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Understated Glamour Reigned at This East Hampton Wedding

With so many mutual friends, it's crazy that Annabelle Cauffman Soudavar and Maximilian Moehlmann never met before 2011. "There were all of these weird coincidences," says Annabelle. "Like when my mother rented a house in Bridgehampton that Maxi's father bought the following year, which meant we both slept in the same bedroom as toddlers!"

The two were eventually introduced at a party in Palm Beach hosted by a mutual friend, Maggy Schultz, and her family. "Maxi and my mom struck up a conversation that I wound up joining, and from there, we spent almost the entire night chatting," remembers Annabelle. "That said, we were both seeing other people at the time and didn't go on our first date until almost a year later, during Hurricane Sandy, which was memorable because downtown New York City nightlife had relocated to the Upper East Side. After dinner at Via Quadronno, during which I pulled out a travel backgammon board—I am still teased for this stunt—we spent the evening bar hopping, and from that night on, Maxi and I were basically inseparable."

The couple loves to travel and typically kicked off summer with a trip over Memorial Day weekend. "After debating various destinations, we landed on Paris—a favorite city, as we had each previously lived there while studying," explains Annabelle. Given her job working in business development for [Indagare](#), a luxury travel agency, and the fact that her father lives there, she took the reins on the planning. "Maxi's one request was that we pass by Musée Rodin, which I was delighted about because it's possibly my favorite museum, and I had spent many afternoons during my spring in Paris reading in its sculpture garden," she says. "On the morning we had intended to visit, I was distracted by suddenly more important plans—shopping the Saint-Germain. Hindsight is 20/20, but at the time, Maxi's nervousness read as annoyance and his insistence that we do something more interesting and stick to our schedule didn't tip me off, as these are his typical reactions to impromptu shopping. Two hours later, I guess we both got our way because we finally arrived at the museum. It was a beautiful day, and while strolling through the garden, we found an empty bench near the fountain. A few minutes later, Maxi was on one knee holding a pale blue box containing the most elegant ring from the 1950s by Harry Winston; neither of us remembers what was said except, 'Yes!'"

The couple knew they wanted a wedding during the summer or early fall, and after some deliberation, decided they would host their weekend in East Hampton. "June evenings can be pretty chilly, as can September, and we loved the idea of a balmy night at the height of August when there's a certain electricity in the air as everyone is savoring the last stretch of summer," says Annabelle. "We wanted our event to be glamorous yet relaxed and incorporate our favorite elements of the places we love. To that end, our extremely talented florist, Anastasia Casale of Sag Harbor Florist, and I turned the tent poles into palm trees reminiscent of Florida, creating a ceiling of tropical leaves and bougainvillea over the dance floor for some island flair, and placed large citrus trees at the entrance of the tent to evoke the Amalfi Coast."

Flowers were a big part of the decor. "I have always loved the look of the lush floral arrangements from the Edwardian era—they are loosely arranged yet tailored in feel," says Annabelle. "I wanted our flowers to be vibrant and romantic, and befitting of a Long Island garden party. We created rich bouquets with fresh textural greens and bright local blooms, and added pops of citrus to the larger arrangements of blue and violet delphiniums on the bars. We washed the tent with an amber glow and hung crystal chandeliers throughout, which were complemented by the cut-glass votives and vases on the tables."

Annabelle also wanted there to be areas where guests could sneak off to for small gatherings within the party, so they set up various lounges outside of the tent on the grass. "Priscilla Rattazzi, Maxi's mother, had the genius idea of lining the perimeter of the lawn with candles in paper bags," says Annabelle. "It was striking and added to the bewitching mood of the night."

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Even though there were 250 guests, the weekend was planned with the idea of creating intimacy and ease top of mind—“David Reinhard Events really made sure everything went off without a hitch,” says Annabelle. The celebration kicked off with a rehearsal dinner for the wedding party and close family at home on the porch, where they often spend evenings. “I think 10 speeches were made that night—thank God they were all entertaining,” laughs Annabelle. Friday night, everyone was included in a beach party hosted by Maxi’s father and stepmother, Susan and Claus Moehlmann, at their family friend Eleanora Kennedy’s home on the beach in the Georgica Association. “The night’s festive energy set the tone for the weekend and the party ended with a blood moon rising over the water, which was pretty spectacular,” says Annabelle.

The bride knew what she *didn’t* want when it came time to choose a dress. “I skipped the typical bridal salon circuit, as the process didn’t appeal to my sensibilities, and instead started my quest for the perfect wedding gown at [Dolce & Gabbana](#), as I always feel great in their dresses,” she explains. “I immediately fell in love with a simple lace gown with a high neck, three-quarter sleeves, a pretty cut-out in the back, and a small, but graceful train. It felt elegant and easy, and most importantly, I felt like myself in it.” Her search committee was not convinced, though, and her mother thought she might be happier in a look that felt more specific to a wedding.

Annabelle ultimately found her dress at [Carolina Herrera](#). “It was timeless, with a Chantilly lace bodice that’s youthful, an open back that’s romantic, a fitted skirt that’s simple, and a long train that gave it cinematic flair, along with the line of buttons that went all the way down the back,” explains the bride. “The corresponding veil was spectacular—I actually wish there were other occasions to wear it!”

While she loved her final choice, she couldn’t shake the thought of that first dress. “Three weeks before the wedding, I was still dreaming of Dolce!” admits Annabelle. So she decided to go all out and wear both. “Practically speaking, the Dolce & Gabbana dress was a bit more comfortable for sitting and dancing,” she adds.

Refusing to spend one second of the night thinking about her feet, she went with fun, fringed Castañer espadrilles. “I bought other versions for my bridesmaids to lend cohesion to their overall look, as I had asked that they all select their own dresses with the direction that they should be pale, romantic, and floral,” says Annabelle. “I wanted everyone’s individual style to come through, and for my friends to feel beautiful and like themselves.”

Annabelle kept her hair and makeup simple, as she didn’t want to have any regrets looking back. “I had my hair in a loose bun for the ceremony to highlight my gown’s open back, and put it down later in the evening,” she says.

“The night before the rehearsal dinner, Maxi gave me the most beautiful pale blue sapphire ring from the 1930s that he found in the vintage case at Barneys,” says Annabelle. “I wore it on my wedding day, along with magnificent pearl and diamond floating chandelier earrings by Yoko that my mother bought me as a wedding present. Brooke Neidich, my best friend’s mother, surprised me at the beach party with three diamond and sapphire bracelets from Sidney Garber, her fantastic jewelry line, to have as my something borrowed. I wore them along with a sapphire and moonstone bracelet, that belonged to Maxi’s grandmother, which Maxi’s father gave me as a wedding present.”

Maxi wore a navy three-button suit he had made by Mario Camplone, his favorite tailor in Rome, and a blue basket-weave tie by Hermès. He had his groomsmen follow suit, and bought them matching Hermès herringbone ties in various shades of blue, along with crisp white linen pocket squares. There was a no-socks policy.

The ceremony took place on the lawn down by the pond. The focal point of the lawn is three majestic linden trees, and the ceremony took place in their shadow, to shield everyone from the late-afternoon sun. “We created a meandering aisle with potted seasonal wildflowers that led to a simple arch covered in tropical leaves and lavender clematis,” says Annabelle. The wedding party was quite large, with 15 bridesmaids and six groomsmen. Annabelle’s

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2-year-old half-sister, Alice, sprinkled the aisle with bright blue hydrangea petals, before the bride and her mother, Jane Soudavar, walked down.

During the ceremony, four of the bridesmaids read poems: Dante Alighieri's "La Vita Nuova," E.E. Cummings's "I Carry Your Heart With Me," "Pathways" by Rainer Maria Rilke, and a beautiful poem that Annabelle's best friend, Mallory, wrote for the bride and groom for the occasion really brought the house down. "We are framing a copy for our apartment," says Annabelle.

After cocktail hour on the lawn, guests made their way into the tent and danced to some oldies. The newlyweds then joined everyone for their first dance before sitting for dinner. The couple worked with longtime-favorite caterer, Acquolina, to come up with a summery Italian menu and served yellow gazpacho, asparagus risotto, and branzino cooked in parchment paper with fresh vegetables and citrus inside. For dessert, they had a Meyer lemon cake with a crème fraîche frosting that was filled with fresh berries, by Luckybird Bakery.

Toward the end of dinner, Katie Schechter, one of Annabelle's closest friends who also happens to be a musician, sang and played a reprise of "Dream a Little Dream of Me" on her guitar, and the bride and groom danced, before being joined by their wedding party. "It was a pretty dreamy moment," says Annabelle.

After the cake was cut, Maxi made a toast that ended with him inviting everyone to take a shot of grappa, after which the dance party promptly got going, and DJ Nick Cohen kept the floor completely packed all night. "It was very warm and in the thick of it, I made an impromptu decision to put on a third dress," says Annabelle. "It was a light-as-air slip dress constructed of two layers of sheer lace by Huishan Zhang, which I paired with a fresh floral crown."

Just after midnight, the party moved from the tent to the main house, where they had cleared the living room so it could act as a dance floor and created a lounge area on the porch. "Everybody hung out for hours, dancing to fun music deejayed by [Hannah Bronfman](#) and Brendan Fallis, and at about 2:00 a.m., empanadas—the house specialty—were served," says Annabelle. "At one point, a group of us went for a swim in the pool, and a handful of guests took kayaks and paddleboards to the beach. And then at about 4:30 a.m., the party had, for the most part, wound down, and as Maxi and I crossed the lawn to the guesthouse to go to sleep, we could hear our friends' laughter echoing in the distance. It was the perfect ending to our version of a perfect night."