

# Town & Country

# WEDDINGS

SPRING/SUMMER 2011

## SPRING PREVIEW

**THIS  
SEASON'S  
MOST  
STUNNING  
GOWNS**

**A HONEYMOON  
FOR EVERY  
PASSION**

**JEWELRY  
THAT POPS**

**REGISTRY  
MUST-HAVES**

**PLUS  
BEAUTIFUL  
TIPS FROM  
THE PROS**



The bride  
Vera



Ryan and Alissa in a field of Spanish lavender on the grounds of the San Ysidro Ranch. Opposite: Chef John Trotta's fresh-from-the-garden tasting menu, printed on a card designed by Yellow Owl Workshop.

BY AUDREY TEMPELSMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSE VILLA

# BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

ALISSA PARKER weds RYAN WALKER 4.18.2009





Clockwise from near left: Alissa and her father, Timothy Parker; the bride's bouquet, by florist Mindy Rice; woodblock-printed bags filled with ribbons for guests to toss during the recessional; an archway of blooming apple branches. Opposite, from left: A parasol shields Alissa during the ceremony; the bride and her grandmother Marie Csadenyi.





## THE DETAILS

### WHAT THE BRIDE WORE

Alissa walked down the aisle in a cotton-silk voile garden dress by **PETER SOM** (*petersom.com*). Its sweetheart neckline and dainty blue-silk sash had swept both Alissa and her father off their feet. "My father told me, 'This is the only dress I could see you wearing at your wedding.' My dad never says stuff like that!" She wore wedge heels from **VALENTINO** (*valentino.com*) and blue-opal and pearl earrings by **TED MUEHLING** (*tedmuehling.com*), who also made the couple's gold wedding bands.

### THE ENGAGEMENT RING

Alissa first laid eyes on the late-19th-century English ring, a central diamond surrounded by tiny ones, at the jewelry store **TAPPARINI** (*tapparini.com*) while on holiday in Verona, Italy.

Ryan secretly bought it but told Alissa that it had been sold to someone else—doubling her surprise when he pulled it out of the pocket of his bathrobe on that momentous trip to the **SAN YSIDRO RANCH** (rooms from \$685; 805-565-1700; *sanysidroranch.com*).

### THE EVENT DESIGNER

"You only have one wedding, but I wanted ten weddings' worth of decor," says Alissa. Fortunately, event designer **LISA VORCE** (*ohhowcharming.com*) helped her pare things down without short-changing the bride's quirky, whimsical style. Together they dreamed up delightfully unexpected details, from chandeliers made from Texas tumbleweeds to chairs tied with reams of rustling ribbon. "She totally got me," says Alissa.

### THE FLOWERS

"I wanted the flowers to look as if they'd been pulled from the property—a little wild, not so 'done,'" Alissa says. Floral designer **MINDY RICE** (*mindyrice.com*) helped her achieve her vision, creating a bouquet of peonies, poppies and lilacs for the bride and a simple pussy-willow boutonniere for the groom. Both were tied with strands of vintage ribbon in different colors.

### THE FOOD

Ryan worked with the San Ysidro's executive chef, **JOHN TROTTA**, to devise a five-course tasting menu packed with local ingredients, starting with a simple salad of house-made mozzarella and tomatoes fresh from the Ysidro's gardens and continuing with a shrimp chile relleno to add a touch of Tex-Mex (Alissa's favorite). The wine

paired with each course was carefully selected.

### FOR THE GUESTS

**CHRISTINE SCHMIDT**, of **YELLOW OWL WORKSHOP** (*yellowowlworkshop.com*), designed, printed and hand-painted the invitations, program and menu, along with printing a beautiful version of the map of Montecito, the location of the San Ysidro Ranch, that Alissa's father had drawn. During the event, artist **KARL JOHNSON** (*cutarts.com*) made paper silhouettes of all the guests' profiles, cut them out and glued them into a book that the subjects then signed with personal notes. Each couple received a silver cup made by hand by **MIRANDA MEILLEUR** (*mirandameilleur.co.uk*), who had engraved the wedding date onto the vessel's base.



From left: The bride's sister Jillian displays her silhouette, made by artist Karl Johnson; one long L-shaped table accommodated the forty-one guests. Opposite: Family and friends dine beneath strings of bulbs and moonlight.



**IT WAS DARK** on that seven-hour drive from Boston to visit a friend in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in April 2005, and Ryan Walker was sleepy. “I pulled over and flipped through my phone to find someone to call to keep me awake,” Ryan recalls. “I saw the name Alissa Parker and thought, ‘I haven’t talked to her in a while.’”

Two years earlier at Franklin & Marshall College, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, bookish, bespectacled Ryan would never have guessed that Alissa—the garrulous Texan with the ivory skin and unruly auburn hair—harbored feelings for him. But with that call, a connection was made; the two talked often and eventually agreed to meet in New York City. Though Ryan was late (he lost his nerve and missed his train), both describe that crisp December rendezvous as magical. “I felt like we’d known each other forever,” says Alissa.

Distance surely makes the heart grow fonder, because by April, Ryan had unpacked his two suitcases into Alissa’s 400-square-foot apartment in Santa Barbara, California, where she was living after transferring to the Brooks Institute photography school. Over the next year and a half, lots of other changes took place. The couple laid the groundwork for launching Horne, an online boutique selling highly curated home furnishings that reflect their boho-chic style (mixing ornate chandeliers with a Formica table at home; wearing geometric prints with flea-market finds). They moved to Philadelphia to be closer to Ryan’s mother, Rose-Mary, a teacher, and his father, Kraig, a computer consultant, who lived in Lancaster County. Alissa tried to adjust to the East Coast’s long, cold winters. But she couldn’t help pining for that California sunshine.

Then one gray, chilly day in 2008, Ryan told her to clear her schedule. “I’m taking you somewhere,” he said cryptically. Only when they were at the airport did Alissa realize that she and Ryan were bound for Santa Barbara. There, in a guest suite at the San Ysidro Ranch, Ryan popped the question.

One year later, on a sunny Saturday afternoon, Alissa returned to her beloved Southern California to walk down the aisle—an antique runner set on the lawn of the San Ysidro Ranch—as forty-one guests looked on from church pews. When the bride and her father, Timothy Parker, arrived at the altar, the Texas ranch owner gave Ryan an affectionate pat on the back: “No returns,” he said, echoing the words of his own father-in-law when Timothy married Alissa’s mother, Cid.

After exchanging their vows, Alissa and Ryan were showered with colorful ribbon clippings, an alternative to the typical petal toss. Cocktails laced with lavender from the lush San Ysidro gardens were followed by a five-course tasting menu. Ribbons fluttered on the backs of the chairs, and one long wooden dining table was strewn with tumbleweeds that Alissa’s family had shipped from their Texas ranch; event designer Lisa Vorce had also turned some into chandeliers. “I wanted something that brought in my Texas roots,” says Alissa.

All too soon the newlyweds found themselves flying to New York for an overnight mini ’moon at the Plaza Athénée (they would spend their real honeymoon in France five months later). Then it was back to Philadelphia. But for Ryan and Alissa, the party hasn’t stopped. “She’s my best friend,” Ryan says. “She makes everything fun; we make everything fun together.”