



Beach chic Ryann and Mark got married at Jonathan Beach Club in Santa Monica and worked with a natural color palette for a fresh and classy look.

planner q&a

We talked to Kristin Banta of Kristin Banta Events to get the scoop on planning a wedding on the beach.
BY JAIMIE DALESSIO

Q How did you get into the wedding business?
“I came from the event planning world, doing events primarily in fashion and music as well as working with a few non-profits. My first wedding was for a record executive’s daughter. At first I thought it wouldn’t be a fit for me. For some reason, I had this idea that weddings had to be boring, formulaic and that everything had to be white. But I realized weddings could be filled with personality and color. It became apparent to me that weddings were the perfect forum to design a space and an experience for the couple that would be something memorable to all in attendance and relevant to who the bride and groom are as individuals and as a couple. I made it my mission to try to shake things up and to encourage couples to take risks with their planning. That was more than 10 years ago and I continue to draw inspiration from each couple we work with, challenging each to design from the inside out.” >>

Q What’s your first thought when a couple wants a beach wedding?
“My first reaction to a couple who wants a beach wedding is, ‘are you sure?’ And this is coming from someone who loves beach weddings! I ask that only because beach weddings are challenging to pull off.”

Q What’s so hard about planning them?
“The hardest part is making sure guests are comfortable. Ladies wearing heels will have to ditch them for flip flops (it’s important you offer a basket of them) and hair tends to get messy in the salty wind. There are multiple elements that come with doing anything on the beach—such as sand getting everywhere, drapery blowing in many directions and the wind carrying items away. You’re not protected by four walls, so every beach wedding is obviously going to have challenges. When the wind picks up, your décor may change and you have to go with the flow. So do the guests. A beach wedding isn’t for everyone.”

Q That sounds tough! Do you have a favorite part of beach weddings?
“My favorite part is actually the hard part—that challenge of creating an intimate, fun and casual experience in a natural, unpredictable setting. There is something wonderful about the casual and organic environment produced by a beach setting, but due to the vast space in all directions, it’s important to develop a perimeter, a spatial divide so that the space still feels intimate and romantic.”

Q Do you have any tips for a beach bride on a budget?
“Everything can be done on a budget. My biggest tip for a beach wedding is to embrace your surroundings. If you’re trying to make a beach look like a country club, it’s going to be difficult (and expensive). Of course you need to provide guests creature comforts, but the whole point is to throw an event within the beauty of nature. If you wanted a ballroom feel, that’s the locale you should have chosen.”

Q The weather can obviously be an issue. How do you prepare for rain?
“Always have a backup plan. Build a tent frame and if it rains, you’ve got the structure; and if it doesn’t, you end up with amazing hanging points for fabric or twine. If you want guests to still be able to see the environment, go with clear panels. I always plan for a tent frame and design around it.”

Q Got any other warnings for beach brides?
“If you’re doing anything on a boardwalk, make sure you place something over it so high heels don’t get stuck in between the boards. Trust me, it won’t be good.”



lovely lighting Delicate, pale pink paper lanterns and twinkling lights added to the romantic, magical vibe Ryann and Mark wanted for their wedding.

Q Do you suggest certain couples steer clear of sandy nuptials?
“Usually couples who want beach weddings are those whose lives are all about the beach. Those couples tend to have relaxed natures. I encourage clients to go with a venue that is personal to them. Whatever it is, we can make it chic, comfortable and amazing.”

Q Do you prefer weddings where the party moves inside for the reception or stays on the sand?
“If you’re going to have a beach wedding you have to do it right. For me, that means going all the way. If you’re going to have your guests digest the idea of being on the beach and ditching their shoes, dig in and do the whole thing on the beach. Once you’ve gotten everyone to partake, why not keep them there? By the time the ceremony is over everyone will be in the same boat and relaxed. They’ll feel beach-y. Not having to transition back out of that space and mood is ideal.”

Q What’s your favorite kind of wedding to plan?
“I love couples who come in with no sense of direction. When a couple comes with nothing and opens up to me, we can create something that’s unique to them. I also love unusual spaces, even though they’re challenging and expensive. A wedding in a forest? I’m in!”

Q What’s your funniest beach wedding moment?
“My funniest story wasn’t even one of my weddings! I was on the beach with my husband and son and we were hanging out when we caught a glimpse of a small ceremony taking place not far from us. The tide was coming in and looked like it was about to wipe out the bride! I just couldn’t look away it was so awful. Note to beach brides: Check a tide report before you time your ceremony.”

