

ONCE UPON A TIME IN HOLLYWOOD

ALANA GRACE ESSIG & JOHN PAUL WESLEY FAIRBAIRN

September 10, 2022 Los Angeles, California | Photographed by Dina Douglass of Andrena Photography



If it wasn't for being cast in a Christmas play in 2013, Alana Grace Essig and John Paul Wesley Fairbairn may have never met. "John played the lead, and I played the elf he wanted to impress," reminisces Alana. John smiles, "It worked!" Within the first couple months, he knew she was special. "I just remember thinking, *'I'm gonna marry her, and yeah, that's totally appropriate and insane to think about someone you've known for two weeks,'*" he laughs. John kept his cool for as long as he could and planned a romantic, laid-back proposal at a cabin in Lake Arrowhead on New Year's Eve 2020.

After relishing in engagement bliss for eight weeks, Alana and John began planning their dream wedding over the next 18 months. "With the help of our fabulous wedding planner, Natalie Sofer, we signed all our major vendor contracts more than a year prior to the event," confirms the bride, who warns other couples that the last few weeks of wedding planning will be stressful no matter how much you're on top of everything, as many final decisions and tasks have to wait until just before the big day.



RESOURCES

Beauty
Hair & Makeup by Michelle V.

Bridal Gown
Leah Da Gloria

Bridal Salon
Lovella Bridal

Bridesmaid Gowns
BHLDN

Cake
The Butter End

Calligraphy
Karen Farnsworth

Consulting
Natalie Safer Weddings and Events

Entertainment
Let's Party LA
Occdamia Music Group

Favors
The Butter End

Floral Design
Butterfly Floral & Event Design

Headpiece
Maria Elena Headpieces

Invitations
East Six

Jewelry
Annoushka; Spragwerks

Lighting Design
The Lighter Side

Linens
Luxe Linen

Photography
Andrena Photography

Registries
Bloomingdale's
Crate and Barrel
Williams Sonoma; Zola

Rentals
Premiere Party Rents
Revelry Event Designers

Stationery
Paper Tie Affair

Veil
Martina Liana

Venue/Catering
The Hollywood Roosevelt

Videography
Parallel Media Productions



As most of their guests would be traveling to the event, Alana and John knew they wanted to have a hotel wedding that allowed their attendees to stay on property, as well as offered separate spaces for the rehearsal dinner, ceremony, reception, and farewell brunch. They chose an iconic venue for its beautifully high ceilings, grand décor, and fond memories they shared together at the site. “The Hollywood Roosevelt represented us as a couple, but it was also a fun, historic destination for those who had never been to Los Angeles,” Alana says.

A string quartet performed classical renditions of modern tunes as friends and family members took their seats to witness the couple’s heartfelt ceremony showcasing awe-inspiring décor. Elvis Presley’s “Can’t Help Falling In Love” played as Alana walked down the aisle lined with cherry blossom trees, vines, and vanilla-toned florals. “Vines became a central part of many facets of the wedding, starting with the beaded design on my dress, to our ketubah, to our cake,” explains the bride. “The trees and vines represented a growing and evolving love.”



She met her groom beneath a grand chuppah embellished with ivory blossoms and a touch of greenery for the ceremony that included some Jewish traditions to honor Alana's upbringing. In fact, the cantor from the temple she grew up attending in Nashville presided over the ceremony. Six months before the wedding, he asked the couple to send him separate emails detailing why they chose one another as a life partner. Little did they know, he planned to share their private responses. "As shocking as it was to us, it really made people lean in during the ceremony," affirms the bride. John asserts: "You could feel the love, and there was no question that we were meant to be married."

Before their guests entered the reception ballroom, Alana and John enjoyed a sneak peek of the exceptional décor – a suggestion from their wedding planner, and one that became a favorite moment of the day. "It was truly magical. We stepped into a fantasy ballroom that exceeded all my expectations," remembers the bride. "It was a dream come true... Everything had come together so beautifully. It took my breath away."

Desiring a design inspired by Old Hollywood glamour, Alana

worked with her wedding team to orchestrate her unique vision. "I didn't want it to be Gatsby, but rather a mix of time periods that never actually existed together," she describes. Glistening crystals and golden details honored the 1920s, a glamorous vibe and a mix of florals paid homage to Art Nouveau, and additional elements were selected to give guests the feeling of "what it must have felt like to attend the Oscars in the 1930s and 1940s," adds the bride, noting that the reception took place in the space where the first Academy Awards was held.

The ballroom was filled with romantic lighting, impressive décor in black, white, and gold, and an "astronomical number of flowers," says John. Mirror-top rectangular tables were decorated with tall, modern golden candelabras alongside small crystal vases filled with roses, orchids, calla lilies, peonies, and baby's breath, and round-table styles featured similar blooms atop towering stands. The groom's favorite tablescapes showcased a 20-foot-tall "tree" displaying cherry blossoms and hundreds of suspended candles, with rows of white roses in individual vases surrounding the base.



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Prior to the sit-down dinner service, the newlyweds made their grand entrance and invited everyone to the ebony dance floor displaying their monogram for a lively hora and to start off the dancing. "I used to be a wedding DJ, and I always recommended people do three to four dance songs right after they entered. You get great pictures with all the guests on the dance floor before people split off to go to the bar," suggests Alana. The rest of the night was spent celebrating. "I just wanted to make sure there was a tremendous amount of dancing," shares the groom of the revelry, which included an eclectic blend of music from alternative rock to EDM to hits by Smokey Robinson and Stevie Wonder.

Before guests departed, they were sent home with custom cookie favors that honored the mother of the groom, who sadly passed away before John proposed. "She always wore 'Cherries in the Snow' lipstick, so our cake designer matched the color for the icing," illustrates the bride of the meaningful addition that concluded such a special evening. "It was a perfect night!" exclaims the groom.

KELCY CHRISTY