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THE RITZ-CARLTON
SOUTH BEACH.

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GRACE ORMONDE WEDDING STYLE

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> COVER:

Dress Designer: Zuhair Murad;

Location: The Ritz-Carlton,

South Beach; Photography:

Kellie Walsh Photography



MILA MOURSI
PARIS

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CELEBRATE

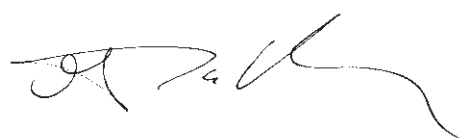
QUE & DESIGN

The Fall 2023 season has started off on a high note, with Paris Fashion Week in full-swing. I love the aesthetics and inspiration this time of year brings, with some of our favorite designers presenting a fresh lineup of incredible evening wear. In this issue, we've highlighted some looks that would be perfect for brides to wear as a second gown for the wedding day – either as a reception gown or after-party ensemble. Many evening wear picks would also be suitable for bridesmaids or ultra-stylish mothers who wish to wear something special.

Speaking of fashion and all things chic, our Fall 2023 Digital Issue highlights the “Queen of Design” herself, Norma Cohen. Although Norma’s work has graced the pages and website of Wedding Style for years, it’s a pleasure to share more about her background and personal evolution – from a Brooklyn teenager volunteering at a community center, to becoming one of the top luxury wedding planners in NYC and beyond.

Finally, with engagement season on the horizon, we wanted to feature some gorgeous real weddings (including a showstopping Santorini celebration) and a very special fashion shoot we produced onsite at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach. It was a pleasure to work with The Ritz-Carlton team, tour the property, and see firsthand why it’s such a wonderful destination for a stylish South Beach wedding celebration.

Cheers to a bright and beautiful new season filled with love.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. L.', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.



THE TOP WEDDING DESTINATIONS 2023

WeddingStyleMagazine.com

Photography:
Adam Alex

54



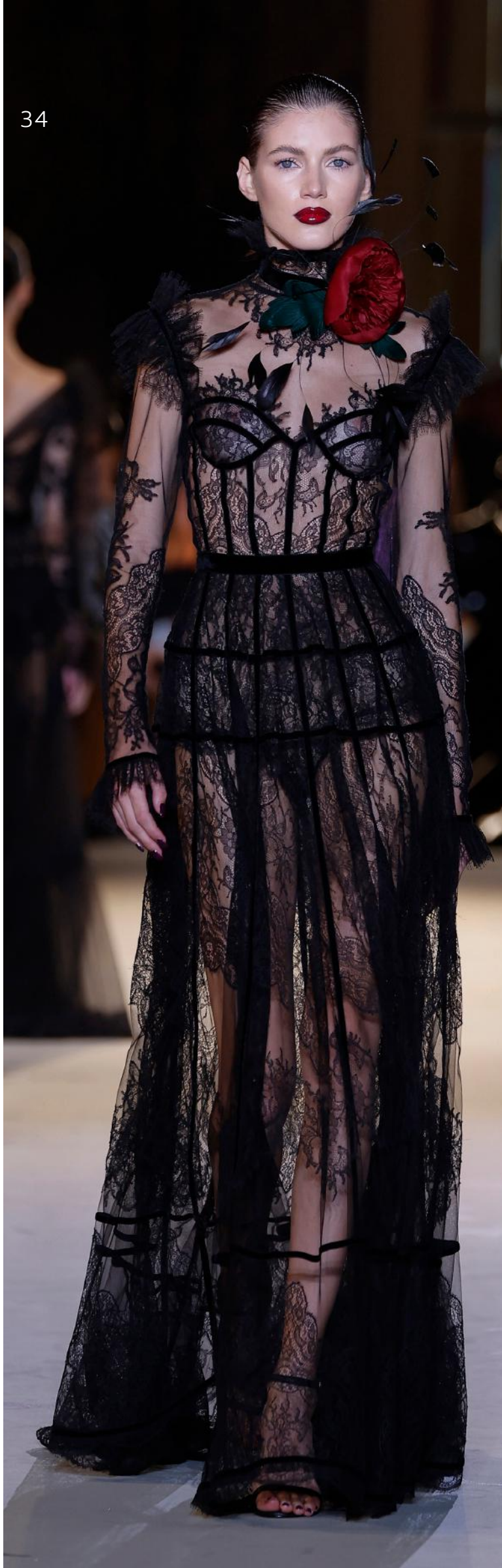
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Shoes: Giuseppe Zanotti



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Fashion Feature ⁵⁴



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> DEPARTMENTS:

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Ceremony &
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Shea Theodore 158
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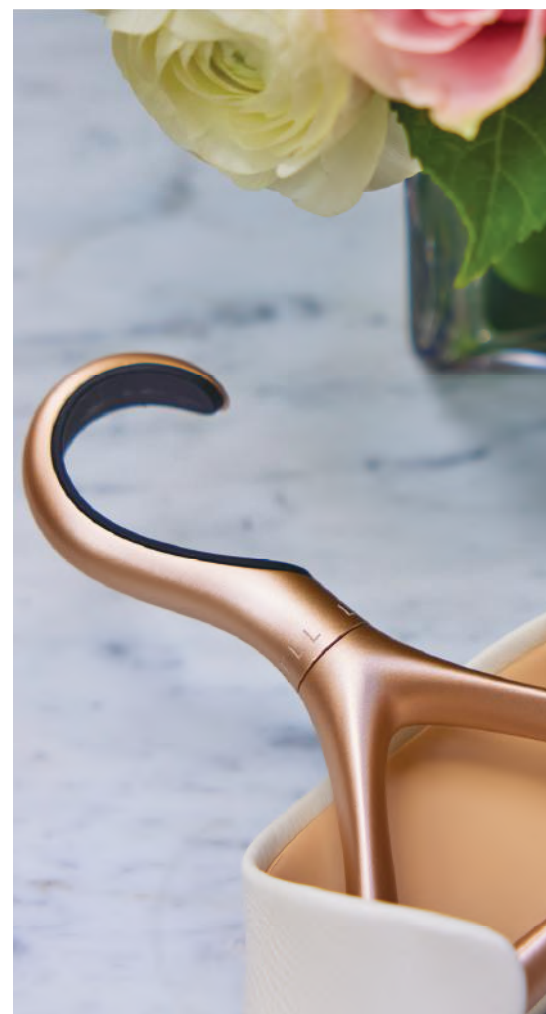




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THE RITZ-CARLTON

SOUTH BEACH

> HOT PICKS:

EDITOR'S PICKS



1

1 Giuseppe Zanotti Gz Aida Open-Toe Mules with Crystal Rhinestone Embroidery. giuseppezanotti.com

2 Dior Rose des Vents, Rose Céleste and Mimirose Earrings in 18k White and Yellow Gold, Diamonds, Mother-of-Pearl and Onyx. dior.com

3 Giuseppe Zanotti Abileene Sandal with Crystal Rhinestones. giuseppezanotti.com

4 Giuseppe Zanotti Brytta High Boot in Purple. giuseppezanotti.com

2







6



5



7



8

25

5 Giuseppe Zanotti Intriigo Bootie.
giuseppezanotti.com

6 Dior Rose des Vents Earrings in 18k Yellow
Gold, Diamonds and Mother-of-Pearl.
dior.com

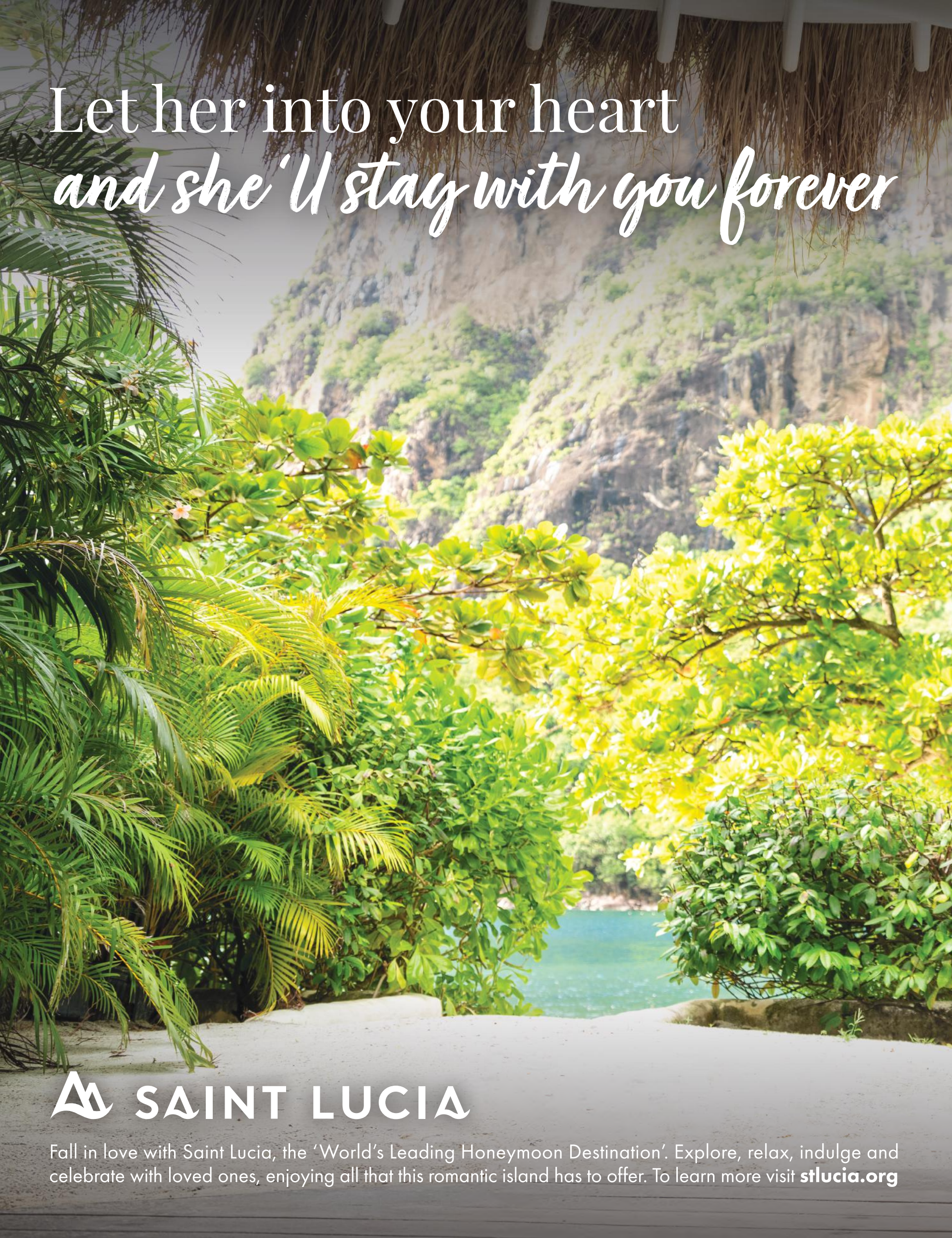
7 Giuseppe Zanotti Intriigo Allure Pointed-
Toe Mules. giuseppezanotti.com

8 Harry Winston Emerald Watch with
Blue Face, 18K White Gold and Brilliant Cut
Diamonds. harrywinston.com

9 Giuseppe Zanotti Beverlee Mules.
giuseppezanotti.com



9



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1

> MEN'S ACCESSORIES:

CHIQUE & STYLISH

1 Giuseppe Zanotti Gz Flash Loafer in Velvet with a Golden Mirrored-Effect Detail. giuseppezanotti.com

2 Harry Winston Ocean Date Moon Phase Watch in 18K White Gold with Brilliant-Cut Diamonds and Blue Alligator Leather Strap. harrywinston.com



2



Boutonniere: **Mayflower Floral Decorators,**
Washington, D.C. Photography: Ron Manville

3



3 Hublot Spirit of Big Ben Sang Blue Titanium Pavé Watch in Polished Titanium set with Diamonds. hublot.com

4 Breguet Classique "Grande Complication" Watch in Rose Gold. breguet.com

5 Hublot Classic Fusion Original Watch in Yellow Gold. hublot.com

6 Onoto Lotus 75th Anniversary Pen Barrel in Lotus F1 Aluminum, Cap in Sterling Silver with Vitreous Enamelling. onoto.com

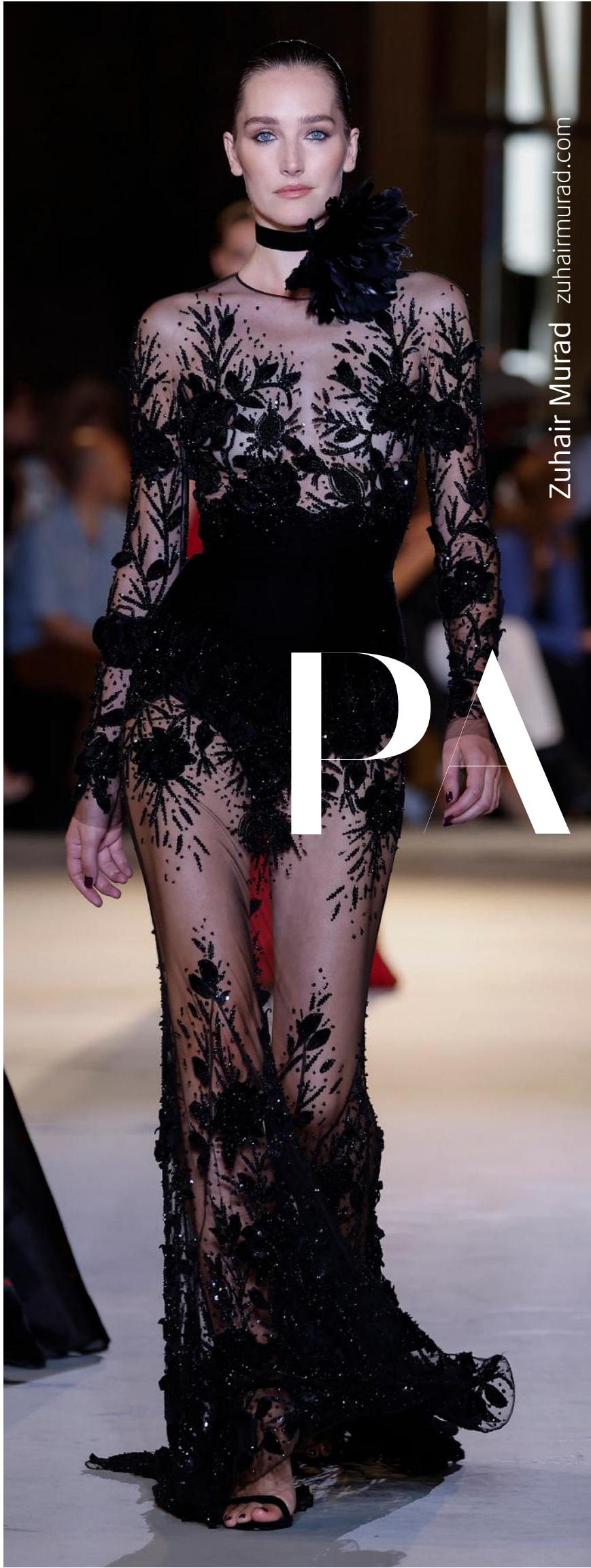
4



5







Zuhair Murad zuhairmurad.com



Zuhair Murad zuhairmurad.com

PARIS



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Zuhair Murad zuhairmurad.com





Elie Saab eliesaab.com



Elie Saab eliesaab.com





Elie Saab eliesaab.com





Stephane Rolland stephanerolland.com



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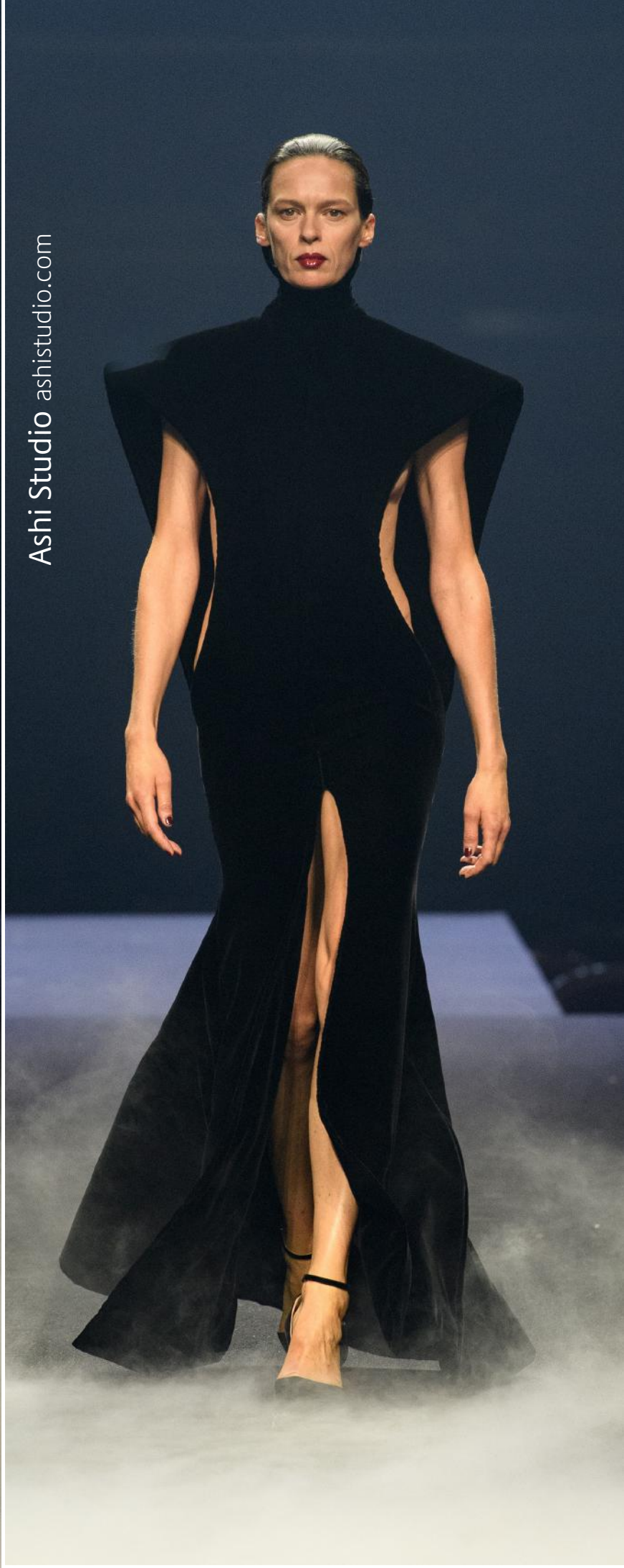
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MODERN WEEK

at
The Ritz-Carlton
South Beach

Location: **The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach**; Hair & Makeup: **Bryin Smoot** using **MAC** cosmetics and **Kenra** Hair Products; Models: **Lexi Gryszowka** and **Denver Smith**; Cinematographer: **VOLT**; Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**; Creative Director: **Grace Ormonde**; Stylist: **Paula DaCosta**

Dress: **Zuhair Murad**; Shoes:
Giambattista Valli; Bridal Salon:
Ever After Miami; Jewelry:
Duchamp Jewelers

WEDDINGS

Photography: Kellie Walsh Photography





Dress & Veil: **Zuhair Murad**; Shoes:
Giambattista Valli; Bridal Salon:
Ever After Miami; Jewelry:
Duchamp Jewelers

Suit, Shirt, Bowtie & Pocket
Square: **Sebastian Cruz
Couture**; Cufflinks: **Duchamp
Jewelers**







Dress: **Zuhair Murad**; Shoes:
Giambattista Valli; Bridal
Salon: **Ever After Miami**;
Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**



THIS SPREAD:
Jacket, Pants & Shirt: **Sebastian Cruz**
Couture; Dress: **Zuhair Murad**; Bridal
Salon: **Ever After Miami**





THIS SPREAD:

Dress: **Viktor & Rolf**; Shoes: **Bella Belle**
Shoes; Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**; Jacket,
Shirt & Pants: **Sebastian Cruz Couture**;
Shoes: **Bruno Magli**







This Spread:
Dress: **Leah Da Gloria**; Bridal Salon:
Chic Parisien; Jewelry: **Duchamp**
Jewelers; Suit, Shirt, Bowtie & Pocket
Square: **Sebastian Cruz Couture**;
Shoes: **Bruno Magli**; Cufflinks:
Duchamp Jewelers; Bouquet: **Ines**
Naftali Events Design

THE RITZ-CARLTON, SOUTH BEACH – A DREAM DESTINATION FOR MODERN MIAMI WEDDINGS

At The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach, a timeless sense of elegance meets contemporary luxury and style. Nestled in the heart of one of the world's most vibrant cities, this wedding venue offers the perfect blend of opulence, tropical allure, and a chic aesthetic to create an unforgettable celebration. With its stunning Atlantic Ocean views, world-class amenities, and impeccable service, The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach sets the stage for modern Miami weddings. It's a truly enchanting destination that epitomizes modern romance for discerning couples.

The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach – Where Luxury Meets “Miami Modern”

Upon arrival at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach, visitors are greeted by a swanky atmosphere with equally stylish surroundings. There's a moody, almost art deco feel to many of the spaces – including the lobby bar, which is a fantastic place to grab a drink or two in a quiet corner – while the suites boast a more modern and streamlined design.

The interior décor features many eye-catching patterns, designs, and thoughtfully curated accents. While the hotel is quite modern in its aesthetics and appeal, innovative design has been part of its identity and history dating back 70 years.

“The hotel was designed by Morris Lapidus in 1953,” shares Camila Chamorro, Market Director of Catering Sales. “Mr. Lapidus was primarily known for Neo-baroque architecture of Miami hotels in the 1950s and 1960s which has become a staple in ‘Miami Modern’ design. The Lapidus Wall inside the lobby is in an unusual L-shape, held together by a curving wall of circular lights. Lapidus referred to the ‘moth complex’ and how people are attracted to light.”

Couples with an eye for design will especially appreciate the ever-evolving, Miami Modern characteristics of The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach.

Why Choose The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach for Your Wedding?

There's a reason why Miami is one of the world's most popular cities for weddings. It's a convenient meeting point between the U.S. West Coast and Europe, or New York and the Caribbean; and it's still exciting enough for Floridians to visit for a staycation. The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach is a beautiful reflection of Miami and its eclectic culture.

“Our vibe is glamorous, modern, vibrant, and definitely full of life,” Camila describes. “The location and stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean make The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach the perfect place to host a wedding.”

Miami is also home to countless wedding and event industry talent, from luxury wedding planners to award-winning photographers and floral designers. Couples who plan their weddings at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach will have the crème de la crème at their fingertips, and a beautiful property to transform into their dream wedding celebration.

Creating the Perfect Wedding Experience at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach

The wedding spaces at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach allow for a great flow between events.

“Our stunning Oceanfront Starr Bar is the perfect setting for a ceremony,” says Camila. “You can follow with cocktails at the DiLido Beach Club overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and finish the evening with dinner and dancing under our Baccarat Chandeliers in The Ritz-Carlton, Ballroom.”

The variety of spaces also make for several beautiful backdrops for wedding photo sessions and first looks. All venues at The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach have a capacity of up to 350 guests.

Between wedding events and activities, guests can curate their own unique wedding experience by venturing to several nearby attractions.



Dress: **Karen Sabag**
Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**





THIS SPREAD:

Dress: **Karen Sabag**; Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**; Suit & Shirt: **Sebastian Cruz Couture**; Cufflinks: **Duchamp Jewelers**







Dress: **Giambattista Valli**; Jewelry:
Duchamp Jewelers; Suit & Shirt:
Sebastian Cruz Couture; Shoes:
Bruno Magli



Dress: **Viktor & Rolf**
Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**

Dress: **Giambattista Valli**
Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**





Dress & Veil: **Galia Lahav**
Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**







Dress & Veil: **Danielle Frankel**
Bridal Salon: **Ever After Miami**
Hat: **Genevieve Rose Atelier**





Dress & Veil: **Danielle Frankel**;
Bridal Salon: **Ever After Miami**;
Suit & Shirt: **Sebastian Cruz**
Couture; Shoes: **Bruno Magli**



Dress & Veil: **Danielle Frankel**;
Bridal Salon: **Ever After Miami**;
Hat: **Genevieve Rose Atelier**; Suit
& Shirt: **Sebastian Cruz Couture**;
Shoes: **Bruno Magli**



Camila recommends walking down Ocean Drive and taking in all the architecture. A tour of Calle Ocho – a hotspot for Cuban culture and known as “Little Havana” – is another favorite among visitors, along with visiting the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens.

Celebrate in Style with Wedding Add-Ons and Luxury Fragrances

While most luxury hotels and resorts will offer a selection of wedding packages and incentives, The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach offers some wedding add-ons that are unique to their property.

In partnership with Krigler, The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach offers a wedding package that allows the couple to create their own signature scent. In celebration of their partnership with the famous Perfume House of Krigler, there are now three add-on options that couples can choose from to customize their wedding package.

The first option is a private shopping experience at Krigler within The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach, where couples can select their signature scent for the big day. Fragrances begin at \$555 USD, and shoppers can reserve their private shopping experience with no lead time and walk out with their signature scent. This service is also available at The Ritz-Carlton, Bal Harbour.

The second option allows couples to lease a one-of-a-kind, archived Krigler scent unavailable for purchase by the general public and inspired by the bountiful florals of the wedding. Couples can capture the olfactory memories of their wedding day by connecting fragrant notes from floral bouquets, decor, and the environment from their celebration to the historic scent that they alone are granted access to for a limited amount of time. The leasing of the Krigler perfume begins at \$11,000 USD and requires at least 3-4 months to recreate the perfume. The couple will receive 3 bottles of perfume.

The third and final option is a bespoke, custom-created fragrance which can be done at the guest's suite or a private experience in the Krigler store. Custom-created fragrances start at \$60,000 USD with an 18-month lead time. This option includes the guest's personal selection for the trunk design and crystal bottle.

Wedding day perfumes and colognes are such a beautiful way to personalize and commemorate the wedding day. Most brides will even have their perfume bottles photographed in their wedding details shots. The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach reimagined this concept with their luxury fragrances by Krigler, so couples can walk away with a tangible, one-of-a-kind souvenir from their wedding weekend.

A New Chapter for Modern Miami Weddings

The quintessential “Ritz-Carlton, South Beach” couple is young, chic, and loves to experience the energy that encompasses Miami Beach. While the property has a longstanding history in Miami, it also evolves with the community and remains at the forefront of style and sophistication. It couldn't be a better destination for today's couples and modern Miami weddings.



Dress: **Danielle Frankel**; Bridal
Salon: **Ever After Miami**; Hat:
Genevieve Rose Atelier; Suit &
Shirt: **Sebastian Cruz Couture**
Shoes: **Bruno Magli**





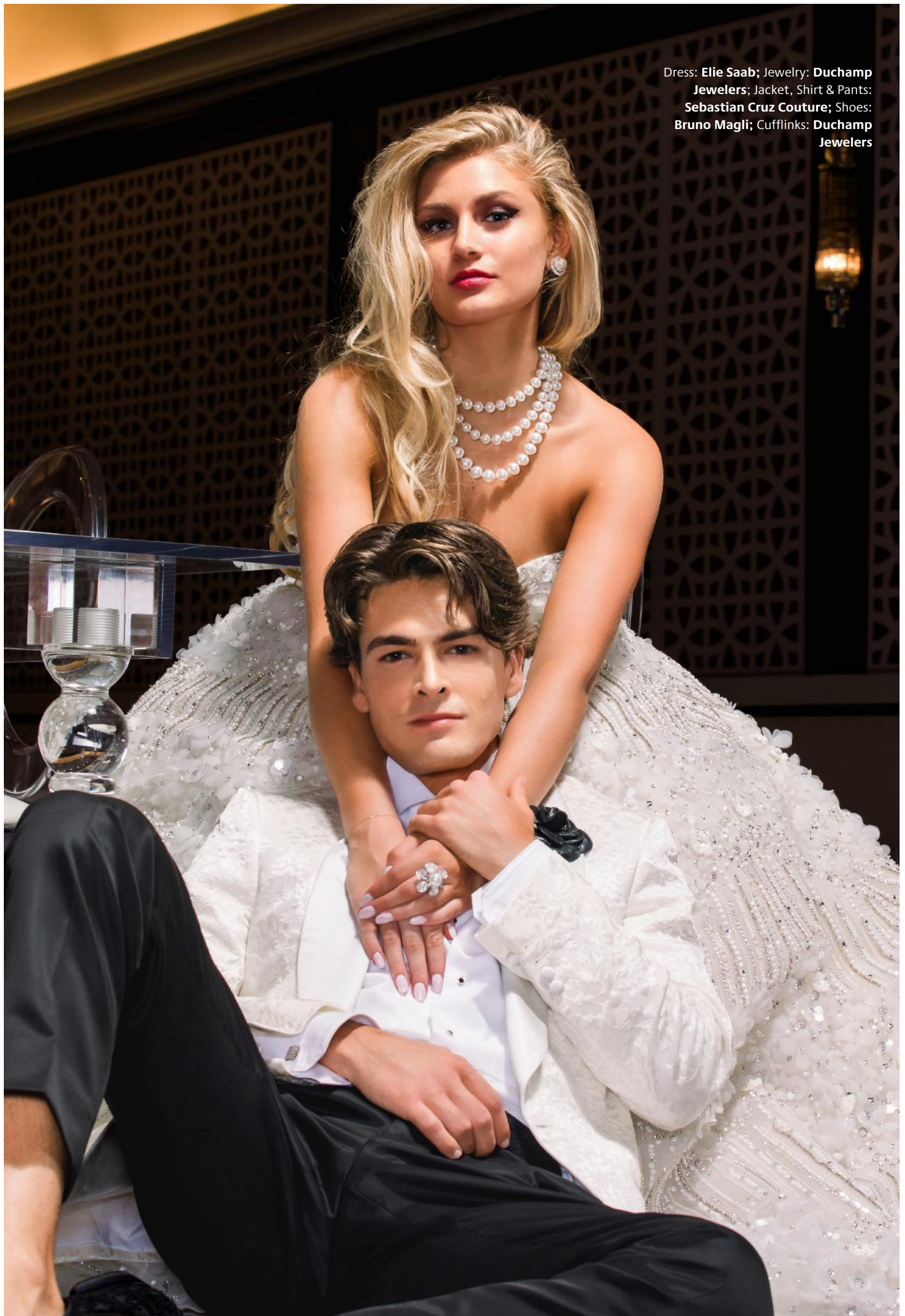


Dress: **Elie Saab**; Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**; Jacket, Shirt & Pants: **Sebastian Cruz Couture**; Shoes: **Bruno Magli**; Cufflinks: **Duchamp Jewelers**
Floral & Table Décor: **EPIC Floral Design**
Furniture Rentals: **The Lounge Design**



Dress: **Zuhair Murad**;
Bridal Salon: **Ever After**
Miami; Jewelry: **Duchamp**
Jewelers

Dress: **Elie Saab**; Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**; Jacket, Shirt & Pants: **Sebastian Cruz Couture**; Shoes: **Bruno Magli**; Cufflinks: **Duchamp Jewelers**







Dress: **Elie Saab**; Jewelry: **Duchamp Jewelers**;
Jacket, Shirt & Pants: **Sebastian Cruz Couture**;
Shoes: **Bruno Magli**; Cufflinks: **Duchamp
Jewelers**; Floral & Table Décor: **EPIC Floral
Design**; Furniture Rentals: **The Lounge Design**



Dress: **Serge Jevaguine**;
Bridal Salon: **Roma Sposa**;
Shoes: **Bella Belle Shoes**; Hat:
Genevieve Rose Atelier





Dress: **Serge Jevaguine**; Bridal
Salon: **Roma Sposa**; Hat:
Genevieve Rose Atelier Jacket:
Sebastian Cruz Couture





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A romantic wedding scene on a sandy beach. A bride in a white lace gown and long veil stands next to a groom in a white suit. They are looking at each other and smiling. To their right is a large, tall arch made of pampas grass and white flowers. In the background, the ocean is visible with several small boats on the water under a clear sky.

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NORMA

THE QUEEN OF DESIGN

She's as "New York" as it gets. With nearly three decades of event planning experience, Norma Cohen has become a household name in the world of luxury wedding planning and event design. As a fully self-taught and self-made businesswoman from Brooklyn, she has developed the uncanny ability to reimagine the same event spaces time and time again. No two weddings are ever alike, simply because no two brides are alike; and she has a knack for connecting with her clients in a way that always brings their personal style to the forefront. With her impeccable eye for design, laser focus, and deceptively tough exterior that houses an ultra-sensitive spirit, Norma embodies everything a couple could want in an NYC wedding planner.

It All Started in Brooklyn

Norma's passion for planning began before she was even a teenager. As a young girl, she was doing

charity work and volunteering on the committee of the Sephardic Community Center in Brooklyn. While serving others, Norma also stepped into her own little world that gave her a sense of fulfillment she wasn't getting from other areas of her life.

"I was around 12," she shares, "and I wasn't that girl who wanted to be with her friends all the time. I was very sensitive, and girls are not that nice at 12. It was an escape for me. I started going there after school and planning events, organizing fashion shows and plays, and started building my skills."

By the age of 16, Norma opened her first business – Party Expressions – and was planning all types of events, from birthday parties to corporate. She had also moved up to become a member of the board at the community center. A few years later, a friend gave her the opportunity to plan her first engagement party and wedding.

Wedding Planning with Norma Cohen Productions

In the early days of Norma's wedding planning business, she worked almost exclusively with the bride's parents. Since then, she has collaborated with almost every type of client imaginable, lending her expertise to countless design visions.

"There's three types of clients," she states. "There's one that tells you to do whatever you want; there's another that gives a small seed of their vision; and then there's a particular micromanager. I always stress that they have to give me something so the wedding can be about them."

COFFIN





Photography: Fred Marcus NY





Photography: David Miller

Photography: David Miller













Photography: Fred Marcus NY



One of Norma's favorite success stories in terms of accurately matching her client's vision happened about 15 years ago. A woman told her she didn't care about any of the design details – she just wanted to show up to a party that was “dark and sexy,” and gave her carte blanche to fill in the rest. After Norma put together a design scheme and the event was underway, the client walked in wearing a gray organza gown that was an identical match to the luxury chair covers Norma chose. Of course, Norma offered to swap out the chair covers; but the client was more than happy with the final result and how the décor was the perfect reflection of her style.

Today, couples who have the privilege of working with Norma Cohen Productions can look forward to a turnkey experience.

“I do everything,” Norma says. “You’re getting a full service.”

The first step is getting the budget and location approved, followed by invitations. While designing their invitation suite, Norma takes note of what type of calligraphy, paper, ink colors, embellishments, and any other small details her couples choose. This gives her some insight to their design preferences before moving on to create a floor plan. From there, it's all about whittling down and refining the details.

The Design Process and Inspiration

What's most remarkable about Norma being a top wedding designer is that she never had any formal training. In fact, she shares that "design wasn't an original skill" of hers. She was entirely self-taught through personal experience over the years.

Although she is adamant about each wedding being a representation of her couple's tastes and not hers, Norma's innate sense of style and fashion undoubtedly gives her an advantage. Even when she attended the wedding of her friends Colin Cowie and Danny Peusovich in South Africa, Colin raved about how Norma was the reigning fashion queen during their "Glamoflaug Safari Party."

"I always love to dress up and be over-the-top," Norma states. "I started looking at jewelry pieces and seeing them as design applications. Now with social media, you can't do anything twice."

Like most artists, Norma can draw inspiration and fresh ideas from anywhere. Fashion is always readily accessible, but the thrill of seeing all the components of a wedding come together can be its own type of inspiration as well.

"My favorite part of the design process is connecting the dots from the day they give me their vision, and where it goes back to them," she says. "We had a humungous wedding at a New Jersey house, and the client wanted a large structure that was in the middle of the garden. One thing led to the next, which led to this first-of-its-kind tent that looked like it was always there. I love the opportunity to always be better. I approach every party like it's my last party, so it has to be amazing."

Although Norma has planned and designed weddings around the world, she honed her talents by creating multiple events in the same spaces.

"Most of my career was in the same two rooms and I had to renovate every time," she explains. "The brides are different, so they're feeding me different elements. Every party looks like my couple – it doesn't look like me."

To create a beautiful wedding in a new and exciting destination is one thing. To consistently produce fully bespoke events in the same venue is the



Photography: Fred Marcus NY









Photography: Christian Oth

GRACE ORMONDE WEDDING STYLE





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Photography: Betsi Ewing





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sign of a true expert.

Words of Wisdom

Looking back at how she and her business have evolved over the decades, one of Norma's greatest takeaways is that people need to be given a chance to show what they can do.

While she was mastering her planning and design skills in Brooklyn, Norma's "big break" came when her friend Preston Bailey called and invited her to be a guest at a summit in Puglia. Norma didn't know anyone initially. By the time she left, she knew everybody at the summit and came away with a priceless new network.

"I always say people need the opportunity," she says. "I got the opportunity, and I'm very thankful. I didn't know the industry and the industry didn't know me. I grew in my own bubble. I'm very grateful for where I am and I don't take anything for granted."

Now, after solidifying her spot as a leading luxury wedding planner and designer in NYC, Norma has a wealth of advice for newer planners hoping to tap into the luxury end of the wedding industry.

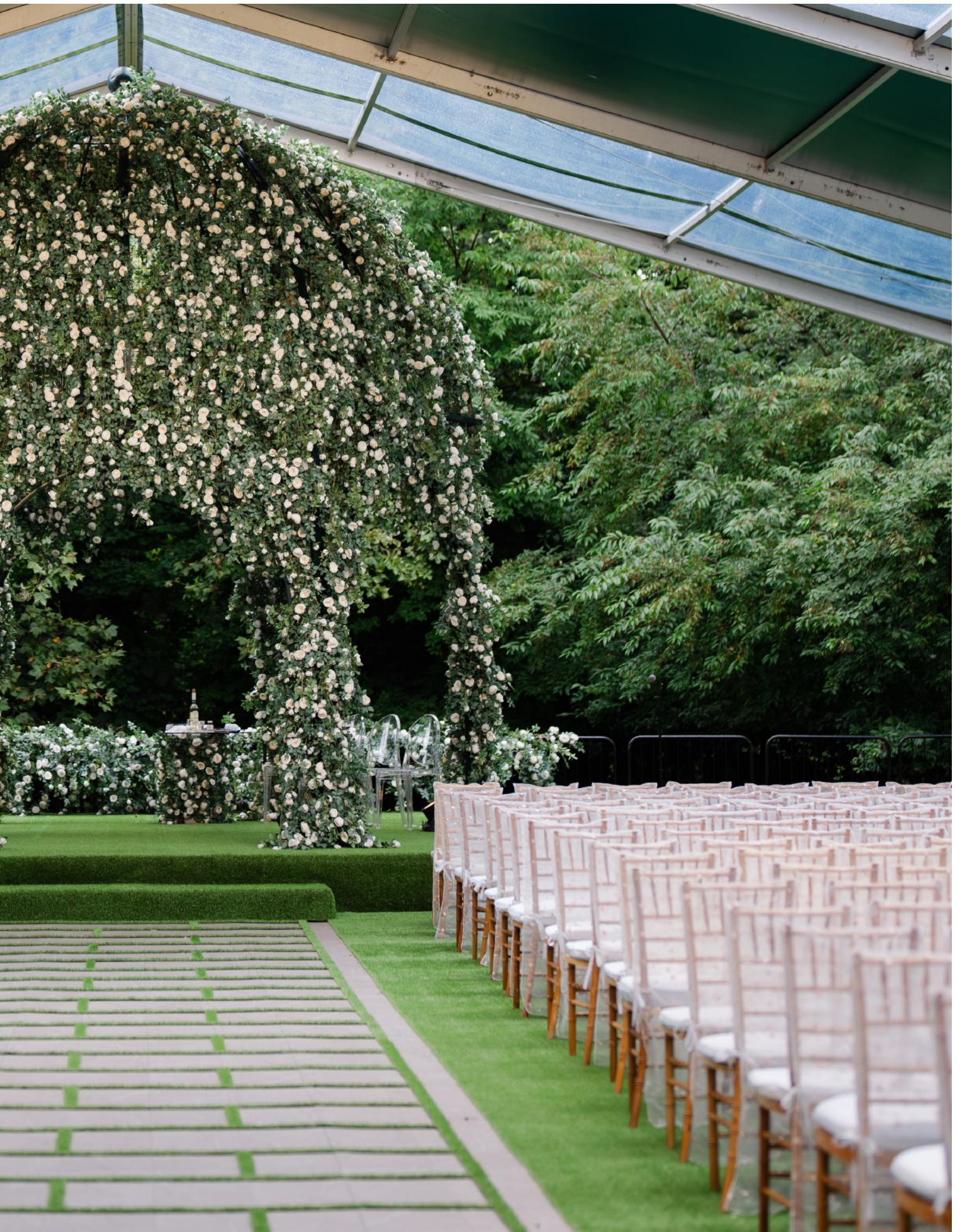
"Don't get discouraged," she says. "Obstacles make you better. Do it because you love it, and make sure you stay on top of it because this is somebody's wedding. Never change your price and never negotiate, because one day it'll hit you in the back. Always stay straight and focused. I never take kickbacks from anybody, so I can always choose vendors based on how they perform. Honesty is very important. Keep your team happy – I used to be a screamer, and now I'm not. You want everyone around you to love working with you. And always stay loyal."

Norma's life and career are like night and day compared to where she started. From being a teenager in Brooklyn volunteering at a community center after school, to jet setting around the world in designer gowns and designing luxury events, she's the epitome of the New York City dream. Yet even with all her career accolades and credits, some of her most meaningful achievements have been the multiple awards for community service that she has received over the years. Simply maintaining that connection to her roots speaks volumes about her character and the type of energy she brings to her clients and their celebrations.

"You never forget where you came from," Norma says. "This is number one."

>Written By: Lauren Malamala











Photography: Christian Oth

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Romantic at Car in Santorini, Greece

MELANIE PAPADOPOULOU & MARKOS CHAIDEMENOS
October, 2022. **Santorini, Greece**

Photography:
Anna Roussos & Thanos Asfis



Wedding

aves Oia Epitome

ce





























Melanie Papadopoulou and Markos Chaidemenos were both working in the travel industry when they met for the first time in 2019.

“I came to Santorini for a site inspection of the Canaves Oia properties,” Melanie shares. “The hotels were incredible, but Markos himself was definitely the highlight.”

As the couple met in one of the world’s most romantic destinations, it was only fitting for the proposal to take place in another dreamy location – Villa Treville in Positano, Italy. It was late-September of 2021, and the two were enjoying some much-needed time off after a demanding work season. Markos suggested jetting off to Positano to relax, and surprised Melanie with the perfect engagement.

Getting Married in Santorini

Santorini is such a special wedding destination that couples often secure their dates and venues without ever having visited the island in person.

For Melanie and Markos, however, their connection to Santorini ran deep.

“Getting married at the place where our love story began, and which we consider our ‘home,’ was the best way for us to celebrate the most important day of our lives with our beloved family and friends,” Melanie explains. “When people think of getting married in Santorini, the ‘Caldera’ cliffside is the first thing that comes to mind. That’s why we organize over 60 weddings and elopements every season at Canaves Oia Suites and Canaves Oia Sunday Suites, both of which are great smaller celebrations. However, for our wedding, Canaves Epitome, located at the outskirts of Oia, on a flat land right above Ammoudi and offering more space and seclusion, was the perfect venue.”

Canaves Oia Epitome

Planning a wedding at Canaves Oia Epitome – the couple’s own hotel – certainly had its advantages. As the Events Manager, Melanie knew



exactly how things should be organized. Privacy and exclusivity were her top priorities, as friends and family would be traveling in from all over Greece and abroad for the wedding. Naturally, the couple wanted to ensure that everything was unforgettable from the moment their guests arrived.

“The entire hotel was exclusively booked for our guests,” Melanie describes, “who enjoyed the amazing rooms, private pools, and the entire resort – an idyllic sanctuary away from the bustling noise of Oia, surrounded by beautiful gardens. The celebration lasted three days, allowing our guests ample time to explore the destination, go on a delightful cruise around Santorini (a must-do experience), and savor the exquisite Greek gastronomy at our restaurants. And, of course, the highlight

of it all was the lively party that lasted until the early hours of the morning!”

The bride and groom had their first dance against the breathtaking backdrop of a golden Santorini sunset. Guests enjoyed a delightful dinner reception surrounded by olive trees, and the newlyweds danced the night away with their loved ones. Even with Greek weddings being notoriously grand, not to mention, loud—Epitome was an idyllic wedding venue for accommodating an epic wedding celebration with more than 250 guests.

Honeymooning in Africa

When she first visited Santorini before meeting Markos, Melanie jokingly told her friends that Canaves would be “the only place on earth”







where she would want to celebrate her honeymoon with her future husband. After all, Santorini has all the makings of a picture-perfect romantic getaway: luxury accommodations, exquisite cuisine, and the most magnificent views of the Aegean Sea and sunset. Little did she know that life would lead her to making Santorini her home so she could enjoy the island every day.

With Santorini off the table, the newlyweds chose to embark on a real adventure by honeymooning in Africa. It was the first time in his life that Markos took a vacation for a full two weeks.

“Being on a honeymoon is a great excuse for all the workaholics out there,” Melanie jokes. “We began our journey in Cape Town, South Africa, then proceeded to Kruger Park. From there, we traveled to Botswana and concluded our trip in Mozambique, right by the water. The safari experience was something neither of us had ever encountered before. It was a truly unique and life-changing adventure!”

> Written by Lauren Malamala

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Location: **Canaves Oia Epitome** Santorini, Greece;
Floral Design: **Betty Flowers**; Rentals: **Stylebox**; Art de la Table: **White Lilac**; Graphics: **Bright White Graphic Design**; Lighting & Sound: **Multimedia Events**;
Candles: **Idea Candles**; Wedding Dress: **Maria Konidi**; Second Dress: **Christina Varotsos**; Shoes: **Alevi Milano**; Hair & Makeup: **George Marascas**; DJ: **George Varveris**; Band: **Fortissimo & Swinging Cats**; Tent: **Tentstyle**; Favors: **Yria Ceramics**;
Videographer: **Kapetanakis Team**; Photographer: **Anna Roussos & Thanos Asfis**



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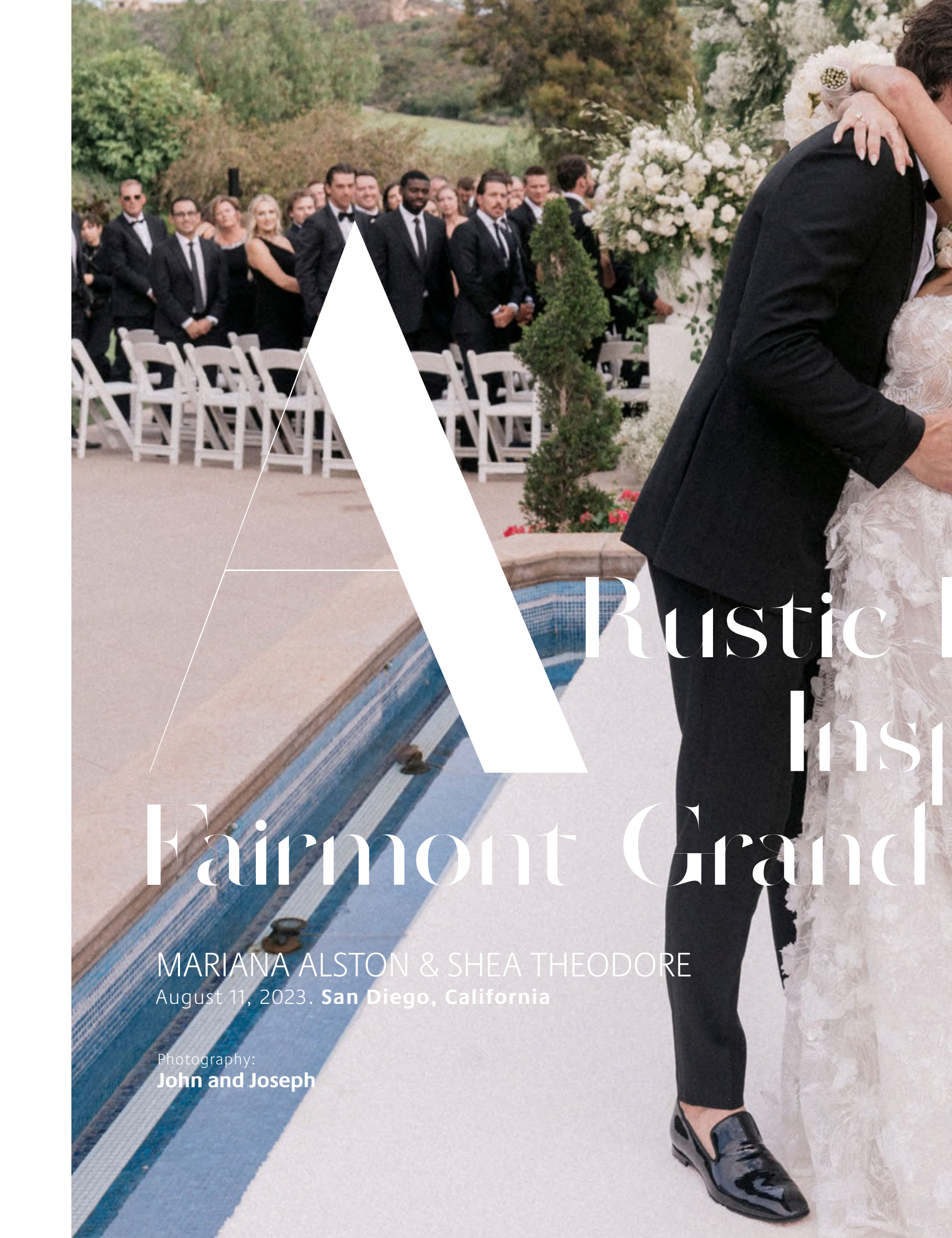
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Rustic Insp Fairmont Grand

MARIANA ALSTON & SHEA THEODORE
August 11, 2023. **San Diego, California**

Photography:
John and Joseph



Italian Garden Inspired Wedding at Del Mar





Mariana Alston and Shea Theodore first met in 2015, when Shea's best friend happened to be the boyfriend of Mariana's university roommate. Since Mariana was newly single at the time, her roommate's boyfriend suggested that Shea reach out; so he broke the ice by sending her a message on Instagram.

With Mariana being from Calgary and Shea being from Vancouver, they chatted for a few months but didn't get around to meeting in person. Eventually, things went quiet between them for a period of time. Fast forward to November, after Shea had moved to San Diego for hockey. He and Mariana started communicating again, and he invited her to come down for a visit. By the time she left, Mariana was officially his girlfriend.

"That showed me we were really meant to be," she recalls, "I thought he was so cute, so authentically himself, and so sweet and kind."

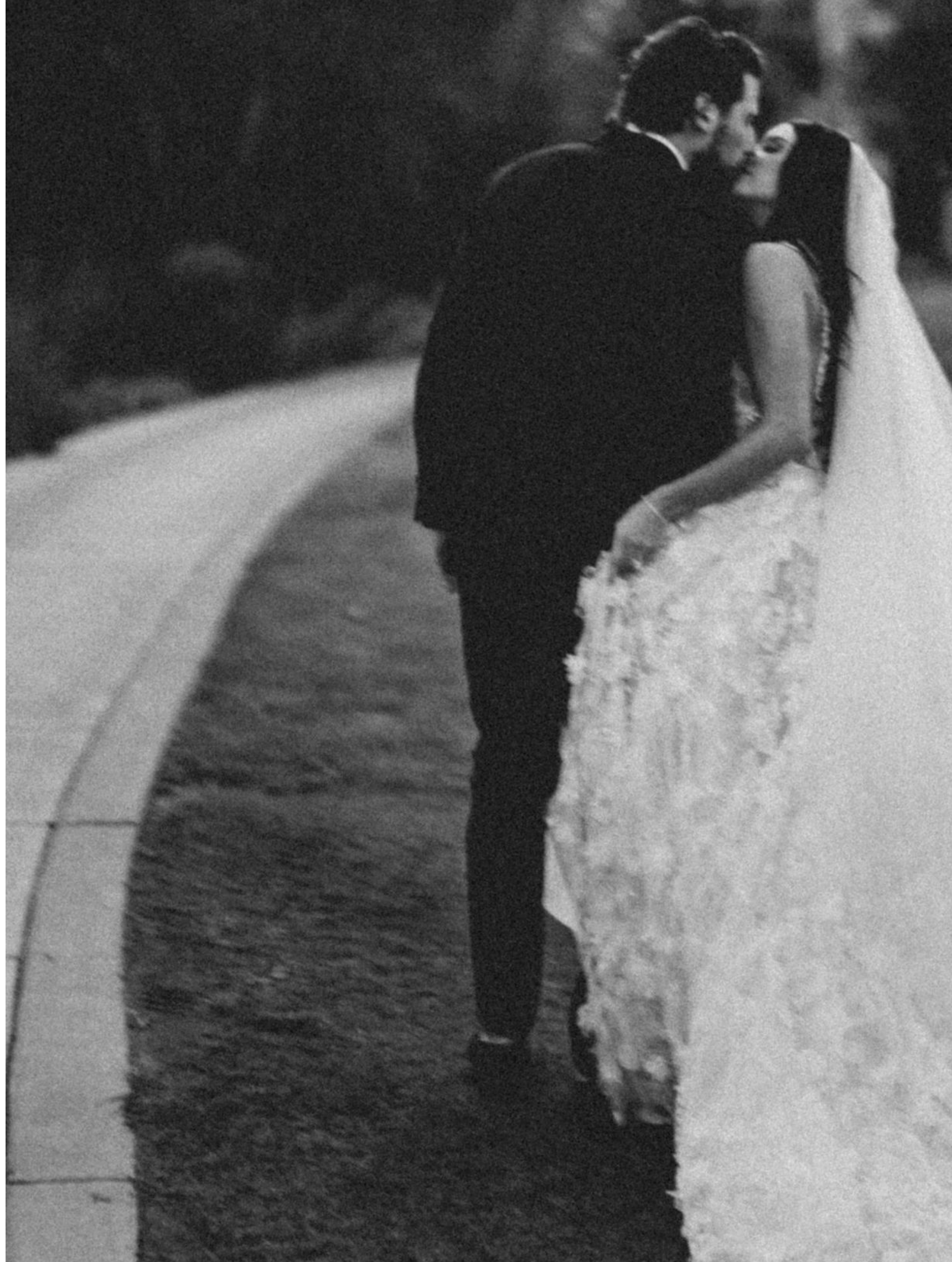
The Forever Home

A couple years ago, Shea and Mariana purchased a lot to build a house in Las Vegas, which Mariana shares, "is just everything we wanted – we want that to be our forever home." Shea also decided it would be the perfect spot to plan a surprise proposal.

The day of their engagement, Shea asked Mariana to go to dinner on the Strip, which they do all the time. He also arranged for their architects to send an email saying that they had to meet onsite regarding a couple measurements, which was also nothing out of the ordinary. Before going to meet the architects, Shea asked Mariana if she could have her hair and makeup done beforehand, as she admittedly takes a long time to get ready – another normal situation for the couple.









After getting glammed up and putting on some sweats, Mariana and Shea headed to the lot of their forever home, where they were walking around with their two dogs when Shea popped the question.

Wedding Planning with Exquisite Events

The couple's wedding planning process involved working with Madiha Khan of Exquisite Events.

"That was the best decision I could have made in regards to our wedding," Mariana shares. "I didn't feel any stress. She just knew my vision and I knew I could trust her. She has great taste, she's really 'on it,' and she makes sure everything is on time."

The couple's wedding was to take place at Fairmont Grand Del Mar in San Diego, and they envisioned an Italian garden with rustic vibes.

"That location is incredible," says Mariana. "I showed Madiha the flowers I liked, and she just nailed it. It was Black Tie, and I made the dress code so everyone had to wear black. I'm so happy I did that because it looked so nice in the photos."

With Shea being a current Stanley Cup winner with the Vegas Golden Knights, being in the hockey world also means having to attend a constant stream of weddings together – something that worked to Mariana's advantage. After noticing the subtle nuances of what works and what doesn't for a wide range of people and ages, she and Shea had a solid "laundry list" of what they wanted so they could offer their guests the best experience possible.

"I never felt more sure about Shea being my person, than during the days leading up to the wedding," Mariana adds. "I was expecting some stress. But every day that got closer, I was more and more certain that he's my person. That's something special."

An Italian Garden Inspired Wedding at Fairmont Grand Del Mar



Before the ceremony, the bride was relatively “chill and zen,” minus a few nerves.

“Our aisle was pretty long, and I’m pretty clumsy,” she laughs, “so I was nervous to walk. I was definitely nervous for the ceremony because we did our vows out loud and I hate public speaking. But I thought it was important. After going to a lot of weddings myself, I couldn’t believe it was my own wedding. It was surreal the entire time.”

The ceremony featured floral arrangements of white roses and baby’s breath created by Butterfly

Floral, perfectly representing the couple’s vision of an Italian garden inspired wedding. To kick things off on a high note, their two dogs – Bruce and Max – made their way down the aisle wearing tuxedos and completely succeeded at their sole job of looking adorable.

Despite any trepidations about her own walk down the aisle, Mariana made a gorgeous entrance wearing her dream wedding gown by Galia Lahav. She actually screen shot that exact dress three years before Shea proposed, and had loved

it ever since. When she was wedding dress shopping, she tried on countless dresses and made sure to save the Galia gown for last. As soon as she put it on, she knew that was it.

“I think our vows were definitely one of my favorite moments,” says the bride. “My sister also officiated the wedding, and it was so incredible having her up there with us.”

The ceremony was followed by a cocktail hour, reception, and afterparty that lasted until 2 a.m. From the food to the father-daughter dance, the











bride could hardly keep track of all the special details and moments that were unfolding. The couple later received several messages from guests about how epic their wedding celebration was.

“Shea and I both love food, so food was hugely important for us,” Mariana notes. “We had a nacho bar and slider bar for late night snacks, and a Fireball toast before the afterparty. I really like to party, and my side of the family is Latino – so they also know how to party. At one point, Shea and I got launched into the air on the dance floor. I just wanted guests to have the best time ever. Every bride is right when they say it goes by way too fast. We got our wedding video back, and that was really special because we really got to see the whole day.”

For their honeymoon, the newlyweds originally planned to go to Maui. Of course, with the recent Lahaina fires, they felt like it wasn’t appropriate to visit the island at the time; so they changed their flights at the last minute and headed off to Los Cabos for a luxurious stay at the Four Seasons. Since their wedding was in August, they couldn’t jet off for a lengthy vacation due to Shea’s upcoming training schedule. However, they’re planning to enjoy a longer getaway in the future.

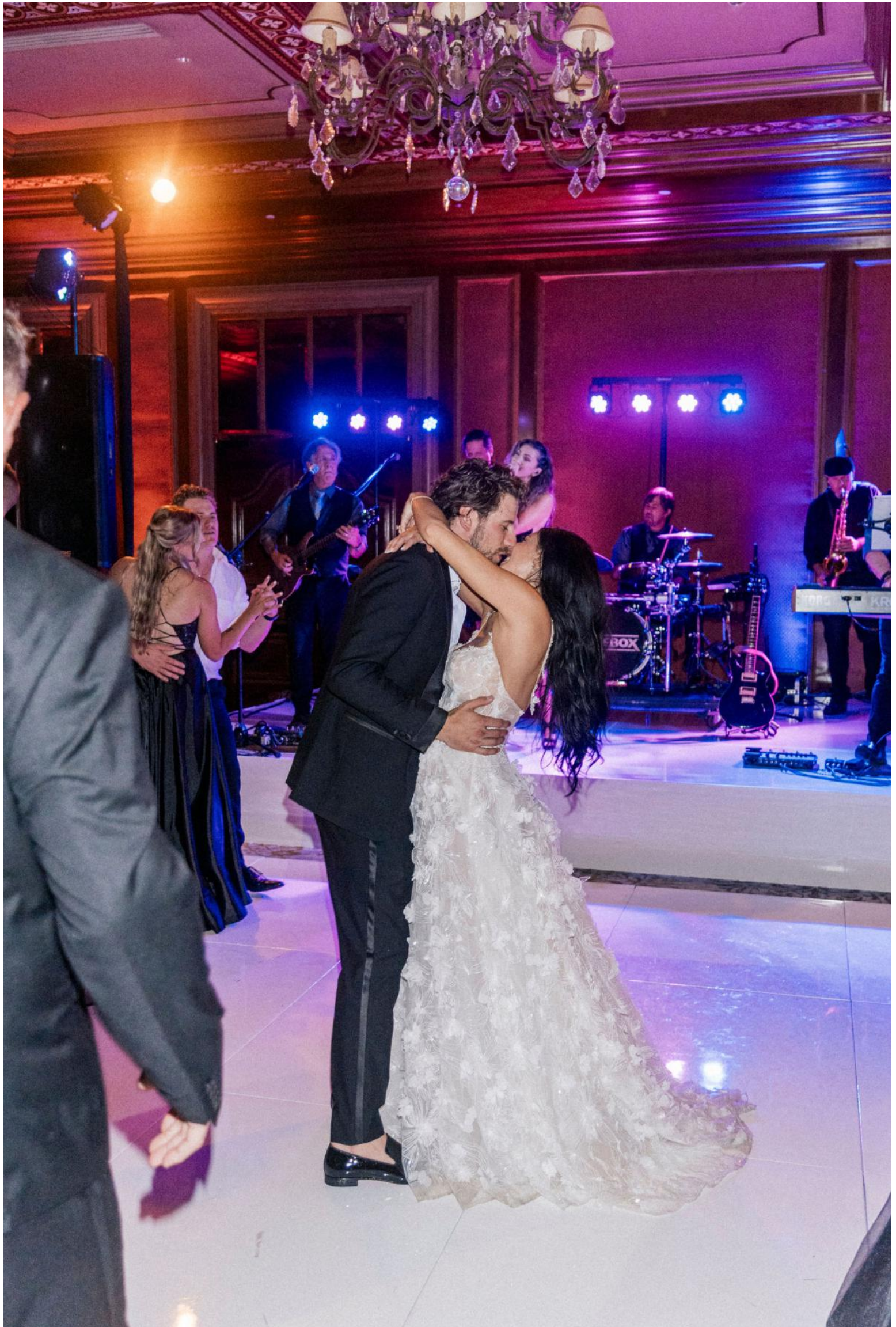
> Written by Lauren Malamala

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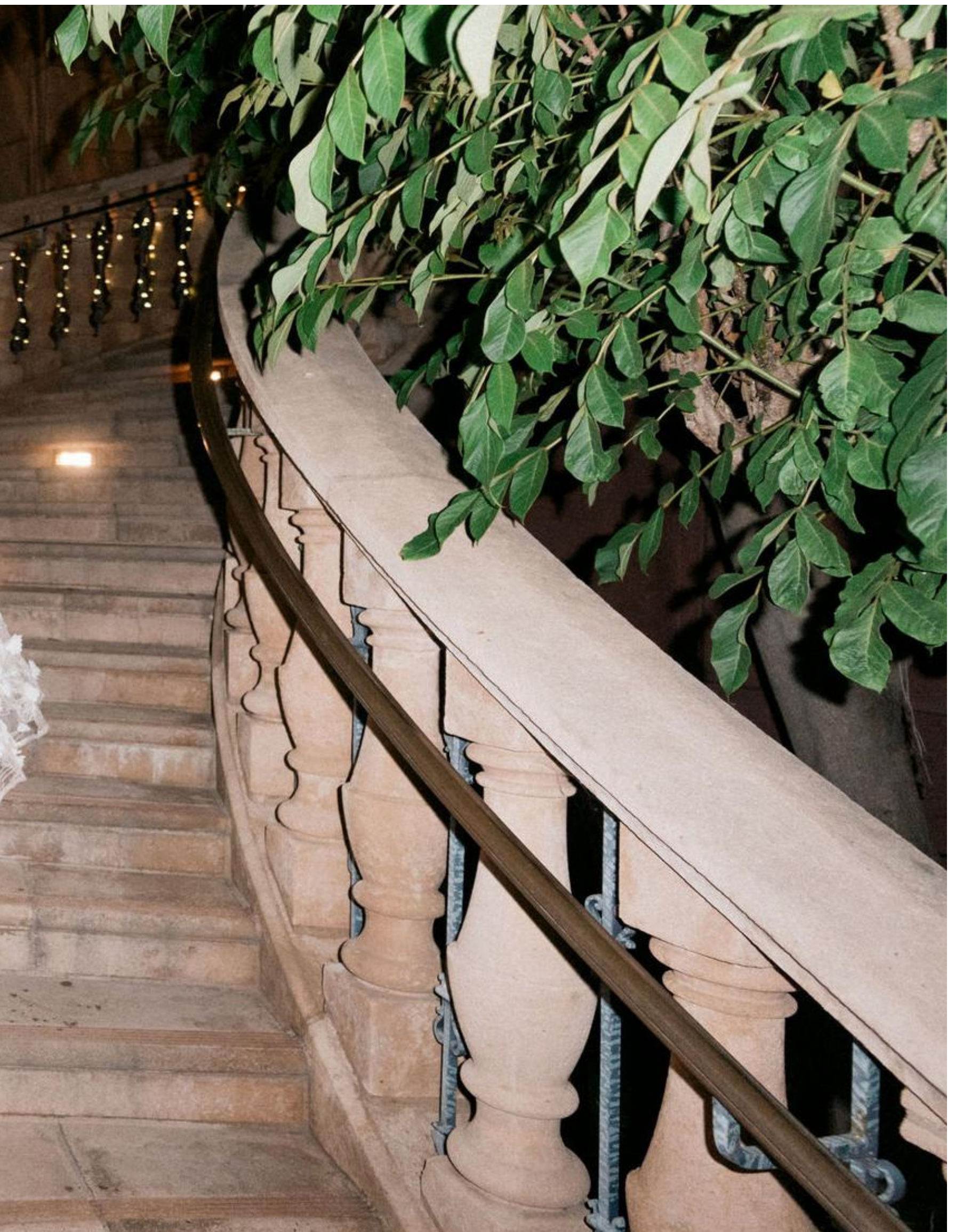
















Location: **Fairmont Grand Del Mar** San Diego CA; Planning & Event Design: **Madiha Khan, Exquisite Events**; Florist: **Butterfly Floral**; Rentals: **MTB Event Rentals**; Lighting: **Amber Event Production**; Wedding Dress: **Galia Lahav**; Custom Aisle: **Abbey Rents**; Cigar Lounge: **VB Cigars**; Band: **Jukebox San Diego**; Ceremony Strings: **Eliana Strings**; Videographer: **Symbol**; Photographer: **John and Joseph**



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DECOR

Location: **Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village** Westlake Village, CA; Planner and Event Design: **Goli Pak, Events By Goli** Los Angeles, CA; Floral: **Floral and Events By Sammy** Los Angeles, CA; Rentals: **Palace Party Rentals** Los Angeles, CA; Caterer: **Bahador Event Specialist** Tarzana, CA; Lighting: **4th Dimension Productions Inc.** Van Nuys, CA; Photography: **Shumanev Production** Los Angeles, CA;





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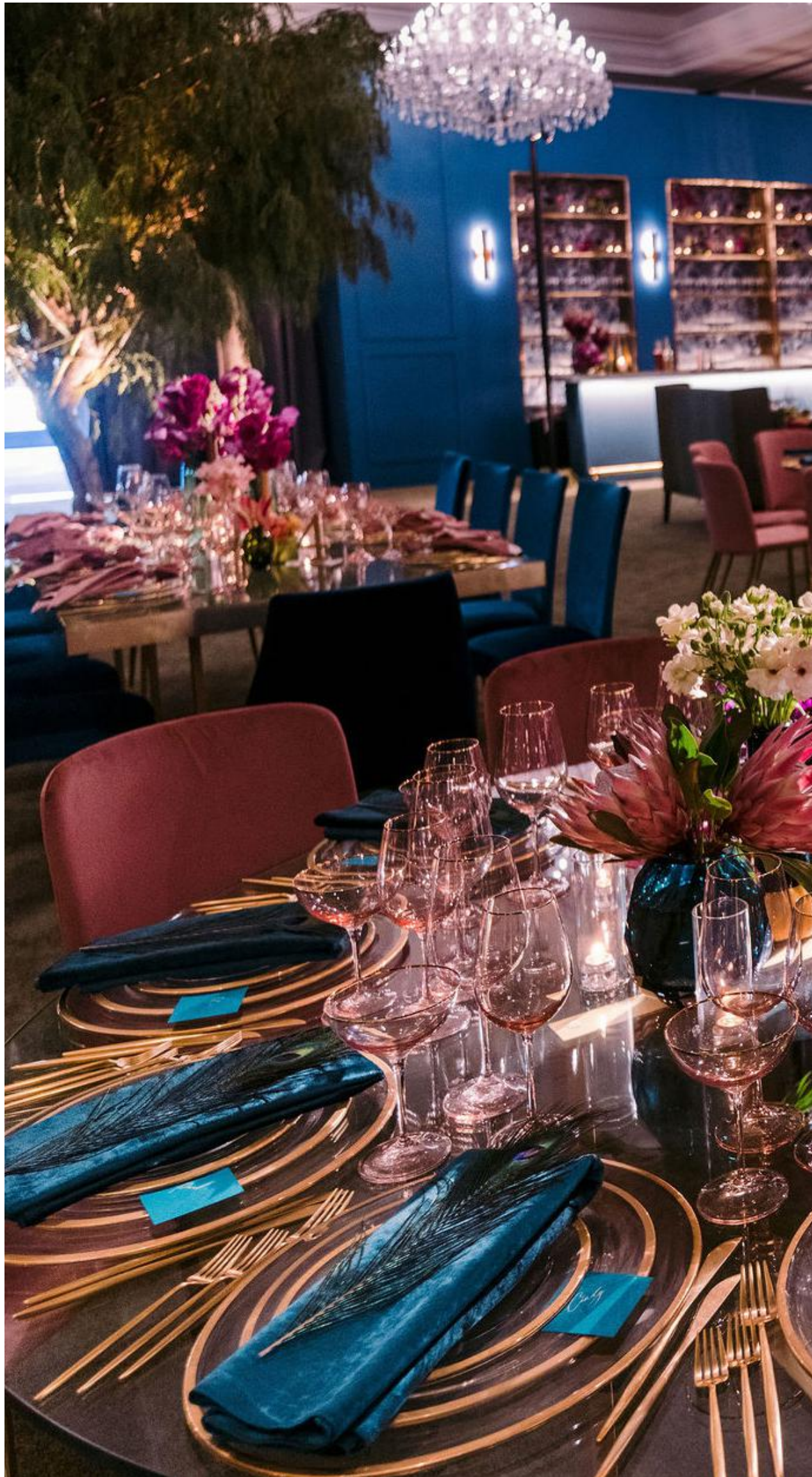








Location: **Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village** Westlake Village, CA; Planner and Event Design: **Kristin Banta** Studio City, CA; Photography: **John & Joseph Photography** Santa Monica, CA;







GRACE ORMONDE WEDDING STYLE

A photograph of a modern event space, likely a bar or lounge. The room is dimly lit with a mix of warm and cool tones. In the foreground, a dark, textured bar counter is visible. Behind it, a multi-tiered metal shelving unit holds various bottles and glasses. The ceiling is high and industrial, with numerous hanging disco balls of different sizes that catch the light. Several cylindrical pendant lights with horizontal slats are also visible. The floor is polished and reflects the ambient light. In the background, there are more tables and chairs, some with floral arrangements. The overall atmosphere is sophisticated and contemporary.

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