



WINTER LIGHT

A PUPPY-LOVE PROPOSAL
LEADS A BASEBALL PRO AND
HIS BRIDE TO A CAREFREE
THREE-DAY WEDDING
FUN-FEST IN PALM SPRINGS

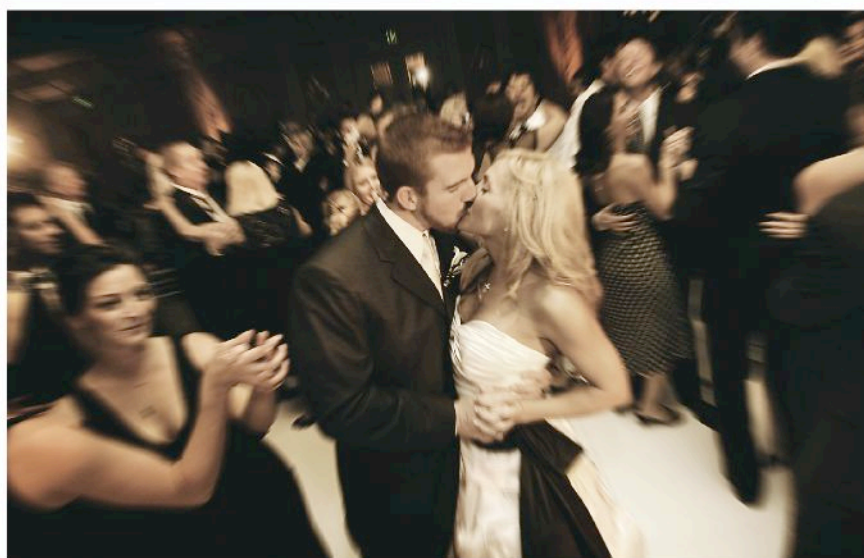
LAURA GUILIANI
AND
JAY GIBBONS



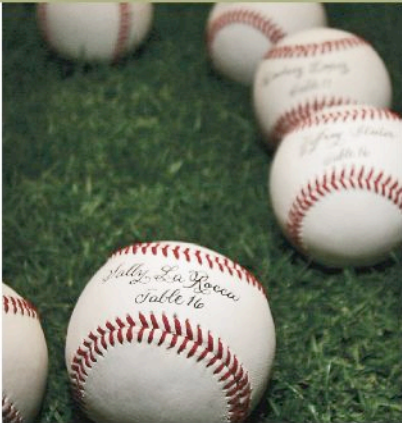
➔ PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT ROBERT



all in fun Completing a playful black-and-white theme, the bride donned a black sash for the reception. In a surprise for the groom, leis were passed out and a hula lesson ensued. Baseballs subbed for seating cards, penned in calligraphy with guests' names, and took shape in flower form on chairs along the aisle. Recurring double G's symbolized the couple's surnames.



“We wanted people to recapture the joy of being a kid, because that’s how carefree Jay and I feel together,” says the bride.



THE DETAILS

Venue

The Lodge at Rancho Mirage

Wedding Gown

Custom by Amelio Designs

Coordinator

Carissa Jones for
Mary Dann Wedding and
Party Coordinators

Photography

Scott Robert Photography

Flowers

Maggie Jensen Florals
& Events

Cake

Pastry Swan Bakery

Invitations

Lele Designs

Ceremony Music

Joel Lish for
The Wrightwood Ensemble

Reception Music

West Coast Music

A

lthough Laura Guiliani and Jay Gibbons both grew up in Ventura County and shared many friends, their paths only crossed peripherally. It wasn’t until later—when Laura was living in San Francisco and Jay was playing baseball for the Baltimore Orioles—that they connected.

“Mutual friends would come to see Jay when the Orioles were playing the Oakland A’s or San Francisco Giants,” Laura explains. One night, sparks flew—and three months later Laura and Jay were discussing marriage.

The official proposal came after they’d been dating for a year. Laura had flown to Arizona, where Jay trains during the off-season and where the couple had recently bought a home. As they cozied on the couch watching a movie, Laura heard a whimpering noise in the kitchen. She investigated and found a chocolate Lab puppy. “I sat playing with him for 20 minutes before I noticed he was wearing a red, heart-shaped tag that said, ‘I love you, baby. Will you marry me?’” laughs Laura.

It was a given that the wedding would be in the winter because of Jay’s schedule, but the couple wanted to marry somewhere warm. They chose Palm Springs. During a three-day search of the area, Laura and her mom had lunch at the Lodge at Rancho Mirage. “I’d remembered it as ornate, stuffy and masculine,” Laura explains. “But they’d just redone it, and it was absolutely beautiful—sort of art deco with Asian influences. And it was really private, which was important to us.”

Laura asked Joanna Amelio, a friend from Notre Dame who’d recently begun designing gowns, to create her dress. To that news, Laura’s dad (also a Fighting Irish alum) quipped, “That’s perfect! She can embroider ‘Notre Dame Class of ‘98’ inside it!” A joke at first, the idea stuck: Sewn in the palest periwinkle thread, the inscription became Laura’s “something blue.”

Amid a black and white palette that carried through from invitations and programs to custom table linens (also designed by Amelio), the couple was married on the Lodge’s great lawn by the Orioles’ team pastor. As a note of whimsy, groomsmen and flower girls wore black Converse sneakers.

Moving inside to celebrate, guests sipped signature cocktails and played vintage arcade games as a string quartet performed an unlikely mix of tunes from Jack Johnson hits to the Notre Dame fight song. In the ballroom, informal food stations included sushi, seafood, pasta, and mac and cheese (“That’s what we ate the night we first kissed,” confesses Laura).

After dinner, guests amused themselves mugging in a black-and-white photo booth and painting black and white tiles that the couple plans to build into an outdoor bar or shower. Laura surprised Jay with hula dancers who taught the crowd some moves. “Jay would’ve loved to get married in Maui,” she explains. “But we couldn’t make it happen. I thought this would be the next best thing.”

As a special gift, the couple had asked guests to name their favorite childhood candy on their reply cards. Laura then set about fulfilling every candy cigarette, candy necklace, and taffy request, which they presented to each of the 250 guests.

After their three-day wedding fun-fest, Jay and Laura waited a week and a half before taking off on their honeymoon to Cap Juluca on Anguilla. Why? “We wanted to have a Super Bowl party!” Laura laughs. “We thought our friends would be sick of seeing our faces, but it turned out to be a blast!”

