, who is seven, recited the Dr. Seuss quote: 'We are all a little weird and life is a little weird, and when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall in mutual weirdness and call it love,'" Andrea says. They celebrated back down the aisle—as husband and wife!—to the Bee Gees' "Islands in the Stream."

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

At the couple's cocktail hour, they served a signature drink—regular *and* spicy margaritas. Along with a raw bar, flatbreads and assorted cheeses and meats were offered to guests. Before the interlude was over, Andrea surprised Justin by having their musicians play a rendition of Bobby Brown's "Every Little Step." "It's an inside joke and I knew that would make him laugh," the bride says. "Everyone ended up joining us on the dance floor for it and it was such a fun moment."

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

The intimate reception took place in a private room at the Tavern at

Graybarns. There, an 18-foot-long dining table was dressed in a quilted floor-length linen. The tablescape incorporated glass hurricanes with taper candles and small arrangements of seasonal flowers, like burgundy ranunculus, pink astilbe, red hellebores and astrantia, cream spray roses, blush roses, and eucalyptus. Place settings featured gold foil trimmed cards set on top of burgundy napkins; fresh flowers were placed on top of each menu.

RELATED: What Is a Micro Wedding and Should You Have One?

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Andrea—who changed into a jacket, trouser, and bra set from Favorite

Daughter for the second half of the event—and Justin served a family-style dinner consisting of branzino, roasted duck breast, prime bone-in ribeye, and cacio e pepe pasta; during the meal, they listened to heartfelt speeches from some of their closest loved ones.

Before dinner began, however, they shared their first dance to Neil Young's "Harvest Moon," a moment Andrea cites as a big-day highlight. "I hadn't planned for the kids to join us, but as soon as Justin and I started dancing, Saxon and Vaughn started dancing together, too," Andrea remembers. "It was such a sweet moment that I'll never forget."

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY RUBY OLIVIA PHOTOGRAPHY

The couple's semi-naked wedding cake, a vanilla cake with chocolate chip buttercream frosting, was decorated with fresh flowers. They served it alongside hazelnut budino desserts with brownie and nutella whip and espresso martinis.

To couples planning a wedding, Andrea recommends taking some time away from the process every now and then. "It takes a lot of time and effort to plan a wedding, even a 17-person one," she says. "But you shouldn't let the planning consume your life and the lives of those around you."

WEDDING TEAM

CEREMONY VENUE Graybarns
RECEPTION VENUE AND CATERING Tavern at Graybarns
PLANNING AND DESIGN Madison Events
BRIDE'S GOWN Nicole + Felicia
BRIDAL SALON Kleinfeld Bridal
BRIDE'S SHOES Sarah Flint
BRIDE'S HAIR Tommy Buckett
BRIDE'S MAKEUP Daniel Martin
BRIDE'S JEWELRY Serpentine Jewels
GROOM'S ATTIRE Todd Snyder
CHILDREN'S ATTIRE Zara, Naturino, Janie and Jack
FLOWERS AND RENTALS JW Design
MUSIC Mark Mollica, Dylan Connor
PAPER PRODUCTS Minted
CAKE Sweet Lisa's
VIDEOGRAPHER Dottie Morris
PHOTOGRAPHER Ruby Olivia Photography

UP NEXT: 13 Fun Things for Kids to Do at Weddings

Related Stories

REAL WEDDINGS • 5 DAYS AGO

An Indian Wedding by the Sea on the Athens Riviera

REAL WEDDINGS • 11/27/23

A Black-Tie Wedding With Garden Vibes at a Historic Brooklyn Venue

REAL WEDDINGS • 12/15/23

A Brooklyn Winery Wedding Inspired by Streetwear and Good Music

REAL WEDDINGS • 06/30/23

A "Bridgerton"-Inspired Garden Was the Backdrop for This Moody Connecticut Wedding

REAL WEDDINGS • 11/06/23

A Picnic-Inspired Wedding in a Wildflower Field in Vietnam

REAL WEDDINGS • 09/20/23

This Couple Ended Their Mexico Wedding in the Pool—Which Is How You Know They Had the Time of Their Lives

REAL WEDDINGS • 09/29/23

A French-Inspired Venue Defined the Colorful Aesthetic at This Summer Wedding

REAL WEDDINGS • 09/15/23

New York Jets Tight End Tyler Conklin's Cabo Wedding Was a Major Party

REAL WEDDINGS • 08/11/23

REAL WEDDINGS • 06/07/23

REAL WEDDINGS • 07/22/22

REAL WEDDINGS • 05/21/19

This Professional Planner's Romantic, European-Inspired California Wedding Was 862 Days in the Making

A Moody, Sexy Wedding at a Restaurant in New York City's Chinatown

A Classically Chic Summer Wedding in Connecticut

A Romantic Rooftop Wedding at the Battery in San Francisco

CELEBRITY & ROYAL WEDDINGS • 07/27/22

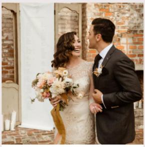
Exclusive: Peloton's Olivia Amato and Daniel Waldron's Ireland Wedding

REAL WEDDINGS • 06/02/23

The Son of Earth, Wind & Fire's Maurice White Married His Partner After 25 Years

REAL WEDDINGS • 10/28/22

A Lush Florida Wedding That Transported Guests to Italy



REAL WEDDINGS • 01/12/23

A Moody, Victorian-Inspired Wedding in New Orleans

BRIDES

Sign up for the *Brides* newsletter.

you@example.com SUBSCRIBE

Rings
Ideas & Advice
Fashion & Beauty

Showers & Events
Registry & Gifts
Real Weddings

ABOUT US
ADVERTISE
TERMS OF SERVICE
CAREERS
EDITORIAL POLICY

CONTACT
PRIVACY POLICY
YOUR PRIVACY CHOICES

Brides is part of the Dotdash Meredith publishing family.

Please review our updated Terms of Service.