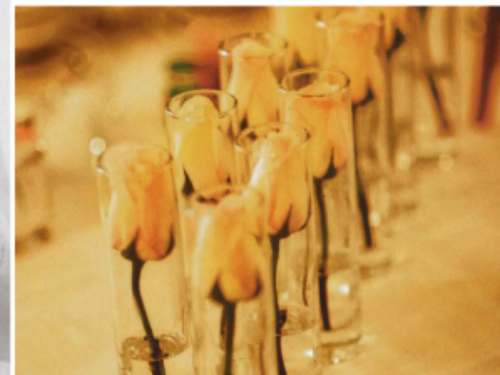




Flower tip: Think outside the vase. Valerie and Ben's centerpieces consisted of individual roses in slim, cylindrical vases grouped together in different geometric shapes.



valerie & ben

AUGUST 1, COLORADO SPRINGS

photography by Paige Eden

Valerie Abitbol and Benjamin Ray hit it off while working for the same advertising agency. While on a trip to Puerto Vallarta, the couple was sitting beneath a gazebo by the beach when Ben, 41, asked Valerie, 32, to come and sit beside him. When he produced a small red box he said he'd found on the beach, Valerie says, "I was really shocked—even though we had talked about it, I didn't expect it." Luckily, she wasn't too surprised to say yes.

The creative couple chose shapes as their inspiration for the day, combining the geometric motif with a punchy palette of deep blue and rose pink. They chose rectangular invites with four blue cards that sat in a pocket, and Valerie designed and created the unique programs and menus. The programs consisted of four triangular cards, in descending size, joined by a ribbon. The menus, which doubled as place cards, used a similar design only with two circles. One circle gave the guest's name, while the other had the actual menu printed on it.

The ceremony unfolded on the terrace of the Broadmoor Hotel, where the wedding party entered to the *Amelies* soundtrack, a subtle nod to the bride's French background. Valerie and Ben stood beneath a huppah, sewn by the groom's mom and dad, in a patchwork-style of pink and blue dupioni silk. The couple wed in a "liberal Jewish" ceremony created to reflect their beliefs (only the bride is Jewish). Instead of exchanging vows aloud, Ben designed the ketubah, which the couple signed separately before the ceremony and the rabbi then read aloud.

At the reception, guests solved a riddle to find their places at tables named for different artists, with a small print of a painting by each set up on each table. In addition to the menus, at each place setting guests also found mini takeout boxes filled with Jordan almonds the mother of the bride had brought over from France. Almost as soon as the newlyweds entered the room they were lifted on chairs for the hoda, and the party did not stop until the wee hours of the night. —K.W. >>



REAL WEDDINGS



VALERIE & BEN'S INGREDIENTS

CEREMONY AND RECEPTION SITE The Broadmoor (719) 634-7711 **PHOTOGRAPHY** Paige Eden, PaigeEden.com, Denver **VIDEOGRAPHY** FaithWalk Productions (720) 338-7393, Highlands Ranch **CONSULTANT** Raven Moore Amerman (720) 333-5875, Boulder **OFFICIANT** Rabbi Adam Morris, Denver **GOWN** Valerie wore a strapless silk mikado gown with a ruffled train called the "Princess Caroline" by Romona Keveza, Felice Bridal Salon (970) 472-0034, Fort Collins **VEIL** The bride designed the veil she had handmade for her; it was inspired by the veil and headpiece Grace Kelly wore in her wedding, Donna Beth (303) 362-5415, Parker **HAIR** Contage Salon (303) 777-8282, Denver **BRIDESMAID DRESSES** Lazaro, The Bridal Collection (720) 493-9454, Denver **FORMALWEAR** Mister Near's Formalwear (303) 980-5999, Denver **FLOWERS** Valerie carried a bouquet of lilies, while her bridesmaids held more non-traditional fare. The maid of honor had a small box covered in pink hydrangea petals, while the maids carried small rectangular fans decorated in the same way. Wildflowers (800) 275-0169 **CATERING** The Broadmoor **MUSIC** JAM-N-SOUNDS (888) 528-JAMN, Denver **CAKE** Instead of an American-style wedding cake, Valerie and Ben served a French *croquebouche*, a tower of vanilla custard and praline cream-filled puff pastries. **FAVORS** Small takeout boxes filled with Jordan almonds **ACCOMMODATIONS** The Broadmoor **HONEYMOON** Three weeks in Asia, visiting Tokyo, Kyoto, Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong