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Organic + Elegant Orange County Estate Wedding

June 18, 2015

By: *Michelle Hoover*

 CALIFORNIA

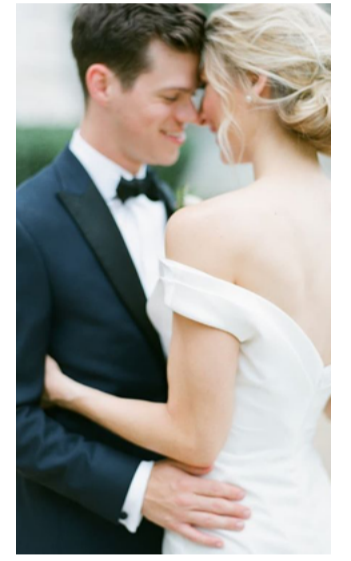
Al Fresco Rustic Backyard



Now *this* is my kinda wedding. The kind where the couple puts an emphasis on the personal, like a backyard taco filled reception complete with homemade cookies by the Groom's mother. It's sweet details like that that lend to the loveliness of the Bride's [BHLDN](#) gown and captures from [Danielle Poff Photography](#) that simply melt our heart. More [here!](#)



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From the beautiful Bride... *Jake and I had the immense pleasure of getting married at our friend's Spanish-style private estate in San Clemente, California, just blocks from the water. Prior to getting this opportunity, we struggled with finding a venue that felt like "us": laid back, private, and intimate. We feel blessed to have married there!*

I knew I wanted a relaxed and comfortable, yet romantic vibe infused in every detail of our day, while not competing with the natural Spanish-style of the home. I've seen quite a few stressed-out brides on their wedding day and knew we needed a relaxing atmosphere for our day. One of the easiest ways to create that relaxed vibe was through our food/drinks: tacos, margaritas, and local beer from Pizza Port (a Southern California classic)!

For my dress, I knew immediately that I wanted to wear a gown from BHLDN. Nothing says "romance" like their stunning collection of gowns. My sisters and I celebrated my bachelorette trip in NYC and simultaneously went wedding dress shopping in their Upper East Side store. It was pretty dreamy to find my gown in Manhattan! My shoes were also from BHLDN. Prior to getting engaged, I underestimated the power of a wedding veil. But when dress shopping, it wasn't until they put a veil on me that it all felt real. I love the beauty and symbolism that a traditional veil represents so I found some vintage scalloped-lace on Etsy and had one of my own bride's mother custom make it for me. It was so special to have!

One of my favorite parts of the planning process was choosing the decor! The thought of spending money on decor that we would use only once pained me. And it didn't feel true to our taste. So instead of buying "wedding decor", I bought items that Jake and I could incorporate into our future home, such as the Anthropologie vase that my bouquet sat in on our sweetheart table, or the succulents that displayed our seating arrangement. I also made the table numbers (and all the other signage) in Photoshop and displayed them in frames I found at a discounted home decor store. My only decor splurge so-to-speak was my florals. They were so important to me! Cherry Blossom Floral Designs made the most incredible eucalyptus garlands which was an easy way to fill the tables (since I didn't want to buy a bunch of décor pieces). It also made for a perfect altar!

We skipped the traditional wedding cake and went for a small naked cake for us to keep the tradition of cake-cutting, and then opted for 1/2 of the cookies to be made from Kuba Kreations and 1/2 of them made by my mother-in-law. It was so special to have her contribute to our day like that! And every guest loves cookies.

Being a wedding photographer myself, choosing the right photographer for our wedding was the most important planning decision to me. I knew Danielle was the perfect gal for us, even despite our 500 mile distance! She and her second shooter, Sidney Morgan, captured every detail so beautifully and had a relaxed, yet professional attitude that I loved. My coordinator Kelsey, of Kelsey Rae Designs, made our day go so smoothly. I couldn't have chosen a better coordinator to work with! She took care of absolutely everything and I knew I could trust her to make our day incredible.

Our backyard wedding felt so true to us, which was so important to Jake and I. It couldn't have been sweeter!

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