



Isle Style

Peter Boulden *weds* Emily Dees

AUGUST 8, 2009

Where there's a will, there's a way. Although mutual friends of Mississippi native Emily Dees and Atlantan Peter Boulden had encouraged the two to meet on several occasions, their paths never seemed to cross. "I lived in Birmingham, and Pete lived in Atlanta. Neither of us had time to go out of town to meet someone new," Emily remembers. The bride, who is known for her impeccable style, owns two high-fashion boutiques called Swank—one at the Shops Around Lenox and the other in Birmingham's Mountain Brook Village. "A year after our friends first tried to introduce us, I had to go to Atlanta for business, and that's when we finally met. From that moment on, we both just knew that we were meant to be together."

After a whirlwind romance, Peter, co-owner of Atlanta Dental Spa, proposed to Emily on New Year's Eve during a flight to Mexico. Bound for Cabo San Lucas, the anxious groom-to-be knew if he waited until they arrived to pop the question, Emily wouldn't be nearly as surprised. So, in a conspiratorial move, he enlisted the help of his sister, who concealed the ring during the flight, and a flight attendant, who delivered champagne and the engagement ring on a silver tray, catching Emily completely off guard. "I am actually not a very good flier, so when Pete woke me up to propose, all I could think was, 'Are you seriously asking me to marry you on a plane?'" she recalls. "It was really perfect, and so true to character for Pete, who can always seem to do something to make me laugh."

Because most of their courtship took place in exotic locales, the pair immediately envisioned exchanging vows with the pristine waters of a remote island as their backdrop. Once their engagement was official, the couple visited the secluded Cap Juluca Resort on Anguilla on a trip they deemed "research" and fell in love with the property's Moroccan flair. The couple determined it would be the perfect complement to their style-savvy spirit and forged ahead with transforming their wedding into a fashion-forward affair only an industry insider could pull off. First on the list: making the wedding



TEXT BY TARA N. WILFONG
PHOTOGRAPHED BY TEC PETAJA / TECPETAJAPHOTO.COM



itself resemble a fresh-from-the-runway fashion show. “I knew I wanted to add my signature flair to the wedding,” Emily says. “The couture had to be super-stylish, because that’s what I do, what I know and what I love.” She began by selecting custom gowns for each of her eight bridesmaids from IODICE, a line carried at her store, Swank. The women dripped with couture as they walked across the lawn, each in ocean-inspired hues, ranging from tropical blue to inky midnight. Their dresses seemed to flow with the island breeze.

Not to be outdone, the bride chose an ivory strapless mermaid gown of Chantilly lace, silk organdy and crinkle silk chiffon from Vera Wang’s exclusive Luxe Collection. But her inner fashionista just wouldn’t let her leave the dress alone. To add her own signature twist, Emily embellished the gown with a custom Chantilly lace and silk organdy banded halter. To complete the look, she sported a dramatic, waist-length, antique multistrand necklace with Swarovski crystals and pearl accents by Erickson Beamon. “My mom fell in love with the dress the first moment she saw it,” Emily says. “I loved it too, but I knew I had to make it a little funkier, a little more me, so I added this amazing necklace.”

But it was in combining her eye for style with the rich colors and laid-back traditions of the Caribbean where Emily excelled in creating a soiree that was not only cutting-edge but also emotional and sensational. Exuding all the style and sophistication of a runway show, but rooting itself in the age-old traditions of religious wedding ceremonies, the bride walked down the aisle to an acoustic version of Brad Paisley’s “Then,” played by the couple’s friend Billy Gant.

With the distant waves of the Caribbean Sea providing a rhythmic tune, Emily and Peter recited time-honored vows that would forever join them as husband and wife. The tropical ceremony was both captivating and exotic. “The wedding couldn’t have been more beautiful,” recalls Peter. “The site was so beautiful, it was almost surreal, and when I saw Emily coming down the aisle, I knew she was going to look gorgeous, and she took my breath away. I typically am not one to cry, but when I saw her, tears started rolling down my face. I realized that beauty was going to be mine, to have and to hold forever.”

After exchanging intimate vows on the resort’s wedding lawn overlooking the sea, the couple and their guests were treated to a pre-dinner cocktail party, complete with signature cocktails—frozen Mojitos for her and Arnold Palmers for him. Once the toasts were made, the crowd retreated to a festive reception at Spice, the resort’s open-air restaurant perched above the crystal-clear waters of the Caribbean. Among ivory-draped tables and chairs and twinkling candlelight, partygoers feasted on local favorites—everything from crab cakes and vegetable chicken spring rolls to a raw bar with oysters, crab claws and shrimp cocktail, among other dishes—and danced the night away to the island sounds of Boss and the Horsepower Band. The couple retreated to their honeymoon suite with the calypso beat fading into the wee hours of the night before continuing their island getaway with a honeymoon in St. Barts in the French West Indies.

It was the perfect ending to an evening that allowed them to not only share their love of travel with close family and friends but also prepare for the newest chapter of their lives the only way they know how—in swanky, sophisticated style. ♡

The Details

PLACE OF RECEPTION
Cap Juluca Resort

WEDDING GOWN
Audrey by Vera Wang

BRIDESMAIDS' GOWNS
IODICE Spring 2009 Runway Collection

PHOTOGRAPHER
Tec Petaja

EVENT/WEDDING PLANNER
Luxe Destination Weddings and Cap Juluca Resort

FLORIST
Black Orchid in Anguilla

CATERING/CAKE DESIGNER
Cap Juluca Resort

INVITATIONS
Yoko Chapman

HAIR STYLIST
Chris Presley

JEWELRY
Erickson Beamon

