

WEDDING, ENGAGEMENT, ANNIVERSARY & COMMITMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

TOGETHER Rain Plan

Be prepared for unexpected wedding-day showers

Susan Huang —
Tim McClure



Kristen Benke, www.kristenbenke.com

Modern technology brings many couples together. But in San Francisco in August 2008, fate arranged a more traditional encounter.

"We met the old-fashioned way," said Susan Huang. "In a bar."

Huang, 33, now a public interest lawyer, and Tim McClure, 33, now a resident in radiology at UCLA, found a lot to talk about that night at a bar in fashionable Pacific Heights. They were both at crossroads in their lives. He was about to change his medical specialty. She had just left her law firm to find more meaningful work. There were strong feelings — but also a few obstacles. McClure lived in L.A. Huang lived in San Francisco. And she was about to take off on a 4½-month trip.

While she was traveling, they e-mailed, but that wasn't really cutting it for McClure. He finally just jumped on a plane and flew to Chile to be with her. "Our third date," he said, "was a two-week vacation in South America."

They were so happy that even 24 hours on a rickety old bus to Uruguay didn't rattle them. "I thought ... this is a cool girl," he said. "She didn't complain at all."

On the trip, they fell under the spell of the tango in Argentina. "That trip is when we really fell in love," Huang said.

After they returned to the U.S., Huang moved to L.A. to be with McClure. There, she found exactly the kind of legal work she had been looking for — representing children in the foster care system.

They married Sept. 18 at a vineyard in the Santa Ynez Valley. Huang is originally from Taiwan and McClure from Canada. With the help of planner Robin Sonner of Santa Barbara, their wedding blended the cultures that have defined their lives.

At the rehearsal dinner, the bride wore a mandarin-collared *qipao*, a Chinese dress. For the reception, she changed into a red tango dress for their surprise dance in honor of the South American trip that started it all.

The readings included a poem in Mandarin and English, as well as an Apache marriage blessing they loved. McClure read in Mandarin a thank-you to Huang's parents.

McClure then told the guests that Huang would say something in his native language, "Canadian." That got a laugh even before she said, "It's a great party, eh?"

— Maxine Nunes
Special Advertising Sections Writer

Leslie Maynor —
Earl Anderson



Holly Stern, Cakes and Kisses

What did the couple who create some of L.A.'s most exquisite wedding cakes want for their own wedding? Pies! Lots of them.

The bride, Leslie Maynor, 46, of Fantasy Frostings in South Pasadena, has designed wedding cakes for some of Hollywood's hottest stars. The groom, Earl Anderson, 53, is an industrial purchasing manager, but also pitches in at Fantasy Frostings, where he's called "Mr. Frostings."

Their wedding took place on Sept. 12. Because Maynor goes to several lavish weddings weekly, she wanted "the homey feel of an old-fashioned barn raising."

No one was asked to lift a hammer, but the invitations were hand-embroidered; napkins were sewn from gingham and florals; and wildflowers served as centerpieces. And, of course, there were plenty of pies — boysenberry, apple, cherry and banana cream. Alexandra Rembac of Sterling Engagements planned the event.

In the end though, the La Verne couple could not avoid a wedding cake. The bride's mother, who founded Fantasy Frostings in 1971, insisted on baking them one. They couldn't have been in better hands. For years, Joyce Maynor created birthday cakes for President Ronald Reagan, whose second marriage lasted more than 50 years.

— Maxine Nunes
Special Advertising Sections Writer



1. Mindy Johnson and Jonathan Fierro enjoy a post-wedding kiss at their rainy-day wedding. Photo by susanstripling.com. 2. Mindy Johnson and Jonathan Fierro seized the mood of the day and had fun splashing around in their Wellington boots. Photo by susanstripling.com. 3. Jamie Prevost and Aaron Wilson of Los Angeles, who married on Oct. 23, celebrate with a kiss under an umbrella in the drizzle as they arrive at their reception at the Grand Island Mansion in Walnut Grove, Calif. Photo by JustineUngaro.com. 4. Guests cuddle under oversized umbrellas just before a wedding ceremony planned by International Event Co. of Beverly Hills. Photo by Joe Buissink, Defining the Moment Photography.

Rain on your wedding day is considered good luck in many places, including Italy, where the saying goes, "Sposa bagnata, sposa fortunata" (a wet bride is a lucky bride). Yet while luck is certainly welcome at your marriage ceremony, a mud-splattered gown or a rained-out venue is not.

"In Southern California, it's always best to have a rain plan during the months of October through March," said Jonathan Reeves of Beverly Hills-based International Event Co., who has pulled off many wet-weather weddings in his 12 years of event planning.

"It's all about being preventative," he said. "It's crucial to book a place with an option to move the event indoors in case of rain."

For outdoor weddings, many event planners recommend that couples consult a farmers' almanac to see how often it showers on a certain day or month. Unfortunately, this doesn't always work.

When Jennifer Suskin and Jason Lazaroff chose their April wedding date, they went straight to the almanac to check past weather conditions in South Beach, Fla., where they were getting married.

Their chosen date looked promising. "It hadn't rained in 25 years," Suskin said, "which

'The last thing a bride wants is to stand in the mud in her gown and shoes.' — Debbie Geller, Geller Events

is why we picked that date." In fact, the weather was predicted to be so gorgeous on that day in South Beach that the couple didn't even bother to have a backup plan.

"We woke up on our wedding day and the sky was suddenly dark and overcast," she said. "We knew we were in trouble."

Just hours before the ceremony, the event planner took everything that had been set up on the beach for the ceremony and scrambled to move it to the reception venue, a restaurant nearby.

A plan for every season

Even indoor weddings can be challenging on a stormy day since the wedding party and guests have to get to the ceremony and reception without getting soaked. Umbrellas or awnings are key to sheltering people as they move from the ceremony to the reception site, according to Debbie Geller of L.A.'s Geller Events.

She also suggested bringing a sheet or towels for the bride to stand on for photos taken outside when the rain clears.

"The last thing a bride wants is to stand in



the mud in her gown and shoes," Geller said.

Tents can be a great option, but they require some advance planning and can get expensive. "Clear tents are my favorite because they make everything more magical," Geller said, adding that it is crucial to think of heating, lighting and a sub floor inside the tent to keep the guests comfortable. And don't forget to cover the valet parking station and any walkways.

"For one event, we built a plywood walkway from the ceremony to the reception so that

the guests wouldn't have to walk in the mud," she added.

Reeves pointed out that if your outdoor event is rained out,

that means everyone else who is planning a party outside will be in the same shoes, meaning that vendors may run out of tents.

"Timing is everything," he said, "though if you have a good relationship with your rental company, they should be able to pull it off."

His hottest tip for a stormy-day wedding? Hire — in advance — a Stitch in Time, a Brentwood-based mother and two-daughter bridal seamstress team.

Ann Fiser and her daughters "will get the bride from Point A to Point B with her gown still intact," he said.

"They will carry her train, protect her with umbrellas, boots, tarps — whatever it takes," he said, adding that they also have come to the rescue during many last-minute wardrobe emergencies at his events. "Rain or shine, I always recommend them."

Even if the weather clears up right before your ceremony, make sure the ground is dry, Reeves advised.

"If the event is on wet grass and mud, everyone's shoes will be destroyed," he said. At one rainy-day wedding, the storm cleared up with

just enough time for Reeves' team to come in and literally blot and blow the grass dry before guests arrived.

Let it rain

For some couples, last-minute rain isn't a problem, but rather a blessing. Photographers don't have to worry about shadows, and many find that the lighting is even better on overcast days.

Some couples actually want rain on their wedding days, such as one of Geller's clients, a bride who was hoping to use their wedding-day rainwater to baptize their future children.

If it showers on your wedding day, try to embrace it, as New Yorkers Mindy Johnson and Jonathan Fierro did. Their Vermont wedding was nearly rained out, with about 4 inches falling in less

than 24 hours. But rather than get upset, they decided to have fun with it.

"We put on our Wellies so we could walk through the drenched ground," Johnson said, "and were playful with our umbrellas." Looking back, Johnson wouldn't have changed a thing. "Something about the rain and the mist in the air made it all the more magical," she said.

When Molly Malaney married Jason Mesnick of TV's "The Bachelor" at the oceanfront Terranea Resort in Rancho Palos Verdes, she didn't seem to mind at all when it began to pour during their vows. In fact, Malaney reportedly told her friends that the rain only "made their wedding more special."

For those getting married during the rainy season, there are plenty of fun options to think about.

Wear cute rain boots with your wedding gown, provide a shoe valet where guests can check their shoes for a pair of Wellington boots, or hand out color-coordinated umbrellas to guests.

Jennifer Suskin and Jason Lazaroff, who faced storm clouds on the morning of their wedding, were ultimately married outside on the beach, as originally planned.

"The event planner set up our wedding and broke it down three times," Suskin said, laughing. As the couple walked down the aisle, a rainbow formed above them. Talk about a sign of good luck.

"In the end, it was the perfect day," Suskin said, "and worth the stress." After all, without the rain, there would never have been a rainbow.

— Jennifer Evans Gardner
Special Advertising Sections Writer

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