

juice

THE COUPLE



Aaron Clutts, 28, and
Sarah Clutts, 33

Arturo Fernandez/Juice

HOW THEY MET

Sarah Dornink and Aaron Clutts were friends long before they became spouses. Their parents met through church, and the families soon made a ritual of Sunday after-service coffee at Hardee's on Merle Hay Road. They never thought much of each at the time, Sarah said.

"He always thought I was an annoying little girl playing with my catsup, and I thought he was kind of a dork," she said.

The dorkiness wore off about 12 years later when Aaron kissed Sarah. The two had recently reconnected over a work project and started hanging out more frequently when Sarah was visiting Des Moines from her then-

home in New York City. Soon, Sarah moved back to Des Moines to expand the wedding gown and dress business she and her mother, Faythe, own.

On Christmas Eve of 2005, Aaron proposed. Sarah's parents had turned in for the night while she and Aaron watched old family videos. Aaron devised a scheme to have Sarah open a small, flat gift-wrapped box that was marked for her brother-in-law. She unwrapped the gift to reveal a small photo frame. When she flipped it over, it read, "Will you marry me?"

"I thought, why would he give this to my brother-in-law?" Sarah said. "Then he pulled out the ring."

THE WEDDING PARTY

Sarah designed and created her five bridesmaids' dresses. Each dress, which was made from the same Asian silk brocade fabric but cut to different silhouettes, was named after an individual bridesmaid. The dresses were all custom designed to flatter and enhance each bridesmaid's figure. Sarah found the silk material from a fabric outlet in California.

"They were so happy to wear a print, which makes it more wearable again," Sarah said.

In fact, one bridesmaid wore the dress to a different wedding the next weekend.

Dresses: Dornink, dornink.com



Photo by Johnny's Photoshop Studio

WEDDING GUIDE **LIVE**

THE FLOWERS

Sarah worked with Heather Worthington of Heather's Secret Garden to design a contemporary bouquet that fit with her modern gown. Instead of flowers, Worthington put together a bundle of greenery including Lemon Leaf, Italian Ruscus, Seeded Eucalyptus and other vegetation. Then she sprayed them with gold, silver and copper paint.

"I told her to be creative, and she came up with something awesome," Sarah said.

Flowers: Heather's Secret Garden, heatherssecretgarden.com



Photo by Johnny's Photoshop Studio

THE DRESS

It was a given that Sarah, who designs and makes wedding gowns for a living, would create her own dress. Shortly after she got engaged, Sarah started work on her 2006 dress collection.

"I took all my favorites and kind of put them together," Sarah said.

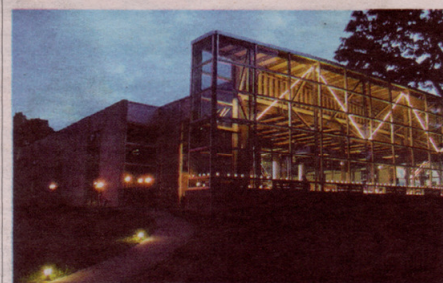
Although her own dress design was completed by February, she didn't start assembling fabric and stitching until July. The entire staff of the Dornink label, including her mother, Faythe, had a hand in creating the gown, which was made from silk duchesse satin, silk zibeline and baby blue and gold metallic silk brocade. Sarah spent between 20 and 30 hours to finish the dress that had elaborate fabric details.

"Amazingly enough, a week before the wedding I didn't really like it," Sarah said. "I almost wore another dress from the collection."

On the list of last-minute to-dos was the veil she made the morning of her wedding. "They really don't take very long at all," Sarah said.

Dress: Dornink, dornink.com

Necklace: Eyebeads and Gemstones, 279-9100



Provided by John McManus, Sticks

THE VENUE

The couple's ceremony took place at Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines where Sarah's family and the couple attend church. They chose the Sticks production warehouse in southwest Des Moines for their reception because they liked its artsy, industrial feel and the floor-to-ceiling windows.

"It really fit our personalities and style," Dornink said.

They enlisted the help of a friend to take charge of music, a mix of Dean Martin and other jazz-flavored songs that was followed by more typical dance numbers.

Local caterer Becky Smith served Iowa pork, spring vegetables and a mango-dressing salad from two food stations.

Ceremony: Lutheran Church of Hope, hopelutheran-dsm.org

Reception: Sticks production warehouse, sticks.com

Caterer: Becky Smith

Photographer: Johnny's Photoshop Studio, 979-4561

First Dance: "Just What I Needed" remake by Heather Green

Rehearsal: The Greenbriar, greenbriartristels.com

Honeymoon: Maui

THE CAKE

Sarah approached Gloria Olson from Glorious Desserts with the idea of incorporating the blue and gold metallic colors from her dress into the cake's design. The end result was a whimsical, towering cake frosted with buttercream frosting and blue and gold rolled fondant.

"It was the most fabulous tasting cake I've ever had," Sarah said.

Cake: Glorious Desserts, Windsor Heights, gloriousdesserts.com



Photo by Johnny's Photoshop Studio

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Necklace: Eyebeads and Gemstones, 515-279-9100

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