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# WEDDING WISDOM

WHAT COUPLES SPENT  
ON THEIR NUPTIALS, AND  
WHAT THEY'D DO DIFFERENTLY **B2**

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# What they spent on the BIG DAY

And — for better  
or worse — what they'd  
do differently

BY ANNE BRATSKER / Special to Newsday

**A**ttention to detail at Danielle Noulis' DIY October 2021 backyard wedding at her parents' house in Farmingdale was on point. Though challenging, the bride, 40, was determined to stay on a \$16,000 budget. And she did it with great flair.

There were plenty of frills: a station of wrapped blankets — a giveaway to guests with a sign that read, "to have and to hold in case you get cold," along with wooden flower centerpieces so artfully hand dyed they looked real, and elegant golden napkin rings on all the tables, these being spray-painted plastic shower rings purchased at Dollar Tree. The pictures underscored the fact that the budget-friendly wedding came together without a hitch.

But in retrospect, Noulis says, "My biggest regret was not having the photographer longer. There aren't that many pictures of just my husband and me unfortunately."

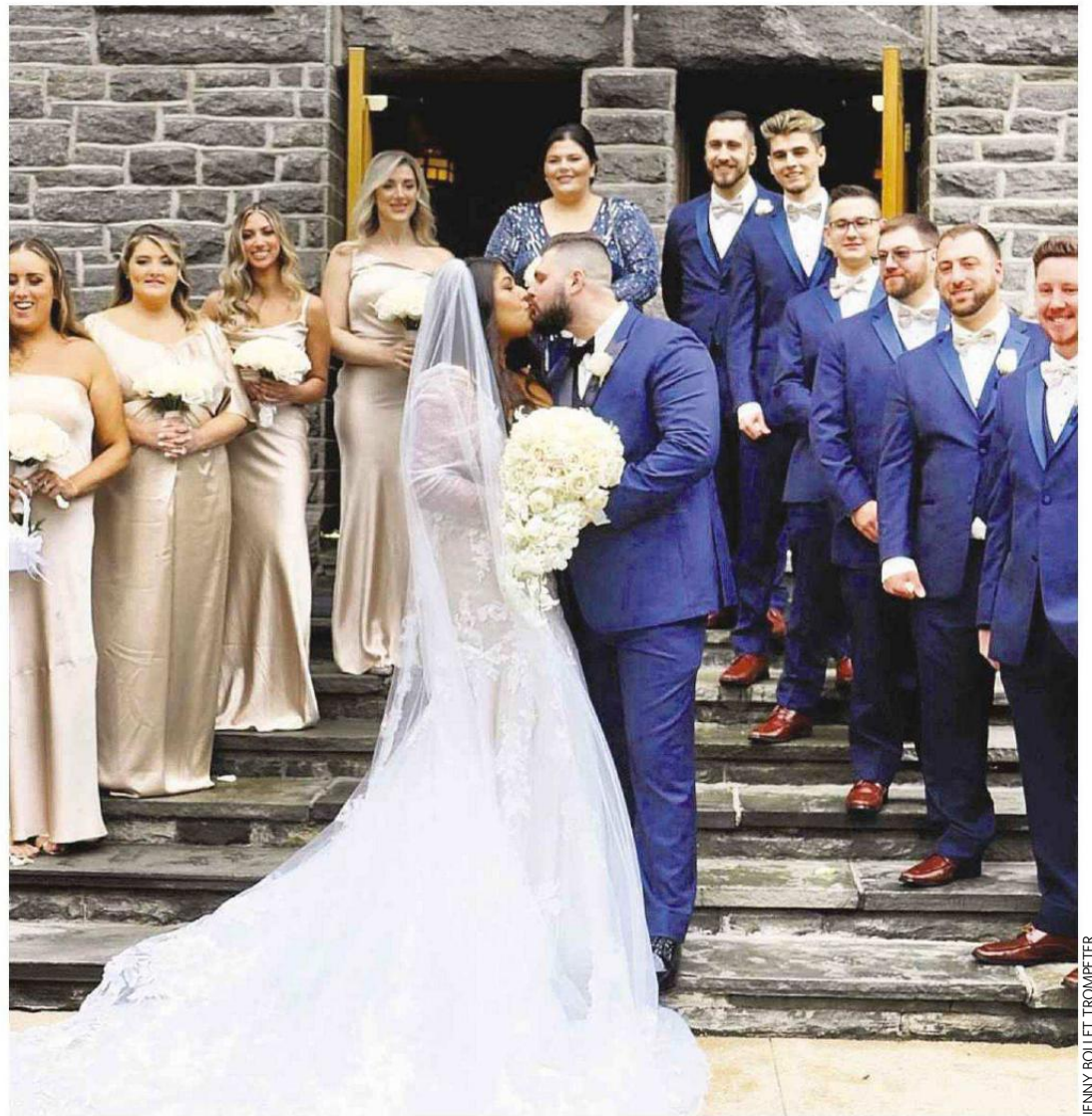
The couple paid \$3,000 for photos, this their biggest ticket item. "Had I spent more," she says, "and had them longer, I would have gotten more."

Truth told, there are always afterthoughts on weddings — especially given the cost commitment.

Heather Cunningham, the owner of local bridal organization Brides of Long Island, with 22,100 members on Facebook, says she's found local weddings average \$62,000.

But Noulis' lesson, even on a budget, had us wondering what wisdom other newish brides can impart to folks in the planning stages, about to spend the big bucks.

We asked them to share their total spends, highest priced item (other than the venue itself) and what, if anything, they would have done differently.



JENNY BOLLET TROMPETER

## JENNY BOLLET TROMPETER, 29, GLEN COVE

**Spouse:** Michael Trompeter

**Tied the knot:** October 2022

**Venue:** Garden City Hotel, Garden City

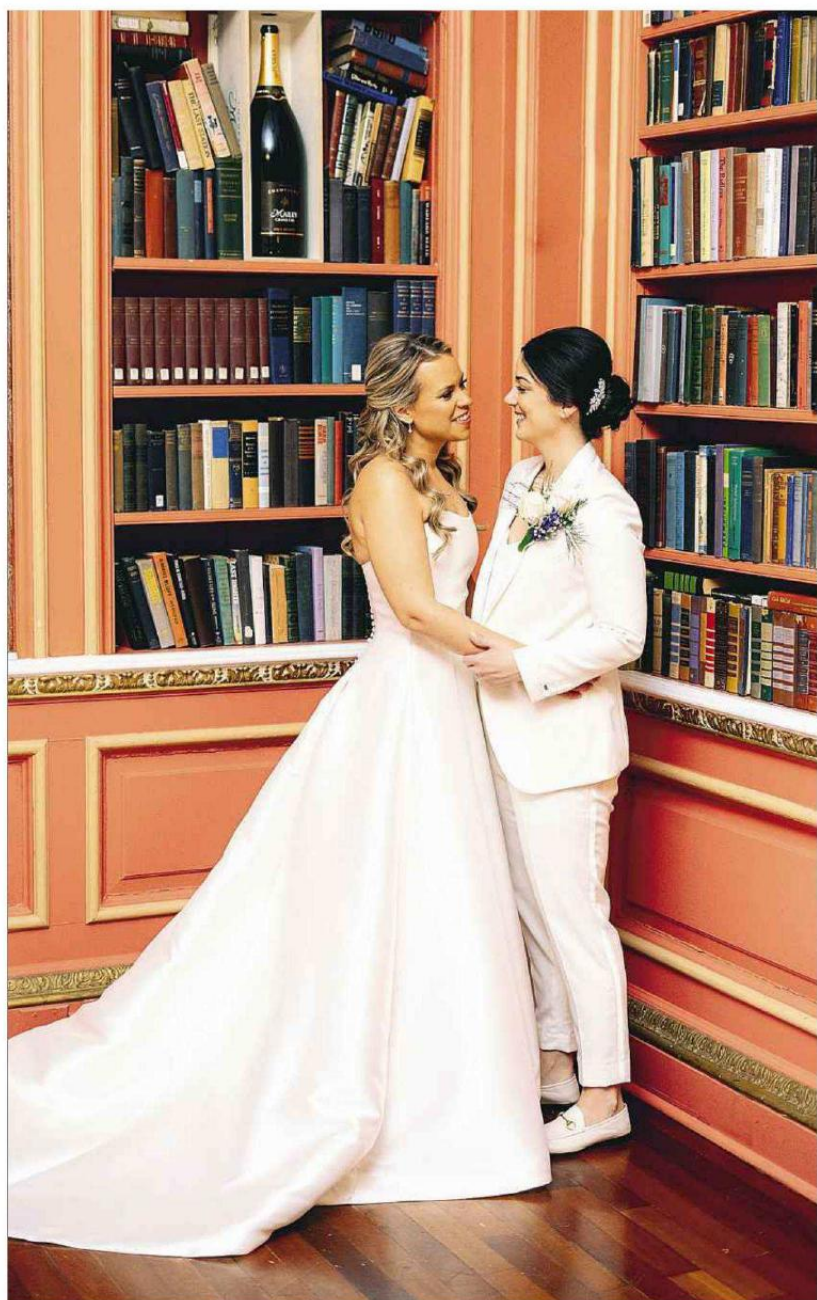
**Guest count:** 160

**Total spent:** \$100,000

**Biggest ticket item:** Flowers, \$10,000

**Her wedding day take-away:** Trompeter was over the moon about the entire wedding to her now-husband Michael. "The whole thing was amazing," she says . . . except for one thing. "I loved my dress, but by the end of the night I was so uncomfortable that I wish I had brought a change of dress for the party," she says of her \$5,000 Essence of Australia gown. "I could have worn the dress I wore to my bridal shower."





CHRISTIAN SHACKTON

## MARNI NICHOLS, 33, AMITYVILLE

**Spouse:** Katherine Karpinski  
**Tied the knot:** December 2022  
**Venue:** NYIT de Seversky Mansion, Glen Head  
**Total spent:** \$75,000  
**Guest count:** 130  
**Biggest ticket item:** Photography, \$6,000

**Her wedding day take-away:** A friend gave Nichols a prewedding bit of advice: Set aside \$5,000 per vendor, some will be less, “and that’s like found money,” she says, although some were more. “There was comfort in managing those expectations,” says Nichols. The couple also did their own thing. “We tried not to get swept up in social media and trends, we didn’t go on Pinterest,” she explains. As for the photos, they were well worth it. “You could have the most perfect day but you won’t be able to relive it without great photos and you want them to be good and your style. Of particular importance to her and her wife, Katherine Karpinski, 36, was using a photographer that “understood a same sex couple.”

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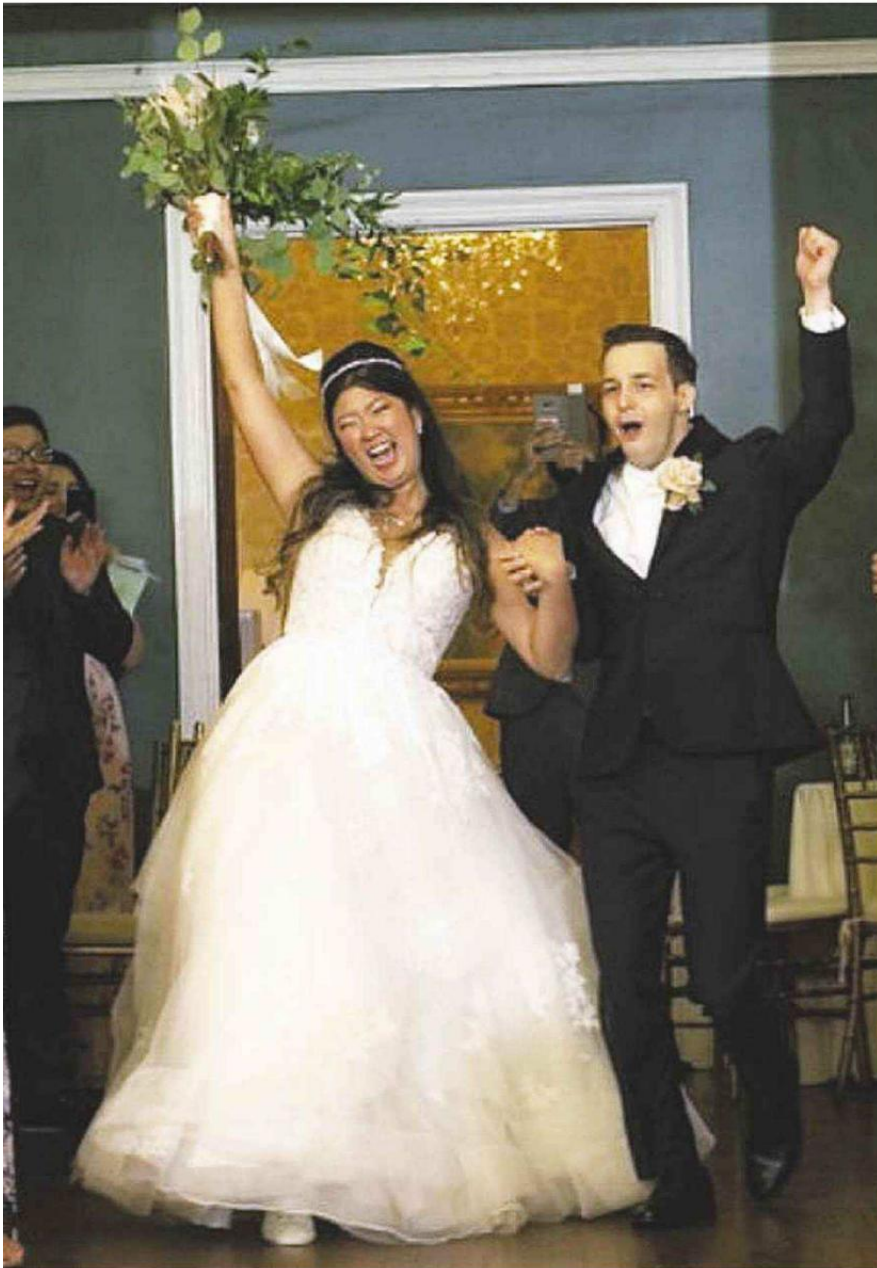
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# Imparting their wedding wisdom



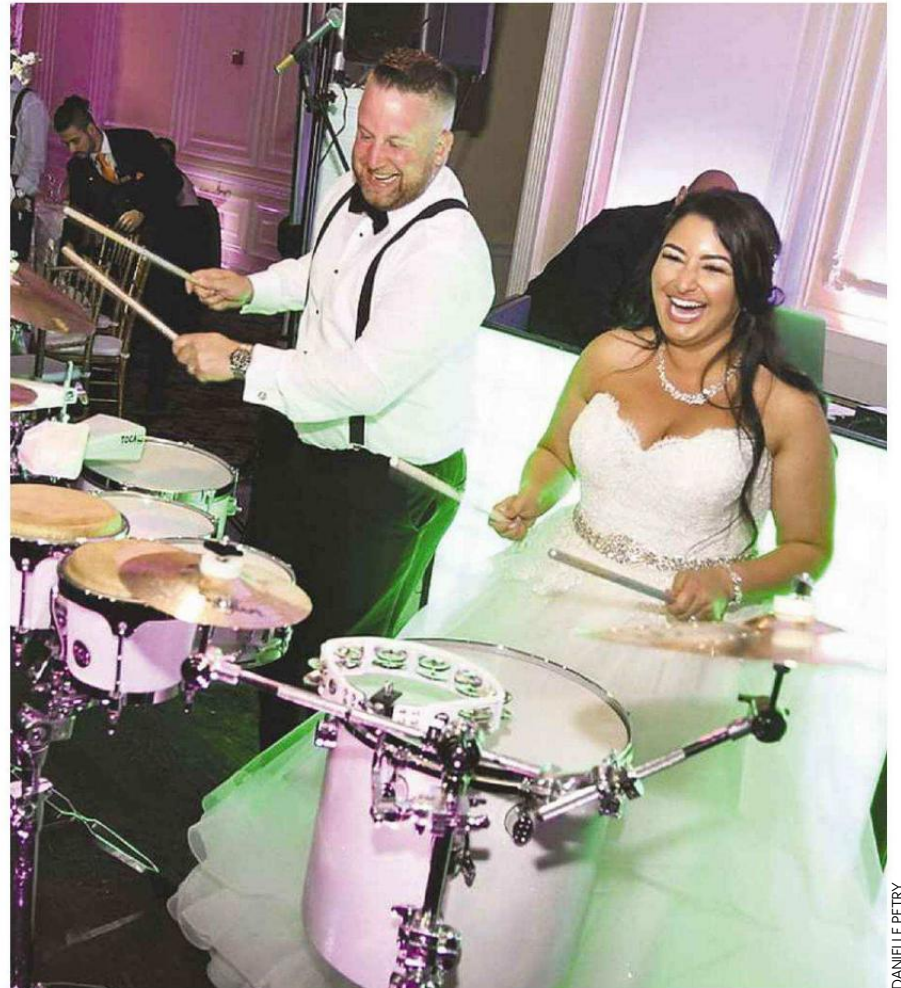
SHELLEY VIOLA

## WEDDINGS from B3

### SHELLEY VIOLA, 34, HUNTINGTON

**Spouse:** Ty Viola  
**Tied the knot:** June 2021  
**Venue:** Chateau at Coindre Hall, Huntington  
**Total spent:** \$45,000  
**Guest count:** 100  
**Biggest ticket item:** Photography, \$6,000

**Her wedding day take-away:** "I was generally happy," says Viola. "But I do wish that I would have put more responsibility on other people. I was in charge and I think it was too much, I was worried about things like getting the vendors paid. It's one day and it goes by really quick."



DANIELLE PETRY

### DANIELLE PETRY, 35, ISLIP TERRACE

**Spouse:** Matthew Petry  
**Tied the knot:** May 2019  
**Venue:** The Inn at New Hyde Park  
**Total spent:** \$135,000  
**Guest count:** 320

**Biggest ticket item:** Photography-video, \$12,000, along with spending "a ridiculous amount on invitations," \$6,500, "that people are still talking about."

**Her wedding day take-away:** It was a "no budget" wedding for Danielle Petry and husband Matthew who saved for two years so "we could do anything we wanted to," says Danielle. Though she smiles about it now, there were issues. First, at the church, the deacon called her the wrong name (that of Matthew's former girlfriend) throughout the service, prompting her father to say, "That was the worst ceremony I've ever been to." To add to the aggravation, the air conditioning at the venue went out leaving the bride and guests broiling. That said, "People had the best time." Her advice to future brides? "Everybody always freaks out about transportation. I went to the church in an old-fashioned car with my parents and that's something I would do again; it was such a special time for us."

**ON THE COVER** Matthew and Danielle Petry take to the dance floor at the Inn at New Hyde Park. They saved for two years and went all out for their wedding.





JENELLE FIORI

## JENELLE FIORI, 33, AMITYVILLE

**Spouse:** Logan Canaday

**Tied the knot:** August 2023

**Venue:** The Mansion at Timber Point, East Islip

**Total spent:** \$35,000

**Guest count:** 132

**Biggest ticket item:** Her dress, \$2,300

**Her wedding day take-away:** “Looking back on it was such a wonderful night, and I’m glad we did what we did, but the biggest thing I was shocked at was the overall price. I was originally thinking of doing it in a park. I had an idea that I wasn’t going to be as all out as other brides, but as you go, you realize how it happens. It would have been helpful to have a breakdown of it all in the beginning.”

## Expert tips from a wedding pro

Huntington-based events planner Michael Russo of Michael Russo Events has planned and overseen loads of weddings, some high-rolling affairs for celebrities such as Kevin Jonas, Elvis Duran and “Bachelorette” Rachel Lindsay, and others for those who have budgetary concerns.

A fan of Long Island as a location, he says, “You’re not locked into one type of wedding. There are so many venues here for every kind of wedding from farm, coastal, vineyard and castle. The choices are unlimited and it’s so beautiful.” And he reminds that, “While everything can be planned to a tee, sometimes stuff just happens, so go with it.”

We tapped him for some wedding tips:

■ Very important, says Russo, “If you’re trying to stay on budget, find a place where they have everything in-house: the tables, the food and linens.”

■ Along those same lines, “Don’t choose a place where you have to change everything about it. When you know you have the perfect place, think about how you will accessorize it to make it your own.”

■ A Russo mantra: “Focus on what’s important to you, not what’s important to everyone else.”

■ A must, he explains, “One of the trickiest elements in wedding planning is weather. If you’re planning an outdoor wedding, definitely have a solid plan B and accept it.”

■ And finally, if you’re looking to save a little money, “Depend on the people around you who are really great in their fields. Lean into your friends and family for their expertise, maybe they’re a crafter or a baker. You’d be surprised at how much people will be more than willing to help and happy to play a part in your special day.”

— ANNE BRATSKER