

EXQUISITE|WEDDINGS

by San Diego Magazine

exclusive
Amazing Race
couple Meghan &
Cheyne Whitney
tie the knot

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TO MAKE
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YOUR OWN

wedding
AISLE READY—
HEAR WHAT
THE EXPERTS
SAY



PEACE, LOVE, AND *Happiness*

Michelle Hoffman
& Brendan Raasch

INSPIRED BY A LOVE OF BALINESE CULTURE, Michelle Hoffman and Brendan Raasch's wedding centered on the joyful, peaceful, and artistic ambience of the little Indonesian isle.

"Bali has this magical vibe," explains Brendan who has surfed there. It didn't take much to convince Michelle to agree on Bali as the spot for their honeymoon and inspiration for their wedding. "After seeing my pictures and hearing me talk about it constantly, she was pretty enthusiastic about this being the theme." Now, after spending her honeymoon there, Michelle adds, "It's so spiritual, and the people are so lovely."

The Balinese influence began with the invitations created by Michelle's sister Ceci, of Ceci New York. The sleeves of the invites featured a laser-cut of a traditional temple door in Bali, complete with a large dragon's head. Two hot-pink elephants with their trunks tied together with the couple's initials on each, wrapped around the main card, completing the gorgeous invitations. Lanterns, belly jars, and vintage glassware in bright, tropical colors dotted the merry backyard. Every detail, including the cocktails' lime green umbrellas with elephants, tied back to the design and feel of the invitations.

The ceremony and reception took place in Brendan's parents' beautiful, lush backyard in Del Mar. The gorgeous setting



Photography by Justin Lee



GET THEIR STYLE

Ceremony and reception location: **Private residence in Del Mar.**
 Caterer: **Toast Catering**, toastcatering.com. Event designer: **Canvas & Canopy Events**, canvasandcanopy.com. Florist: **Studio Fiore**, studiofioredesigns.com. Officiant: **Martin Curtin**. Cake and cupcakes: **Twin Treats by Amy Pilz**, twintreatssd.com. Gown: **Matthew Christopher**, matthewchristopher.com at **Gabriella's New York**, gabriellanewyork.com. Hairpiece: **Gabriella's New York**, gabriellanewyork.com. Shoes: **Cole Haan**, colehaan.com. Makeup: **Jennifer Budner**, jenniferbudner.com. Hair: **Ceci Johnson**. Groom's attire: **Hugo Boss**, hugoboss.com. Bridesmaids' dresses: Made by mother of the bride **Marilynn Hoffman**. DJ: **DJ Gabe Vega**. Band: **The Mattson 2**, mattson2.com. Invitations and paper elements: **Ceci New York**, cecinewyork.com. Linens: **ETSY**, etsy.com. Rentals: **Classic Party Rentals**, classicpartyrentals.com. Photo booth: **Snap Sho**, snapsho.com. Photography: **Justin Lee Photography**, justinleephoto.com.

WE love...
 how the riot of
 color comes
 together



required little need for over-the-top decorations, but good friend and designer Cortnie Purdy, from Canvas & Canopy, added extra pops of color like cobalt blue and fiery red goblets, which served as floating floral vases interspersed between a rainbow of lanterns. The bride-to-be collected Balinese batik sarongs, which her mom sewed into festive pillows for the lounges. Bright orange and fuchsia fabric served as table runners. Cortnie also added a hand-carved Balinese wood fireplace. Striking traditional Balinese wooden containers filled with burgundy, pink, and orange dahlias alongside vintage glassware overflowing with eucalyptus pods, orange parrot tulips, protea, and scabious gave a unique mix of elements and texture. Adelena Rooney from Studio Fiore Designs served as florist and also created a gorgeous hand-tied cascade of white orchids and dahlias for Michelle to carry.

Brendan's cousin served as the officiant. As the wedding processional entered, friend Ronnie Dudek, from the band Years Around the Sun, played appropriate Beatles songs on his acoustic guitar. Michelle and her father befittingly walked down the aisle to "Michelle My Belle," and the entire bridal party exited the ceremony to "All You Need Is Love."

Guests enjoyed a festive cocktail hour, rather than a sit-down dinner, in keeping with their more casual theme. They sipped the couple's special creation of "Bali Thyme," a vodka-thyme and lemonade quaffable at the vodka bar. Delectable dishes included mini Kobe sliders, smoked salmon beignets, and spicy ahi poke salad; there was also a bruschetta



station and a chicken lettuce wrap station. A red velvet and chocolate cupcake tower, created by Michelle's former co-worker Amy Pilz of Twin Treats, capped an evening of fabulous food.

Michelle's dress was an unexpected find. In fact, she nearly laughed at it on the hanger. But with the designer Matthew Christopher standing next to her, she reluctantly put it on and instantly fell in love. The off-white silk duchess gown with a scalloped sweetheart neckline and chapel-length train clung perfectly to her. The groomsmen looked dapper in complementary fuchsia-colored ties to match the bridesmaids' dresses. To make sure that every guest was comfortable, the couple provided flip-flops for the ladies to slip on and dance the night away.

Aside from marrying Brendan, the most memorable part of the evening for Michelle was having her dad walk her down the aisle. Her father, who had been battling cancer, passed away two months after the wedding. Looking back, Michelle is grateful to have had that special moment with her dad.

"For him to be so sick and put on a happy face, suck it up, pretend like nothing was bothering him, and be the best dad ever, was so cool," Michelle says with great emotion.

The bride invited her two sisters, Christie and Ceci, to the dance floor for the father-daughter dance. "That was probably the most special thing for me," explains Michelle. "Just having that last dance with my dad and being able to have my sisters join in on it."

The happy groom adds, "I had the best time ever. I wouldn't change it for anything in the world." —JESSICA MATTESON

See additional photos from Michelle and Brendan's wedding at exquisiteweddingsmagazine.com.

