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REAL DESTINATION WEDDING

Newport Beach

AFTER CANCELING THEIR ORIGINAL WEDDING PLANS, THIS COUPLE MADE A MEMORABLE SPLASH WITH A SMALLER BUT NO LESS SPECTACULAR CELEBRATION CLOSER TO HOME.

BY JENNA MAHONEY

AFTER A YEAR OF PLANNING—and pre-paying—a 150 guest celebration in glitzy Las Vegas, the pandemic shutdown shut out Kelli and Anthony Patino's event slated for March 21, 2020. Parents to twin boys and a daughter, they were at a loss as to where, when and how to celebrate their love. The Balboa Bay Resort in the nearby Southern California city of Newport Beach gifted the couple a wedding complete with all the traditional and social-distancing details. The celebration, which was entirely curated by local planner Rebecca Calagna, was hosted on the waterfront property's newly revealed Wedding Lawn. Fifty guests toasted Kelli and Anthony, all wearing custom masks. "In the end it turned out better than what we originally planned for our wedding," says Kelli—whose only additional decision was her dress.

Kelli and Anthony on the Balboa Bay Pier.





Balboa Bay Resort expanded the Wedding Lawn to host pandemic-precautionary events.

Love at First Sight

Kelli entered a wedding contest on a whim. After canceling their nuptials celebration, "we were full of so many different emotions," she says. "Months went by and I came across a wedding giveaway that The Balboa Bay Resort was putting together to pick a couple to host a wedding for those affected by Covid-19, so I entered." Although they live just 40 minutes from the waterview resort, she and Anthony had never been to the property. It wasn't until the big day that they saw the photogenic hotel that sits on the edge of a made-for-Instagram harbor. Upon arrival they were impressed by the "beautiful and elegant hotel, its ocean vista, and the large yachts docked in the background."



Local vendors donated their services.

"The scenery at Balboa Bay was beyond expectations; our ceremony and dinner were held on the grassy area beside the boats and water."



All together.

Covid precautions with class.



QUITE AMUSING

Newport Beach is the classic sunny California setting. The city has two pretty piers where larger-than-life boats are docked. At Balboa Pier is the Balboa Fun Zone, an old-school amusement park complete with an arcade and a ferris wheel that first debuted in 1936. There's also a restored carousel and bumper cars, among other carnival rides. Adjacent outposts rent bikes to explore the pier, and there are whale watching excursions and day trips to nearby Catalina Island as well.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JIM KENNEDY PHOTOGRAPHERS

SUN SPOTS

The centerpiece of the Balboa Bay Resort property is the pool area—this is Southern California, after all. Days here are spent splashing and shooting selfies in the daybeds and private cabanas. An adjacent pool bar serves up a refreshing cocktail menu that's heavy on vacation-perfect spirits, along with California casual cuisine—the poke bowl and mahi mahi tacos are particular must-tries. "We spent an entire day at the pool," says Kelli. "We wish we could have been able to stay longer! We did not want to leave!" →

REAL DESTINATION WEDDING

In attendance—All Kelli's attendants with custom face coverings.

"Even though this wedding was a prize, the planner made sure to honor our opinions. We got to have our color scheme, our cake, our music, and have our ceremony unfold the way we wished."

WITH A ROSE

Kelli and Anthony wanted to honor their mothers, and did exactly that with a rose ceremony, a tradition that spotlights the importance of love, appreciation and the blending of families. We had custom red glass roses made for keepsakes, says Kelli.

NEW NORMAL

Warm weather, an outdoor venue and a limited number of guests were just some of the details for this Covid-era celebration. The resort's planning team created an elegant experience with health and safety guidelines as a priority. There was signage throughout the Wedding Lawn space reminding guests to stay socially distanced. Customized hand sanitizer and masks were also on offer. Family members sat at distanced round tables during the ceremony.



The sweets table



Planner Rebecca Calagna oversaw every detail



Just kids—some of the youngest guests.



Happily ever after.

legally wed

Marriage licenses are compulsory and issued by the County Clerk in California. Couples must apply in person, and present proof of age, marital status and the necessary fees, which vary by county. There is no waiting period. Licenses are valid for 90 days.

Balboa Bay Resort fronts a yacht-docked pier.



travel notes

The concept of Orange County is as recognizable as a neighboring California zip code for its glitz, glamour and over-the-top beachfront living. Newport Beach, one of the SoCal cities within the sea-hugging county about an hour from Los Angeles, sparkles with chic shopping, high-end restaurants, excellent access to the golden sands and accompanying beach activities—beach volleyball is especially popular—and its most photogenic attribute—the yacht-filled harbor. The 159-room Balboa Bay Resort on the edge of one of the tony city's most known (and eponymous) piers is the perfect place to experience it all for yourself.

wedding details

VENUE AND CATERING:
Balboa Bay Resort

WEDDING PLANNING AND DECOR:
Rebecca Catagna Events

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Jim Kennedy Photographers

VIDEOGRAPHY: Luxury Lifestyle Studios

DESSERTS:
Sweet Art Fine Sweets Confectioner

OFFICIANT:
Alexander Officiants

DJ: Extreme DJ Service

BRIDAL GOWN:
Cocomelody

BRIDESMAID DRESSES:
Windsor

HAIR AND MAKEUP:
Heather Kennedy, Dotted Up, OC

GROOM AND GROOMSMEN SUITS:
Fiar Lux

PHOTOGRAPHY: BALBOA BAY RESORT

Although truly a city hotel, the grand, sandy-hued property is a resort experience with all the expected service and amenities. Fitness pursuits include stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking, riding bikes along the pier and an on-site gym that wows. The food program is quintessential SoCal, with healthful local ingredients served with a side of excellent water views. The main pool area is the perfect perch to stage some Bravo-worthy Insta-stories with a glass of champagne. Of course, the spa is a don't miss thanks to its specialized massage offerings, some of which feature CBD. And no matter which room you book (although we love the oversize suite), you'll have a balcony flaunting bay and boat views (room rates start at \$269 a night; balboabayresort.com). ■

