

The beautiful aroma of roses, rosemary and lavender will forever remind Annie Hirsch and Mark St. John of their enchanting wedding day. Set at the sprawling Spanish colonial Ojai Valley Inn, their destination wedding was so moving that one guest admitted it “made her believe in love again.” With personal touches recognizable in every nook and cranny of their affair, this was definitely more than a celebration for the bride and groom – it was an observance of love felt by all who were present.

The path to Annie and Mark’s wedding began six years earlier when the two met in acting class. They often found themselves playing lovers, but it wasn’t until they were cast opposite one another in *Private Lives* that *their* lives began to imitate art. While rehearsing on a bench outside the playhouse, Mark surprised Annie with a kiss, and from that moment on, their romance blossomed. Five years later, Mark brought Annie back to that same bench, but this time around, it was her hand he wanted most. Like the kiss that started it all, Annie had no idea that he was about to propose, and she was once again swept away by Mark’s romantic and special gesture.

In the nine months they took to plan their wedding, the couple was committed to creating an environment focused on the love they have for each other and for their families. With Annie’s family having spent almost every year vacationing there, the familiarity of the inn filled her with a tremendous sense of comfort. Mark was instantly at home on the beautiful, peaceful grounds, too, and felt that the Chumash Indian word “Ojai,” meaning “nest,” was a perfect place to start their family.



A kiss to build a dream on

ANNIE HIRSCH & MARK ST. JOHN
JUNE 25, 2005 OJAI, CALIFORNIA
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN SOLANO

Wedding Consultant
Linda Howard's Sensational Celebrations

Ceremony & Reception Site
Ojai Valley Inn & Spa

Officiant
Howard Hurwitz

Gown Designer
Atelier Aimee

Shoes
London Sole

Hair Stylist
Kate, Chop Chop

Makeup Artist
Amy Shayhoda, Laura Mercier

Lingerie
Claire Pettibone

Bridesmaid Dresses
Christiane Cello, Calypso

Mother's Gown
Heidi Weisel

Formalwear
Men's Wearhouse

Wedding Cake
Fantasy Frostings

Invitations
Soalip

Florist
Mark's Garden

Rentals
Classic Party Rentals

Linens
Party Designs by Dina, Inc.

Lighting
Images by Lighting

Entertainment
West Coast Music

Photography
John Solano

Videography
Vidcam

Wedding CD
Arthouse Films

Rehearsal Dinner
Boccali's Pizza and Pasta

Honeymoon Accommodations
L'Auberge de Sedona, AZ
La Posada de Santa Fe, NM
Wynn Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV

Gift Registry
Bloomingdale's
Pottery Barn
Macy's
Williams-Sonoma



The red tiled roof and wooden balconies surrounding the courtyard where the ceremony took place helped set a warm and welcoming stage for the former actors. Annie's uncle Howard was ordained for the occasion, and his performance of their ceremony made it an intimate and soothing experience for the bride and groom. Blending Annie's Jewish and Mark's Irish heritage was achieved by incorporating specially chosen traditions from each – the couple was married while standing under the traditional Jewish *chuppah* as Irish blessings were bestowed upon the happy couple.









Selecting their flowers was as important to Annie and Mark as choosing the perfect venue. The sweetheart table was imbued with rosemary, lavender, moss, kumquat vines, and old roses, elements also repeated on the wedding cake. Rather than designing traditionally tight bouquets for the bride and her bridesmaids, Annie chose loose and natural-looking arrangements giving the impression that the roses, rosemary and lavender were freshly picked.

The couple's personality and their strong sense of family were particularly evident in their musical selections for the ceremony, the original vows they penned for each other and the speeches shared by family members. With two guitarists and a bass player performing, the parents walked down the aisle to "In My Life," the bridal party to "Annie's Song," and Annie and her father made their grand entrance to "Let it Be Me." Most appropriate was the song the newly minted Mr. & Mrs. St. John played as they left the chuppah – "Feeling Groovy." The speeches shared during the reception, particularly the one given by Annie's father, and a surprise serenade by her brother brought the room to tears.

While their love affair began with a kiss, it was solidified with a magical weekend set amidst unforgettable scents, twinkling lights, and a strong awareness of one another. Taking the time to weave personal character into every aspect of the wedding proved most rewarding for Annie and Mark and resulted in a truly remarkable celebration. As Annie puts it, "the more you plan, the more you watch the wedding become a reflection of who you are as a couple!"

ALLISON KRUMHOLZ

