



weddings

CALIFORNIA STYLE

# Love in Bloom

*You're Invited*

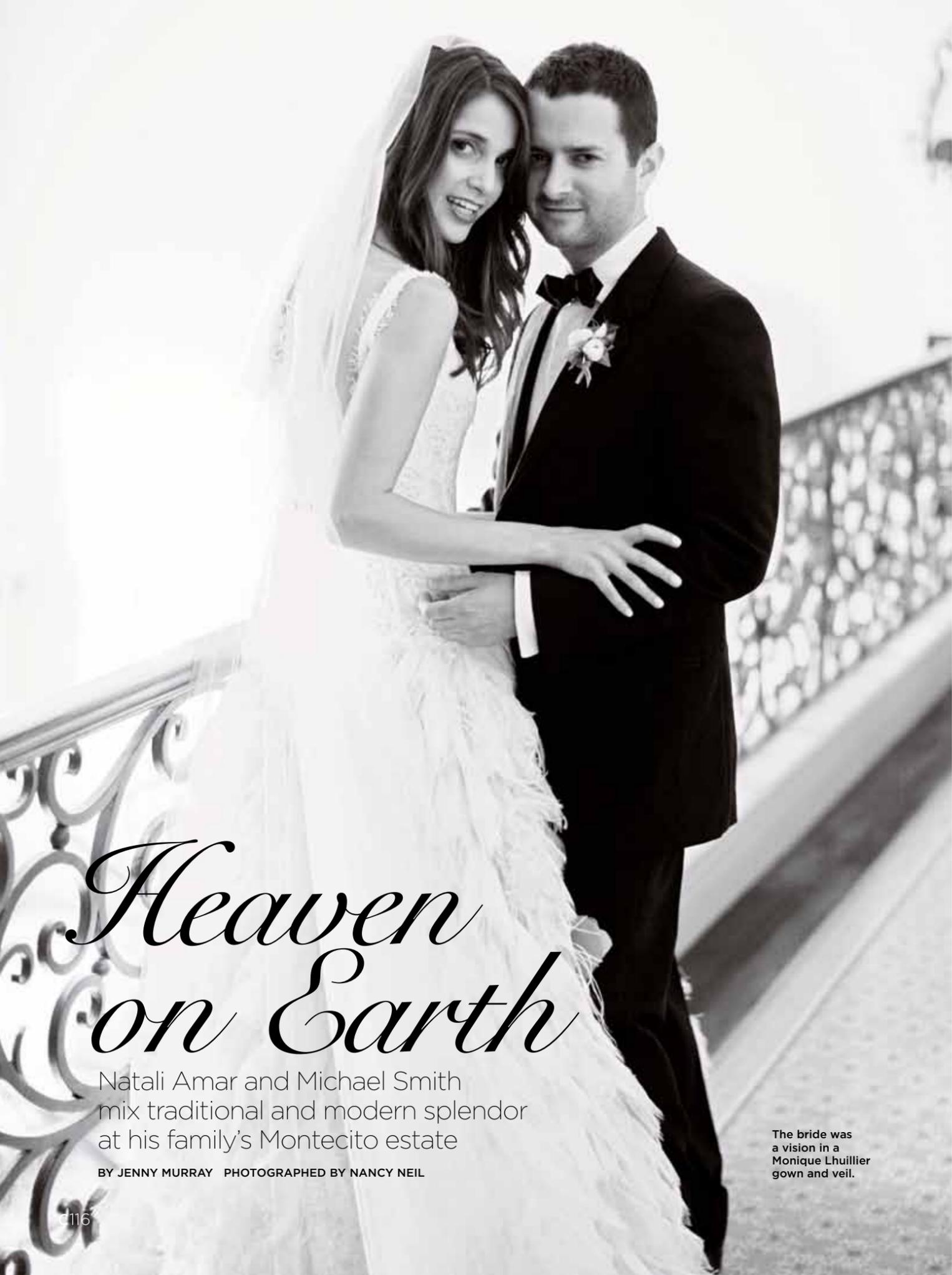
THE ULTIMATE GOLDEN STATE GOWNS, GEMS, GIFTS AND GETAWAYS

*Grand Affairs*

- \* *A Montecito Masterpiece*
- \* *Big Sur Bespoke*
- \* *Heaven in St. Helena*
- \* *Beverly Hills Bash*
- \* *Malibu Magnificence*
- \* *Vineyard Revelry*

READY  
MAID

A Bridal  
Attendant's  
Must-Have  
Guide



# Heaven on Earth

Natali Amar and Michael Smith mix traditional and modern splendor at his family's Montecito estate

BY JENNY MURRAY PHOTOGRAPHED BY NANCY NEIL

The bride was a vision in a Monique Lhuillier gown and veil.

*M*

atali Amar and Michael Smith met in Israel (where Amar was born and raised) at a party for a friend's wedding. Upon his return to Los Angeles,

Smith (a media executive) courted the brown-eyed beauty over Skype for two months before she agreed to a visit. ("To show her I was normal, I had my mom and niece join one of our chats," he laughs.)

A year later, on a trip up the California coastline, Smith proposed at Big Sur's Post Ranch Inn with a sentimental stone. "The brilliant-cut white diamond was the last piece of jewelry my dad gave to my mom before he passed. I had it reset with a setting Nati loved."

At once, the betrothed, along with coordinator Merryl Brown, immersed themselves in planning every detail of the lavish affair, which would take place at Smith's family's Montecito manse. That detail had been firmly sealed: "Nati first met my mom when we went to her house. She told Nati that one day she hoped I would get married there and then gave her a little wink, wink."

And it was under a chuppah, adorned with thousands of pink and white roses, by Mindy Rice, that the couple were joined together as man and wife. The groom's lifelong Rabbi, Uri D. Herscher read letters the two had scribed to one another.

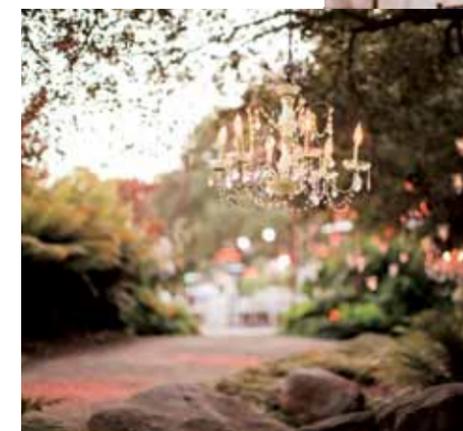
Amar's fondest memory from the day was her walk down the aisle. "I came out to see the entire crowd of our favorite friends and family. My father gave me a beautiful blessing and then I saw my amazing husband," says the bride, who was flawless in a white confection and veil by renowned designer Monique Lhuillier. The drop-waist gown had a lace-corset bodice and full skirt made with dramatic layers of organza and ostrich feathers. Amar completed her look with Harry Winston Lily Cluster diamond earrings.

Following the ceremony, the sound of saxophonist Justin Claveria greeted guests as they passed through sky-high iron gates (from local Eye of the Day Garden Design Center) into the courtyard. All were seated under grand oak trees dripping with lights by King Dahl Event Design and brilliant chandeliers provided by Bella Vista Designs.

It was longtime family friend Kenny Loggins who kicked off the reception with a lively performance of "Footloose," followed by Brian Judah, star of the Bravo show "Platinum Hit," who performed



FROM TOP A quiet moment for Amar. The alfresco reception was created with La Tavola Linen, Small Masterpiece table settings and Classic Party Rentals. Bella Vista Designs hung chandeliers in the trees. The bridal bouquet of white garden roses by Mindy Rice Floral and Event Design. Smith, in a Gucci tuxedo, with groomsman Sam Valenti.





FROM LEFT Amar works for a non-profit; Smith is CEO of The Playlist Generation. The couple had their wedding bands made in Jerusalem. Small Masterpiece mixed and matched 100-year-old china, silverware and crystal to look like a family's heirloom collection. Smith's mother and step-father, Anne and Michael Towbes at left; Amar's parents, Pinchus and Shula at right.



Elton John's "Your Song" for the father/daughter dance, plus his new single "Bettin My Life on You" for mother/son. DJ Chris Carter's ambient music soothed as the culinary team from the Four Seasons Biltmore served lamb with truffle gnocchi and branzino, and a towering, regal dessert by Robyn Loves Cake. The Tuscan-inspired menu was paired with wines from locally owned Summerland Winery.

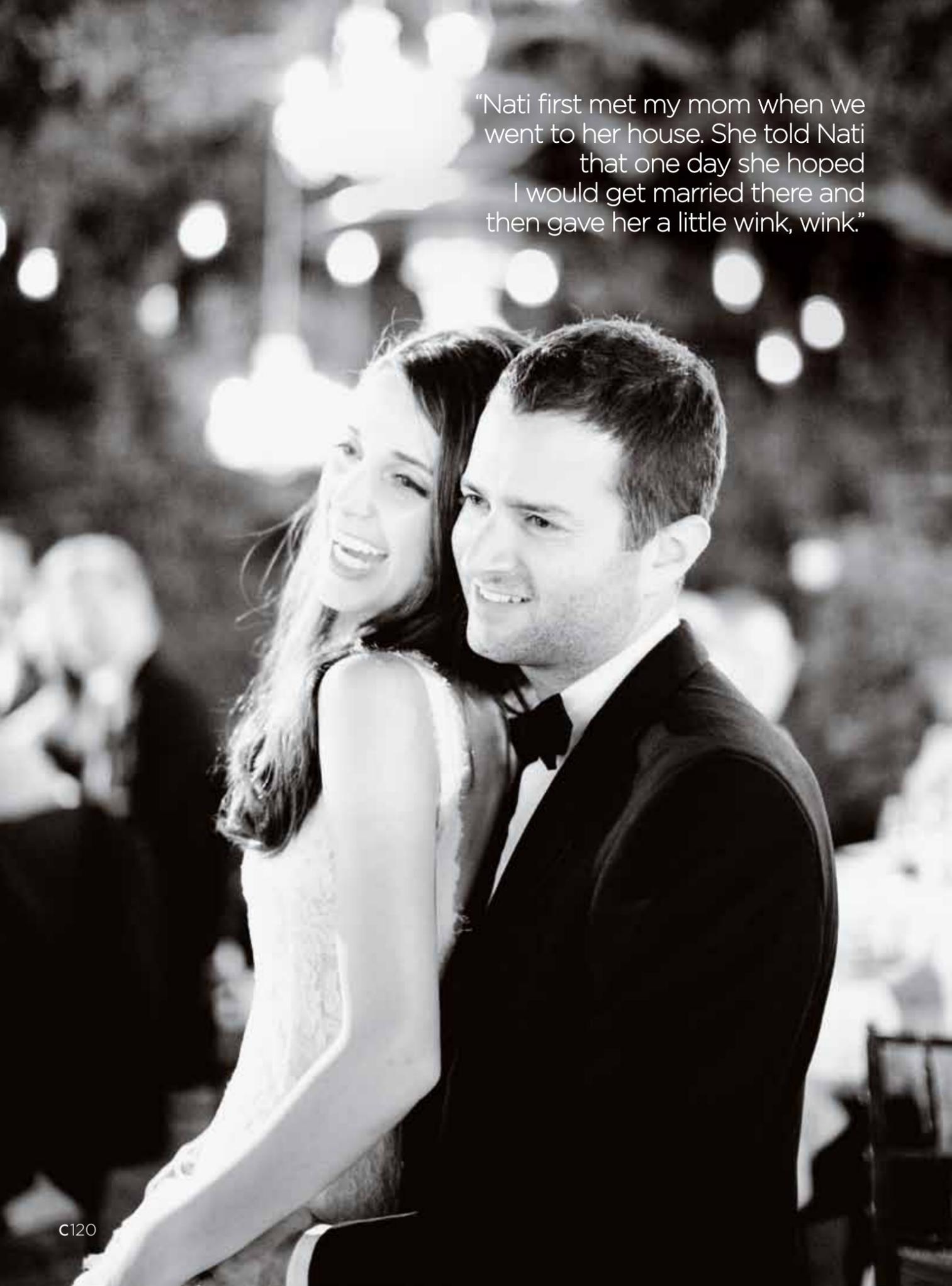


FROM ABOVE A framed portrait of the groom's late father, Robert Smith. Rabbi Uri D. Herscher performed the ceremony under a cascading floral chuppah by Mindy Rice Floral and Event Design. OPPOSITE Amar makes her way to the altar at dusk.

To toast the couple, best man Peter Lehman raised a glass of Moët's Dom Pérignon. "He told tales of our friendship and interwove thoughts and memories of my late father," says Smith. Ortal Amar, Nati's sister and maid of honor, followed suit with some funny childhood memories. Inside, the real dance party started and DJ Zen Freeman had it going into the early morning hours as Moroccan-inspired hors d'oeuvres and cocktails by Karma Tequila and VeeV were served. Before returning to their home in the Hollywood Hills, Amar and Smith first took a weeklong mini-moon to the Hawaiian island of Lana'i, followed by a longer family trip to France, and, finally, to Nati's native Israel. "I went across the world to find my true love," recalls Smith. "Our wedding was the best weekend of our lives, and we will always treasure the memories." •

"I came out to see the entire crowd of our favorite friends and family. My father gave me a beautiful blessing and then I saw my amazing husband."

"Nati first met my mom when we went to her house. She told Nati that one day she hoped I would get married there and then gave her a little wink, wink."



FROM ABOVE A sweet moment with niece and flower girl, Leighton. Signing the ketubah. Family friend Kenny Loggins performed "Footloose" at the reception. The wedding invitation was designed by Marc Friedland. OPPOSITE Before leaving for their Hawaiian mini-moon, the newlyweds spent three days in town with Amar's family, who lives in Israel.



FROM LEFT The bridal party in dresses from Priscilla of Boston. Amar and her father embrace. Christina Ricou and Ryan Fuson congratulate the newlyweds. Robyn Loves Cake created the 5-tier vanilla masterpiece. Monique Lhuillier and husband Tom Bugbee. The Four Seasons Biltmore served an Italian-inspired menu paired with Summerland Winery varietals.

