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# at home on the RANCH

*The tradition and charm of an Arizona ranch was both backdrop and blank canvas for Kimberly and Marcel's weekend-long wedding event.*

by KRISTIN BUSTAMANTE  
photography by HOLLYE SCHUMACHER

From their engagement after a rare family dinner to impromptu stargazing in the Sonoran Desert, everything about Kimberly Quinnell and Marcel Valenta's wedding journey was comfortable.

Marcel and Kimberly met through mutual friends at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., while he was completing law school and she was finishing her first year of medical school. After being introduced to each other, the pair spent the evening dancing at a local club and ended the night chatting and noshing at a Mexican restaurant in Chicago. After several years of dating, the love affair culminated in a weekend-long wedding fiesta in southern Arizona.

The search for the perfect venue took the couple around the world, from Germany and Italy to various locations in the States. After traveling the globe and finally feeling at home with the other guests at Rancho de la Osa in Sasabe, Ariz., the couple started planning their celebration for May 13–14, 2005.

Rancho de la Osa whispers rustic elegance from the moment you pass through the unassuming cattle gate into the peaceful courtyard embraced on each side by brightly colored haciendas. "We were drawn to the ranch because it is a unique, almost spiritual place and right from the beginning I felt confident that they would know how to handle our wedding details," says Marcel. Because the ranch staff can fulfill virtually any request, Kimberly and Marcel were able



Rancho de la Osa in Sasabe set a relaxing mood for Kimberly Quinnell and Marcel Valenta's May wedding. The ranch is tucked in the majestic Baboquivari Mountains and provides a secluded, romantic getaway for couples and their guests.

to customize their wedding weekend to accommodate family and friends from as far away as Argentina and Germany.

With the venue decided, Kimberly began looking for the perfect dress—a search that ended again in comfort. When she tried on the three-tiered ivory gown by Italian designer Domo Adami, "it just felt like me," says Kimberly. In fact, she was so comfortable in her dress that at the end of the evening she added a simple sweater for warmth as she gazed at the stars and felt just as elegant as she had walking down the aisle.

Rancho de la Osa's rigorous attention to detail ensured that Kimberly and Marcel's guests experienced the traditions and lore of the Southwest with all the comforts of a resort vacation. On Friday evening, guests sat down to an authentic Spanish fiesta, complete  
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with roaming mariachis and a piñata filled with sweet treats. The next morning, family and friends from around the world gathered for breakfast in the main hacienda. Another personal touch, a participation rodeo, gave guests a taste of cowboy life on horseback. As guests prepared for a trail ride, Kimberly and Marcel stole a

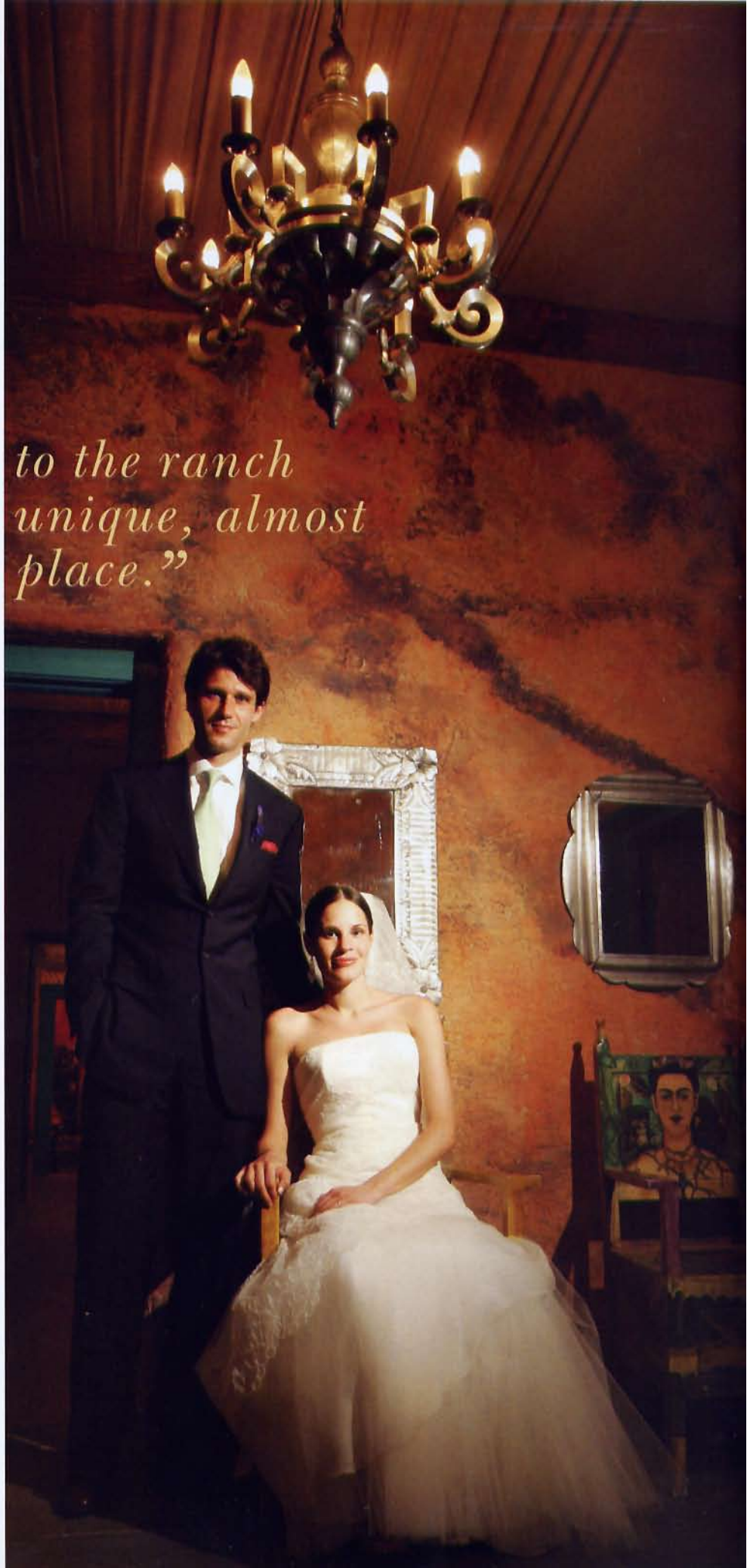
*“We were drawn to the ranch because it is a unique, almost spiritual place.”*

few moments on the patio to practice their first dance.

Framed by the brilliant blue backdrop of the main hacienda, Kimberly and Marcel's ceremony overflowed with elegant simplicity. The sisters of the bride and groom acted as maid of honor and best woman, and Kimberly's niece sprinkled petals down the stone path that Kimberly chose for her aisle. Attracted to her ability to capture the soul behind a picture and not just the subject, the couple asked photographer Hollye Schumacher to capture every moment of their event on film.

A string quartet provided the music as the bride and her father walked down the aisle. With equal amounts of tears and joy, Kimberly and Marcel exchanged vows beneath an arch covered with floral creations by Table Tops, Etc. in Scottsdale. The serenity of the Sonoran Desert embraced the couple as they shared their first kiss as husband and wife.

As the sun slipped behind the Baboquivari Mountains, guests left their words of wisdom for the bride and groom inscribed on tiny cards hanging from a vase of pussy willows—a desert twist on a traditional Asian well-wishing tree. During dinner in the courtyard, the blending of cultures continued as guests were serenaded by the sounds of a Spanish guitar and





Music from a string quartet accompanied Kimberly and her father down the aisle of the ranch's main hacienda. The whole day was full of unique details. The modern three-tiered square cake was designed by Ilsa's Konditorei and Bakery in Tucson.





violin. "It felt as though we were lost somewhere in the Mediterranean, not on a desert patio," says Marcel.

After cutting their cake from Ilsa's Konditorei and Bakery in Tucson and dancing all night in the oldest standing building in Arizona (another of the ranch's unique features), the bride and groom ended their wedding day with a bit of stargazing, marveling at their unobstructed view of the desert sky.

"I don't think it could have been any better," Kimberly fondly remembers. "It was as much as you can picture your wedding to be."

Kimberly ended her wedding weekend just as she began it: Absolutely comfortable, in the arms of her new husband, Marcel. \*



Kimberly and Marcel's wedding was an intimate celebration with approximately 50 close friends and relatives. The dinner table was lined with nests of blue robin's eggs (which were really chocolate-covered almonds); the couple chose halibut and steak as a main course. Kimberly's bouquet, designed by Table Tops, Etc., was made with hydrangea, cream peonies, blue delphinium and lavender.