

Sunday, January 23, 2011

BRIDAL PLANNER ALBUM

A bounty of love

Family's vegetable farm provides a wedding feast

BY MICHELE INGRASSIA
Special to Newsday

Danielle Bruno is the sort of girl who evokes visions of organza not overalls, satin not soil, couture not carrots or corn. Petite, blond and finely chiseled, she may seem "Gossip Girl" chic, but as fourth-generation of the family that built the Lenny Bruno Farms in Manorville, she cherishes her hands-in-the-dirt bona fides.

And it was just that earthy heritage that she wanted to celebrate at her July 31 wedding to Robert Altieri, a certified public accountant who grew up near Pittsburgh.

"I've worked at the farm since I was 3 years old," said Bruno, who until recently was assistant to the catering director of the Garden City Hotel, which hosted the wedding for 200. "I started going out to the farm stand with my mom, and I worked there after college and during all my free time in the summers. Even last summer, after the wedding, I was able to come and help finish out the season."

For Bruno and Altieri, both 26, the question wasn't if they would try to build their menu around the offerings from the 100-acre vegetable farm, but how hotel chef Steven De Bruyn would marry the glory of the summer bounty with the couple's decidedly low-key personalities (so low-key that Bruno's only request of her colleague was to add petit lamb chops to the hors d'oeuvres list).

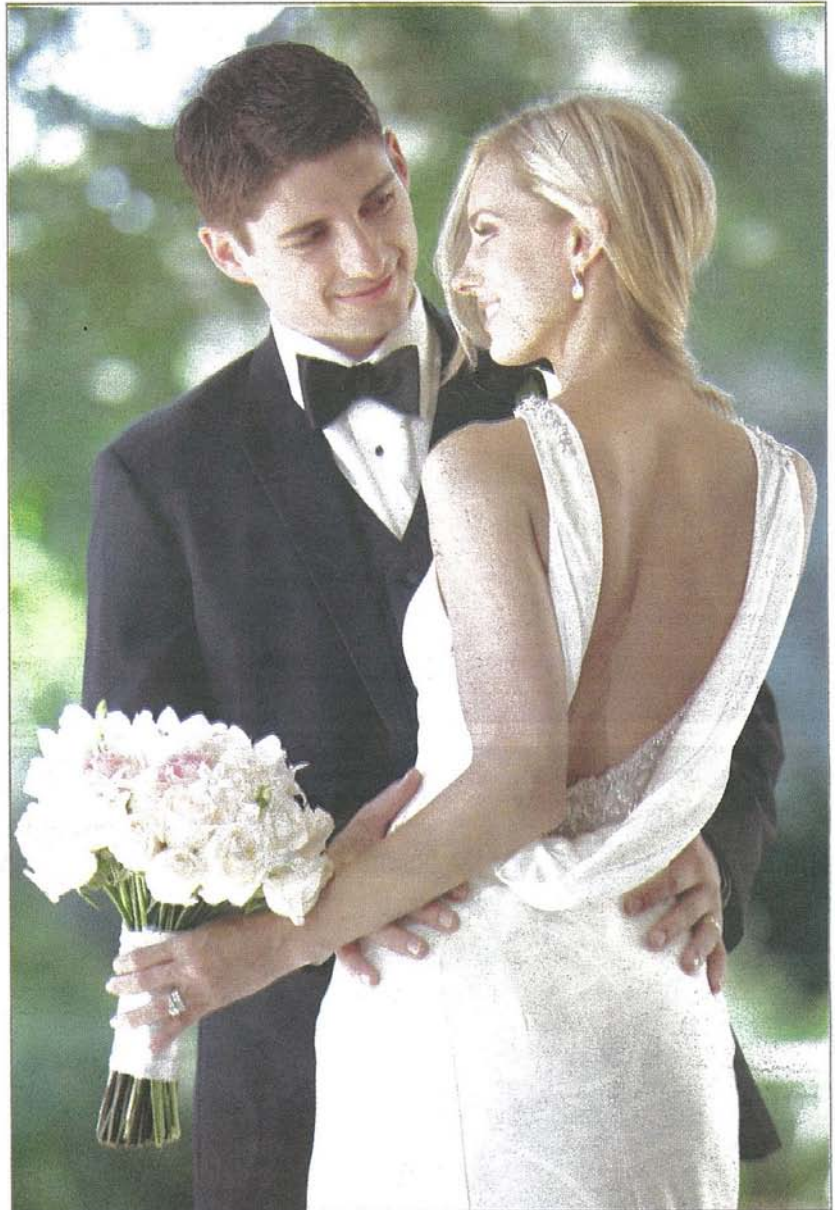
"She's very down-to-earth,

and she wanted her wedding like that, too," De Bruyn said. "We wanted to blow her away, but at the same time we wanted to let the produce speak for itself. We wanted it to be the focal point." Which is saying a lot when you're competing against a bride in a Marisa duchess satin gown, cut down to here in the front and jeweled down to there in the back.

Needless to say, both shined.

Although Danielle had given the chef a long list of Bruno offerings — everything from tomatoes and broccoli to cabbage and corn — she underplayed the depth and variety. "She tried to play it safe. She just told me plain stuff — tomatoes, corn. But when it arrived, it was incredible," De Bruyn said. "It was some of the most gorgeous produce I've ever seen."

Besides a lavish assortment for the crudites, Bruno crops were part of nearly everything but the wedding cake: Tomato sauce for pasta was made from fresh tomatoes and finished with chunks of heirloom tomatoes. A lobster sampler sat on a salad of heirloom tomatoes, corn salsa and peppers. Herbed chicken was served with cranberry beans and escarole. There was eggplant rollatini, eggplant caviar and pasta with sausage and broccoli rabe — and hot peppers instead of



Danielle Bruno and Robert Altieri wanted their wedding to be elegant and earthy.

pepper flakes to spice the dishes.

To cap the entrees, De Bruyn served Bruno potatoes and made zucchini boats from yellow and green squash stuffed with Bruno-laden ratatouille. "The yellow squash was beautiful," he said. "It was the stuff you see at the market in Provence."

Ironically, the idea of incorporating the farm into the wedding came not from Danielle but from her father, Dominic Bruno,

who runs the 90-year-old business along with his wife, Teresa; Danielle's grandparents, Leonard and Mary, and her brothers, Dominick and Anthony.

"The joke in the family was that we were going to do the wedding at the farm stand after a long day's work," Altieri said.

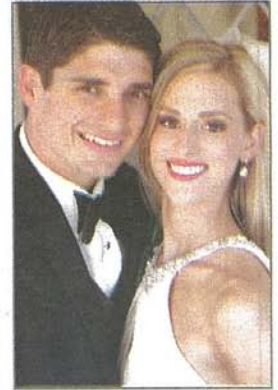
But when the couple settled on the slightly more upscale Garden City Hotel, the elder Bruno proved he wasn't entire-

ly joking. "When we were negotiating the price," Altieri recalled, "he said he could help by bringing in some vegetables." And he did, delivering them to Danielle's house in Melville; she then drove the carloads west.

"It was really wonderful," Danielle said. "My family takes such pride in the farm and in its vegetables. And this was something special we could add to a day that was already so overwhelming."

See who's
been getting married
on Long Island





THE COUPLE
Danielle Bruno
& Robert Altieri

THE DATE
July 31, 2010

PHOTOS BY JOYON PHOTOGRAPHY

THE VENUE
Garden City Hotel



For the reception at the Garden City Hotel, director of catering Joseph Borbely, far left, and master chef Steven De Bruyn, with the bride, built the wedding menu around produce from the 90-year-old Lenny Bruno Farms. They used it to create nearly everything but the wedding cake. Below, Danielle's grandparents, Mary and Leonard Bruno, who still help run the Manorville farm.

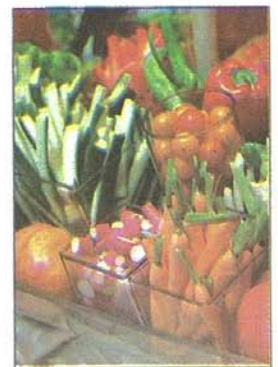
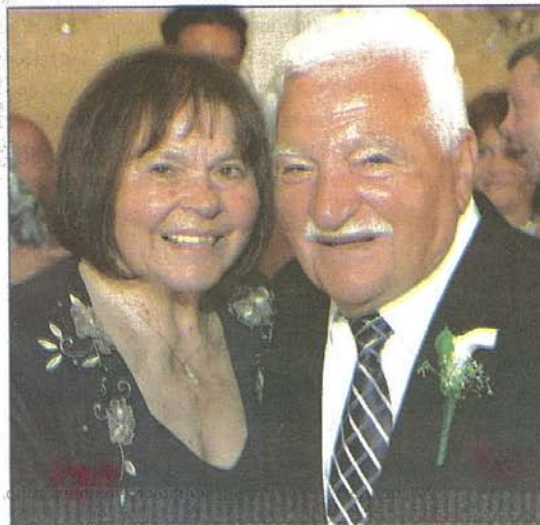


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