

Anthony Vazquez Photography



BY SHARON ROTH

The destination February 26, 2011, nuptials of New York investment bankers Michelle-Lee Cona and Justin Rabinowitz at the Breakers in Palm Beach was a stunningly lavish celebration in shimmering ivory and gold. Intricate branches and lush roses and hydrangeas in white, ivory, champagne, and red lent a richly elegant English garden touch to the ornate beachside resort, while elaborate centerpieces and dramatic red and yellow lighting gave the appearance of flaming torches in a majestic ruby ballroom. Guests feasted on a raw bar of lobster, crab, and shrimp, and Chilean sea bass and filet mignon. They were treated to a towering multi-layered Sylvia Weinstock confection for dessert and danced the night away to the Marcia Mitchell Band. **How they met:** Graduate school sweethearts. **The proposal:** Wonderfully adorable. Arriving home from work one day, bride was met at the door with flowers, candles, and the couple's shih tzu, Buster, wearing a doggy tux and hat — and a proposing Justin. Surprise engagement party planned by the groom at the Whiskey Blue followed. **Bridal fashion choice:** A Vera Wang double hitter! Ivory halter gown and vintage-style brooch for the welcome dinner, strapless ivory stretched stain dress with flared tulle bottom for the wedding. Cathedral veil, footwear by Manolo Blahnik and Jimmy Choo. Bridesmaids in burgundy strapless Jim Hjelm. **Groom's preference:** Custom Zegna tux. **Wedding bounty:** Lucky bridal party! Bridesmaids received David Yurman necklaces and groomsmen were presented with Tag Heuer watches. All guests took home welcome bags themed around an "R" for Rabinowitz, red velvet cupcakes, and scratch-offs that read "We came out a winner tonight, did you?" **After Party:** Lounge décor in ivory and gold with a DJ, photo booth, and late night goodies: sliders, chili dogs, tater tots, and pancakes. **Fun facts:** The minister, a friend and executive vice president of the Maxim Group where the bride and groom both work, became ordained online at lifechurch.net so he could perform the ceremony; Buster the dog did a cameo at the ceremony along with family dog Chloe, who both trotted down the aisle in bride and groom outfits. Cute! Dessert consisted of individual sundae bars tagged with the couple's saying, "My whole heart, my whole life"; pastry queen Sylvia Weinstock personally brought her cake down to Palm Beach and joined the wedding festivities, while painter Agnes Russo was flown in from LA to complete a live painting of the reception, which now hangs in the couple's home. **Honeymoon:** Barcelona, Capri, and Mediterranean cruise.

The April 30, 2011, St. Barts nuptials of Laura Gottlieb, vice president of international sales for Vince, to entrepreneur Joshua Siegel was a savory fiesta of French island chic. Festivities for the 80 friends and family who had flown in from the United States, Japan, Dubai, Israel, and Italy opened Wednesday night with a delectable supper at Le Ti, followed by a welcome beach barbecue the following evening. After a rehearsal dinner Friday at Le Plage, guests arrived to the island villa Le Manoir De Lurin for an exquisite sunset ceremony overlooking the water. Lush rose and violet island florals, overhanging trees, white candles, light pink linens and tiki torches created the gorgeously romantic lavish garden décor, set against French villa elegance for the reception that lasted late into the night. **How they met:** Six years ago at a dinner party the groom — a talented chef — hosted and cooked in New York. While Laura initially turned him down, Joshua persisted over the next several years and finally won his date — and future wife — in 2009, when the couple ran into each other four times over two weeks and Laura realized this might be a sign from the universe! **The proposal:** Simply fabulous. After spending weeks designing the perfect yellow diamond ring, groom proposed before the fountain in Stuyvesant Park, then whisked his new fiancée for celebratory champagne at bride's favorite tapas place on the Lower East Side. Following that, Joshua surprised Laura with an on-the-spot engagement party of 80 family and friends. Well done, groom! **Bridal fashion choice:** Ivory bare-backed Elizabeth Fillmore creation with custom headpiece and veil. Shoes by Jimmy Choo, maid of honor in pink. **Groom's preference:** Custom tan suit by Astor and Black. **Le Cuisine:** Wonderfully decadent: Guests toasted the couple with flowing Veuve Clicquot and feasted on white sturgeon caviar, foie gras, steak tartar, cured salmon, and an elaborate "surf and turf" of grilled Caribbean lobster tails and lacquered duck breast with balsamic figs. Cake was French vanilla with Swiss meringue frosting and fig puree. Catering by Patricia Clark. **Music:** DJ Melissa. **Fun facts:** Couple's first date was, ironically, *He's Just Not That Into You*, in a nod to the couple's love of Scrabble, guests were given travel Scrabble sets with the note, "J'adore St. Barts, Laura and Josh"; groom built the huppah himself in New York and trotted it down to St. Barts, and — in a magnificently beautiful touch — decorated it with his late mother's key collection to honor her memory at his wedding. **Honeymoon:** Two weeks of post-nuptial safari chillaxing in South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia.



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