



The Browns' traditional Jewish ceremony at the InterContinental Buckhead

## IT TAKES TWO!

A BROKEN LEG DOESN'T TRIP UP BRIDE BETH HALPERN FROM PULLING OFF AN EXCEPTIONAL WEDDING—AFTER CANCELLING THE FIRST ONE

BY BLANE BACHELOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC WITTMAYER

From the band flown in from New Jersey and ice sculptures to Lucite boxes filled with cupcakes for guests to take home, Beth Halpern and Gavin Brown's August 2007 wedding was quite the event. "It was pretty extravagant," admits Beth, who teaches at a Jewish school in Sandy Springs.

The couple jokingly refers to it as Wedding II—a nickname that evolved after they had to postpone the original date because just six weeks prior, Beth was hit by a car and broke her leg. The injury required surgery and three months of physical therapy. "The first thing I thought was, 'Ow!' and the second thing I thought was, 'Oh my God—my wedding!'" she says.

As limiting as the injury was, Beth knew she was in good hands with Gavin, a neurology resident at Emory School of Medicine, and her wedding planner, Helene Popowski, founder and owner of Helene & Company. After Beth returned from the hospital, Popowski went to work on changing the date. Two hours later, it was reset for Labor Day weekend at the InterContinental, the original venue, and all but two of the original vendors were able to reschedule. "She's unbelievable," Beth says of Popowski. "It was such a relief. I would have been on crutches, and it would have been awful. So I got to concentrate on getting better."



Lucite favor boxes filled with cupcakes, Jordan almonds and notes wishing guests "Sweet Dreams"

The traditional Jewish ceremony took place in a room swathed in white including drapery behind the platform where the chuppah, the ceremonial canopy, was set up. In addition, several hand-made trees decorated with white roses and hydrangeas, as well as dangling votive candles, and serene white backlighting completed the theme. "It was really pretty. It almost looked like a little forest where the ceremony took place," says Beth, who wore a stunning lace gown by Monique Lhuillier.

After the ceremony, the 350 guests followed music from three violinists across the lobby to the cocktail area outside the ballroom. Heavy hors d'oeuvres included mini Reuben sandwiches and sushi made on the spot. At the reception, an elegant plated dinner featured small servings of filet, grouper, risotto and stacked vegetables.

The band, Valley Music, was a huge hit



with guests, playing until 1AM. "They played everything from Maroon 5 to Frank Sinatra to Motown," Beth says. "People were on the dance floor the whole night." The party then moved into a hospitality suite where DJ Rhythm, a well-known figure in Atlanta's music-spinning scene, set up shop until the wee hours.

It was a fitting finale for a couple whose first official date was at a two-day Widespread Panic concert in Atlanta. Interestingly enough, the popular band's name could have been a theme, not only for the moment of panic that ensued after Beth broke her leg in the car accident, but also for what happened when Gavin proposed.

He invited her to Piedmont Park, where the plane he'd hired was supposed to fly over with a banner that read, "I love you Beth. Will you marry me?" But the plane was late, and several times Gavin had to stall Beth from going inside their nearby apartment to escape the summer heat. Finally, the pilot called Gavin's cell phone to tell him the banner had fallen off the plane just a few miles from the park.

His elaborate plan foiled, Gavin simply pulled Beth into a patch of shade, pulled the ring from his pocket and asked her to marry him. "Despite my frustration, it was a wonderful moment," he recalls. "I got the answer I wanted." ■

**LOCATION** INTERCONTINENTAL BUCKHEAD **WEDDING PLANNER** HELENE POPOWSKI, OF HELENE & COMPANY **CAKE** INTERCONTINENTAL BUCKHEAD **FLORAL** CATHERINE WALTHER, ARRANGEMENTS **INVITATIONS** PACES PAPERS **BRIDAL GOWN** MONIQUE LHULLIER (PURCHASED AT IMPRESSIONS) **BRIDESMAIDS GOWNS** THREAD (PURCHASED FROM IMPRESSIONS) **TUXEDOS** TUXEDO WEARHOUSE **ENGAGEMENT RING** JUDITH RIPKA AT TASSLES

*"The first thing I thought was, 'Ow!,'" Halpern says of her broken leg. "And the second thing I thought was, 'Oh my God—my wedding!'"*



The centerpiece of roses, hydrangeas and votive candles



Individual tastings of chilled soup served on ice