

BGW *Elevate* ↗

The Premier Wedding Magazine For LGBTQIA+ People of Color

WINTER ISSUE 2022

150+ PAGES OF
INSPIRATION

AD SAMPLER/GUIDE

16 BEAUTIFUL
WEDDINGS

8 STUNNING
ENGAGEMENTS

EXPERT ARTICLES
& ADVICE

COMMUNITY PROFILE:
GREG MATHIS, JR. & ELLIOTT COOPER
E! TV'S MATHIS FAMILY MATTERS

COVER CREDIT | PHOTOGRAPHY: LAJOY PHOTOGRAPHY LLC
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: RUSSELL WENDELL EVENTS

COVER COUPLE

ANDRAE & JASON
AKA *Drae-J*

Winter 2022

Display Until June 20, 2023



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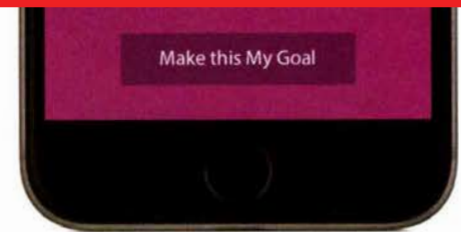
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Together we'll go far





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WINTER 2022

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Be sure to check out couple interviews, full BGW photo galleries & wedding highlight films on

BGWElevate.com



COMMUNITY PROFILE:
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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Lawrence D.S. Broughton, MADJ, MPA, MHRM
Owner/CEO
Broughton Media Group, LLC
Co-Founder, Black Gay Weddings

Veteran of Desert Storm-Desert Shield-Iraq-Afghanistan
US Air Force, Retired

Our world is constantly evolving - shifting and growing politically and socially and changing how we create communities and develop relationships. We've just crossed over 8 Billion people on the planet, and here we stand, connecting and interacting with each other like never before. Thanks to social media, we can create communities dedicated to common causes that inspire political movements that affect social change worldwide. It is our hope that this issue of BGW Elevate will inspire those who genuinely believe "Love Is Love" to see LGBTQIA+ people of color for who we truly are, as equals, not rivals.

We are diverse, we are fierce, and we are fabulous. And we now have a safe space and platform curated by us, dedicated to showcasing "OUR" love stories to provide a source of inspiration for years to come. BGW Elevate Magazine is the flagship publication of Black Gay Weddings and is committed to elevating the love stories of LGBTQIA+ people of color.

Every member of the LGBTQIA+ community of color is encouraged to submit their love stories, fiercest weddings, and enGAYgements. Our goal is to foster a community of love, appreciation, and expression. We encourage you all to become a source of inspiration and motivate others to do the same.

In addition to creating a platform to showcase our love stories, we have also created a vetted directory of LGBTQ-Friendly businesses (LGBTQBizList.com) that will allow you to create the weddings of your magazine dreams. In vendor credit sections throughout the magazine, vendors with (BLV) next to their names are vetted vendors you can trust. So bring your vision to life and let your love shine bold and beautiful. Most of the vendors listed travel both domestically and internationally to make your "Big Day" dreams a reality.

We hope that as you turn the pages, read the stories, and look at the photos, you'll see the love, feel the warmth in the smiles, and welcome the love of these happy couples into your heart.

Love Is Love,

ALL ADS MUST BE SUBMITTED & PAID-IN-FULL BY THESE DATES

EDITORIAL DEADLINES

WINTER ISSUE 2024

WEDDING SUBMISSIONS

June 28, 2024

ENGAGEMENT SUBMISSIONS

June 28, 2024

USE PERMISSIONS

July 12, 2024

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July 28, 2024

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August 9-12, 2024

PROFILE SESSION

August 23-25, 2024

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

September 6, 2024

AD SUBMISSIONS

September 20, 2024

SUMMER ISSUE 2025

WEDDING SUBMISSIONS

December 28, 2024

ENGAGEMENT SUBMISSIONS

December 28, 2024

USE PERMISSIONS

January 10, 2025

FEATURE SELECTIONS

January 24, 2025

COVER SESSION

February 7-10, 2025

PROFILE SESSION

February 21-24, 2025

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

March 7, 2025

AD SUBMISSIONS

March 21, 2025

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CAKEOLOGY: LET'S TALK CAKE!

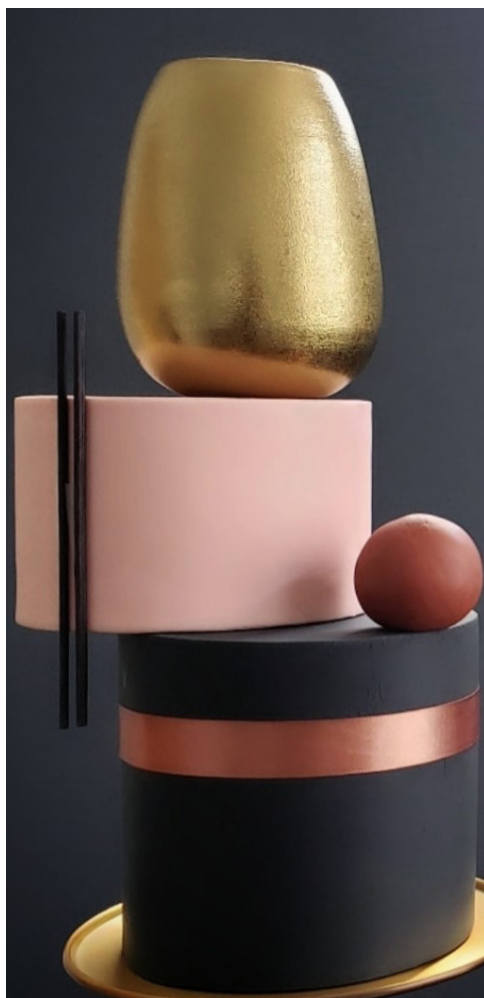
By Chef Lincoln Alexander, Owner
Flour House Cakes & Co.
LGBTQBizList Vendor



In my world, every wedding deserves a bespoke celebratory cake. Whether it be a one-tier hand-painted “minimony” confection or a towering avant-garde stunner, your wedding cake is one of the single most important details of your celebration that deserves considerable attention. If you haven’t given your wedding cake much thought or were thinking of opting out of a cake, I’m here to guide you through some basic cakeology to help you with your decision-making and planning.

By tradition, wedding cakes were structurally uniform. They represented good fortune and prosperity and were often symbols of wealth. Although some of these ideas hold true today, we’ve rightfully evolved from some of the eccentric reasons to celebrate with cake. Thanks to ‘the modern couple,’ the art of cake has taken on a whole new look. Gone are the days of catalogue cake orders that categorized for us what a wedding cake should look and taste like. Cookie cutter tiered cakes, plastic swan cake toppers, and plug-in water fountains helped put me on the map. These early design concepts have been replaced by asymmetric tiers, themed designs, and ornate color palettes.

At Flour House Cakes & Co., we are intentional with every aspect of our wedding cake design process to ensure we’re producing relevant and authentic creations that have meaning for our couples. A well-designed wedding cake tells the story of your love and wedding journey, and that does not always take the shape of a traditional structure or translate well in white. In fact, some of my most photographed cakes look more like art pieces than wedding cakes.



When you look at a striking wedding cake in a magazine or on Pinterest, what is it about the cake that speaks to you? The answer is intentionality. The cake tells a story that translates a feeling, mood, vibe, and aesthetic that is consistent with the other elements around it. Have you ever attended a wedding reception, looked at the wedding cake, and thought, “one of these things is not like the other?” That’s because the wedding cake was most likely an afterthought and the couple failed to prioritize this essential element during their wedding planning phase. Likewise, storytelling will set one wedding cake apart from the other.

Fun Fact: Gospel recording artist, Kierra Sheard-Kelly, requested that we incorporate butterflies into her wedding cake design to represent her grandmother, the late Dr. Mattie Moss Clark. Accents of butterflies appeared all around her

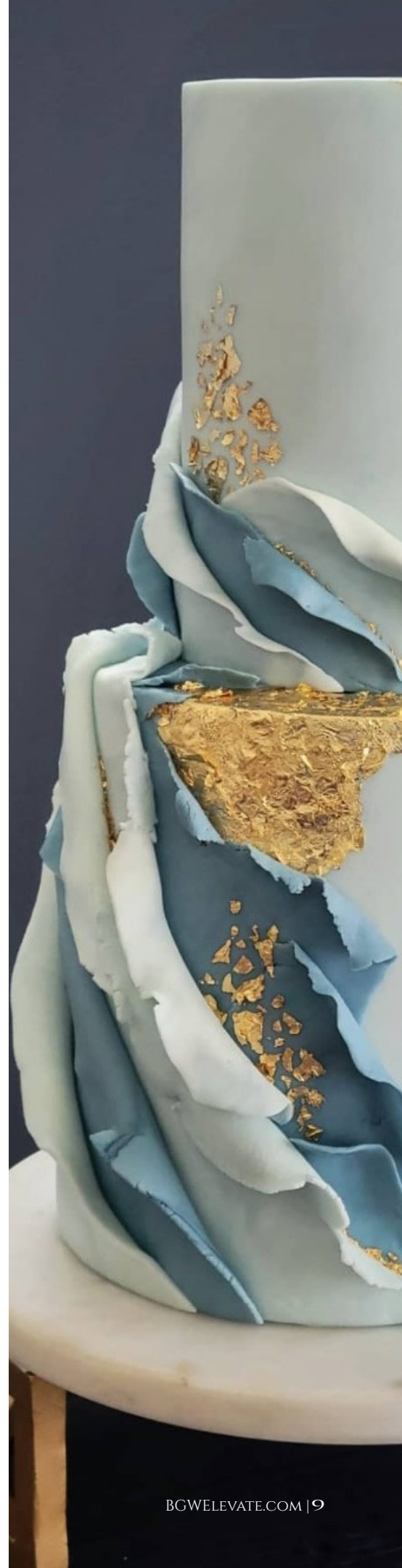
beautiful reception space, from the dinner menus to the floor wrap. The entire room told a uniform story of love.

In our experience, couples come to the table under-prepared to ‘talk cake.’ This is unfortunate because, besides the couple and their beautiful wedding attire, no other aspect of the wedding trends as much on social media as photographs of the wedding cake. It is the most tangible and talked about element of a wedding that everyone will experience. It often becomes the central backdrop at the reception for selfies and group photographs, essentially becoming timeless keepsakes.

Fun Fact: If you serve your delicious bespoke cake to your guests after dinner, they are more likely to experience an instant boost of endorphin release, enhancing their moods. So, for those of you planning long lists of speeches and toasts, I recommend serving a thick slice of your favorite cake to your guests!



Jamie Gens



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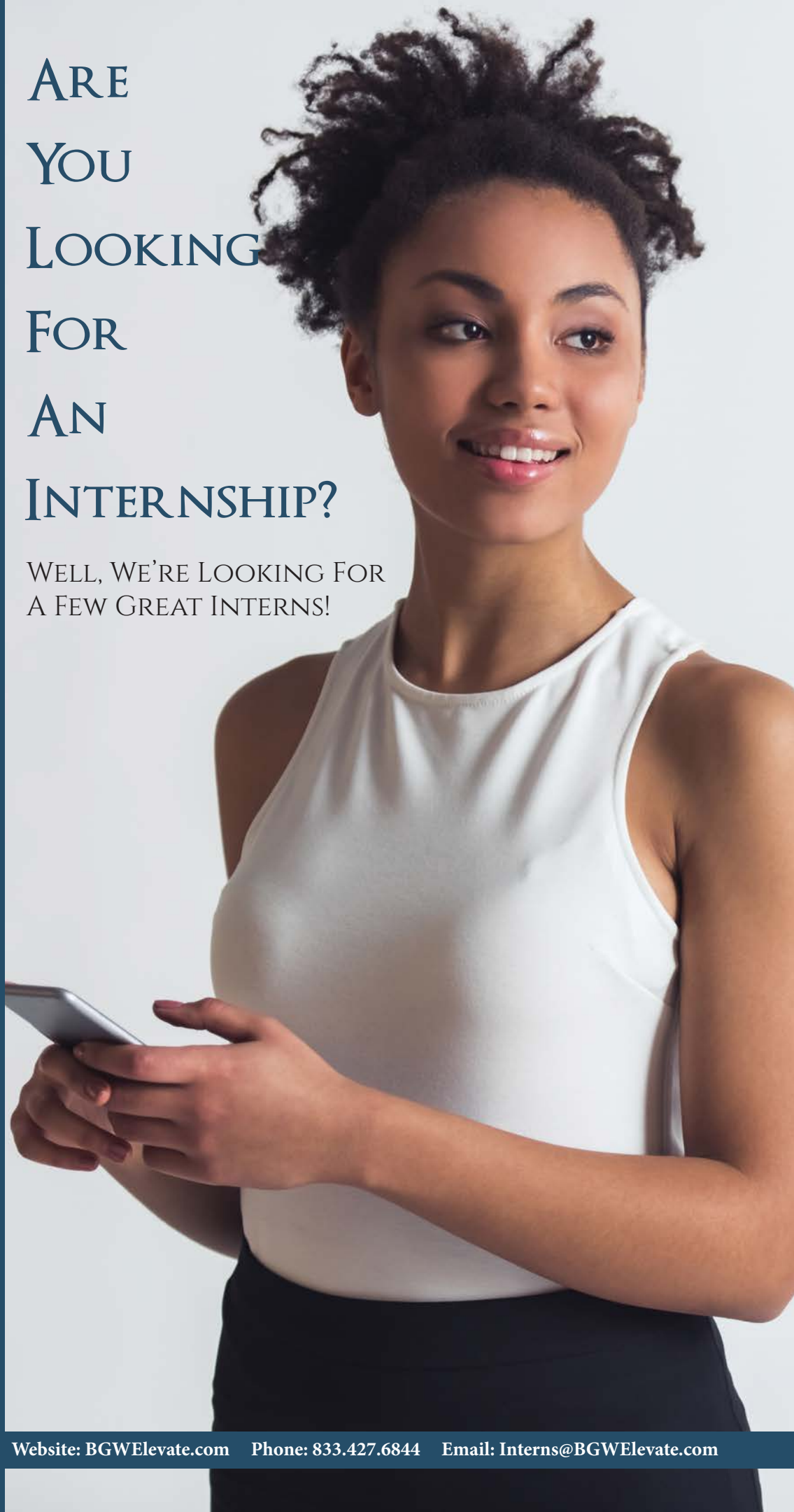
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A Love Experience Photography

WEDDINGS & ELOPEMENTS

ANDRAE & JASON

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KESHONA & MONIKA

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BRIAN & ALEC

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SHANITA & WHITNEY

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TAVIN & DAHLIA

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WILLIAM & WATU

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ERICA & DANIELLE

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VERONICA & BRIDGETTE

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ALEA & ALIYAH

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DELCONNO & SHEILA

Atlanta, Georgia
July 29, 2022

By Pi rre Ramon Thomas
Photography A Love Experience Photography



HOW THEY MET?

By God, the universe, destiny, or all three, Sheila came upon Delconno's IG and liked a couple of her pics. This surprised Delconno because she was new to IG, barely had any followers, and there were no hashtags to boost her posts. In return, Delconno liked more than a couple of Sheila's pics and sent flirty heart-eyes emojis in her comments. Sheila DM'd one of Delconno's posts to one of her friends and said, "Why can't I meet someone like this?" Flirty comments, multiple photos, and likes from Delconno soon turned into a flirty convo in the DMs.

According to the couple, "We knew that we would be together at hello. The intensity of our connection, the butterflies, and the goosebumps were undeniable. We spent countless hours talking, laughing, texting, and sharing stories. Although it's been five years, we still remember the night we met and the excitement we both felt."



Less than two weeks after they connected on social media, Delconno traveled to Atlanta to meet Sheila in person. "We needed to know if the intensity and sense of familiarity were real," the couple shared. As soon as their eyes met and they hugged each other for the first time, they knew their futures were bound together. "We felt like home . . . We felt right," the ladies admitted. In less than one month after their meeting, Delconno decided to step out on faith and move to Atlanta with Sheila, leaving her life in Miami behind.

THE PROPOSAL

Four years later, one day after their four-year anniversary, Delconno proposed to Sheila during a blended family gathering in Columbus, Ohio. Sheila always told Delconno she would know if Delconno was going to propose. But, ironically, Sheila didn't even see it coming. Sheila hadn't seen her family for a couple of years due to COVID-19. So last June, once the COVID-19 travel restrictions were lifted and Delconno, Sheila, and Sheila's family were vaccinated, the couple, along with Delconno's mom, traveled to Sheila's



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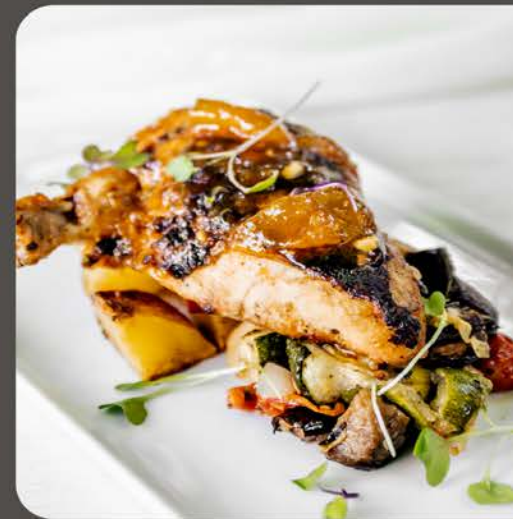


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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES
JUNE 24 - 26 2022 · 2 NIGHTS







ENGAGEMENTS

D'LESSIA & TANESHA

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ALLEN & SHANE

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EVERETT & JONATHAN

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JAMES & DEMETRICK

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BRIDGET & KEYONNA

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MICAH & RAPHEAL

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DOUGLAS & NASIIR

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MARTESE & QUANDARIOUS

Page 136



By Lawrence D.S. Broughton
Photography Dani Brown Photography

Quandarious (Q) Worked at Target, and Martese (Marty) would be a regular Sunday shopper and would always check out Q; I mean, checkout with Q. Mmmhhmmm, he wasn't intentionally stalking; it just appeared that way. Now Q is no innocent bystander here; why would a Vegan frequent the local Kroger where Marty worked and load up on non-vegan goods he didn't need? I'll tell you why, to check out Marty, I mean checkout with Marty. See, there was mutual stalking going on. "Nothing to See Here People" is just the beginning of a brand-new everlasting love!

After countless visits to "the store," they finally made a conscious decision to hang out. When they started spending time together (Every Day), they realized how connected they already were. They immediately started enjoying each other's company more and more because of the emotional, physical, and spiritual connections they established. As horror movie fanatics, Marty & Q would watch horror flicks until they fell safely asleep in each other's arms.

Many believe that communication is the key to a lasting and loving romance. Marty & Q stated they could converse on any topic in a deep and substantive way. So, it was

MARTESE & QUANDARIOUS

ATLANTA, GA
OCTOBER 18, 2022





only logical that after spending every day together, these two dads moved in together. Marty and his son, age 24, and Q and his son, age 12, will soon be the newest LGBTQIA+ blended family in the BGW Community.

Marty proposed to Q on October 18, 2022 at the Atlanta Botanical Garden during a visit to see the autumn exhibit.

Marty & Q decided to take four days off and spend some quality time together. Now Marty had already packed bags for this four-day excursion and told Q just to bring his underwear. Get Your Mind Out of the Gutter, People! I told you Q had already packed the bags.

Anyway, on Day 1, they went to one of their favorite restaurants, Full Taste of Vegan, ate dinner, then went home and watched movies till they fell asleep.

Day 2 -Marty had arranged a Spa day to include mani-pedis and endless pampering. But it had to end at some point because it was time to get dressed and get to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, where Marty had arranged a little surprise for the Q, who had no clue.

Marty prepared a blue gift bag with a photo album in it. When he gave it to Q,



composure long enough to speak, he said YES!!!



Marty then took Q to Ruth's Chris for a romantic Vegan Dinner and then to a hotel room adorned with royal blue balloons and flowers, chilled champagne, and a "Do Not Disturb" sign for the door. There you go again! Please keep your thoughts pure, people, the Do Not Disturb Sign means nothing except we are tired, come back later. Mmmhhmm.

he opened it and saw pictures & quotes of their love from beginning to new beginnings because the last picture in the book shows Marty wearing a T-shirt that said Will You Marry Me? Cue the song "Marry Me" playing in the background, and when Q looked up, he saw Marty was down on one knee with a ring, asking him to be his 1 in 8 Billion.

Here comes the "Ugly Cry!" Unfortunately, we don't have any of those pictures because Q was not about to share those. But after Q regained his

On Day 3, the celebration continued with these two newly engaged lovers checking out Cirque Du Soleil's "Curious." Afterward, they headed home, set up the backyard movie theater, and watched Michael Myers die for the 157th time. Did I mention they are horror movie fanatics? Well, here you go!

On Day 4, they rested in the excitement of the new lives they are now beginning to forge together. -Congratulations, Martese and Quandarious from Black Gay Weddings.

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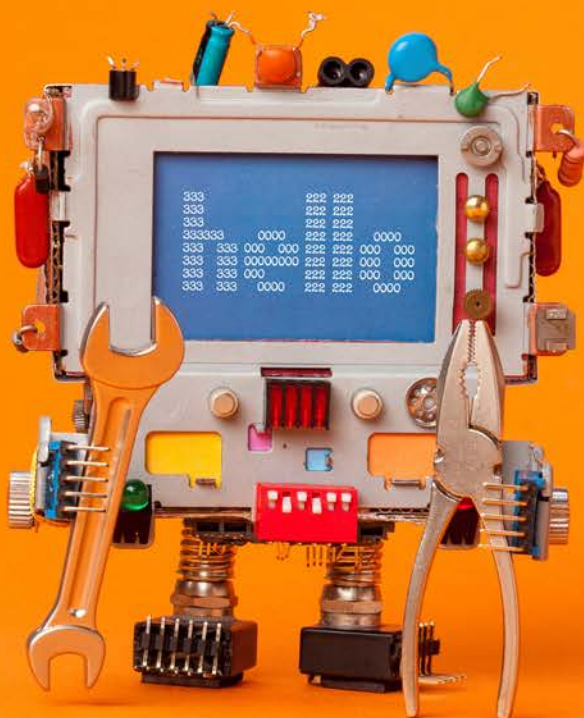
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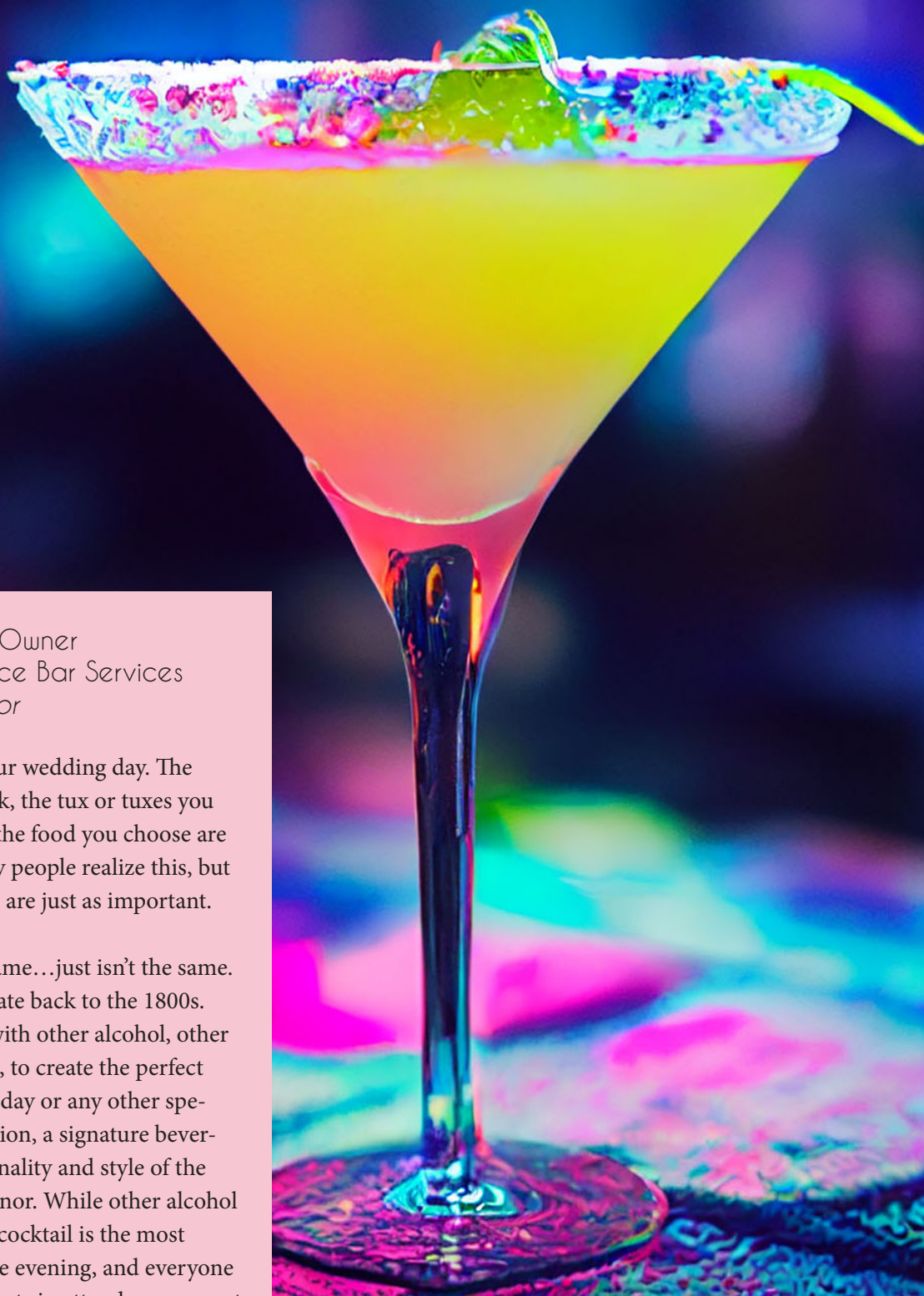
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GET YOUR DRINK ON! SIGNATURE COCKTAILS BRING THE FUN!



By Cicely Webber, Owner
A Taste of Excellence Bar Services
LGBTQBizList Vendor

Congratulations! It's your wedding day. The dress or dresses you pick, the tux or tuxes you select, the flowers, and the food you choose are all important. Not many people realize this, but your signature cocktails are just as important.

A drink by any other name...just isn't the same. The cocktail is said to date back to the 1800s. Today we mix alcohol with other alcohol, other beverages, liqueurs, etc., to create the perfect drink on your wedding day or any other special occasion. By definition, a signature beverage embodies the personality and style of the person it's created to honor. While other alcohol is served, the signature cocktail is the most sought-after drink of the evening, and everyone is dying to try it; the guests in attendance cannot



wait to taste this special drink that was made to celebrate you and your union.

Do you prefer brown or white? Do you prefer fruity or bold and strong? Whatever you prefer, make sure your signature cocktail speaks for you. All eyes will be on you, the happy couple. Make sure all eyes are on your signature cocktails too. The crowd will be in awe at the display of your signature drinks. It's a tradition that is rapidly growing. A few signature drinks that we have had the pleasure of making have gone over really well with our happy couples. We simply ask couples for inspiration, and we take it from there.

Tastings are scheduled to allow couples to taste what we have come up with beforehand, and the cocktail is fine-tuned from there. We, of course, add yummy fruit for garnish, and what an excellent outcome it is.

In the grand scheme, a signature drink will make your event stand out, make



bar ordering more efficient, and enhance your event theme. Being a mobile bartending service, we highly recommend signature cocktails because they add an extra flair to your special day. Coming up with a drink that our clients will be happy to have at the wedding is very important to us. We want to ensure that the couple of the hour is very satisfied, especially with something we made.

May it be soft and delicate or bold and refreshing, your Signature Cocktails will have your guests ready to Get Their Drink On!



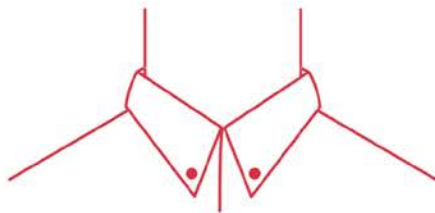
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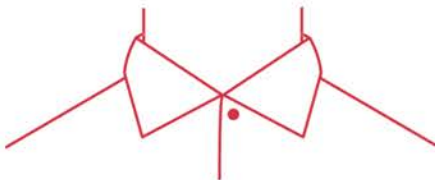
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From Bowtie Experience Like No Other



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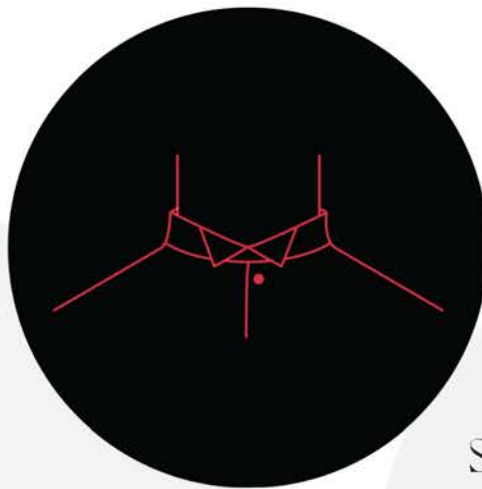


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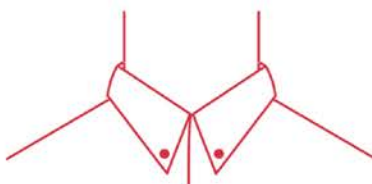
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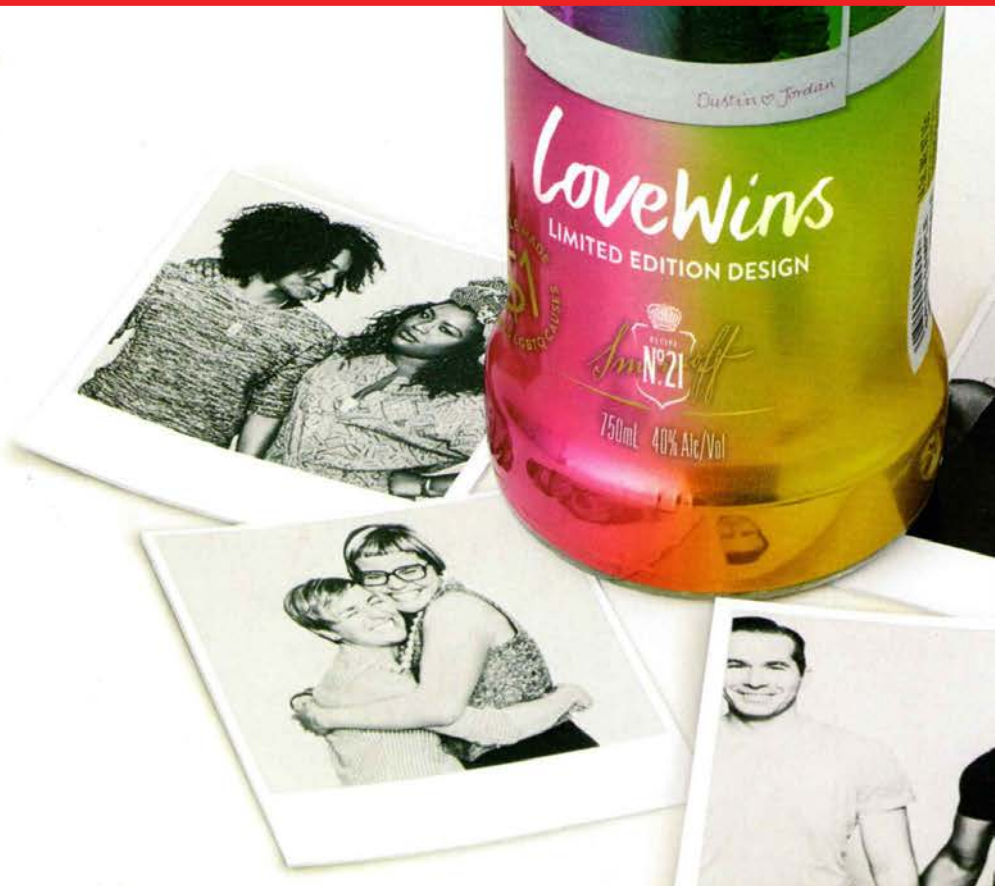
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