



Sha Nguyen & Victor Fong

OLD HOLLYWOOD

Ingenuity

ON VALENTINE'S DAY 2009, Victor Fong had planned the perfect proposal for his hard-to-surprise girlfriend, Sha Nguyen: Take her to the Exploratorium, where they had one of their first dates, and ask her to marry him by writing a proposal in the sand at one of the museum's hands-on exhibits—where they had written their names together seven years earlier. But alas, Vic's romantic gesture went unfulfilled, because of Sha's reluctance to leave the house that rainy afternoon, so he was relegated to proposing to Sha, in her pajamas, TV remote in hand.

"Even though we had talked about it for a really long time, that day I was really not expecting it," she laughs. "I'd been very vocal about not being a fan of Valentine's Day—or any holiday—proposals!"

Despite the unexpected circumstances, Sha accepted, and the San Francisco-based couple began planning what they wanted to be a "unique and different wedding" in the bride's hometown of San Diego. The couple's choice of the Hard Rock Hotel as their venue served as the foundation on which to build.



Photography by Jennifer Dery



GET THEIR STYLE

Ceremony and reception location, and catering: **Hard Rock Hotel San Diego**, hardrockhotelsd.com. Wedding coordinator: **Bliss Events**, blissevent.com. Florals: **Haydee's Creative Flowers**, haydeescreativeflowers.com. Cake: **Sweet Cheeks Baking Co.**, sweetcheeksbaking.com. Gown: **Vera Wang**, glamourcloset.com, and **Melissa Sweet, Pricilla of Boston Salon**, priscillaofboston.com. Shoes: **Christian Louboutin**, christianlouboutin.com. Jewelry: **Tiffany & Co.**, tiffany.com and **Nordstrom**, shop.nordstrom.com. Hairpiece: **Portobello**, etsy.com. Makeup: **Valerie Vonprisk**, valerievonprisk.com. Hair: **Mish Mucho**, mishmucho.com. Groom's attire: **A Better Deal Tuxedo**, abetterdealtuxedo.com. Bridesmaids' dresses: **White House, Black Market**, whitehouseblackmarket.com. Ceremony canopy: **Arc de Belle**, archrentals.com. Lighting and A/V: **Flashback Stage & Lighting**, flashbackstagelighting.com. Décor and rentals: **Concepts Event Design**, conceptseventdesign.com. Draping: **West Coast Drape**, westcoastdrape.com. Officiant: **Pastor Wally**. DJ: **Tim Altbaum Productions**, taproductions.com. Late-night snack: **Pinkberry**, pinkberry.com. Photo booth: **PhotoBoof!**, photoboof.com. Photography: **Jennifer Dery**, jenniferdery.com. Videography: **Epic Affair**, epicaffair.com.



"I didn't have a particular vision, but I had a color palette in mind. I love grey, black and white, and the idea of a modern take on vintage Hollywood Regency," Sha explains. "But a lot of things happened really organically."

In fact, many of the unique pieces in Sha and Vic's wedding were do-it-yourself creations inspired by Sha's love of design and Vic's meticulous skills as an engineer.

"I'm the type of person that when I see something I really want, instead of buying it, I'll figure out how to make it," Sha says. "The first big do-it-yourself project was the invitations. I always knew I'd do my own, and it was quite an adventure."

Sha and Vic purchased a membership at TechShop, an open-access public workshop, where they worked tirelessly using a laser-etching machine to create stunning acrylic invitations, which were paired with foil-embossed card stock for a perfect package to introduce their event. Sha and Vic also created a laser-cut chandelier to hang from a wedding canopy that framed them during the ceremony as well as the reception.

"The chandelier was one of the most special things we did," Sha says. "The best part of being hands-on was that we were able to make one-of-a-kind things for our wedding that we could take with us and use functionally in our home. The chandelier now hangs in our dining room."

In the end, the couple's creativity and DIY whimsy, combined with a host of talented vendors coordinated by Staci Tiras-Jones of Bliss Events,





culminated in a different yet cohesive event through a show-stopping variety of unique elements. Food and drink dazzled with color-coordinated specialty cocktails, blackberry mojitos and “Berry Lemon Rocks” with purple rock candy and personalized stir sticks, and late-night snacks like mini grilled cheese, tomato bisque shooters, sliders and Pinkberry. The stunning fashions included Sha’s “dream of a dress” Vera Wang princess gown, worn with a to-die-for pair of black Christian Louboutin heels and a gray crystal sash that she created herself. Her bridesmaids all wore smaller versions of the sash, either in their hair or around their waist. Her groom’s sleek black tux with white vest and tie were the perfect complement.

“Overall, I think what we wore was really in line with the theme of our wedding: classic, but irreverent, with tons of texture and personality,” Sha says.

Finally, in perhaps the most unique wedding gesture of all, the groom got his chance to show all 230 guests the romantic side of his personality that was missing from his original proposal.

“At the reception, when I was thanking everyone for coming, I mentioned that a lot of people asked how I proposed, but I never had a good answer,” Vic recalls. “That’s when I turned to her, got down on my knee and proposed again.”

—CHRISTINA ORLOVSKY PAGE

See additional photos from Sha and Victor’s wedding at exquisiteweddingsmagazine.com.

