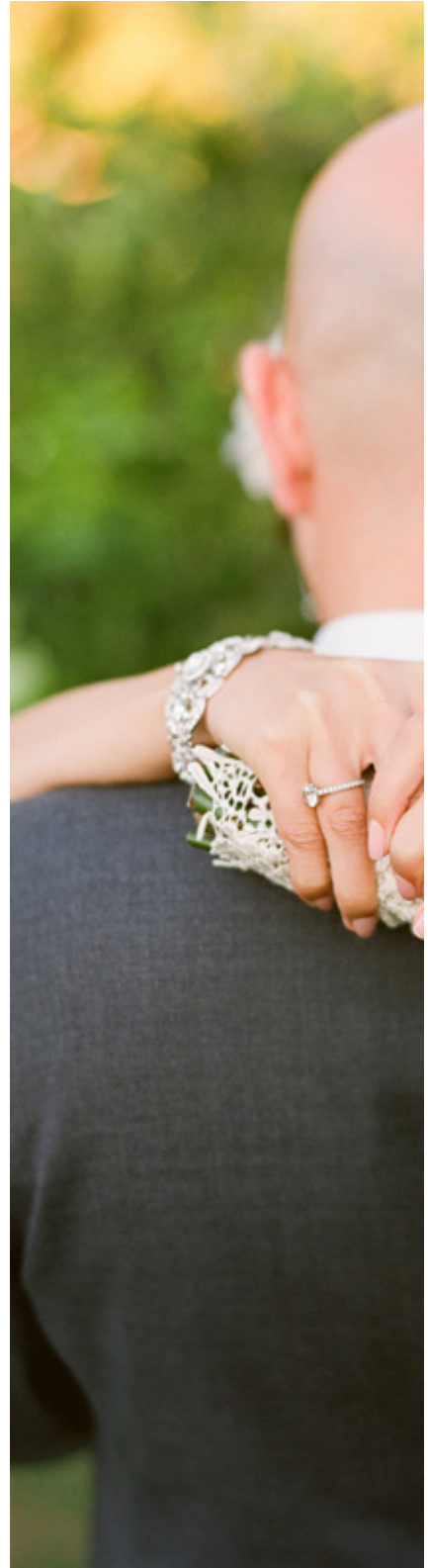


A
Natural
WESTERN
UNION

High school sweethearts plan an au-naturel wedding among citrus orchards and lavender fields.

Photography by *Lisa Lefkowitz*

Words by *Mary Lee Herrington*





T

he first time they met, they only exchanged about two words to one another. Melissa and Jay were only sixteen and seventeen at the time, not even from the same high school. A mutual friend had invited them to a barbecue, and after just a few words were shared, that friend tried again and set them up on another date, and this time it apparently went well, as their next date was Melissa's junior prom! Nearly fifteen years later, Jay, now a neuroradiologist, got down on one knee at the Mandarin Oriental in New York City and asked Melissa, now a freelance writer, to marry him.





The Dress

Melissa's Rivini dress had a dramatic ruffle running down its entire back. She accessorized it with a simple veil, silk flower headpiece from Clark & Diversey, diamond bracelet and earrings from Regina B, and glittery peep-toe Jimmy Choos.

The Rings

Jay surprised Melissa with a round brilliant cut engagement ring from Leon Mege when he proposed at the Mandarin Oriental in New York City. They matched Melissa's ring with a platinum eternity band from Leon Mege and a plain platinum Tiffany's band for Jay.



As residents of the San Francisco Bay Area, Melissa and Jay decided to exchange their vows outside among the orchards, gardens and natural setting of Bear Flag Farm in California. Underneath sunny skies on August 20th 2011, Melissa appeared in a romantic silk Rivini gown escorted by her father to Pachelbel's *Canon in D*. In front of 101 guests, in honor of the couple, Melissa's seven-year-old cousin recited a passage from Dr. Suess's *Oh, the Places You'll*

Go! And underneath an altar of pink roses and hydrangeas, Melissa and Jay exchanged vows that they wrote themselves, each of them making sure to mention a very important member of their family, their poodle mix, Milo, who in the end, due to concerns about getting overly excited, could not make it as their ring bearer. Blessed as husband and wife, Melissa and Jay walked out hand in hand to a rendition of Coldplay's *Viva la Vida*, performed by their string quartet.





Well Suited

Jay looked every part the sophisticated groom in his Tom Ford suit and tie. His entourage of groomsmen all wore matching suits from Brooks Brothers and boutonnieres of pink rose, sage and horsetail ferns.

The Bouquets

Melissa held a classic posy of pink roses with white hydrangeas, bouvardia, freesia, horsetail ferns and dusty miller, wrapped in an antique lace handkerchief embellished with a brooch found in an antiques shop.









The Invitations

Bearing in mind the natural chic setting for their wedding, Melissa opted for a less-is-more approach with her invitations from Hello!Lucky, who created subtle letterpress invitations on thick cotton paper with rounded corners.

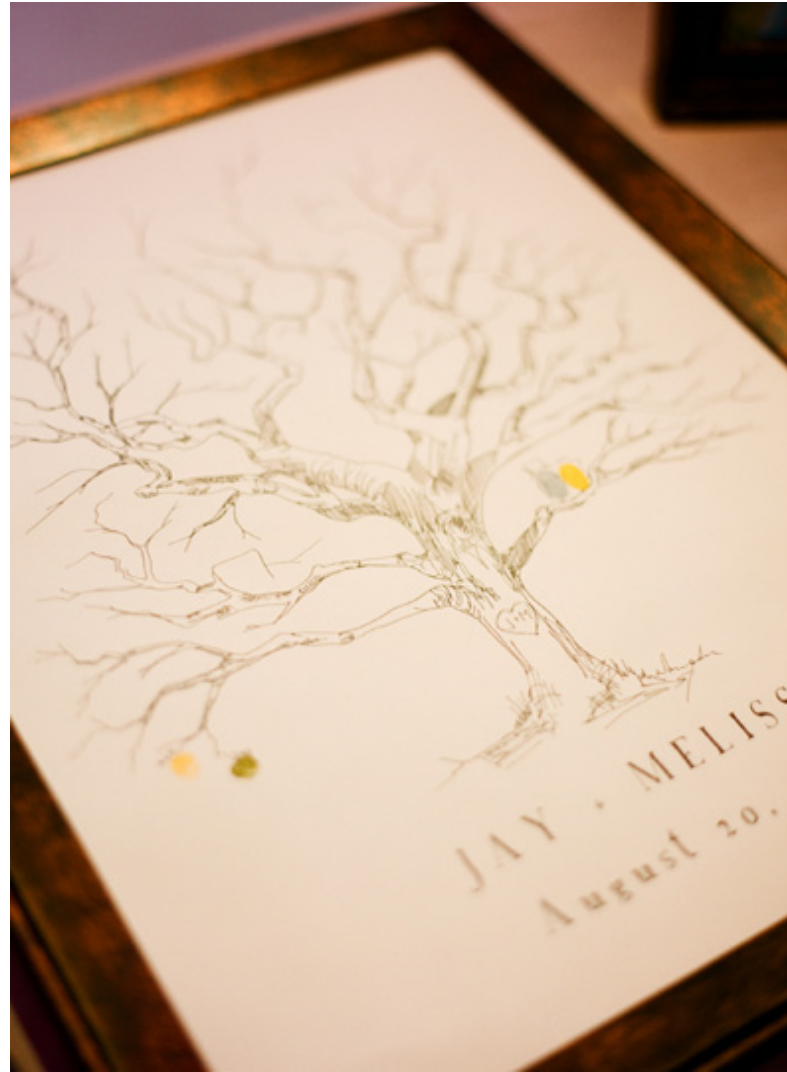
The Menu

Informing their guests of the worldly flavors of their wedding meal, Melissa and Jay displayed their menu on a chalkboard propped up on the back of a vintage pick-up truck, with long-stem roses, hydrangeas, greenery and hay bales.



The Favours

Guests took a little bit of the wedding back home with them in the form of miniature bottles of olive oil.



A Keepsake

In lieu of a traditional guestbook, Melissa and Jay displayed a fingerprint tree illustration, where guests created leaves for the tree with their fingerprints. The drawing now hangs on display in Melissa and Jay's home.



To create a home-like atmosphere, Melissa and Jay scouted antique fairs for decorative vintage touches that matched the natural setting of the farm and the decor styled by their wedding planner and designer Tina Reikes. For their striking dinner setting, Tina also chose to highlight the natural sophistication of their environment with bamboo chairs, woven placemats, and floral centerpieces of succulents, olive branches, sage, grapes, hydrangeas and pink astilbe in wooden plant boxes, and wrought-iron candelabras set on top of vintage books.









DINNER IS SERVED...

Melissa and Jay's menu incorporated flavors from around the world but still embraced the season with ingredients available on the farm. Starting with a cocktail hour with their chosen specialty cocktails of strawberry and plum mojitos, their guests munched on hors d'oeuvres of pommes frites in garlic aioli sauce, hamachi crudo with avocado, peas and jicama served on individual spoons, and heirloom tomato gazpacho shooters. For their supper, guests started with a Peking duck glass noodle salad with peppers, cucumbers, Thai basil, cilantro and ginger-plum dressing. This was

followed by a choice of red wine braised short ribs with roasted fingerling potatoes and garlic spinach or roasted seasonal fish served in a paper pouch with fingerling potatoes and seasonal vegetables in a tarragon fume. There was even a third option of a risotto of corn, English peas and mushrooms served with grilled asparagus. Kids of course were not overlooked and were served down home chicken fingers with Mac n' Cheese. Children and adults alike were then offered three different flavors of wedding cake: vanilla, chocolate and red velvet.

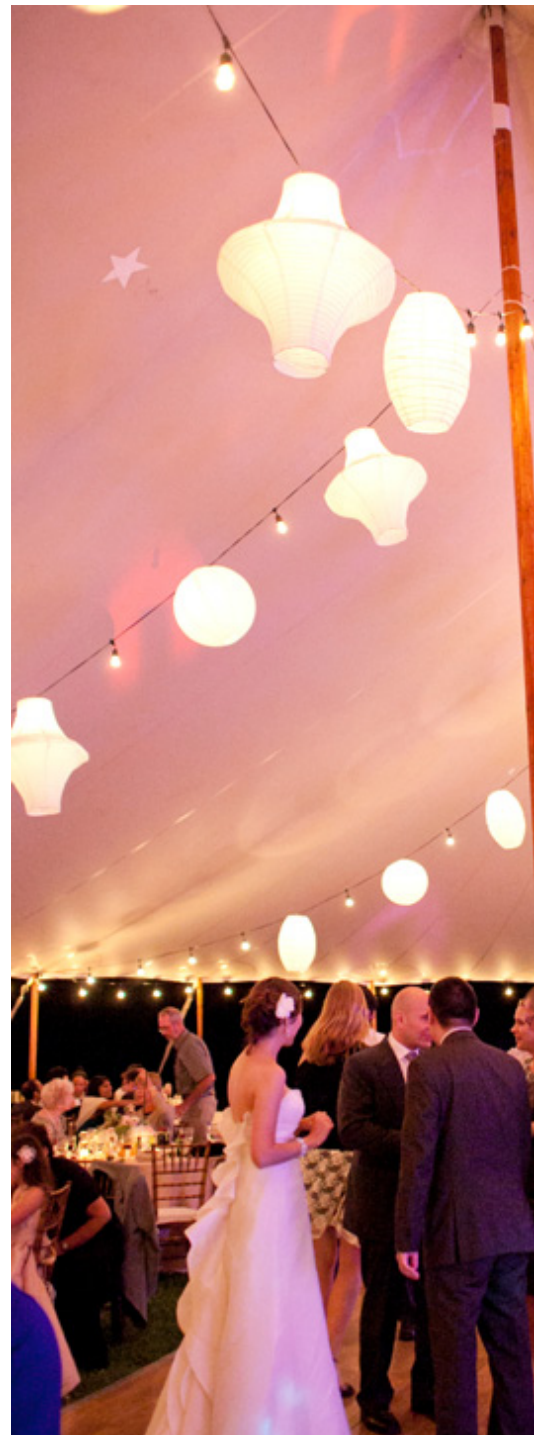


Click to watch Melissa & Jay's
beautiful wedding film by

Joel Serrato







To get the party started, Melissa and Jay danced to Otis Redding’s *That’s How Strong My Love Is*. They chose the song because of the lyrics – “about love standing the test of time,” said Melissa. They then danced the night away beneath their marquee

before hopping into a vintage Packard convertible and waving goodbye to their guests. To relax after their wedding weekend, Melissa and Jay honeymooned on the Tahitian Islands.







Creative Credits

Location

Bear Flag Farm

Photography

Lisa Lefkowitz

Wedding Planning & Design

Tina Reikes
of Bear Flag Farm Bride

Catering

Grace Lee

Videography

Joel Serrato

Officiant

Lisa Francesca

Stationery

Hello!Lucky

Flowers

Kathy Santilli

Cake

Freeport Bakery

Photo Booth

Red Cheese

Transportation

Classic Convertible Wine Tours

Quartet

Dolanc String Quartet

Band

Hip Service

Marquee

Zephyr Tents

Furniture Rental

Classic Party

Hair & Makeup

Triple Twist

Fingerprint Tree

Bleu de Toi

Ringbearer Bowl

Paloma's Nest

Bride's Dress

Rivini

Bride's Shoes

Jimmy Choo

Bride's Headpiece

Clark & Diversey

Bride's Jewellery

Regina B.

Rings

Leon Mege and Tiffany's

Bridesmaids' Dresses

Alfred Sung

Flower girl Dresses

Dessy

Groom's Suit & Tie

Tom Ford

Groomsmen's Suits

Brooks Brothers

