Who needs love that’s written in stone when it can be engraved on gorgeously designed paper? A stylish stationer and a smitten lawyer dream up a fairy-tale, letter-perfect wedding.

Jeff York and Cheree Berry share a kiss before a setting sun. Cheree wears a Carolina Herrera lace gown and carries a bouquet of her print, and orange, pink, and red ranunculus with a single, tiny golden bee—one of the motifs she often uses in her work as a stationer—perched among the flowers. Opposite: Cheree gives a peak of color with red Stuart Weitzman open-toe pumps.

PRINTS charming

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY DONNA NEUMANN  TEXT BY AMY COONEY
If you want to get a sense of stationer Cheree Berry’s personality, look no further than her work desk. Tucked between design books and a box of vintage papers is a gag peanut can with a springy snake inside. Cheree loves to surprise people—but when she met Jeff, she was the one, finally, who was caught off guard.

It was 2004, at Christmas time, and Cheree had flown from New York to visit her parents in the small town outside of St. Louis where she grew up. A mutual friend had suggested that she meet Jeff, an attorney. She agreed but didn’t imagine that anything would come of it. To her amazement, “we clicked immediately,” says Cheree. She and Jeff spent the rest of the holidays together, and a year later, she moved back to St. Louis, happy to have found a great guy (who lived near her family, to boot) and ready to start her own business.

When it came to the proposal, Jeff had a harder time surprising Cheree. He had intended to decorate their apartment with flowers so it would look special when they returned after a nice dinner out. But Cheree came home unexpectedly, so he stuffed the flowers in the closet. At the chocolate shop where they went for dessert, she got suspicious as soon as he ordered the most expensive port there (he’s not a big port fan). And when he started getting fidgety, she knew. He asked, she accepted, the waiter rushed over with champagne. When they got home later, he showed her the flowers in the closet—and they both had a good laugh.

Laughter is something that comes naturally to Cheree. As owner of Cheree Berry Paper, a stationery and graphic design company, her goal, she says, is always “to evoke a big smile.” And that’s surely the reaction Cheree and Jeff’s wedding guests had when they opened their mailboxes to find thick, creamy envelopes addressed in swirls of red calligraphy, with the words love mail printed in the corner—all designed, of course, by the bride herself.

In fact, just about everything that had to do with their September 13, 2008, wedding bore Cheree’s creative imprint, from the jaw-dropping invitation suite to the charming paper “char-gers” on the tables to the nostalgic touches that punctuated the event. A display of lollipops, for instance, greeted guests post-ceremony. At their seats, they found big napkins printed with the words yum yum in red script. “I wanted to bring memories from childhood as I went into married life,” says Cheree. And in what may be the ultimate symbol of the way the bride looks at life—with joyful, childlike wonder and a deep appreciation for the unexpected—guests were sent home with grab bags filled with vintage dime-store finds, like whoopee cushions, googly-eye glasses, and Slinkys.

“From the first day I met her, I was fascinated by the way her brain comes up with all the little details,” says Jeff. “With Cheree, you never know what’s going to happen next.” Maybe not, but chances are, it will make him smile.
Clockwise from left: Washington University in St. Louis, where Cheree was an undergraduate and Jeff earned his law and business degrees, serves as the ceremony site. Cheree and Jeff tap into their inner children. A spread of lollipops encourages their guests to do the same. The beaming bride, whose gown boasts a removable bottom tier, and her groom with their parents, from left: Bill and Jackie Berry, and Judy and Ron York. The bridesmaids, wearing Siri dresses, carry simple, brightly colored rosebuds. Opposite: Cheree created light-pink card-stock “chargers” printed with their names and wedding date. The trumpeter on the place card (which doubles as a menu) hints at Jeff’s love of music. A card invites guests to save room for dessert. Just behind it is a port glass with a chocolate and a monogrammed tag balanced on top. For the centerpiece, dahlias, zinnias, and roses form a neat dome.

“I’m a paper person,” says Cheree. “So I asked myself, ‘How can I bring that to the table?’” The answer: beautifully. Her inspired settings are proof that paper can be as elegant as crystal.
Clockwise from top left: The happy couple raises glasses of bubbly. Oversize white napkins letterpressed in red add a punch of color. Cheree based the design of the seating-card display on Plinko from The Price Is Right. An extra-long table is roomy enough to seat the couple and close relatives.

Opposite: A layered buttercream-frosted cake is decorated with lengths of ribbon; paper artist Denise Sharp transformed parts of the couple’s stationery suite into the cake topper and paper swags. Slices of red-velvet cake wrapped in papers printed “yum yum” stand in for the groom’s cake. The bride crafted the crimson garlands in the background by spray-painting foam balls and stringing them on fishing line.
Clockwise from top left: Sitting alongside a bowl of chocolate pennies, the his-and-hers grab bags are arranged on trays for guests to choose from. Cheree’s parents take a whirl on the dance floor. The groom’s cakes are red-velvet “sandwiches” from Niche Restaurant, a favorite. The bride and groom cut the main cake, her headpiece designed by Cheree and custom made, boasts a lace rose and a “messy, asymmetrical arrangement of tulips.” Jeff and Cheree collected the contents of the favor bags for months, amassing in their living room a pile of hand buzzers, slinkys, and other five-and-dime treats.

Sources

LOCATION Ceremony, Graham Chapel at Washington University in St. Louis; reception, Lumen
EVENT PLANNING Rebecca Boillat of St. Louis Wedding Design
CATERING Lumen
FLOWERS Bloomin’ Bullets
CAKE Mathew Rice of Niche Restaurant
STATIONERY Cheree Berry Paper
CALLIGRAPHY Cheryl Taff of Calligraphics
MUSIC The Ultraviolet
WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY Susan Jackson
GOWN Carolina Herrera
SHOES Stuart Weitzman
BRIDESMAIDE DRESSES Sin
SUITS Jiu A. Bank
TJ Maurano
HAIR Jennifer Jones of Jones & Co. Hair Salon
MAKEUP Suzy Bacino

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