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a vine romance

A California couple returned to Wine Country for an evening of ceviche, starlight, and Sinatra

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LISA LEFKOWITZ

BRIDE: JAMIE SCHMIDT, 29
GROOM: MIKE WALKER, 35
LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT: 14 MONTHS
WEDDING DATE: JUNE 28
WEDDING LOCATION: CALISTOGA, CA
NUMBER OF GUESTS: 140
WEDDING PARTY: 1 BEST MAN, 1 MAID OF HONOR,
4 BRIDESMAIDS, 4 GROOMSMEN

WHERE DO WINE LOVERS GO WHEN they want good grape and a lush setting? The Napa Valley. “We couldn’t imagine having our wedding anyplace else,” says Jamie Schmidt who, like groom Mike Walker, grew up near this epicenter of California’s Wine Country. (The two met in New York, where they both work as financial research analysts.) After scouting locations with their planner, Traci Steuteville, they set their caps on a private estate surrounded by rambling park-like grounds in the town of Calistoga. Bottles of the duo’s favorite wines—whites, reds, and sparkling—flowed throughout their laid-back lawn party; guests explored the property with vino in hand, hopping into the newlyweds’ vintage Packard for photo ops and noshing on oysters and scallop ceviche. Later, folks chilled by an open stone fireplace at a mellow after-party starring hot cocoa, doughnuts, and dreamy Sinatra standards.

creative customizing

SIGN OF THEIR TIMES In keeping with their wine theme, Jamie and Mike’s guest “book” was a jeroboam (a three-liter bottle of wine), which guests signed with glass markers.

SPORTING SWEET The groom’s cake was a blue and white fondant Yankees baseball cap, in honor of Mike’s favorite team.

EQUESTRIAN ELEGANCE Jamie, who comes from a family of horse lovers, named the reception tables after steeds her clan had owned over the years.

CHEERS Mike gifted his guys with a six-month subscription to a Wine of the Month club. — *Terrie Collymore*

LEFT TO RIGHT Bridesmaids went green, wearing sage silk Coren Moore dresses and carrying wildflower bouquets. The rustic stone walls of a private garden framed a quiet post-wedding moment; Jamie wore an Amsale gown and Mike chose a cream Ralph Lauren suit.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Fit for a pastoral princess, the bride's chair was decorated with a passion flower vine and roses. Jamie sent a swatch of dress fabric to the baker, who created the fleur-de-lis design on her mocha and vanilla cream cake. "It was like having a party in our own beautiful backyard," says Jamie about the outdoor reception, held next to a pond that reflected strings of paper lanterns. Cocktail nibbles included mini pulled-pork sandwiches and fries. In addition to wine, Pimm's Cup, the groom's favorite summer drink, was served during the cocktail hour. Turn to Shopping Guide.

BEST MONEY-SAVERS

- **High fashion for less** Jamie snagged her wedding dress at a designer's trunk show and ended up saving 15 percent.
- **Family freebie** When you have a relative in the beauty biz, you can save face—and a few hundred dollars. Jamie's aunt, who owns a hair salon, volunteered her staff and services.
- **Inking a good deal** Jamie had a connection in the printing world, too: One of her friends, a graphic designer, created all the wedding stationery—the invitations to the thank-you notes—at a greatly reduced rate. "She handled everything, which also saved me time and worry," says Jamie.
- **Bottled bargains** The couple's caterer allowed them to purchase the wine on their own from local vintners. Since there was no markup, it cut the bar bill significantly.

