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Kate and Barry's Heirloom Filled Green Wedding

Posted by admin

G A J
D A T E



I D E A S

Kate Harrison and Barry Muchnik met on Kate's first day at the *Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies*. All of the incoming Master's students go on a three week camping trip before school starts, and Barry happened to be the leader of Kate's trip. Exactly two years later Barry proposed to Kate in a tower at Yale, overlooking the parking lot where they first met.

Since Kate's background was in Environmental Law and Policy and Barry was a Ph.D. student in Environmental History, it was important for the couple to pick eco-friendly wedding options whenever possible. To decrease the carbon footprint of the event, the couple chose a location near the majority of their guests—[Cat Rock](#) (a historic castle) in Garrison, New York. Their wedding planning experience inspired Kate to write [The Green Bride Guide](#) and to launch [TheGreenBrideGuide.com](#).

T O P I



The couple worked hard to use family heirlooms and items from their parents' homes as part of the ceremony. Instead of a disposable aisle runner, they used a hall rug from Kate's parents' house. "Disposable aisle runners are terrible. In addition to producing unnecessary waste, heels go through them when they are placed outside. This was a sturdy, beautiful and meaningful alternative," Kate says.



Barry wore a suit that belonged to his great uncle by marriage, and Kate was determined to buy an eco-friendly wedding dress, but had a hard time finding one she liked. She finally located the perfect dress one day when her car broke down and she had some time to kill. In the back of a small Asian boutique she found a dress that fit her perfectly. She soon discovered why it was hidden all the way in the back – it had been badly damaged and was being sold off for fabric at a steal. She brought the gown to a tailor who was able to remove the stained fabric pieces. The train was the worst part, but the seamstress was able to fashion a shawl out of the remaining material.

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Kate bought a gorgeous pair of Vera Wang heels on eBay for \$50 and resold them on eBay to another bride after the wedding. Instead of buying new jewelry, Kate sent an e-mail out to the women in the couple's families, asking if she could borrow pearls for her wedding day. Barry's parents lent her a beautiful necklace that belonged to his grandmother, and Kate's parents gave her pearl earrings and a bracelet to match. "It was nice to wear jewelry from both sides of the family and was much more meaningful than purchasing something new," Kate says.



The chuppah was sparsely decorated with flowers from neighboring gardens and a local farm and matched the bride's bouquet. The table under the chuppah was covered with a tablecloth that Barry's grandmother had sewn. Kate sent the extra fabric from her damaged train to Barry's Great Aunt Shirley, who used it to make a break-the-glass pillow on which she embroidered the couple's names and wedding date. After the wedding, Kate donated her gown and shawl to [Brides Against Breast Cancer](#) and kept the pillow as a keepsake.



The couple made their own ketubah, which had the image of a modified cartouche taken from a 1659 map of New England from Yale University's Sterling Map Collection. Barry photographed the cartouche and adapted the image using photoshop, and added the ketubah text from an online form. He then had it printed it out on post-consumer waste watercolor paper for Kate to color in.



Under the chuppah, the couple drank from a family kiddush cup. "We used the same cup my parents used at their wedding. It had my grandparents' and parents' names and wedding dates engraved on it too. After the wedding we had our names added and I can't wait to pass it down to our children," Kate says.

2 comments



[Courtney S.](#) { 08.25.09 at 7:32 am}

1

gorgeous wedding – I have been trying to make our wedding green – it's tough but I'm learning!



[Lana](#) { 10.23.09 at 4:29 pm}

2

Green Idea...Hebrew Watches by artist Eduardo Milieris are green AND gorgeous. The perfect gift for the Jewish groom and Eco-Chic!

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