



# RACHEL & MICHAEL

Photography by  
5IVE15IFTEEN  
PHOTO COMPANY

Michael wore a bespoke tuxedo by Tom Ford.

Hair styling provided by Nataliya Vynnyk. Makeup application services provided by JULIA BEAUTY INC.



Sugar cookies by  
CAKE OPERA CO.



## Country Chic Meets Gatsby Glam

Rachel Bu and Michael Zhang first met on prom night in 2010. Though they were attending different high schools at the time, they ended up at the same after-party held at the **FAIRMONT ROYAL YORK**. The pair is unclear of how exactly they met, but one thing's for certain: they didn't like each other much at the beginning. "Whether it was over me rejecting his beer, an argument over a bowl of Chinese fried rice, a fight over the playlist, or all three events happening at the same time, that is how Michael and I first 'clashed,'" recalls the bride. Roughly seven years later, the pair was spending Christmas at the groom's family estate in Collingwood like they always do. On Christmas Eve, Michael took Rachel on a walk to see the newly-built chapel and tower on the property. Along the path, there were little lanterns hung from trees. Rachel remembers saying, "We are extra festive this year, aren't we?" They arrived at the top of the tower just in time for sunset, which is when Rachel turned around to find Michael down on one knee. Rachel immediately blurted out, "Are you proposing?" to which Michael awkwardly replied "yes." She accepted and nine months later, they said "I do."

The couple was married on October 1, 2017 in Meaford, Ontario. Laura Atendido of **LAURA & CO. EVENTS** provided full-service event planning. "Laura was the master behind all the planning and she made my vision come alive! I was overseas planning for this wedding and only arrived in Toronto three days prior; I can't imagine how the wedding would have turned out without Laura's professional help," recalls Rachel.

The day before the wedding, Rachel and Michael hosted an intimate Chinese tea ceremony, followed by a dinner at the groom's family home.

For the tea ceremony, the bride wore a red qipao and a champagne-hued qipao, both handmade in China. The champagne garment took eight months to make and featured an embroidered phoenix with flowers outlined in 24-karat gold thread. The groom's matching ensemble, also made and purchased in China, featured an embroidered dragon sewn with pure gold thread.



Co-designed by Laura & Co. Events and RACHEL A. CLINGEN WEDDING & EVENT DESIGN, the dinner reception featured a deep red colour palette complemented with loose greenery and gold accents.

Gold Chiavari chairs from CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE RENTALS INC., tableware from, CHAIR-MAN MILLS, and linens from AROUND THE TABLE.







RACHEL A. CLINGEN WEDDING & EVENT DESIGN provided all floral and decor for the wedding, including the bride's beautiful bouquet of blush garden roses, anemones, and lisianthus, accented with wispy astilbe and soft greenery.



Chairs from CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE RENTALS INC.

RACHEL A. CLINGEN WEDDING & EVENT DESIGN and LAURA & CO. EVENTS created a soft and natural ceremony setup, complete with ficus trees, glass urns bursting with wild florals, and a circular floral chandelier, which planner Laura Atendido described as the "beautiful focal point" of the space. The couple, along with their wedding party, stood beneath the floral masterpiece.

### CEREMONY NOTES

The following day, Rachel and Michael tied the knot in a romantic ceremony on the groom's family estate. "Sophisticated, charming, and enchanting with a rustic and rebellious undertone" was the inspiration behind the couple's big day. Transportation was provided by **LUXURY COACH** and included round-trip transport for guests from Toronto to Blue Mountain, as well as to and from all wedding events throughout the weekend. A private helicopter was also used to transport close family and friends; landing on the private helicopter pad on the family's property.

Rachel wore a Monique Lhuillier gown and veil purchased from the designer's flagship location in New York City.

The bridesmaids wore vibrant jewel tone gowns of their own choosing. The groomsmen wore custom formalwear from **HARRY ROSEN**.

Stationery by **PALETTERA CUSTOM CORRESPONDENCES**.



"Through my veil, I could only vaguely see Mike at the altar, but with each step, he became clearer and I began to see the big smile on his face that I have come to know so well." —RACHEL



Rachel and Michael were wed in the pavilion on the groom's family estate.



Jeremy Citron of **ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE** officiated the ceremony.



After the ceremony, the couple decided to store away their vows, along with their favourite Italian wine, to be opened on their fifth wedding anniversary.





### CREATIVE COCKTAIL HOUR

After the ceremony, the pavilion was flipped into an upscale cocktail reception complete with an over-the-top charcuterie station, live oyster bar from **RODNEY'S OYSTER HOUSE**, and a perfume bar by **AROMACHOLOGY**.

### STARRY NIGHT

After the cocktail hour, a draped walkway led guests from the family pavilion to the reception tent. The reception tent, complete with soft pink carpet, was provided by **PREMIER EVENT TENT RENTALS INC.** and was transformed into a twinkling, floral wonderland by **RACHEL A. CLINGEN WEDDING & EVENT DESIGN**.

An oversized floral tree acted as a canopy over the head table, creating an incredible focal point as well as an intimate space for the newlywed couple who sought to achieve the perfect balance between Chinese and Western traditions. The magnificent tree, made of roses and wild greenery, was a nod to the couple's Chinese roots, shares Rachel. "The grand tree that stood behind the head table was a great representation of family and longevity." One of the bride's favourite Western elements was the magical ceiling, on which over one thousand roses were suspended between thousands of miniature fairy lights by **FIREDOG CREATIVE**. According to the bride, "The starlit ceiling was the perfect setting for a Gatsby-like Western celebration."

**FIREDOG CREATIVE** provided AV, rigging, and lighting support throughout the entire day. **EVENT CUSTOM ENVIRONMENTS AND EVENT DRAPING** lined the reception tent and walkways with flowy white fabric.

Guests sat on gold Grace chairs from **DETAILZ COUTURE EVENT RENTALS** and dined at tables detailed with alternating high and low centrepieces. The high arrangements had additional florals in elegant crystal vessels at the base. **RACHEL A. CLINGEN WEDDING & EVENT DESIGN** created each arrangement to look uniquely organic yet luxurious. Florals comprised a collection of garden roses, lisianthus, ranunculus, fluffy stock, and a mixture of fresh greens, including local wildberry branches.

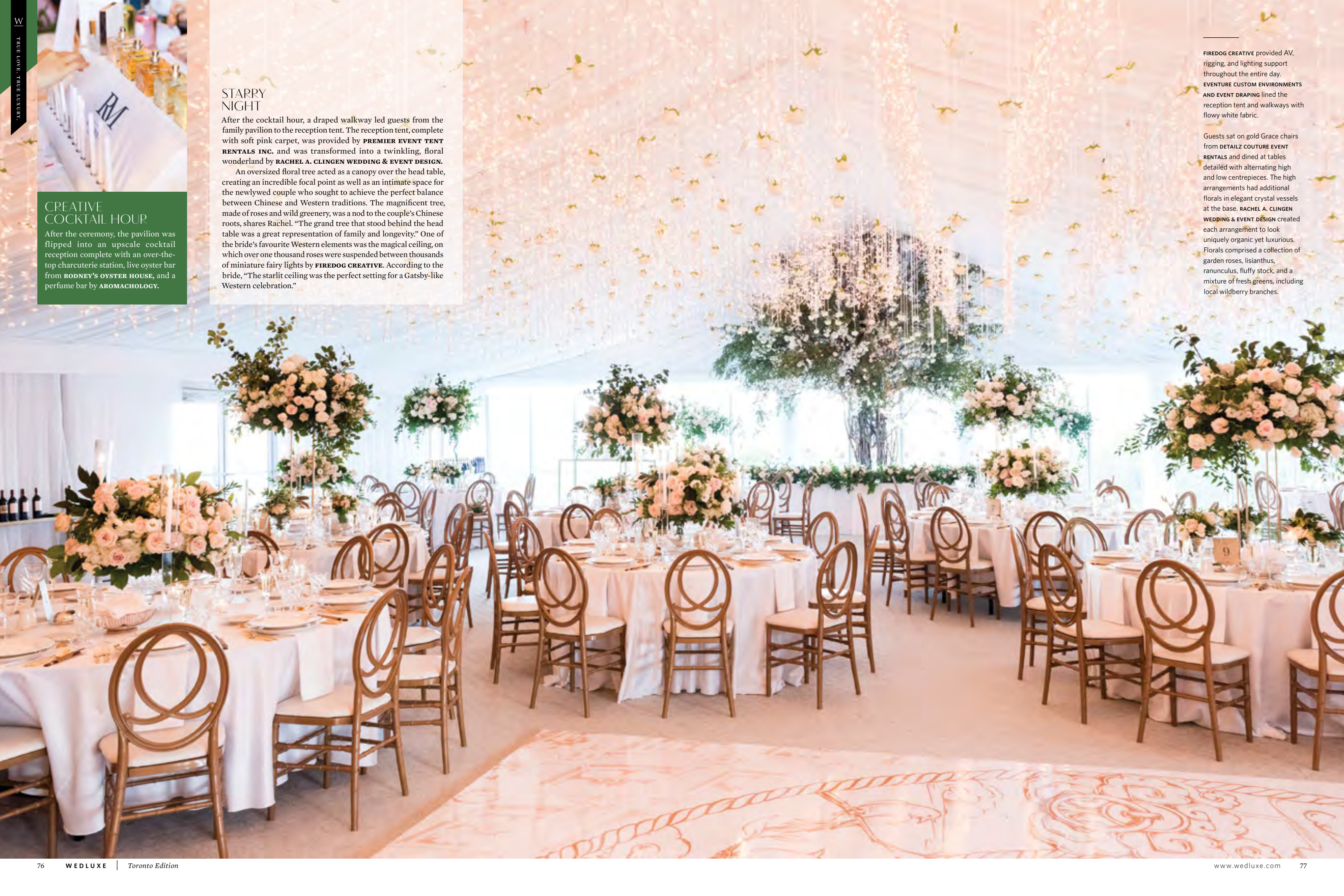






Table numbers, menus, speakeasy keys, and dance floor decal design were by **PALETTERA CUSTOM CORRESPONDENCES**, who also co-created the fortune cookie escort cards with **Cake Opera Co.**

Dishware and stemware provided by **PLATE OCCASIONS**. Flatware and all other kitchen, bar, and serving rentals provided by **CHAIR-MAN MILLS**. Linens from **AROUND THE TABLE**.

For the reception, Rachel changed into a sexy gold sequin gown by Monique Lhuillier.

The pavilion was flipped once more into a late-night speakeasy lounge. Guests were invited into the speakeasy by serving staff who passed out special keys during dinner.

Event planner **LAURA & CO. EVENTS** designed the speakeasy with the help of **CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE RENTALS INC.**, who provided the lounge furniture and faux fur throws.



## END NOTES

Rachel and Michael's wedding cake was prepared by **CAKE OPERA CO.** The white three-tier confection had intricate lace-like detailing that mimicked the ceiling and crown mouldings from their nineteenth-century Upper West Side home in New York City. A croquembouche, a macaron tower, and madeines, also from **Cake Opera Co.**, rounded out the dessert table.

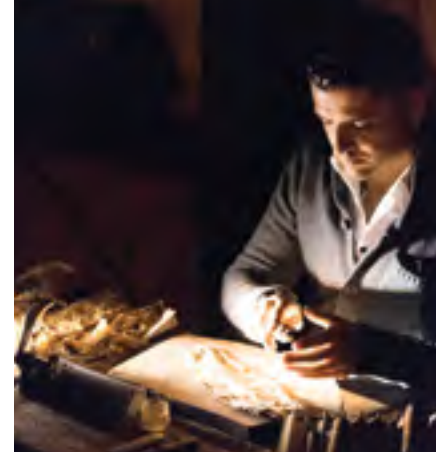
As a special treat, the bride's father had collected twenty-five bottles of wine from around the world, all from the year Rachel was born (1992), which were served to guests during dinner. **LIFFORD WINE & SPIRITS** provided full wine pairing services and wine stewards for the duration of the wedding.

After indulging in an Asian fusion meal prepared by **CULINARY DESIGNS**, guests returned to the pavilion, which had been transformed for the third time. This time, it was turned into a post-dinner speakeasy lounge designed by **LAURA & CO. EVENTS**. The 1920s-themed space certainly wowed guests. It featured house rules, a cigar bar with a live cigar roller from **FRANK CORRENTI CIGARS LTD**, and a DJ from **SOLE POWER PRODUCTIONS**. **SOLE POWER BAND** performed during the reception. The entire day was captured by cinematographer **CORINNE MCDONALD FILMS**.

The couple currently resides in New York City, where they are both entrepreneurs.



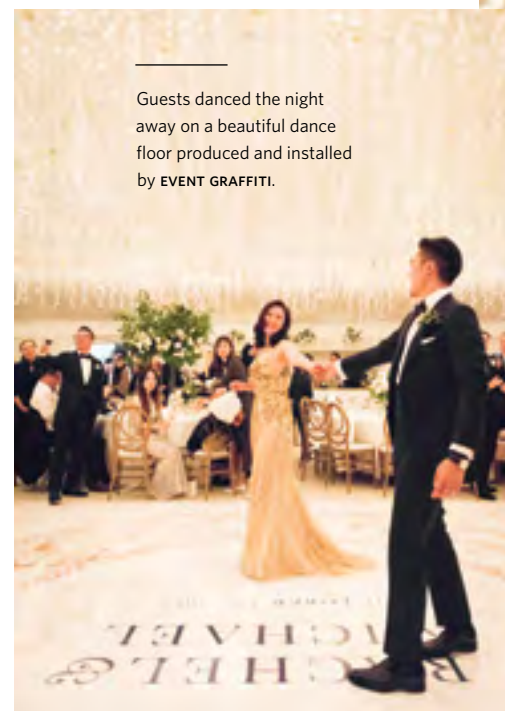
**FRANK CORRENTI CIGARS LTD** provided the cigar bar.



"Mike and I honour traditions but also love the atmosphere of the prohibition era, especially the speakeasies in New York, so our vision was to create our very own speakeasy with hand-rolled cigars, bottomless whiskey for the gentlemen, and a perfume bar for the ladies." —RACHEL



Guests danced the night away on a beautiful dance floor produced and installed by **EVENT GRAFFITI**.



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