# New Zealand rugby player Campbell Johnstone marries Ben Thomson



Former professional rugby player Campbell Johnstone has publicly celebrated his marriage to partner Ben Thomson, marking a significant moment in both their lives and within the sporting community. Last week, the 45-year-old athlete, recognised as the first openly gay player to represent the New Zealand All Blacks, shared details of their marriage in an exclusive feature for Woman’s Day [pictured, Campbell on the left], a New Zealand-based publication.

The couple’s wedding took place at The Flaxmill, located in Oxford, New Zealand. An unconventional entrance set the tone for the day, as the pair arrived via helicopter, adeptly piloted by Johnstone’s former rugby teammate, Richie McCaw. Thomson recounted the exhilarating journey, noting, “Richie did this really steep loop around the property, and I lost my stomach a bit,” before they disembarked to an array of congratulatory greetings from family and friends.

In a departure from traditional wedding practices, Johnstone and Thomson opted for a more intimate ceremony, choosing to exchange their vows privately. “We had a day with just the two of us, when photographers videoed and photographed us getting ready together in a hotel,” Thomson explained. They exchanged vows atop a mountain at Castle Hill Station, with only their photographers and videographer present, eschewing the need for a celebrant. Johnstone expressed the significance of this choice, stating, “We also thought it should be a moment just for us. That was really special because we just got to enjoy the day together.”

While their vows remained confidential until later, the couple managed to create a surprise for their family and friends during the wedding celebration by sharing a video of their private ceremony. “Nobody knew what was going on. Even the groomspeople and our families didn’t know,” Johnstone revealed. Their carefully orchestrated reveal made it appear as though they had come directly from the video during the event.

The Woman’s Day feature showcased a collection of heartwarming photographs from their wedding day. In one memorable image, Johnstone and Thomson can be seen holding hands whilst donned in matching tuxedos, adorned with pendants inscribed with their initials. Another evocative snapshot highlighted a unique voting station related to their new surname, which was retained as Johnstone. The pair were also photographed engaged in celebratory activities, such as constructing a champagne tower and exploring their dessert spread.

Following their wedding announcement, Johnstone's social media accounts were inundated with supportive messages from admirers. One individual commented, “Absolutely stunning! Wishing you all the best and lots of love,” while another expressed, “LOVE THIS FOR YOU BOTH congratulations.”

This marriage announcement follows Johnstone's landmark decision two years prior to come out publicly as gay, a move that resonated within the rugby community. He reflected on the implications of his openness during a discussion with Seven Sharp TV in January 2023, stating, “If I can be the first All Black that comes out as gay and take away the pressure and the stigma surrounding that whole issue, then it can actually help other people.”

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campbell_Johnstone> - Confirms Campbell Johnstone as the first openly gay All Black and provides details about his rugby career.
* <https://gayexpress.co.nz/2025/01/campbell-johnstone-marries-ben-thomson-in-emotional-mountain-top-wedding/> - Details the marriage of Campbell Johnstone and Ben Thomson, including the private ceremony and the celebration at The Flaxmill.
* <https://gayexpress.co.nz/2025/01/campbell-johnstone-marries-ben-thomson-in-emotional-mountain-top-wedding/> - Describes the intimate mountain-top ceremony and the surprise reveal to family and friends.
* <https://gayexpress.co.nz/2025/01/campbell-johnstone-marries-ben-thomson-in-emotional-mountain-top-wedding/> - Mentions the helicopter arrival piloted by Richie McCaw and the congratulatory greetings from family and friends.
* <https://gayexpress.co.nz/2025/01/campbell-johnstone-marries-ben-thomson-in-emotional-mountain-top-wedding/> - Explains the decision to exchange vows privately and the significance of this choice for the couple.
* <https://gayexpress.co.nz/2025/01/campbell-johnstone-marries-ben-thomson-in-emotional-mountain-top-wedding/> - Describes the heartwarming photographs from their wedding day, including images of them holding hands and the unique voting station for their new surname.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campbell_Johnstone> - Provides context on Campbell Johnstone's decision to come out publicly as gay in January 2023.
* <https://gayexpress.co.nz/2025/01/campbell-johnstone-marries-ben-thomson-in-emotional-mountain-top-wedding/> - Quotes Johnstone's reflection on the implications of his openness during the Seven Sharp TV interview.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htDnsxgHdqc> - Supports the context of Johnstone's career and his decision to come out, as discussed in the All Blacks podcast.