

TASTE OF *Europe*

Old World charm unites with modern elegance in a sweet celebration filled with meaningful touches

Written by **Catherine Roscoe Barr**

Photographed by **Kelsey Goodwin**

Estefania Almeida *and* **Ron Simoes**

June 23, 2012

Ceremony at Our Lady of Fatima
Portuguese Parish, Vancouver

Reception at La Perla Ballroom, New Westminster





“For the ceremony, it was easy for us to choose right away,” says Estefania Almeida, who wed Ron Simoes at Our Lady of Fatima Portuguese Parish in Vancouver, the same church where they were both baptized, and where Estefania’s parents were married 34 years earlier.

Even though Estefania and Ron were baptized in the same church, it wasn’t until years later that they met, as adults. Today Estefania is a federal government staffer, while Ron works in the building trades. “We met through family, his brother and my cousin,” says Estefania, “and we just kind of clicked from the beginning.”

Four and a half years later, Ron surprised his love with a romantic proposal on the rooftop at Summit Lodge and Spa in Whistler. “I was in shock,” says Estefania. “Amazed.”

“My sister Katie and I love planning events, so right away we started talking about what we were going to do,” says Estefania. “We didn’t need a wedding planner because Katie kept us in line whenever we were behind or undecided on something, but we did opt to hire a day-of planner, so Katie could enjoy the memorable day too.”

The first step was to find a venue. “It kind of sets the mood for the wedding itself,” explains Estefania. “We wanted it to have this Old World European feel, because our dream would be to get married in Europe with all our family — we’re both Portuguese.”

After more than a month of searching, they stumbled upon La Perla Ballroom, overlooking the Fraser River at the New Westminster Quay.

“It was perfect,” says Estefania, of the venue recently opened by the owners of Orlando’s Catering, an Italian family specializing in European cuisine, including Portuguese food.

“That was the most important thing,” says Ron, referring to the food and drinks. He describes the open bar, Portuguese multi-course seated dinner, all-night espresso and cappuccino bar, and massive midnight buffet — with ornate fruit sculptures, seafood, Portuguese pastries, the bride and groom’s favourite desserts, and sweets made by their cake designer — served with cold port wine.

La Perla’s patterned-cloth chairs, crystal chandeliers, gold accents and Juliette balcony dictated a simple décor, says Estefania. “We wanted to give that Old World feel to it and at the same time we wanted it to be very fresh and very clean, not too ornate because that’s not our style.”

“We used a lot of flowers, which I never thought I would, but it really freshened up the room because it was dark, lots of wood, lots of gold,” she adds. “We went with very pale peaches, creams, whites, even some pink.”

The blooms — lush garden roses, peonies, hydrangeas and baby’s breath — were displayed in glass vases, “so everything looked like it was floating there,” in a mix of heights, and candles were set in crystal candelabras, “so it was see-through and clean.”

Adding to the play on light, mirrored frames were used to display everything from the couple’s engagement and both their parents’ weddings, to the bar menu, including their signature martini, *Pretty in Peach*.

Tying everything together was the couple’s peach and white monogram, designed by Estefania’s friend, Susan Vu. “I was only going to use it for the invitations, but then we decided we would use it everywhere, and it really brought everything together,” says Estefania, who added the elegant monogram to numerous handmade touches, including the framed seating arrangement chart, the favours, the giveaway match boxes, the thank-you





Clockwise from far left: Estefania found her lace gown at Isabelle's Bridal; dancing the night away as husband and wife; the bride's simple bouquet featured lush pale peonies; getting ready with sister (and bridesmaid) Katie; Estefania's parents on their own wedding day; the proud father of the bride.



FOR THE *Ceremony*,
 THE COUPLE CHOSE THE SAME
 CHURCH WHERE *Estefania's*
 PARENTS WERE MARRIED
 34 YEARS EARLIER.

cards following the wedding, and even one of their wedding cakes.

"We had so many different patterns and ideas that we wanted, so we decided to do small cakes and do different things," says Estefania, who worked with Emily from When Pigs Fly Pastries to create five distinct wedding cakes, including one with a "stucco look to it" as a nod to Estefania's contractor father, and one with a lace pattern to represent her lace Paloma Blanca dress from Isabelle's Bridal.

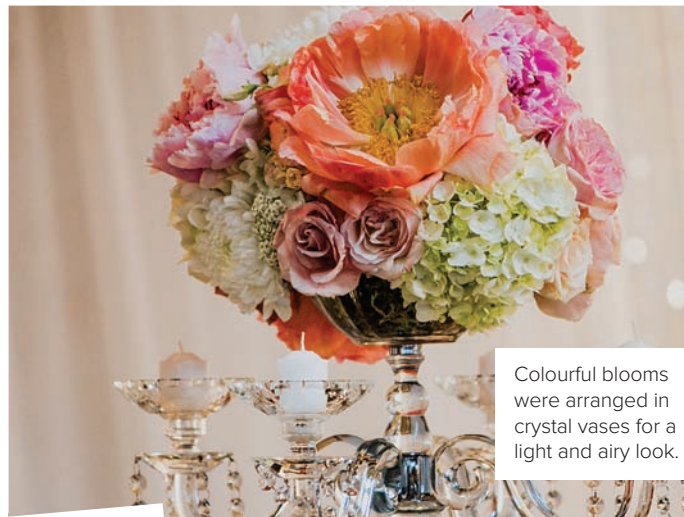
There to capture their celebration were photographer Kelsey Goodwin, whom Estefania was drawn to because of her "very moody, very editorial" style and "really bubbly, super positive" attitude, and videographer Mathew Collings, whose "fantastic" work Estefania discovered online.

"Everyone said, take a couple minutes to remember your wedding because it goes by so fast," says Ron, who took that sentiment to heart. "I remember the conversations, I remember people hugging me, hugging my wife. I couldn't ask for anything better."

Adds Estefania, "It was more perfect than we imagined."  



Custom-engraved corkscrews provided a lasting wedding favour.



Colourful blooms were arranged in crystal vases for a light and airy look.



Who's next? Estefania's sister won the traditional bouquet toss.

the Dream Team

Photographer
KGOODPHOTO
kgoodphoto.com

Videographer
Capture the Moment Media
capturethemomentmedia.com

Venue — Ceremony
Our Lady of Fatima Portuguese Parish,
Vancouver

Venue — Reception
La Perla Ballroom
laperlaballroom.com

Bride's Dress
Paloma Blanca, from Isabelle's Bridal
isabellesbridal.com

Bridesmaid Dress
BCBG

Hair
Mary-Anna Anselmo for
Hair Up-to-Date

Make-up
Sabrina Ferreira
sabrinaferreira.wix.com/makeup#1

Groom's Outfit
Hugo Boss

Flowers
Just Fresh Concepts
justfreshconcepts.ca

Catering
Orlando's Catering
orlandoscatering.com

Cakes
When Pigs Fly Pastries
whenpigsflypastries.com

Favours
Valentinos Wholesaling, Kelowna
valentinosintl.com

Disc Jockey
Pavel Cibula for Canadian DJ
www.canadiandj.ca

Jewellery
La Vie Parisienne, from Blue Ruby
blueruby.com

Transportation
Excel Limousine
excellimousine.ca



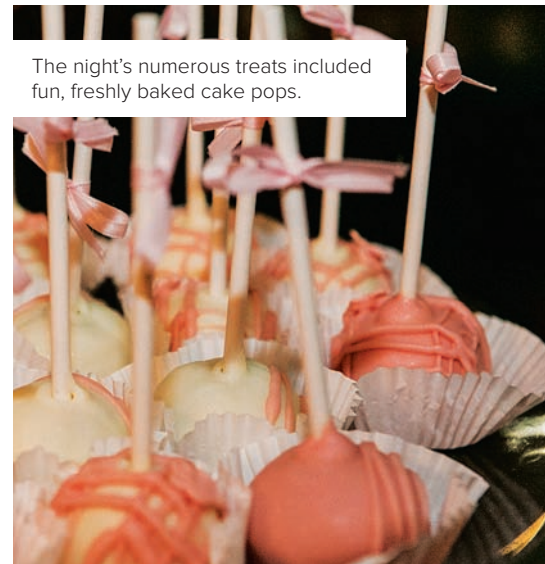
The couple opted for an assortment of cakes instead of a single large one.



The wedding's European flavour extended to the dinner menu.



Guests signed a book featuring Estefania and Ron's engagement photos.



The night's numerous treats included fun, freshly baked cake pops.