



SEEKING A MARITAL BLESSING, QUEENS, N.Y.

Photograph by FEDERICA VALABREGA

Tommer Weingarten (right), 22: *It's a custom that before you announce your engagement, you first go to the rebbe and you ask for his blessing. You ask him to deliver your prayers on high, that they should be heard by God and answered speedily. So we went to the ohel. It's the grave of our rebbe, the Lubavitcher rebbe. And my arm was in a sling, because I fell off my longboard and broke my collarbone. I'm into skateboarding. My friends set me up with Rochel.*

It's called a shidduch. I'm excited to get married more than ever. I'll be honest, I didn't see myself getting married this young, but when you find the right one, if you wait too long, she might run away. I don't want to be that guy who looks back at his life and says, "You know, there was that one girl. ..."

Rochel Wiener, 23: *We dated for about three months before we got engaged. Basically you date for however long you need to decide if you want*

to marry the person. Usually it's a very short period of time, in part because, according to the Torah, we abstain from touching before marriage. Without physical contact, you can really see who the person is intellectually, without a lot of emotional interference. Once you realize the person you are dating is the other half of your soul, you go to the ohel to pray, and then you plan your wedding as quickly as you can. We're getting married on Sept. 18. ♦