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—Kara Forsterberger





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y husband and I live in California and have family in Connecticut, Florida and Chicago,” says Kara Firstenberger, whose big day faced a common American wedding challenge. “We knew that wherever we chose to have our wedding, all of our guests would have to travel. We decided it was best to pick a place that meant a lot to us and that we wanted to share with everyone.”

The two Savannah College of Art and Design alumni embraced the boundless creative freedom of a destination wedding.

“It was such an amazing opportunity to share a city that we love with all the people that we love,” says Kara. “We knew we wanted to have it during the Jazz Festival because that’s our favorite time of year in Savannah. We had a rehearsal picnic at Forsyth Park instead of the traditional sit-down dinner. We laid out white blankets and candles to make it easy for everyone to find us. We wanted the whole feeling of our wedding weekend to reflect Savannah and give our guests a taste of what a unique city it is.”

To help guests enjoy the city, Kara opted not to appoint a wedding party.

“It was already so hard with everyone traveling,” she explains. “We just wanted all of our guests to relax and enjoy the day.”

Sense of Place

Kara wanted to echo the historic atmosphere of Savannah with a vintage style. She set the ceremony and reception at the Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum, also known as the Scarborough House, a Greek Revival built by William Jay in 1819. This urban mansion boasts lavish ornamentation and a lush formal garden.

“It was the first and only place that my husband and I looked at when choosing our venue,” says the bride. “What a gorgeous setting! Walking down the museum stairs into the garden was such a beautiful way to begin our ceremony. It is a very romantic and intimate location for a wedding, and Tony Pizzo and his crew did an amazing job of getting the garden and grounds ready.” Kara’s vintage theme found further expression in her flowers.

“We decided to go with an overgrown garden look that had elements of Gothic style like the architecture in Savannah,” recalls Kara, a jewelry designer who appreciates the finer details. “Michèle at Madams Chrysanthemum used ornate silver pots, dotted with green moss. The bridal bouquet was stunning and had a collar of draping greens around the edge with gardenias, roses and cinnamon-scented flowers.”

ALL THAT JAZZ

When a West Coast couple returned to their meeting place,
the wedding weekend was part celebration,

part vacation.

By Meaghan Walsh



A Perfect Match

So what was the greatest challenge for this long-distance, self-planning bride? In a word: Color.

"Planning things at a distance made it difficult to match colors," says the bride, who chose classic peach, black and white for her décor. "We figured that black and white were mistake-proof and added peach for a pop of color. We filled the ceiling of our tent with 100 lanterns in shades of white and peach. We also added peach gel lights to give the entire tent a warm glow. It matched perfectly with our satin linens and floral centerpieces, which tied everything together."

After the romantic garden ceremony, guests were invited into the museum to look around and have hors d'oeuvres while the garden area was transformed for the reception. They returned for a dinner of New York strip steak and Maine lobster tail, followed by a night of dancing to the sounds of the Eric Culberson Blues Band—a fitting choice for Jazz Festival weekend.

Sweet Things

Of all the memorable moments from her wedding weekend, one of Kara's favorites is the moment she and Andrew spent alone the night before their union.

"The whole week leading up to the wedding can get so hectic," she remembers. "It's important to take a few moments together to just breathe. Andrew and I took a break from our rehearsal picnic for a little walk around Forsyth Park. It gave us the opportunity to relax and share our excitement with each other about everything that would be happening the next day."

Savoring the moment appears to be a specialty for the Plesterbergers.

"We took the cake top back with us to California but ended up deciding it was too good to let it sit in the freezer for a year," laughs Kara. "For our first anniversary, we may just have to take a trip back to Savannah and have a little cake made just for the two of us to share!" *S*

Behind the Veil

Planning time: One year
Number of attendees: 75
Event rental and setup: Savannah Special Events
Ceremony site: The Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum
Officiant: Reverend Steven Schultz
Reception site: The Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum
Gown: Pronovias
Accessories: "The Garbi" headband by Fern
Flowers: Madame Chrysanthemum
Music: The Eric Culberson Blues Band
Cake: Minette Rushing Custom Cakes
Catering: Creative Catering
Invitations: Bride and groom
Transportation and honeymoon suite: Mission on Forsyth Park
Videographer: Mark Whiteledge, friend of groom
Something old: Flower applique from bride's mother's wedding dress, hand-sewn into the new gown





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