



TO HAWAII WITH LOVE

MIKI NGUYEN *to* JOEL KUWAHARA
OCTOBER 17, 2008, LANIKUHONUA, OAHU

PHOTOGRAPHY BY APERTURA | TEXT BY SHALINNA KEOUGH

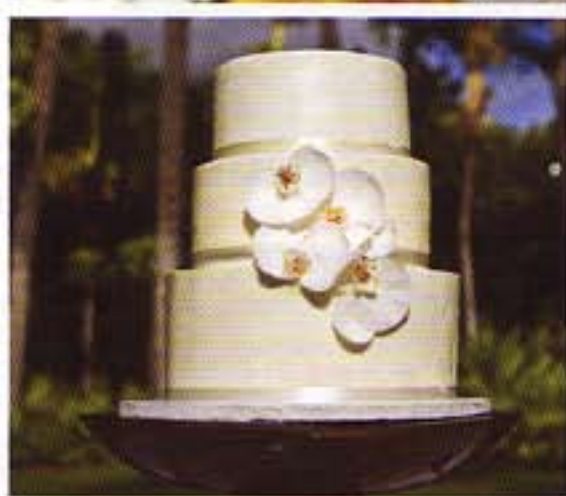
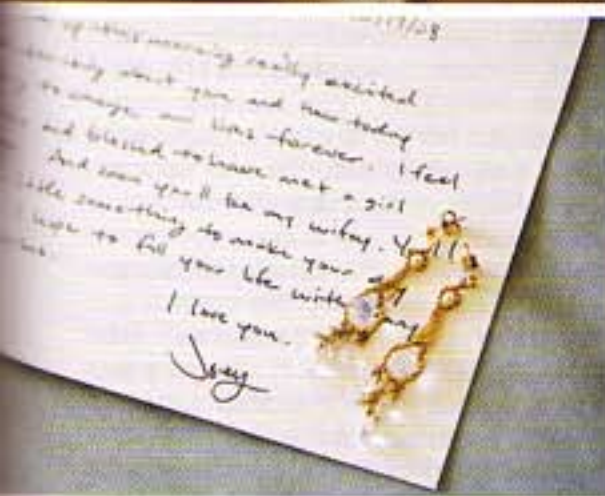
For Miki Nguyen, nothing is more emblematic of the warmth and love she feels for her husband Joel Kuwahara than a golden sunset. "I've always felt that there is something so romantic and passionate about that moment when the day is ending and the night is just beginning," she says. "I have a lot of emotional attachment to that vision." It was fitting then that Joel chose to propose to his sweetheart at dusk on a particularly gorgeous summer day in Hawaii. They savored their engagement on the North Shore of Oahu, then set out to plan a lighthearted celebration, one that would reflect their down-to-earth sensibilities.

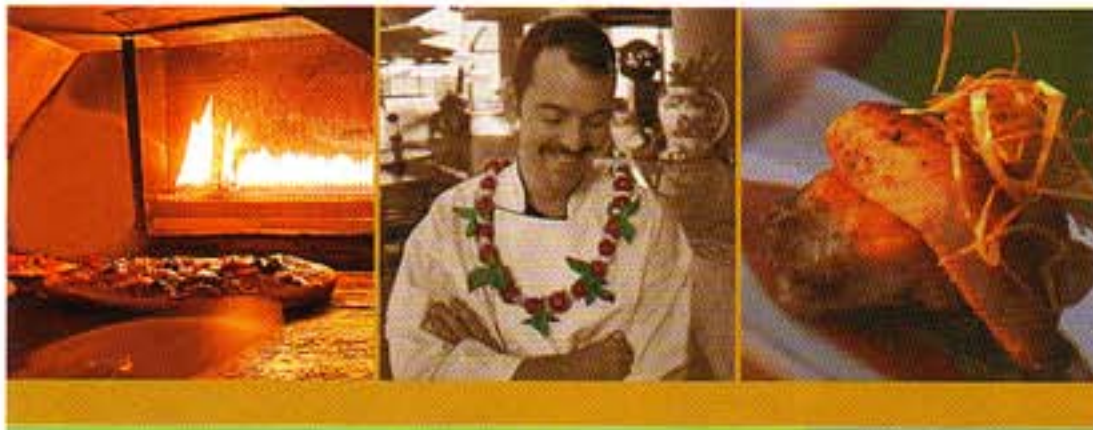




The pair's beginning was decidedly untraditional. A mutual friend insisted that Miki was "the perfect girl" for Joel, an animation producer in Los Angeles, and persuaded him to send Miki an email to introduce himself. At the time, Miki was consumed with her studies at graduate school and simply dismissed his message. Joel tried again and this time, he made an impact. Within days of their correspondence, Miki had developed an affinity for his magnetic candor, wit and subtle way with words. They decided to finally meet. Nestled in the back of a café in Hollywood, the couple shared stories and laughter for hours on end. "I'm a talker and he indulged me, I suppose!" she says. "There was something about the way he spoke—he was very approachable and genuine. I felt like I could open up to him, and I still appreciate his honesty to this day."







MATTEO'S

808-874-1234
WWW.MATTEOSCATERING.COM



Catering on Maui
Wedding Receptions
Rehearsal Dinners

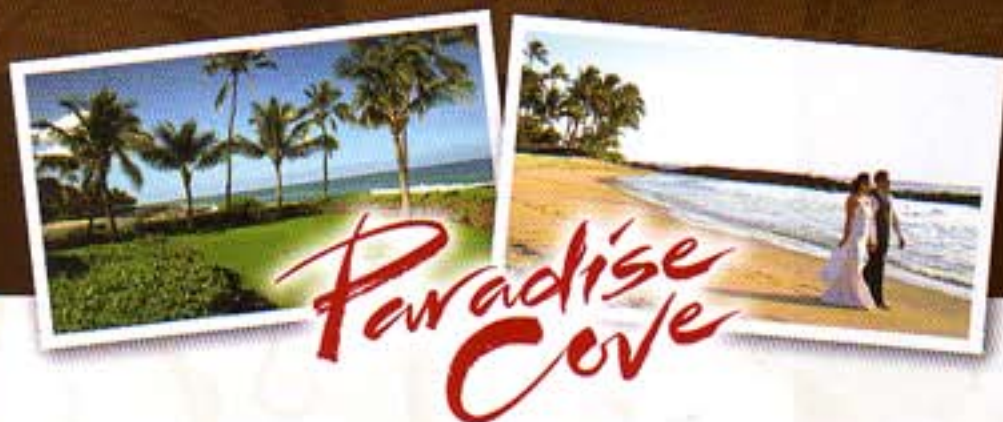


THE CAKE GALLERY

We create cakes as unique as you are.

808.258.9285
WWW.CAKEGALLERYHI.COM

BEGIN YOUR HAPPILY EVER AFTER IN PARADISE



*A 12-acre private beachfront estate on the island of O'ahu,
Paradise Cove is the perfect setting for your wedding and reception,
with lush lawns, majestic palms and a spectacular ocean sunset.*

800.775.2683 ♦ 808.842.7911
WWW.PARADISECOVE.COM

Although the couple realized that their relationship was something special, it wasn't until Miki left the country to grieve her grandmother's death in Vietnam that they both felt a sense of real attachment. "I was having a difficult time dealing with that heavy loss and even though Joel couldn't be there, he was on the phone with me every night," she recalls. "I realized that he is the one person who brings me the most happiness and that is more than enough for me." Within a month of Miki's return, the couple was engaged and plans for a destination wedding in Hawaii were in full swing.


It was never a question of where. "We always knew that we would be married in Hawaii," Miki says. "The aloha spirit is so warm and welcoming, and as a couple, we have shared many special moments in the Islands." After attending their fair share of elaborate hometown weddings, the couple longed to create a more intimate celebration in a private, tropical paradise. "We wanted our wedding to honor the union of two people and the community that raised us—our family and closest friends."

To begin plans for the event, the bride flew to Oahu to meet her wedding coordinator, Sandra Williams of Finishing Touch, in person. "Sandra is the opposite of me in that she is really calm and nothing seems to rile her," Miki says. "I knew that's exactly what I needed in a coordinator." Sandra introduced the couple to Lanikuhonua, one of just a few private wedding sites fronting a secluded sandy beach on Oahu's southwest shore. They instantly fell in love with the picturesque location. "Sandra helped to convey my sense of style and bring my vision to life," the bride says. "I wanted the look to be fresh and modern with natural elements running throughout." The wedding invitation and itinerary for the week-long celebration arrived in a burlap fabric bag, carefully hand-sewn and assembled by the bride and her best friend. Since Joel has access to some of the best animators in the industry, their stationery featured playful renderings of the couple and scenes from the ocean to echo the island setting.

The bride enlisted the talents of floral designer, Yvonne Chapman, after seeing her work in the pages of Pacific Weddings magazine. "As a designer, she is inspirational and she really draws out the creative side of people," Miki says. The cheerful palette that Miki and Joel chose for the day, vivid shades of orange and yellow, reflected a cool summer sunset. A bamboo archway and sleek wooden benches marked the ceremony site at the water's edge. Exotic arrangements of orchids and anthuriums were intertwined in curly manzanita tree branches that lined an aisle of sand. The bride was breathtaking in an ivory gown of Japanese Dutchess satin and tissue-thin organza, created by San Francisco designer Jin Wang. Miki carried a delicate bouquet of white Casablanca lilies. Joel was a handsome groom in a stylish pewter suit custom tailored for the occasion. In a touching ceremony, the bride and groom recited vows from the heart, inviting family members to join them in a group blessing.


Afterwards, guests dined on long tables adorned with lush arrangements of deep orange Mocara orchids, fiery-red celosias, pincushions and anthuriums displayed in wooden boxes. Silvery succulents and sea coral were scattered along burlap table runners, adding a touch of organic elegance. The mother-of-the-bride spent the day before the wedding sewing all of the linens with her daughters in their beachfront bungalow. "We had fun and it gave us a chance to bond and spend time together," Miki says. Dramatic capiz shell chandeliers cast a warm glow beneath a clear-top tent, where colorful food stations displayed a multicultural blend of Asian and Pacific Rim cuisine. "Joel and I are big foodies so we had high expectations, and everything turned out to be phenomenal!" Miki says. A photo booth at the reception ensured that the couple would have unique keepsake photographs of their guests. "We still laugh uncontrollably when we flip through that album!" Miki says. Guests danced late into the evening, enjoying an eclectic musical selection from the groom's iPod. Everyone savored a delicious passion fruit and Mandarin orange buttercream cake by Cake Works. "The day was all about family, friendship and love," Miki exclaims. "It was absolutely perfect."

MAUNA KEA RESORT




The perfection of **Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel** on Hawaii's Big Island is found in breathtaking beaches, picturesque overlooks and tropical gardens. Traditional to contemporary cuisine is tailored for your special day. Let our Romance Specialists assist with every detail to create everlasting memories.


www.PrinceResortsHawaii.com/Weddings | 1-866-PRINCE-6



Mauna Kea Beach Hotel | Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel | Maui Prince Hotel | Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki **Prince Resorts Hawaii**



christie pham [PHOTOGRAPHY]
www.christie-photography.com





Creations By You is a specialty craft store where design and detail are showcased. Our travels, experience, and attention to style and detail bring together elements to help you adorn and create unique and inspiring ...

- Favors • Wedding Accessories • Jewelry • Invitations • etc.
- Fine Papers • Luxurious Ribbons • Hand Woven Boxes
- Swarovski™ Crystal Components • Custom Ordering



A Specialty Craft Store
cbyweddings.com cbysparkle.com

CREATIONS BY YOU 1801 Liliha Street • Honolulu • HI 96817 • (808) 536-5255 • Free parking