

LOVE OF A LIFETIME

ALLYSON LEVINE & STEVEN JOSEPH

May 4, 2013 Ojai, California | Photographed by Elizabeth Messina



When sought-after event producers Allyson Levine and Steven Joseph began planning their own wedding, they followed their well-practiced professional approach: “Infuse the couple’s soul into every aspect of the event.” The bride and groom wanted guests to feel relaxed while enjoying a celebration that would commemorate their many years of love. “I don’t actually remember meeting Steven... I have just always known him,” says Allyson. “We grew up one block away from each other and have always been in each other’s lives.”

An enchanting inn, just shy of an hour away from the hustle and bustle of city life, was selected to host the personalized wedding weekend, which commenced with a large family-style rehearsal dinner and concluded with a Cinco de Mayo pool party. “We approached the [wedding] design process with a feel, rather than a look, in mind. We wanted the space to feel inclusive and comfortable as if we were hosting our wedding from our own [home],” explains the bride, who reveals that planning her wedding from both a client and professional perspective was an extremely vulnerable process.



Beauty

Trina Duarte for The Studio Agency - hair
Tara Dowburd for Make-Up Therapy - makeup

Bridal Gown/Salon/Veil

Monique Lhuillier

Cake

Vanilla Bake Shop

Calligraphy

Laura Hooper Calligraphy

**Consulting/Entertainment/
Floral Design**

Bob Gail Special Events

Dresser

A Stitch in Time

Honeymoon

Grand Hotel Tremezzo
Hotel Danieli
Hotel dei Borgognoni
Villa Mangiacane

Invitations/Stationery

Laura Hooper Calligraphy
Lilly & Louise

Jewelry

Bea Millen; XIV Karats Ltd.

Lighting Design

Bob Gail Special Events
Peterson Event Lighting

Linens

La Tavola Fine Linen

Mothers' Gowns

Florie Couture; Saks Fifth Avenue

Photography

Elizabeth Messina

Registries

Bloomingdale's; Maison Midi
Williams-Sonoma

Rentals

Casa de Perrin
Classic Party Rentals
Designer Event Rentals
FormDecor
Found Vintage Rentals
Town & Country Event Rentals

Shoes

Jimmy Choo

Transportation

AITS, Inc.

Venue/Catering

Ojai Valley Inn & Spa

Videography

Elysium Productions





The ceremony décor invited guests into a serene outdoor setting, reminiscent of a French garden courtyard. Upon arrival, attendees were greeted with tray-passed Champagne accented with sprigs of lavender prior to finding their seats beneath a large oak tree adorned with chandeliers made of greenery and suspended from branches. To create the look of an overgrown garden, lush white florals and ferns lined the aisleway. The ceremony backdrop featured five window boxes, each draped with custom fabrics; a simple chuppah hovered above a heart-shaped display of coral rose petals at the altar. Eight bridesmaids and nine groomsmen lined either side of the ceremony structure. Bridesmaids were instructed to wear dresses that made them feel comfortable and beautiful, regardless of color or style, and groomsmen stunned in classic tuxedos.



“It felt as though all the love that we have shared in our relationship over the past eight years was tangible at that very moment.”

Allyson – who was resplendent in a sparkling, cap-sleeved illusion gown that featured white and gold embroidered tulle – and Steven, who donned a black tuxedo, felt it necessary to craft their own ceremony, which was officiated by the bride’s brother. In lieu of a traditional Jewish reading, a passage from a children’s book that Allyson had gifted Steven at the beginning of their relationship was recited. The couple also opted to publicly share the reasons why they wanted to marry one another, along with their personal vows, which they signed instead of a ketubah. “It was very important to me that

our ceremony reflect who we are as a couple,” confirms the groom.

To celebrate their mutual love for farmers markets, the cocktail hour was designed to represent the couple’s favorite Sunday morning ritual. Wooden carts filled with fruits and vegetables and elaborate charcuterie displays provided fresh canapés for loved ones, while tray-passed hors d’oeuvres and herb-garnished cocktails were also served. Guests discovered their watercolored escort cards in heart shapes pinned to a custom walnut-stained wall and filed into the romantic reception space.





Residential-inspired areas were created within the large room to make guests feel at home. The “dining room” featured an inviting mix of table shapes, printed linens, and chairs. Varying centerpieces featured a collection of colorful and all-white blooms, lush greenery, and gold glitter hearts; vintage chargers, crystal-cut glassware, and corresponding napkin treatments completed the allure of each tablescape. Following a sit-down dinner, guests made their way to a cake bar situated in front of the room’s fireplace and enjoyed selections from nine different varieties, all decorated with fondant hearts.

A “living room” provided a resting place for guests and featured velvet furniture and accent pieces with hints of gold. Decanters filled with aged bourbons were offered to guests on a bar cart, while a larger lounge provided the couple’s favorite brews, local wines, and libations throughout the evening. To encourage dancing, guests were treated to a 14-piece band that played music ranging from big band to Top 40 – followed by a surprise performance by an arena-rock cover band later in the evening. After the bands’ performances, guests got their

second wind by way of late-night snacks and an espresso bar, while a DJ spun until 3AM. Both bride and groom admit one of their favorite moments of the day was crowd surfing at the reception, “... in my wedding dress,” adds Allyson. “That was pretty epic.”

From the printed materials to the musical elements of both the ceremony and reception, each component of Allyson and Steven’s celebration represented their personalities, as well as special moments from their eight-year romance. “We wanted to make sure that each element felt like us, through and through, while incorporating traditions that felt relevant to our relationship and truly spoke to us,” declares the bride.

While both Allyson and Steven believe the day was the perfect way to celebrate their love with such a close-knit group of people, the groom admits it would have been just as wonderful without all of the details. “Even if the entire place had burned to the ground, I would still get to marry the love of my life and share that with family and friends,” he says. “Everything else was just the cherry on top.” KELCY CHRISTY

