



Versha + Arjun



Versha and Arjun met at UCLA, on the first day of freshman orientation. It sounds like a scene from a rom-com, but Arjun actually spotted across the campus and knew he had to meet her. Versha, however, was not so sure, so she played hard-to-get for a few months. Arjun asked her out a few times, and she kept saying no, but finally relented. When they finally went out, Versha quickly realized she was on the best date ever, and wondered why she hadn't said yes sooner. Since they were both young (Versha was a mere 17, while Arjun was 18), they took things slowly but exclusively, never breaking up, but taking care not to rush things. Nine blissful years later, Arjun proposed to Versha on Coronado Island (near San Diego). Versha's entire family was in on the proposal plans, but Versha was completely unaware. "I was totally blindsided," she recalled. Arjun had hired a photographer as part of his decoy plan, but Versha was totally clueless when the photographer first approached. "This random guy on the beach comes up and asks if he can take a photo of us," she remembered. "So he said, 'I know a great spot for photos, and it's right over here.'" The amused couple walked over to the spot the photographer suggested, and that's where Versha found their names in the sand. Once she saw the names, Arjun got down on his knee and proposed, while the photographer snapped away. Versha of course said yes, and then the next day, close friends and family joined together for a fabulous dinner to celebrate the engagement. When Versha set about planning her wedding, she knew her mother Poonam

would be instrumental in pulling everything together, especially since Versha was in the middle of her pediatric residency. "The planning was definitely a collaborative effort with my mom, though she let my vision take the lead," Versha said. "I knew I wanted a beachfront wedding, so we looked at three or four venues before I chose the Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel. Once I saw the Ritz property, I knew I had to have my wedding there," Versha said. To ensure every detail came together flawlessly, she hired Elegant Events by Nutan Shah to handle coordination. Versha and her mom interviewed three florists and chose Fayaz at Bloom Box Designs. "I wanted something different from what I had seen in weddings before, and I kind of knew what I wanted, but I didn't know how to execute it. I chose Fayaz because he is really good at figuring out what you want and making it happen. I chose creams and golds for my palette because I thought that



combination would be a perfect contrast to all the colorful Indian clothing our guests would be wearing. I really thought it would look elegant and timeless, especially at our beachfront location. We also added a tiny pop of coral as the color accent, then included mirrors and candles throughout the ballroom to add glamour." Arjun was content to let Versha and Poonam take the lead on all the wedding details, but he had one request that was non-negotiable: An elephant for the baraat. "Watching him enter on an elephant was just incredible," Versha recalled. "He was just having so much fun." "For the ceremony, I wanted a mandap that was going to complement the beach scape, so I wanted it to incorporate elements from nature. Fayaz included greenery and flowers, along with a chandelier, on the inside of our mandap, and it was so wonderful to look up and see a little garden during the ceremony. Fayaz helped us achieve our vision beautifully." Popular officiant Shukavak Dasa presided over the Hindu ceremony, and his presence had a lot of meaning for Versha and her family, as he'd been a family friend since Versha was just four years old. Shukavak clearly felt a personal connection with Versha and her family, too, as evidenced by the many kind words he said about her during the ceremony.



Vendor LIST

Photographer:
Dina Douglass & Yoshi Morimoto
Andrena Photography
Coordinator:
Elegant Events by Nutan Shah
Florist:
Bloom Box Designs
Videographer:
Impressive Creations
DJ & Lighting:
Special Occasions Los Angeles
Hair & Makeup:
Oscar Naranjo
Entertainment:
The Jewels that Raq
Rentals:
Revelry, Bloom Box &
Needle-Free Productions
Elephant Rental:
Have Trunk Will Travel
Mendhi: Neha Assar
Officiant: Shukavak Dasa
Cake: Christopher Garrens
Pastry & Dessert Buffet:
Ocho Rios by Keith



Versha chose to enter her ceremony in a doli because she felt like it was something that was traditional yet beautiful. "Whenever I've seen weddings in movies, the bride's first step out of a doli is always such a pretty sight. It's just so beautiful and moving, so it's something I always wanted to have at my own wedding," she said. For her wedding outfit, Versha did her shopping in New Delhi. "My mom went to India two weeks before I did, and narrowed down all the best stores for me to look at. This was just so helpful. When I arrived in Delhi, I tried on hundreds of dresses, but the two I ended up with were the ones my mom chose for me before I even got there! I couldn't believe it. She has such great taste, and she knows me so well. "The wedding dress is from Shantanu & Nikhil, while the reception dress was made by Gautav Gupta. The reception dress in particular was really unique, as it featured a series of petticoats for the skirt with a bejeweled floor-length light jacket serving as the bodice, sleeves and dress. It's just two pieces, but it looked incredible and it was so easy to wear," Versha remembered.

"For the reception, we wanted to make sure our 400 guests weren't bored by endless speeches, so we put a lot of thought into entertainment and performances. We found a company called The Jewels That Raq, and they offered up performers in various styles. Our guests were thrilled by a snake dancer, Brazilian dancers, tango dancers, knife dancers and belly dancers. We were so happy to be able to provide so many different styles of entertainment." Versha also took care finding the perfect wedding cake designer. "Christopher Garrens made the cake and he's awesome. Not only was it gorgeous, but it was so yummy. He is just so artistic! He did three sketches before he came up with the design we ultimately chose, and I was just floored by how beautiful our cake was. "If there's one piece of advice I could give to girls planning their weddings, it would be to just relax and enjoy the process. It's so easy to stress out about every little thing, but at the end of the day, all that matters is that you're marrying the love of your life, and that all your friends and family are there to celebrate with you. My wedding was the most fun I ever had. And I'm so excited to start my life with Arjun."