



Vanessa Barnes & Simon Punch

Vanessa Barnes witnessed the most extraordinary sight on the morning of her wedding to fiancé Simon Punch. “There was supposed to be a downpour but on the morning of the wedding, I went for a walk with my mum and dad and looked around,” she says. “There was a doughnut of storm clouds but over Jonah’s, blue sky. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

It was a good omen for the kindergarten teacher and the plumber and surf photographer, who met eight years ago at a party and became engaged during a holiday in WA’s Margaret River region. “From then on, it just became sunnier with more blue sky,” Vanessa says of the big day.

THE LOCATION

When planning the wedding, the couple wanted an intimate ceremony that would reflect their laid back personalities and Simon’s love of surfing and the beach.

“We both loved Whale Beach and Simon grew up on the northern beaches,” Vanessa says. When their original plan to hire a house for family and friends and get married

there proved impossible, they decided to hold the ceremony and reception at Jonah’s Whale Beach. “Once we had picked Jonah’s, everything flowed from there and it was smooth planning,” Vanessa says. “It was everything we had imagined.”

THE THEME

The coastal location and the couple’s interests were the inspiration for the quirky decor. Tables were decorated with simple white flower arrangements so as not to detract from the stunning views over Whale Beach. In a nod to their shared love of photography, each table featured black and white photographs of their parents’ and grandparents’ weddings.

“We didn’t want a showy wedding, we wanted it to be all about the view,” Vanessa says.

Vanessa’s two bridesmaids, her sisters Megan and Kristen, wore teal full-length dresses and carried paper parasols. “When I saw the weather, I didn’t think we’d be able to use them,” Vanessa says.

The green and white theme was continued in the green-and-white bridal bouquet of roses and moluccella laevis, known as Bells of Ireland, created by Enchanted Rose in Davidson.

Vanessa wore a full-length white lace dress with a low back, teamed with simple pearl



earrings. "It was a simple lace mermaid dress, quite streamlined," she says.

The couple's 18-month old nephew, River, almost stole the show as page boy.

THE BIG DAY

Thanks to the sudden sun, the couple could revert to their original plan to hold the ceremony on Jonah's outdoor terrace. Afterwards, they snuck down to Palm Beach for a few more photos while the guests enjoyed champagne and canapes such as oysters, crab shooters and prawn skewers, before heading inside for a sit-down three-course meal from Jonah's one-hatted restaurant.

Dessert was a lime and coconut cake with white chocolate ganache from Sweet Connoisseur in Wahroonga. "It was fresh and summery, just what we wanted," Vanessa says.

Afterwards, the couple drove away in Simon's beloved blue 1964 EH Holden to a house they had rented overlooking Pittwater. "It was Simon's first car and so on our first date, Simon picked me up in it, and we have since done a lot of road trips up and down the NSW coast in it," Vanessa says. "So the car holds a lot of very special memories for us."

THE MORNING AFTER

The next morning, the newly married couple headed down to Whale Beach to meet close friends and family and catch a few waves.

"Because Simon works in Western Australia in the mines, he can't surf as much as he likes, so he went surfing while we had coffee on the beach and just relaxed," Vanessa says.

And while it's usually the bride who trashes the dress after the wedding, in this case it was Simon who simply threw on a pair of board shorts with his wedding outfit and hit the waves.

Afterwards, the couple headed into the city for a few nights to catch some gigs featuring their favourite bands and finished by sharing a bottle of Margaret River red wine.

"It really was the best of Sydney," Vanessa says.

Location: Jonah's Whale Beach;
69 Bynya Rd, Whale Beach.
Ph: 9974 5599. W: jonahs.com.au

Photography: Petal Photography.
Ph: 0404 366 076.
W: petalphotography.com.au





