

Dear Jackie,

I am sitting by myself, a little over a week after the most magical wedding weekend, wishing I could be sitting next to you and telling you in person how happy Bob and I feel that our Kara had the wedding of her dreams! You have been in my thoughts all week...yes, true wedding withdrawal is in full force and I am not ready to let go. I find myself smiling all the time at the memory of it all. I am typing this rather than writing, as I know I have so much to say to you and Andrew too. How lucky we were that Kara found Lord Thompson Manor and both of you. Bob said the other day that after Kara and Neil came to tell us they were engaged, he thought "This is really wonderful...now we have a wedding to plan...how the heck do we do that?" I had to admit to him that I had much the same feeling. It was a bit of overwhelming to think about.

As soon as the school year ended for Kara and Katie, the four of us took off to look at wedding venues on a sunny Saturday morning. We went first to a winery in Stonington, CT. We all loved it and left, agreeing, "if we see nothing else we like, we have found a place". Sunday we all got in the car again and headed to Thompson, CT. I remember thinking "this place can't possibly be as good as the photos" and then we drove down the long driveway and suddenly, there sat your lovely home and I thought "Oh my, it is already better than the pictures!" We parked and started walking over to the Manor just as a bride and her family were departing. I asked, "Did you get married here this weekend?" and we got our first rave review! What a way to begin! Then we met Ted and took the tour. We were instantly in love...with the Manor and, I have to admit, with Ted, too! Eventually Andrew came and sat with us and clearly went over the details of having a wedding at Lord Thompson Manor. His gentle manner and his answers to our many questions assured us that here was a place that really knew what they were doing. It was clear that one of your goals was to see that we all enjoyed the time we would be there and not have any concerns or worries to deal with. We finished up the day with Ted at The Cottage House and looking at Kara, I knew we had found the place she had dreamed about. He even responded to one of our questions by breaking out with a song from "Phantom" for us right on the steps of the Cottage House! To this family of "Phantom of the Opera" lovers, it was the perfect ending to a lovely day. The car was a-buzz of conversation all the way home.

Now Neil loved the manor too, but being very practical (and probably only half realizing that this was where he was going to get married), felt that they should take a few days to look at some places closer to home. So the next day, Kara, Neil and Katie took off looking at places along the Hudson River Valley. Bob and I knew this was really a waste of time, but Kara was trying to be fair and respectful of Neil. Katie secretly kept texting us reactions to the various places they went....all thumbs down. We cheered at every text!!! I will give Neil credit, that he did acknowledge, that when all was said and done, we would call Andrew and say "Count us in!" and within a few days, we did. Then the fun began.

Once we had our first meeting with you, Bob and I no longer felt "How do we do this"...we knew we were in capable hands. What we did not know was how nicely you and Andrew would guide us through the year, how much fun it would be and how much we would all come to love you all so dearly. The wedding weekend could not have been more perfect, from start to finish. People who were not with us have been asking us all week about it and we can't begin to make them understand how very special it was for all of us. We relaxed, we felt at home, we were excited to share this all with our guests and we just had the happiest and very best time. We hated to say good by. People are in awe....no one can say the same about their experiences. I remember telling Andrew at the "Tasting" that when the kids got engaged I said to them I hoped they could look back on their engagement year and say "Didn't we have fun planning our wedding?" and even then in March you were all making this Mom's wish come true. I have to tell you, it was a wonderful, happy engagement yearthings went smoothly from start to finish and we have you to thank. Everyone you recommended to us turned out to be just the nicest people.... Michelle, Anne, Victoria, Greg, Brian...they all began to feel like family. By the time we arrived for the wedding, we knew all was in place and we did not have to worry about a thing. How much fun it was for Kara, Katie and I to walk with you as you led us from one thing to another...we were speechless at the beauty of it all. Everyone had told us that the wedding goes by so fast and when it is over you hardly remember a thing...not with us and certainly not with Kara and Neil! Kara did not miss a single thing and she loved every minute, right down to the special cigar Andrew brought out for her. Yesterday, Cathy forwarded a photo to me that someone sent her, with Kara, in full wedding dress, standing in the big tub...they called it "Cold Feet" ! Our guests were enthralled with the beauty and comfort of the manor, the stunning flowers and décor

and the wonderful food and the kindness of your staff. Chef Mike is amazing! Friends kept asking "How did you find this place?" So many complements while there and since we have come home. My brother wrote he has never been to a wedding to match it and he has been to many!

We loved meeting your sisters, your niece and visiting the flower shed. I still pick up the paper cones your sister Sue made for the rose petals and can't believe she did that. Little surprises kept popping up and just sent us into another level of excitement. You have a wonderful, engaging staff and they made it all the more personal and special. I wish I had learned all their names. Kate was always there for all of us - she is delightful and we loved her too. Priscilla did such an amazing job making us all feel beautiful and she even put up with Bob and Vin sitting there at the spa, having the best time, being part of the morning excitement. Kara loved the fact that her Dad was there for some of that. I took hundreds of photos right up until I put on my green dress and then I put the camera down. Jackie, I have to say, the flowers were just the most beautiful flowers I think I have ever seen and all your special touches have not gone unnoticed. I keep going over and over the photos....(do need to once again get the names and colors of every rose). We are still enjoying many of the flowers we brought home, I am drying rose petals to try to make a potpourri and the Mandevillas are going strong. I am committed to keeping them alive until Kara and Neil have their house. The bouquets for each of us were perfect...so unique and so special. I still get misty eyed over my lilly of the valley bouquet.

I have to tell you Kara was just beside herself when we all got home and she unpacked her special box of "treasures" from you. At the condo the sisters shared, they would jokingly say Kara was in charge of "entertainment, fun and decoration" and she indeed kept their home full of beautiful flowers. She loved decorating their mantle weekly with special seasonal touches. I, too, love my beautiful mercury glass bowl. You are such a very special person...every bride should have a Jackie in her life to make her dream come true. We will never ever forget our time with you and your many kindnesses. The men are still talking about Andrew's presentation at the scotch/whiskey/cigar happening. Again to quote my brother: "Absolutely first class...I loved it!"

Katie has told us that when she meets her man, she will ask two questions: "Do you like cats?" and "How do you feel about getting married at Lord Thompson Manor?" It is our fondest wish that we will indeed return some day and have this wonderful

experience with you all once again. I asked Bob on the way home, "Do you think when Katie gets married, we will be back?" He laughed and said "without a doubt". So, until we meet again...our heartfelt thanks and sincere appreciation.

much love:-

Karen and Bob too!