



Mikie Gets Married!

REALITY TV'S MASTER OF MATRIMONY WALKS DOWN HIS OWN AISLE

BY PAUL HUTNICK

There is no fête, large or small, wedding guru Mike Russo cannot handle.

On his show, "Mikie Saves The Date", airing on FYI Network, he proves his talent weekly, executing uniquely personalized and visually arresting weddings for each and every client, no matter the budget.

His celebrity clients include Kevin Jonas, Joey Fatone, Kathy Griffin, and Shaquille O'Neal.

However, it's his ability to work with everyday brides and grooms - and defuse the family disputes that inevitably threaten to ruin the big day - that really sets Russo apart from his reality matrimony competitors.

But what happens when Mikie becomes his own client? We spoke to the Master of Matrimony about his biggest challenge yet: his own wedding, airing Sunday, March 8th at 12pm on FYI.

How did you get into the wedding business?

I've always had a passion for flowers so weddings seemed like it would be the perfect job for me. In 2014, I planned the wedding for Joey Fatone and that's when everything changed.

Is that what led to your own television show?

Not exactly. The show was a long time in the making. I'd done HGTV, Style Network and My Big

Redneck Vacation on CMT and appeared on morning shows like The View and The Wendy Williams Show. I'd been pitched every show under the sun, however, they were never the right fit. Then my production company approached me with the new concept they were working on. I knew in my gut it was the show for me! I flew out to Denver and the rest is history.'

Why are women (and gay men!) so fascinated with

wedding shows?

Because they know they will eventually be getting married themselves. Most people tune in to see the selections the brides and grooms make.

How are you different from David Tutera?

I don't come in and change everything. I work with my client's vision and what they want. I then give them a polished version of it.

Are you excited to share

your big day with the world?

If I'm going to be honest, it's freaking me out. When I was planning it, I always had at the back of my mind that the wedding world would be watching so it had to be good. It was a lot of pressure! Once I stopped over thinking everything, that's when the small details emerged and I became super creative.

Where did the wedding take place?

The ceremony and reception took place on the Gold Coast of Long Island at The Harbor Club by Prime, Huntington, New York. Our welcome dinner was held at Oheka Castle where I planned Kevin Jonas and Joey Fatone's weddings. I wanted to get married there too but it's such a popular wedding venue and they didn't have dates available until 2016. I couldn't wait that long.

What was the theme?

Black and white, everything! You'll see on the season finale how I was able to incorporate it from the handmade monogrammed folio invitations to the seating cards. Oh and don't forget my navy and white striped Christian Louboutin reception kicks.

Who was your best man?

We didn't have titles for our wedding party. We selected friends that were instrumental in building a solid base for our relationship.

How did you decide what you would each wear?

I wanted to have a navy tuxedo made but I wasn't sure about the color so I ordered a J. Crew tuxedo online. When it arrived, I fell in love with it. The fit was amazing! So I wore it with Saint Laurent shoes for the ceremony. Then I changed into navy and white striped Christian Louboutin shoes for reception, finished off with a custom black sequins vest. Richie wore a black tux from Theory.

What did the wedding party wear?

Girls wore black strapless gowns designed by Monique Lhuillier and the guys wore their own custom tuxes.

Were you a Bridezilla?

No, but I did have a tiny bitch fit when I found out the liquid nitrogen (smoke effect) was broken for our grand entrance and first dance. (Laughing) Actually, I was livid.

Any other mishaps?

Everything was perfect except the top layer of our wedding cake was accidentally thrown

out! Traditionally, you're supposed to eat that on your one-year anniversary.

What was your memorable experience of the day?

Seeing all of our family and friends in one place at the same time. It was a big trip. Also, I'll never forget the immense amount of love and joy that filled our ceremony and day.

What's your advice to anyone planning a wedding?

Plan the wedding of your dreams and don't worry about pleasing anyone else. It's impossible.

How about for gay couples specifically?

When booking appointments with vendors or venues, be clear on the phone or in email that the wedding is for you and your partner. This way you can avoid any awkward moments. Also, I would ask if they have done same sex weddings before.

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