

AIR SCREAMS DREAMS

An unconventional couple headed to the Mojave Desert for a vintage-inspired celebration starring Wild West scenery, pom-poms, and retro-themed Airstreams

BY REBECCA ASCHER-WALSH
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID BRANSON





"The theme of our wedding was 'surreal sunshine pop retro desert coolness,'" says the bride.



W

Y MOTTO IS 'GO BIG

or don't try,'" says Tanner Hammond, 27, now a Ph.D. student at Boston University. Case in point: For his L.A. proposal to his high school sweetheart, Kaitlin Keleher, 26 (they both hail from Long Beach), he rented out a movie theater, screened her favor-

ite film (the Japanese drama *After Life*), interrupted it halfway through with an on-screen proposal, then threw an engagement party behind the movie house. "It was the most surreal day of my life!" says Kaitlin.

Another breakthrough moment for the convention-busting couple: being the first people ever to throw a wedding at the Hicksville Trailer Palace & Artist Retreat in Joshua Tree, California. "It's this punk-rock, retro oasis with vintage Airstream trailers and a BB-gun range," says Kaitlin, a production assistant. "The moment we set foot on the property, we said, 'We have to get married here!'"

But pioneering had its challenges. "Hicksville's located off an unmarked dirt road in the middle of the Mojave. And we had to bring (cont. p. 238)



1. Tanner took aim at his groomsmen in Hicksville's BB-gun-and-archery range. **2.** The groom wore an octopus tie clip. "It fit in with the surreal look we were going for," says Kaitlin. **3.** "I gave my mom free rein to design the bouquet," says the bride, who carried roses, billy buttons, and tulle down the aisle. **4.** "I had five bridesmaids and one mansmaid—though he prefers the term *bridesman*," she says. **5.** Tanner bought her vintage ring set at an antiques market; his band came from Etsy jeweler Neta Wolpe. **6.** The ceremony took place on the shaded porch of Hicksville's New World trailer. **7.** "My niece, Kate, was the flower girl," says Kaitlin. "She loved twirling in her mint green petticoat dress!" **8.** Kaitlin's mom also made the bridesmaids' hair clips.







(cont. from p. 236) everything—from tables to flatware,” she says.

So the couple turned to friends and family for help. Kaitlin’s mother made a veil and bouquet to go with her vintage dress. Friend Elizabeth Jackson of Please Note paper goods created colorful pom-poms for the altar space. Tanner’s mom officiated. The only hitch? The wind: “Most of the balloons blew away, and our hair looked crazy. But we just laughed and rolled with it,” says Kaitlin.

After the two exchanged vows they’d written together, the party moved to the pool area for music (everything from the Bees to R.E.M.), food (salmon and steak), and custom cocktails (dubbed the Desert Banshee and the Devil’s Wand). There was also a cake for Kaitlin’s 25th birthday, which fell on the same day. “Everyone I love sang to me,” she says. “That will never happen again!”

By 10 p.m., all but a handful of the 45 guests were gone, and the couple settled in for a night of drinks and Ping-Pong with their friends. “Later Tanner asked, ‘Do you think everyone had fun?’” Kaitlin remembers. “I was like, ‘Babe, my grandmother left with a glow stick on her head!’”

1. “Rather than haul seventy bazillion glasses to the desert, we had guests each pick one glass for the evening,” says Kaitlin. **2.** Tubs of soda bottles gave the reception a retro feel. **3.** Instead of a guestbook, the couple set up a Polaroid station. **4.** Hicksville’s owner’s old pickup became part of the party decor. **5.** “Our friend Bucky,

who’s a bit of a cocktail aficionado, manned the bar for the after-party,” says Kaitlin. **6.** Mexican *loteria* cards served as table numbers. **7.** Kaitlin’s favorite dish? “The quinoa salad!” she says.

» FOR MORE WHIMSICAL WEDDINGS, GO TO BRIDES.COM/REALWEDDINGS.



Venue Hicksville Trailer Palace & Artist Retreat, Joshua Tree, California; hicksville.com. **Day-of-planning** Firefly Events; firefly-events.com. **Vintage bride’s dress** The Paper Bag Princess; thepaperbagprincess.com. **Hair & makeup** Lindsay Fleischmann of Label Me Lindsay;

labelmelindsay.com. **Bridesmaids’ dresses** Maggy London; maggylondon.com. **Flower-girl dress** Dreamspun Kids; dreamspunkids.etsy.com. **Groom’s pants & vest** Eddie’s Tailor Shop; eddiestailorshop.com. **Caterer** Ricochet Gourmet; ricochetjoshuatree.com. **Stationery**

Ampersand Studios; dearampersand.com. **DJ** Morgan Higby Night; devilsnight.com. **Rentals** Classic Party Rentals; classicpartyrentals.com. **Photographer** David Branson Photography; shuttereye.com.



3



4



6



5