

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

MELISSA PRATT & JOE PASTORA

July 21, 2012 Newport Beach, California | Photographed by Samuel Lippke Studios

For some reason, all transportation to and from Santa Catalina, a resort island just off the southern California coast, had been canceled, stranding Melissa Pratt and her boyfriend Joe Pastora on the haven overnight. At least that's what he told her.

"Since it was a perfectly sunny day, you think it would have tipped me off [that something was amiss]," says Melissa, who was too concerned about making it home in time for her best friend's baby shower the following

day to notice the discrepancy in Joe's story. With no other option available, he checked them into a charming hotel. As soon as Melissa opened the door to their ocean-view suite, she saw an abundance of scattered rose petals, glowing candles, and more than one hundred tea lights spelling out the question, "Will you marry me?" Behind her, her beau was down on one knee with a ring. "I couldn't have dreamed of a more special and romantic proposal," she beams.





RESOURCES

Beauty

Mr. Bilardi Salon - hair
Lipstick and Luster -
makeup

Bridal Gown

Vera Wang Gown -
ceremony
Monique Lhuillier -
reception

Bridesmaid Gowns

Monique Lhuillier

Catering/Cake

The Resort at Pelican Hill

Consulting

Jeannie Savage for
Details Details

Entertainment

West Coast Music
DJ Kurch - after-party

Floral Design

White Lilac, Inc.

Formalwear

Ermenegildo Zegna

Invitations

Lehr & Black

Photography

Samuel Lippke Studios

Registries

Bloomingdale's
Williams-Sonoma

Rehearsal Dinner

Mastro's Ocean Club

Rentals

White Lilac, Inc.

Shoes

Christian Louboutin

Stationery

Lehr & Black
Patricia Ducharme

Veil/Headpiece

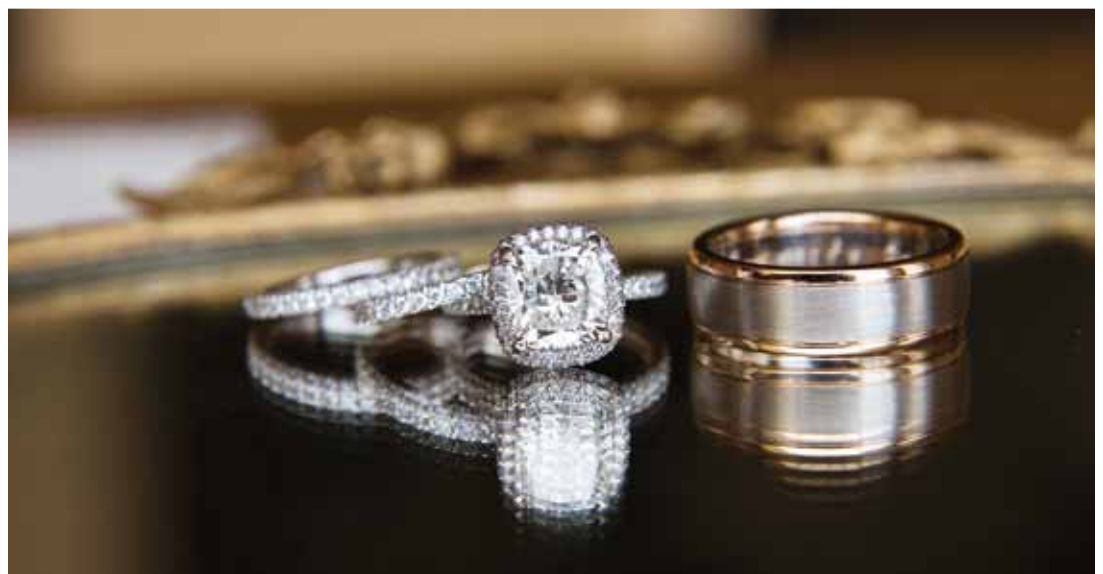
Vera Wang

Venue

The Resort at Pelican Hill

Videography

Living Cinema





The couple had no problem deciding upon a location for their nuptials. “From the moment I walked into The Resort at Pelican Hill and saw that stunning view of the ocean, I knew it was the place I would get married,” states the bride, who immediately enlisted the help of her mother, as well as a renowned consultant, to help orchestrate the event. In addition to the spectacular landscape, the venue provided signature dining amenities and extraordinary accommodations fitting for loved ones traveling from afar.

The wedding could not have occurred on a more perfect summer’s day. Two intricate iron gates enveloped with garden roses and

trailing green smilax stood at the entrance of the ceremony space, reflecting the custom motif incorporated on the couple’s wedding stationery. The aisle was covered in rose petals dispersed in an ombre pattern, effortlessly shifting from bright pink to snowy white. The head of the aisle was marked with a garden arch bursting with florals in soft peach and blush tones. Glossy fabric with ruffled edging billowed from a stunning rotunda beneath which the service took place. Three crystal chandeliers were suspended from the center of the dome, while giant birdcages overflowing with colorful blooms completed the backdrop for the service.

“Joe looked so happy and in love. It made me feel like such a blushing bride!”



The bride carried a smashing bouquet of Juliette and Auswater garden roses kissed with miniature white gardenias. She glided down the aisle in a ravishing ball gown that featured a strapless bodice, blossoming skirt of swirling ruffles, and crystal belt. A cathedral veil cascaded effortlessly from her long locks, which had been gently pulled away from her face in a partial updo. Her bridesmaids were clad in mauve floor-length dresses and carried hand-tied nosegays of roses in soft cream sprinkled with vanilla nerine blooms.

The groom, who appeared debonair in a noir tuxedo and white tie, will never forget the couple's heartfelt exchange of vows. "I locked eyes with Melissa," he recalls, "and although there were 200 hundred people in the audience, it truly felt like it was just her and me." To commemorate the couple's first kiss as husband and wife, 150 doves were released into the sky above.





The reception was designed so attendees would feel as though they'd stepped out of an English garden and into an elegant country home. Tables were either left bare, revealing their rustic wooden finishes, or draped in apricot-hued taffeta linens for a more refined effect. Centerpieces showcased an array of flowers that echoed those used in the ceremony, utilizing either tall, iron candelabras or low, cubed vases. An ample supply of candles added to the romantic ambiance. To complete the look, accent walls bedecked with vintage sconces and lavish mirrors were erected throughout the space.

By this point in the celebration, the couple of the hour was fully able to savor the moment. "I remember being relieved that everything had gone smoothly with the ceremony," says the groom. "I could just sit, relax, and enjoy the evening." The bride changed into a flirty cocktail dress with textured skirt and sweetheart neckline. A live band brought even those guests who usually refrain from dancing to their feet. At midnight, a DJ took over and played favorite songs from the couple's college days.







A calm, happy bride, Melissa reports cherishing not just each minute of her wedding day, but also the months preceding the big event, and encourages future brides to do the same. “Try to enjoy every moment from the engagement through the honeymoon,” she says. “It truly is such a special time in both of your lives, and it goes by so fast.”

ALISON BONN