





francesca & mark

OCTOBER 9, GALVESTON

photography by Chris Moseley

Graphic designer Francesca Spezzapria and Mark Papini first met in college, but they didn't have their first date until years later—they reconnected after graduation, when they'd both moved to California. It was there that, over dessert after a pizza dinner, the two learned they shared a sweet tooth—and a mutual attraction! One Saturday, Mark, 28 and working in sales, made breakfast in bed, “which is normal,” adds Francesca, 27. “He is wonderful!” Afterward, the two hung out all day until Mark suggested they take a motorcycle ride to watch the sunset. As the sun fell into the Pacific, he proposed in a park overlooking L.A. “I thought I would cry,” says Francesca, who had always dreamed of a surprise proposal. “Instead, I laughed, tackled him, and yelled, ‘Yes!’” The two soon began planning a wedding in the bride's home state of Texas.

To help with the long-distance planning (and keep the mother of the bride sane), the couple hired a wedding consultant. Still, Francesca stayed very involved—leaving her office job to go freelance helped her take the time to travel to Texas frequently. Francesca and Mark chose a >>





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wedding style—romantic Tuscany—that enhanced the warm, festive mood they were going for, and called for a palette of yellows, reds, and ivory with a touch of gold. “We wanted it to feel elegant but informal,” the bride explains. “I was born in Italy, and I love the feeling of having big dinners with family and celebrating. I wanted the celebration to feel as intimate and cozy as possible with our 180 guests.”

Francesca and Mark exchanged vows at a Galveston church built in 1847. The deep red carpeting and white marble altar gave the full Catholic ceremony a timeless feel. The reception didn’t begin for several hours, so the gracious newlyweds suggested activities in Galveston and set up rooms at the hotel where guests could hang out. Later, the party regrouped at Hotel Galvez for a cocktail hour that featured Prosecco, a sparkling Italian wine. “It was a hit with everyone, and of course all the Italians were thrilled we had it,” the bride says.

The reception took over several rooms at the historic Hotel Galvez. Yellow and white tapestries draped across the ceiling onto the floor of the Veranda Ballroom, where guests dined overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. The DJ and dance floor were set up in the terrace, with Victorian-style pillars. Outside, a lounge area near the pool featured comfy couches where guests could rest their dancing feet and enjoy the ocean view, while a dark wood bar inside offered cocktails in a classic setting. In the Veranda Ballroom, tables covered in gold-flecked ivory damask held centerpieces of either tall silver candelabra or low floral arrangements flanked by votives. To make the mood mellow, the lights were set low, and candles ruled. “It was really beautiful, and even more amazing at sunset,” the bride recalls. >>





Flower tip: Make sure your bouquet fits your gown style. The warm-hued blooms of the bride's bouquet suited Francesca's ivory gown, which was embellished with satin flowers.





FRANCESCA & MARK CONT.

The evening kicked off with a round of touching toasts. Mark's brother, the best man, started, followed by the maid of honor, an Italian cousin of the bride, who did a speech in both English and Italian. "The fact that she prepared such a wonderful, sweet speech in English meant so much to me," Francesca says.

The friend who introduced the couple said a few words, but the groom took the cake with a speech in Italian, a language he doesn't speak at all. "He made everyone who came from Italy feel so special by surprising all of us with such a sweet speech. Just another reason to love him more!" the bride says.

After dinner, the two dessert lovers broke out one of the highlights of the evening, cutting into a princess torte, a white cake with a thick layer of cream and raspberry filling in the middle, all covered in ivory marzipan. The couple opened up the dance floor with a turn to Ronan Keating's "When You Say Nothing at All." About a minute into Francesca and her dad's dance to Celine Dion's "Because You Loved Me," Mark asked his mother to dance, and the evening erupted from there into a nonstop dance party. "We didn't have a last dance song," Francesca says. "We were out on the dance floor the entire time!" After the last of the guests had gone, the newlyweds retired to their hotel room where they did, well, what else?... They ate more wedding cake! —*Kate Wood* >>





FRANCESCA & MARK'S INGREDIENTS

CEREMONY SITE St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica (409) 762-9611 **RECEPTION SITE** Hotel Galvez (409) 765-7721 **PHOTOGRAPHY** Chris Moseley Photography, ChrisMoseley.com, Dallas **VIDEOGRAPHY** Edward Holtgraver, New Horizon Wedding Films (832) 237-8204, Houston **WEDDING CONSULTANT** Christine Hoffer, Belle of the Ball (713) 528-9966, Houston **OFFICIANT** Father John LaBauve S.V.D. (409) 762-9611 **GOWN AND VEIL** Francesca wore a strapless A-line gown in ivory satin that featured gathers throughout the skirt accented with satin roses. Norma Lenain, Celesté (323) 653-8750, Beverly Hills, CA **SHOES** I Do, I Do (713) 522-0456, Houston **BRIDESMAID DRESSES** Francesca's seven bridesmaids wore floor-length crimson gowns by After Six. **FLOWERS** Francesca carried a bouquet featuring red and peach roses, green cymbidium orchids, and green accents. Events in Bloom (713) 880-1475, Houston **CATERING** Hotel Galvez **MUSIC** Ceremony: Heights Chamber Players (713) 862-2339, Houston; reception: DJ Greg, Greg's Mobile Entertainment (281) 772-3948, Simonton **CAKE** Andre's Pastry Shop and Cafe (713) 524-3863, Houston **FAVORS** Since Francesca and Mark are such big dessert fans, they gave each guest a silver ice cream scoop tied with a red ribbon. **ACCOMMODATIONS** Hotel Galvez **HONEYMOON** Francesca and Mark spent 10 days at the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort and Spa (808) 661-1234, Maui, HI

