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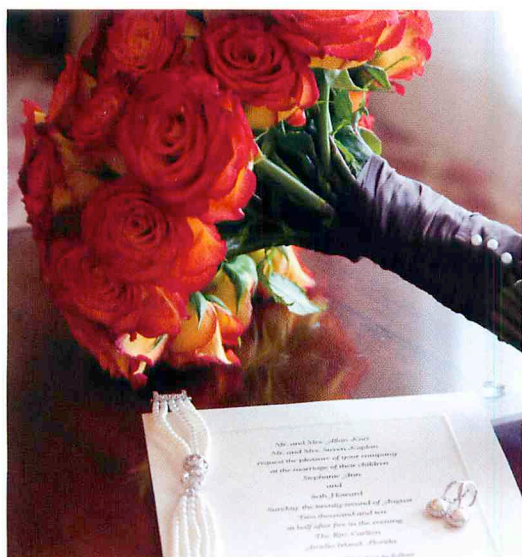
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Stephanie & Seth

THE RITZ-CARLTON, AMELIA ISLAND

By Jan Davis Photography by Holly Allain Photography

IN RECENT YEARS, ONE TREND IN PLANNING WEDDINGS HAS BEEN for couples to make their ceremony as unique as possible. In their efforts to do so, many couples exchanged time-honored traditions for uniqueness. Lately, however, most brides have been returning to a more traditional wedding ceremony. In the Jewish faith in particular, a traditional wedding consists of many important symbolic features that give special meaning to the wedding ceremony. Incorporating these traditions in their service

was important to Stephanie Kart and Seth Kaplan, who were married at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, on August 22, 2010.

The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, a grand beachfront resort, is well equipped through its knowledgeable staff to assist brides and grooms of any faith in having the wedding of their dreams. Eric Pierson of the hotel staff, whose own wedding to Angela Wallace of The Travel Agency was featured in a previous issue of *Amelia Island Weddings*, assisted Stephanie and Seth with all of



Seth down for a visit, he also found the “beaches magnificent and the downtown charming.” Seth’s parents, Norma and Steve Kaplan, are from Minneapolis, and he knew they would agree that this was the perfect spot for their dream wedding. Stephanie had always wanted a garden wedding, and she and her mom chose the courtyard of The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, with its rolling green lawn and ocean views.

Since there is no Jewish temple on the island, the Karts found a rabbi in Jacksonville to marry them. Rabbi David Osachy guided them through the ceremony with great care. An intimate gathering of family watched the signing of the Ketubah, which is similar to a marriage contract, but often becomes a beautiful piece of artwork to be displayed in the home. Both sets of parents escorted Stephanie and Seth down the aisle to take their place

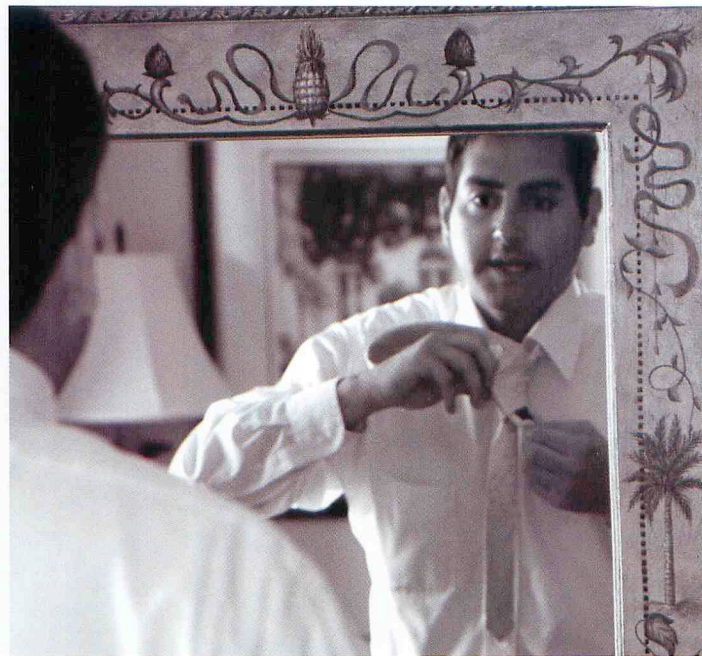
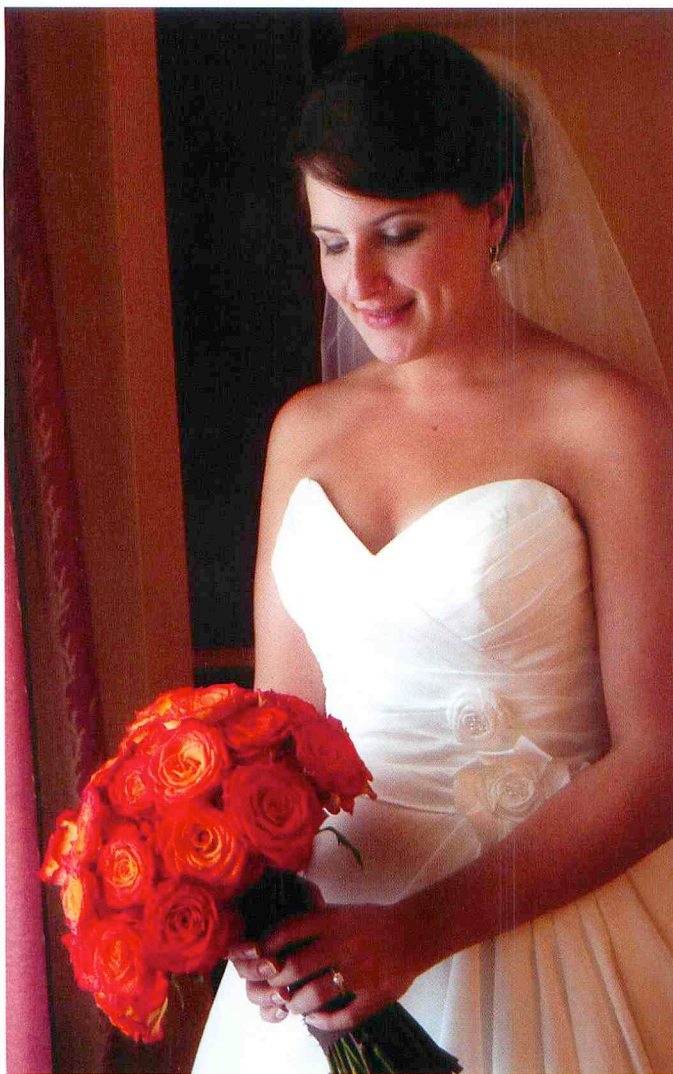
under the traditional Chuppah, in front of friends and family. The Chuppah, a canopy on four poles, symbolizes the creating of a home together. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Seth stepped on a glass goblet wrapped in a silk bag. There are multiple meanings of this tradition. Some refer to it as a symbol of the marriage lasting forever, while some say it references the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem. Seth adds laughingly, “Others say it is the last time the groom puts his foot down!” After shouts of “mazel tov,” the couple proceeded to cocktails before a seated dinner in the Plaza Ballroom.

The five bridesmaids wore brown and carried dramatic, lively flowers of sunflowers and orange and yellow “Circus” roses. “The bright colors made me so happy,” Stephanie adds. The food lived up to the reputation of The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island—



exceptional—and the John Parker Band had everyone dancing. As a finale to the event, Stephanie and Seth were hoisted on chairs to dance the Horah. As their wedding program stated, “Stephanie is a huge fan of the Horah and she won’t apologize for being a little crazy. Your participation is mandatory!” The Kaplans were so delighted with the professionalism of photographer Holly Allain and how she captured the spontaneity of the wedding. Her photographs show just what they wanted: a great party!

Finally, there was a touching note in the program: “As we celebrate this joyous occasion, we honor the memories of our grandparents. They are with us today and in our hearts forever.” They would have been proud of Stephanie and Seth’s wedding, full of time-honored and meaningful Jewish traditions.



the plans. Who better to advise the couple than one who had so recently enjoyed a wedding of his own? “He was a pleasure to work with,” says Stephanie. “He really helped make our vision a reality.” That reality was a spectacular wedding in the courtyard of The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island with beautiful Jewish traditions woven throughout the ceremony.

Stephanie and Seth, residents of Washington, D.C., met as many young couples do these days: online. They used the Internet site, JDate, which specializes in matching Jewish couples. “So many of our friends have found successful relationships on this site,” says Stephanie. “D.C. is so large, and so it is a very helpful way to meet someone with similar values.” Both had gone to school in the Mid-West—she to Indiana University, and he to University of Iowa—and both later found jobs in Washington. Stephanie works in government relations for a medical society, and Seth is with a private bank while pursuing his MBA.

Stephanie’s parents, Dianne and Allan Kart, discovered Amelia Island a few years ago and moved to North Hampton. Stephanie loved visiting her parents here, and when she brought

