

# east MEETS west

A California couple pour a whole lot of love—for handmade details, travel, and each other—into a heartfelt destination affair at an oceanside family home on Martha's Vineyard.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Jessica Antola* TEXT BY *Elizabeth Passarella*





**Opposite:** A view of the Gay Head Lighthouse, near Charlie Walton and Lilly McDowell's ceremony site.  
**This page:** The couple take a moment to celebrate their new status. Her dress is by Carolina Herrera; he is wearing a Sam Elsom tuxedo.

# Charlie

WALTON WAS DRIVING ACROSS THE COUNTRY—FROM BOSTON TO CALIFORNIA—IN 2005 WHEN A FRIEND FROM LOS ANGELES CALLED AND ASKED HIM IF HE'D LIKE TO BE SET UP ON A DATE.

"I was in the middle of Nevada," he recalls, "And I said absolutely not. I had just finished paramedic school and was thinking of looking for a job with a fire department in San Diego."

But actress Lilly McDowell, the setup in question, was hopeful. "Something about the way our friend Gene talked about Charlie—how deep and thoughtful he was—made me know I'd connect with him," she says. So she waited. "Gene would call and say, 'Okay, he's on his way, he'll be here in a week. . . . Now he's in San Francisco, driving down the coast.'" Once Charlie arrived in Los Angeles, he met Gene for drinks—and Gene brought Lilly.

"It was instant," says Lilly. "We talked the whole night and felt completely at ease with each other, like we were old friends." Charlie was equally smitten, so much so that he opted out of moving to San Diego altogether.

Fast-forward four years to their 2009 engagement, which also took an unexpected turn (as did Charlie's career plans—he's now getting his Ph.D. in clinical psychology). Lilly's stepsister Kate and her husband, Jesse, invited them on a trip to Paris over New Year's Eve, and Charlie drummed up a plan. "I thought we'd go for a walk, and I'd find some picturesque place to pop the question," he says. "But I never found the right spot." Instead, he asked Lilly to marry him in the bedroom of the apartment they had rented, while Kate and Jesse waited outside with Champagne.

The location for the wedding, however, was a clear choice. Lilly wanted to get married at the Martha's Vineyard home of her mother and stepfather, actors Mary Steenburgen and Ted Danson. Charlie, who grew up in Concord, Massachusetts, felt a special connection to the area as well.

Lilly and event planner Emily Kelly, who had planned Kate and Jesse's wedding, shared

a love of antiquing and crafting. The overall look—a mix of Parisian flea market finds, travel memorabilia, and a few nautical touches—came together from thrift-shopping trips, elements pulled from Lilly's own home, and projects she tackled with friends.

"I wanted to be really involved from day one," says Lilly. "Luckily, I have an amazing group of girlfriends whose idea of a perfect evening is to open up a bottle of wine and create something." One such wine-and-craft night involved labeling custom candle favors from Nell's Compass, owned by Lilly and her mother. Another was spent sewing garlands made of old maps and book pages.

With Emily's help, Lilly also scoured flea markets for vintage postcards, which they scanned and reprinted as escort cards. And on the morning of the wedding, they hung letters spelling out "Just Married" from the trees above the shaded walkway on the property that led from the ceremony to the reception.

On the afternoon of September 25, 2010, their 180 guests were enchanted at every turn—but her mother was the most delighted of all. "I was so impressed by every one of Lilly's creative touches, and even more impressive was her total cool when the inevitable little things went wrong," Mary says.

Charlie, for one, remembers the slightly off moments as some of his favorites. "During the ceremony, Lilly's veil was whipping around in the wind. All of a sudden she just said, 'I don't think I need this,' and took it off. It made the day seem much more real."

As for Lilly's most cherished memory? "I loved reading the letters we wrote to each other as vows. Mine was about how we met, our relationship, and how we got there," she says. "But Charlie's was totally not what I imagined. It was all about our future."





## The Vows

Clockwise from top left: Lilly attached her grandmother's locket to her bouquet of anemones and roses. Her stepfather, Ted Danson, officiates the ceremony. Welcome bags, printed with a friend's artwork, contained local Cape Cod Potato Chips, Chilmark Chocolates, the island's newspaper, and schedules printed to look like telegrams and airline tickets. Lilly's stepsister and matron of honor, Kate Danson, watches with Lilly's mother, Mary Steenburgen. Event planner Emily Kelly printed "memorabilia," including nautical-themed invitations, air-mail envelopes, and RSVPs scanned from old post-cards. The couple's rings were carried in a box inherited from the groom's grandfather. Lilly and Charlie embrace during the ceremony.





## The Cocktails

**Opposite:** Blackberry-mint lemonade fills a glass beverage dispenser Lilly bought at Costco. To learn how to make the medallion and other projects, turn to page 242.

**This page, clockwise from top left:** Lilly's father, actor Malcolm McDowell, with son Seamus. A sign at the entrance to the property. The couple with (from left) Lilly's step-sisters Katrina and Kate Danson; brother Charlie McDowell; former president Bill Clinton, a family friend; Mary Steenburgen; and Ted Danson. Focaccia is set out on boards made from wine crates. Postcards of Martha's Vineyard serve as escort cards and are displayed with a map of the couple's favorite places. A guest enjoys a Dark 'n' Stormy. Lilly's brother Beckett peeks through a telescope.





## The Party

This page, clockwise from top left: Charlie dances with his mother, Adelaide. "I had no idea the tent would come with flags! It was an amazing surprise," says Lilly. Instead of a cake, the couple served berry pies and tarts from a local baker. Little brother Beckett serenades the crowd with his favorite Elvis songs. A mirror is decorated to look like a French menu, made of circles cut from old book pages, for her chair and Charlie's. **Opposite:** Lilly used ticking from Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores on the tables, plus linen napkins stenciled with words and locales significant to the couple; the candle favors were custom "Atlantic" and "Pacific" scents. Dahlias and anemones are clustered in simple glass vases.

THERE'S MORE TO SEE  
For extra images and Lilly and Charlie's adorable save-the-date video, go to [MARTHASTEWARTWEDDINGS.COM/SUMMER2011](http://MARTHASTEWARTWEDDINGS.COM/SUMMER2011)

"I loved getting my girlfriends involved in *all the details*," says Lilly. "To make these napkins, I had a *stenciling party*. I've always been very visual and hands-on, so this wedding was a *dream come true!*"





DIY WORKBOOK

# LILLY AND CHARLIE

To get the look of their seaside soirée, take a cue from these resourceful ideas.

## THE PAPER GOODS

The couple wanted their stationery to look like ephemera you might find in your grandmother's attic—old letters and postcards from far away with timeworn stamps. The suite at right evokes a similar feel, complete with a sailing motif and an all-American palette. Visit [marthastewartweddings.com/summer2011](http://marthastewartweddings.com/summer2011) for the clip art.

THE DETAILS (clockwise from top left): Airmail envelope (\$5 for 10, [letterboxco.com](http://letterboxco.com)), Martha Stewart Crafts anchor craft punch (\$10, [michaels.com](http://michaels.com)), kraft-paper tag (\$3.25 for 24, [acmoore.com](http://acmoore.com)), navy A7 envelope (\$6.75 for 25, [paperpresentation.com](http://paperpresentation.com)), postage stamps ([championstamp.com](http://championstamp.com)), our clip-art invitation, postcard (88¢, [zazzle.com](http://zazzle.com)).



**NUMBER TAGS** Hang them as table markers (\$12 for 10, [letterboxco.com](http://letterboxco.com)).



**BAKER'S TWINE** Use it to tie, bundle, and thread (\$10, [letterboxco.com](http://letterboxco.com)).



**ANCHOR STAMP** Carry your theme throughout with ink (\$5, [paper-source.com](http://paper-source.com)).



## THE FRUIT BASKETS

Fresh berries offer a summertime alternative to candy on your dessert bar—and pair perfectly with fruit pies and tarts. Display them in market “baskets” made of porcelain. Simply stagger a few around the sweets station, or place a trio at every table for guests to enjoy. The best part? You'll be able to use them long after your big day (\$20 to \$38, [jaysonhomeandgarden.com](http://jaysonhomeandgarden.com)).



## THE MEDALLION

1. Cut two 2½-by-11-inch strips of vintage map paper (ours is from [touchofeurope.net](http://touchofeurope.net)).  
2. Make creases every ½ inch with a bone folder to create its accordion style. With double-sided tape, connect the two



pieces to form one long strip. Use a needle and thread to sew through each panel at one end. Pull the thread so the strip forms a circle, and tie. Join the first and last panels with double-sided tape.  
3. Punch a 2-inch circle from card stock (we like Uchida's 2-inch circle



punch, \$14, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)); hot-glue it to the back of the medallion. Print the drink label (download it at [marthastewartweddings.com/summer2011](http://marthastewartweddings.com/summer2011)), and hot-glue it to the medallion's front. Cut a ribbon to go around the drink vessel, and two for tails. Attach with glue.

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: BRYAN GARDNER



THE COUPLE'S PALETTE



### THE RING BOX

1. Cut a piece of foam batting to fit the inside of your box. Fold fabric around it and cut, leaving ½ inch extra around the edges. Fold it in half, wrong sides facing out, and sew two sides together. Turn the pouch right side out, and stuff with the batting. Stitch up the open side, tucking raw edges to the inside.
2. Sew two or three buttons on top of the pillow, and tie twine around them to hold the rings.



### THE NAPKINS

Fold your napkins in thirds, then use tape to affix a stencil to the center. Soak a small foam brush in fabric paint, and dab it over the letters. Allow to dry for at least 30 minutes. **THE DETAILS:** Felix Populi linen napkins (\$10 each, [felixpopuli.com](http://felixpopuli.com)), "Love" stencil (\$14, [stencilase.com](http://stencilase.com)), Versatex #26 ink (\$4.50, [dhamatrad.com](http://dhamatrad.com)).

## THE WELCOME BAGS

Lilly and Charlie's totes were screen-printed, but you can get the look with the design below. Download it from our site, print it onto iron-on paper, and transfer it to your bags following the manufacturer's instructions. Then fill 'em up with goodies.

**THE DETAILS:** Canvas tote "10101" (\$3, [bagworks.com](http://bagworks.com)), Tyrrells "Lightly Sea Salted" chips (\$19 for 5 bags, [chelseamarketbaskets.com](http://chelseamarketbaskets.com)), Gerolsteiner mineral water (\$47.75 for 12 bottles, [nutricity.com](http://nutricity.com)), Martha's Vineyard Cookie Company cookies (\$24 for 6, [marthasvineyardcookiecompany.com](http://marthasvineyardcookiecompany.com)).



## THE CHAIR GARLAND

1. Collect papers, pages from old books, and maps (find great examples at [touchofeurope.net](http://touchofeurope.net)). Cut them into 1- and 3-inch rounds with craft punches. To make the chain, put a piece of double-sided tape on the back of one circle, press white twine onto the tape, and then place a same-size circle (with another strip of tape) over the first.
2. Repeat along the length of the twine, mixing up the sizes as you go.



## THE VENDORS

- EVENT PLANNING & STATIONERY** Emily Kelly, Unscene Inc.
- CATERING** V. Jaime Hamlin & Sons Catering (food); Our Market (bar)
- FLOWERS** Marlene DiStefano, Island Ambiance
- MUSIC** The Mike Benjamin Band
- RENTALS** Big Sky Tent & Party Rentals
- LINENS** Party Rental Ltd., BBJ Linen Rentals
- RESTROOMS** Dottie's Potties
- WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY** Tec Petaja
- GOWN** Carolina Herrera
- BRIDESMAIDS' DRESSES** Woodford & Co.
- MENSWEAR** Sam Elsom; Prada
- HAIR** Jennifer Keeler from Krimson Hair Studio
- MAKEUP** Troy Surratt

>SEE **THE GUIDE** FOR MORE VENDOR SOURCES