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tiz and michael 08.29.09 keswick, va

Travel is an aphrodisiac, plain and simple. Just ask Tiziana Lopez and Michael Ziman about their trip to South Beach. "I felt a connection with her immediately," says Michael, who was in Miami visiting a friend when he met Tiz. Coincidentally, the friend Tiz was vacationing with knew a friend of Michael's, so the two spent the next few evenings together and Michael extended his trip by two days to spend more time with Tiz. "Michael initiated the phone number exchange, but after we parted ways, we spent equal time texting each other," says Tiz, a fashion buyer who travels frequently. Soon after her Miami vacation, she was headed to New York City, where Michael lived. "I was in the city for four nights and he took me out every night," she remembers. "I took her to some of the most romantic places I could think of," says Michael, who shares a love of good food and wine with Tiz. Their relationship developed and they began to see each other more. "Though we weren't living close geographically, we were spending a lot of time with each other," says Michael and before long, Tiz decided to move to New York to pursue her career in fashion. "We eventually met each other's families, moved in together, got a dog and kind of started a little family," says Michael. "It took me a little time to save some money, plan the perfect engagement and ask her parents for their daughter's hand in marriage, but the rest is history!"

During their 10-month engagement, Tiz worked with Dickie Morris, an event manager with Easton Events in Charlottesville, VA. Having someone to coordinate the décor, the vendors and "sweat the small stuff" meant Tiz could focus on the big picture. She became enamored with Keswick Hall and booked it for their ceremony and reception. Located amidst rolling hills, Keswick's pastoral setting fit perfectly with Tiz's vision of an enchanted garden theme. Her florist created arrangements that were "wild and refined at the same time," Tiz says. "More importantly, they were breathtakingly beautiful and like nothing I'd seen at a wedding before. It had this fabulously overgrown feeling." Flowers, moss and vines were placed in and around antique candelabras, lanterns, urns and mercury bowls. Lavender was sprinkled over the aisle to release its scent as the wedding party processed. The florist built an arbor out of tree branches and added birch branches around each pole, which were then wrapped with grapevine and moss ribbon. Hydrangea, orchids, moss, pheasant feathers and sheer purple fabric were integrated to complete the piece and lanterns filled with flowers, moss and butterflies were placed along the ceremony aisle.

Tiz walked down the aisle with her mother and father in an ethereal strapless ivory silk chiffon gown by Monique Lhuillier. "The beauty was in the construction... the pleating and the draping and the overall fit," says Tiz, who accessorized the simple dress with a gorgeous "statement" necklace by Alessandro Dell'Acqua and satin peep-toe platform Christian Louboutins. She carried a bouquet of antique green hydrangea, Amnesia roses, garden spray roses, eggplant mini callas, fern curls, Lady Amherst pheasant feathers and hanging sage green amaranthus. The stems were wrapped with double-faced sage green satin ribbon threaded through antique mother-of-pearl buckles. Tiz's six bridesmaids wore floor-length moss green chiffon BCBG Max Azria dresses and carried bouquets of antique green hydrangea, amnesia roses, garden spray roses, sage, seeded eucalyptus, feathers and fiddlehead fern curls. Tiz and Michael's dog, Izzy, was their ring bearer and wore a special collar of fresh lavender, hydrangea and purple dendrobium orchids.

Blending Jewish and Catholic traditions, Tiz and Michael's ceremony took place under a chuppah and a light rain in the distance before the wedding caused a rainbow to appear just as they walked down the aisle. They lit a unity candle and in celebratory Jewish tradition, Michael stepped on a glass at the close of their ceremony. "I don't think there was a person there that didn't say something that touched our hearts," said Michael.

As foodies, oenophiles and avid travelers, Tiz and Michael looked forward to having a cocktail hour for their guests. They created a culinary experience for everyone, with a menu that paid homage to their favorite places, foods or excursions. A string quartet played Beatle music while friends and family enjoyed a wine and cheese station inspired by Tiz and Michael's engagement trip to California's Napa Valley. A ski trip to Jackson Hole inspired the inclusion of spicy green onion rings and a favorite restaurant in New York warranted foie gras PB&Js, along with mini cheese steak sliders and truffled mac and cheese.

"The idea was to have everyone eating dinner while the sun set," says Michael, "so Tiz and I started off the evening with our first dance." With that, the tented reception began with a salad of Diva watermelon with mimolette cheese, candied pecans and 100-year-old balsamic vinaigrette followed by a lime-fennel sorbet served as an intermezzo. "The main course was a surf and turf," says Tiz. "Beef tenderloin for him





and halibut, which is my absolute favorite thing to eat, for me." It was served with a sunchoke purée, baby vegetables and Bordelaise sauce. "We planned a menu that really reflected what we love." They served a dessert tasting that included a chocolate-dipped NY cheesecake lollipop, a mini caramel apple dipped in nuts, a lavender crème brûlée spoon with raspberry sauce and a banana-caramel bread pudding bite. "The desserts were all things we've tried and loved at different places we've visited together," said Tiz. "We also had Carpe Donut, a doughnut truck well-known in Charlottesville for their organic apple cider doughnuts, served as a treat during the reception." Their four-tier wedding cake was made with alternating layers of red velvet and dark chocolate cake with blackberry buttercream filling. The outside was decorated with fresh flowers, feathers and a vine motif found on their invitations.

"We had the most unbelievable DJ, Tom Finn, whom we brought in from New York," says Tiz. "He had a way of reading the crowd and kept the dance floor packed all night!" At 11pm, everyone moved to a club-like room in the hotel for the after party. It was decorated in a Moroccan theme and featured hand-rolled cigars along with more food, dancing and cocktails. The spectacular evening finally came to a close and Tiz and Michael went to Paris, one of many of their honeymoon destinations. "We knew it would be romantic and beautiful," says Tiz, "and that we would have all the great food and wine we could possibly want." JLG

Wedding Consultant: Easton Events. Ceremony, Reception, Baker, Catering and Coordination: Keswick Hall. Florist: Pat's Floral Designs. Tent: Skyline Tents. Rentals: Festive Fare. Lighting and Draping: Blue Ridge Light Forms. Invitations: Wiley Valentine. Calligraphy: Cyndie Spiesbach. Ceremony Music: Silverleaf Quartet. Reception Entertainment: DJ Tom Finn. Bridal Gown: Monique Lhuillier through Kleinfeld NY. Bridesmaid Dresses: BCBG Max Azria. Groom's Attire: Zegna tuxedo, custom shirt, Prada shoes. Hair: Zoe Levine. Makeup: Lucinda Riley of Face Value. Favors: Cortez Cigars and Carpe Donut. Dance Lessons: Dance Manhattan.

Photography: Jen Fariello Photography, www.jenfariello.com.

