

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO WEDDINGS WITH STYLE

WINTER 2013

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weddings



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A WINTER WONDERLAND

JESSICA KARDISH & BILL STARKOV

January 21, 2012 Napa Valley, California | Photographed by Cooper Carras

Bill Starkov's wedding vows promised Jessica Kardish a "sparkly" life. Even before the words were spoken, their wedding embodied the term figuratively and literally.

Jessica had always dreamed of a winter wedding. When plans to bring the couple's loved ones together in Aspen proved less than ideal for guests, they opted to incorporate the snowy feel without the mountains (or distance). The

notion of cool tones and cool climate warmed by glistening light were to become the focus of the wedding planning.

The first element of any frost-themed nuptials is the ice. Bill and Jessica went to the jeweler together so the bride could design her ideal ring. Afterward, Bill embellished the original specifications a bit. As he explains, "I added a few special touches... as well as a few extra carats."



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Many couples wrestle with the decision to have their marriage ceremony in their own town or plan a destination wedding. For Jessica and Bill – who met at a mutual friend’s nuptials out of state – a wedding away just made sense. The couple wanted to offer a weekend far enough away from normal life that guests could immerse themselves in the festivities, yet close enough that their Los Angeles-based loved ones could drive.

When they discovered the Meadowood resort in Napa Valley, it just fit, much the same way Bill knew he wanted to marry Jessica the first day he met her. Its décor alluded to the woody winter theme they wanted, and Bill’s love of wine

rejoiced amongst the vine-laden vistas.

With January chilling the air, the stage was set for enjoying the warmth of family and friends celebrating the union of two souls. Hot cider with cinnamon-stick garnish greeted guests’ arrival to the ceremony. Vaulted white ceilings towered above adornments of ivory, champagne, cream, and silver. Arrangements of branches intertwined with white roses and draped with strings of crystal flanked a custom runner infused with speckles of glitter that reflected light from glowing candles. Delighted with the outcome, Jessica says, “It was different from anything we have ever seen.”

“Everything turned out perfectly and our wedding weekend was a true reflection of who we are as couple.”







The stems of Jessica’s bouquet of roses, orchids, and crystal-dotted stephanotis blossoms were wrapped in white velvet held with a crystal brooch. Her maid of honor clutched flowers bound in cool gray velvet.

The Jewish ceremony was performed by a close family friend. After Bill and Jessica were pronounced and receded down the aisle, guests showered the couple with “snowflakes” that had been placed in cones that hung on every chair.

Jewish customs and family were honored throughout the reception as Jessica’s brother-in-law blessed the challah, and Bill’s cousin blessed the wine. Guests lined up to make loving speeches as a string quartet played renditions of upbeat contemporary songs.

Four long tables filled the dining room, illuminated by the glow from a roaring stone fireplace. Snowy centerpieces composed of roses, tulips, and hydrangeas matched the ceremony arrangements and were accented by mercury-glass candleholders and silver chargers.

The groom’s contribution to planning centered on ensuring an unequalled food-and-wine destination. Bill says, “I think our food was the best I’ve had at any wedding.” Not surprising, since The Restaurant at Meadowood has earned three Michelin stars. The white-glove service

featured five courses – with wine pairings, of course.

“Our wedding cake was magnificent – sparkly and very unique,” Jessica gushes. The tiered structure fitted the winter-wonderland theme with glittery silver snowflakes and a crystal pedestal lofting high the topmost tier.

Unbeknownst to their guests, Bill and Jessica had planned a surprise after-party to prolong the festivities. Bill describes the feel as a Hollywood nightclub. Snowy white cotton candy and hot cocoa treated the revelers, keeping sugar levels high.

Whereas the dinner had focused on wine, endless bottles of Grey Goose were the social lubricant of the late night. The groom boasts, “I felt it was appropriate, since I am Russian, and no party is complete without vodka.” However, he does advise the following proverb: “Do not do a shot of vodka with every single guest at your wedding. You will feel it the next day.”

Jessica proffers her own words of wisdom to those planning a wedding. “Don’t listen to everyone else’s opinions. Make a wedding reflect the bride and groom, and it will turn out more intimate and personal.”

DREW CLAYTON