



ali hillis & matt schwarz

The actress and her financier fiancé's coastal wedding was a real cliffhanger

courtship Hillis had “heard great things” about Schwarz from a coworker in 1998. Back then, she was waiting tables at Brother Jimmy’s BBQ in N.Y.C., which Schwarz now co-owns. The two were introduced in 2002, but they didn’t start dating until a spontaneous trip to Cabo San Lucas. *The Beverly Hills Chihuahua* actress had a lull in her filming schedule and “just wanted to drink out of a coconut.” Instead, she fell in love twice—with Mexico and with Schwarz.

proposal After 10 months of long-distance dating, Schwarz moved to L.A. in October 2006. On a trip back east a year later, he took her for a stroll on a jetty overlooking the Connecticut River and presented her with a diamond that his father had given his mother. “It’s really special to have that,” Hillis says.

ceremony On August 2, 2008, 140 guests gathered at the Cliffs Resort in Pismo Beach, Calif., which overlooks the Pacific Ocean. Hillis, in a gown by R-Mine Bridal Couture, and Schwarz, donning a Ted Baker suit, exchanged vows in an interfaith Jewish and Catholic service.

reception After announcing the new “Señor and Señora Schwarz,” a mariachi band kicked off cocktail hour, and Coronas and mini margaritas were passed around—a tribute to their Cabo trip. At the reception, the San Luis Jazz Band kept the crowd rocking all night, says Hillis. “Everybody screamed, ‘One more song! One more song!’” —ELIZABETH JENKINS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CAMERON INGALLS



steal this idea

The couple gave each guest a personalized note tucked into a recycled glass bottle. For more original gift ideas, visit instyleweddings.com/steal.



1 CAKE The three-tier confection from Morning Star Creations in San Luis Obispo, Calif., was embellished with branches and sugar-paste African orchids. It featured two different flavors: The bottom and top tiers were yellow cake with Bavarian cream and raspberry filling, while the middle was dark chocolate-chip cake with chocolate mousse and raspberry filling. **2 DECOR** The couple seated guests at three long feasting tables adorned with silk runners hand-sewn by the bride’s aunt, as well as square vases filled with dendrobium orchids by Pismo Beach Florist. **3 MUSIC** After a touching, quiet ceremony, a high-energy mariachi band pumped up the crowd. **4 CEREMONY DETAIL** Hillis and Schwarz provided parasols to shield guests from the sun while they waited for the ceremony to begin. **5 PERSONAL TOUCH** The crafty bride used a paint pen to decorate rocks with romantic words like “destiny.” **6 TRADITION** The pair lit a unity candle beneath a Jewish chuppah made of driftwood taken from—and later returned to—the beach below. **7 BOUQUET** Hillis carried freesia, phalaenopsis orchids, cymbidium orchids, echeveria, brunia, dusty miller, nigella and tulips designed by Adornments in San Luis Obispo, Calif. **8 THE TOSS** In lieu of rice, guests tossed white rose petals (they’re biodegradable) as the eco-friendly newlyweds exited the ceremony.