SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

RYAN REYNOLDS AND BLAKE LIVELY ARE NO STRANGERS TO A SEA OF CAMERAS AIMED AT THEM. BUT WHEN THEY DECIDED TO MARRY, THEY WANTED TO CELEBRATE IN PRIVACY—AND IN STYLE. HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED WHEN AN OLD BARN MET THE NEW MR. AND MRS. REYNOLDS, AND THE ONLY PRESS CAMERA CLICKING? OURS.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Marcus Nilsson  TEXT BY Robin Sayers

WHEN RYAN AND BLAKE secretly got engaged last June, they knew it would take careful planning, confidentiality, and a select crew to pull off their nuptials before word got out. Enter Martha Stewart.

The actors, both friends of our founder, turned to her for guidance, and Martha sent the happy duo our way. Phone calls with editorial director Darcy Miller on logistics led to brainstorming sessions and then a bona fide collaboration between the pair and Martha Stewart Weddings.

We quickly discovered that Ryan and Blake are not like the many altar-bound celebrities who sell their big-day photos to the highest bidder. This public, yet very private, couple's sole wish was to have an intimate affair (there were only 35 guests total). And while they remain protective of images of them on their most heartfelt occasion, they graciously let us share pictures of the elements we created together.

Both the bride and groom hail from the West Coast (California and British Columbia, respectively), but they live a life that's more in line with the Bayou than the beach. Instead of a seaside setting, they desired a venue that felt like home, yet had the patina of a bygone era. Weeks were spent crisscrossing the States in search of just the right spot. Ultimately, they were drawn to Charleston, South Carolina. Known for its grace and hospitality, it also has an up-and-coming gastronomic scene, which appealed to these foodies. Ryan and Blake settled on a sprawling historic estate just outside the city complete with a centuries-old "Avenue of Oaks" on its approach and a slow-moving creek out back.

With where to wed in place, next came the how. They fell in love with the property's rustic barnlike dock house—and the idea of filling it with grand touches that matched the significance of the event. For this couple, that meant resplendent tablescapes, eclectic chandeliers, their own antique china brought from home, and a sophisticated palette of cream, nudes, light mochas, and sage. Above all, they wanted the comfortable feel of a family gathering. They envisioned a perfectly paced event, unfolding scene by scene—wit a few twists.

To that end, on a sun-dappled Sunday afternoon in late summer, the delighted guests began arriving. They were welcomed with Mason jars of cool lemonade and sweet peach tea, and the sound of muted trumpets and Gypsy violins. Then everyone was ushered into the tented ceremony space, draped with ethereal fabrics and overflowing with flowers and tall branches.

The bride swept down the aisle, which was covered with rose petals strewn in an ombre design, her high wattage smile on full display. She and her attendants wore Marchesa, the groom and his men, Burberry, with both Blake and Ryan in custom Louboutin kicks.

After exchanging personal vows that were not only deeply loving but humorous, too, guests streamed out onto the dock for a fun-filled "carnival" hour, followed by a four-course supper in the barn. By candlelight only, toasts were given, dear friend Florence Welch performed "Cosmic Love," among other songs, the cake was cut (to a professional whistler!), dancing ensued, and then this happened: Blake's sister Robyr, star of the cult hit Teen Witch, and their brother Eric, left the newlyweds in stitches by reenacting the movie's final dance sequence—in full costume.

Later, guests launched wish lanterns into the starry sky, along with their fondest hopes for Ryan and Blake. Considering the couple had managed to marry in secret, in style, and surrounded by their closest loved ones, it was clear that their wedding day wishes had already come true.
THE FUN STARTED RIGHT AWAY...

1. Pre-ceremony, guests were greeted with chilled grapes, a refreshing treat given the humidity, and a cheeky message from Blake and Ryan.
2. Half the guests were under the age of 18! During the carnival hour, they aimed darts at a wall of balloons, reconstructed a giant ring-like tower, and sat for a silhouette artist.
3. Ice pops were unexpected! Featuring Arnold Palmer, Italian soda, strawberry, chocolate, peanut butter, and peaches and cream, which came with sticks stamped with "I heart U" and more funny messages from the hosts.
4. While the bride and groom posed for their pictures, revelers nibbled at a popcorn station featuring little butter, white cheddar, and caramel varieties served in custom boxes.
A collection of scalloped paper parasols provided color and atmosphere at the reception, while also saying, in the most genteel Southern manner, "no thanks" to uninvited photos.
AND THEN CAME DINNER...
Opposite: Candles and mullions, affixed through wire channels, were suspended from beams in the deck-side barn. The rich tablescapes consisted of terrariums and hurricane lamps, candlesticks, and linens. This page displays a lover of antique plates, brought her personal collection from home to create place settings for each guest. Calligraphed menus doubled as place cards.
FOLLOWED BY SWEETS— AND LOTS OF THEM...

Opposite: An idea for a cut-out, cracker and fake blueberry dessert table overflowing with their favorite sweets, including macarons from One Girl Cookies and salted caramels from The Caramel Jar. The local point was their vanilla and sour-cream wedding cake with peach-apricot preserves and Earl Grey-milk chocolate buttermilk cream made by Maggie Austin Cake in Alexandria, Virginia. Each and every confection had its own calligraphed label.

This page: Smores bar by Bakehouse Charleston (1), coffee and cream, espresso beans from Barstcorni (2), past de hui from La Maison du Chocolat (3), and blueberry cheesecake tartlets (4) in mini strawberry shortcakes (5), and lemon tartlets (6) by Cava & Bananas in Charleston.
This page: 1. The mouthwatering takeaways were parfaits packed in Weck jars with custom seals in either Blake or Ryan's favorite flavor combos (the bride's peanut butter and chocolate, the groom's blueberry with mascarpone). 2. Partners took to the deck to launch their wish lanterns, like a miniature air balloon, a lit candle emits gas that sends them skyward. 3. Cool drinks with foil-stamped flags by Shop Sweet Lulu small milk bottles kept guests well-hydrated.

SOURCES

LOCATION Boone Hall Plantation (boonehallplantation.com)

CHAIR Mike Law of Fig (figatfig.com)

CALLIGRAPHY Elizabeth Purche Jones (elizabethpurchejones.com)

CAKE Maggie Austin Cake (maggieaustinca.k.com)

MLSC Debut (641-4-48-1956)

RENTALS Coastal Events (coastalandrentals.com), Snyder Event Rentals (snydereventrentals.com)

BRIDE'S GOWN AND BRIDESMAID DRESSES Marchesa (marchesa.com)

SHOES Christian Louboutin (us.christianlouboutin.com)

GROOM AND GROOMSMEN'S SUITS Budd Lake (blakeflamingo.com)

BRIDE'S HAIR Rod Ortega of Solu Artists (solualrtists.com)

BRIDE'S MAKEUP Elaine Ollers of Exclusive Artists (exclusiveartists.com)

BOUQUET RIBBON Hyman Hendler & Sons (hymanhendler.com)

CEREMONY FURNITURE Aidan Gray (aidangray.com)

SILHOUETTE ARTIST Patti Richardson of Heart Paper Scissors (heartspaper.scissors.com)

GUEST BOOK Graphic Image (graphicimage.com)

PARASOLS Paper Lantern Store (paperlanternstore.com)

PAPER ELEMENTS Laurie Cinatto (lauriecinatto.com), Fierce Party (fierceparty.com)

POPcorn The Hampton Popcorn Company (hamptonpopcorn.com)

POPcorn BOXES Oriental Trading Company (orientaltrading.com)

KIDS TABLE DECOR A Dora Woods (adorawoods.com)

FLOWER GIRL HEADPIECES Rhin (rhin.com)

CANDLES Colonial Candle (colonialcandle.com)

METAL LEAVES Restoration Hardware (rh.com)

MENU CARDS Invision Olive (invisionoffice.com)

COUPLE'S PHOTOGRAPHER Gary Atcho (garyatcho.com)

COUPLE'S VIDEOGRAPHER Bryan Rowland (bryanrowland.com)

DR KIRBY Richey of Footsteps Security Services (footsteps.org)

WHISTLER Eric Gifford (William Morris Endeavor: rmg.com)

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FOR MORE STORY DETAILS
LAST, THE NEWLYWEDS SHARE A STILL MOMENT

The bride's cloudlike silk tailcoat featured a fitted bodice, illusion crystal beading on the shoulders, and rose gold embroidery. Blake wanted something different that would be mysterious and ever-changing in the light, so she asked friends Georgina Chapman and Karen Craig of Marchesa to dip-dye select layers pale pink to complement her engagement ring. Jovana Schwartz forged Ryan and Blake's wedding bands.

Photograph by Gina Amico.