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CULTURAL DEVOTION

DANIELA MALCA & JEREMY BENLOULOU

September 6, 2015 | Santa Monica, California | Photographed by Paige Jones

All Daniela Malca planned on doing that sunny June afternoon was purchasing essentials for her new home in Los Angeles. Intrigued by the novelty of her unfamiliar surroundings, the young woman's curiosity led her right into a Moroccan furniture store. "I instantly fell in love with everything," Daniela recalls. "The owner of the store was a nice man; we [chatted] about Moroccan Jewish culture and how I'd love a good Moroccan meal." Following a few more visits to the shop, the gentleman

graciously invited Daniela to share a Shabbat dinner with he and his wife – an invitation she promptly accepted. Little did she know, her attendance would bring about a pivotal moment in her life. "I show up, and a handsome young man is there – he was their son, and his name was Jeremy [Benloulou]," she gushes. Jeremy noticed the effervescent energy that Daniela brought into the room. Later that evening, he walked her out and asked for her number. "The rest is history!" remarks the happy couple.



RESOURCES

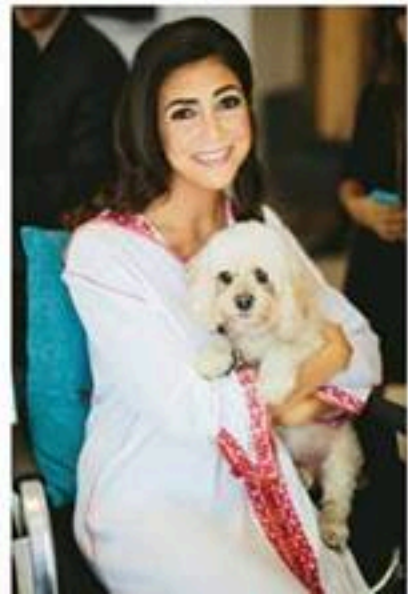
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After two years of dating, Jeremy had a profound thought. "I realized I wanted to propose when it was clear to me that I didn't want to go another day without having Daniela by my side," beams the groom. With flowers in hand, Jeremy made the trip to the home of his girlfriend's mother to ask for Daniela's hand in marriage – an inquiry to which she was more than happy to oblige. Armed with her mother's blessing and a stylish ring – that included a stunning round diamond heirloom from his late grandmother – he got down on bended knee amid a Labor Day Weekend trip to Palm Springs. "It was so dark I couldn't see the ring!" she laughs, remembering their romantic late-night stroll. "It was a very surreal

and emotional moment and I will always remember it!"

The excited duo set a date: exactly one year from when Jeremy proposed. Daniela selected a luxury oceanfront hotel as their wedding venue for its ability to accommodate their large guest list and its grand aesthetic. When the day finally arrived, their chuppah was constructed underneath a gorgeous fig tree adorned with bright pink bougainvillea – a classic California bloom. It was clear to their 331 attendees that Daniela wasn't shy when choosing the hues of the occasion. "My favorite colors are coral and fuchsia, and an ombre aisle was a way to mix the two. I wanted my bouquet and all flowers to be an explosion of color," she says.





Preceding their ceremony, the pair hosted a traditional tisch and bedeken for their family and friends. At long last, revelers gathered in the alfresco space in anticipation of the vow exchange. As the ethereal bride glided down the aisle clothed in a mermaid-style gown, her 10 bridesmaids looked on blissfully. Each one clutched a vibrant nosegay of ranunculus blossoms, anemones, dahlias, and garden roses – coordinating with both the bold motif of the event and regal cluster of posies Daniela held. A decelerated version of Clean Bandit and Jess Glynne's tune "Rather Be" played softly as Daniela reached her groom. The service was abounding in rich, cultural customs from their respectively diverse backgrounds. "Our number one priority was to [stay] true to Orthodox Judaism," explains Daniela. "[W]e had two rabbis – one Ashkenazi, one Sephardi. We had our Sephardic rabbi speak in Spanish, [as] I am Peruvian."





"I was influenced by *The Great Gatsby* and Art-Deco glam with the use of sequined linens and gold flatware."



All at once, it was time to celebrate. Attendees adjourned in a ballroom bathed in low, purposeful light that gave the reception a sentimental atmosphere. Decadent chandeliers crowned the space with an indisputable opulence. Small glass vases housing brilliant blooms sat atop lengthy, mirror-top tables. Larger centerpieces of whimsical perennials resting above crystal stands decorated round tables. "I wanted [the space] to evoke passion and fun, while still being elegant. My base of black, white, and gold was accented by colorful florals," muses Daniela. "I was influenced by *The Great Gatsby* and Art-Deco glam with sequined linens and gold flatware. I wanted the flowers to really pop against the black." For the newlyweds, it was an ideal backdrop to bask in the revelry of their marriage.

When deciding on a dessert, Daniela stayed true to tradition and elected to serve cake. Says she, "One of my favorite wallpapers is a dark floral print I've had my eye on [to install in a home] for years. I had the bakery print the image on wafer paper [for] one of the tiers." In congruence with the audacious décor, the pair kept the party lively and fun with a French DJ. He "played a lot of French, Hebrew, Arabic, and Spanish songs. Salsa was key for me!" Daniela exclaims. As for the most memorable moment of the evening, the bride and groom are in agreement: "In the middle of our first dance, the speakers blew out and the music stopped," recalls Daniela. "Instead of an awkward pause, Jeremy continued by singing the French song to me, followed by his cousins and all the French guests. We never stopped the dance." Now, Daniela and Jeremy never have to stop dancing together.

MEGAN SIMPSON