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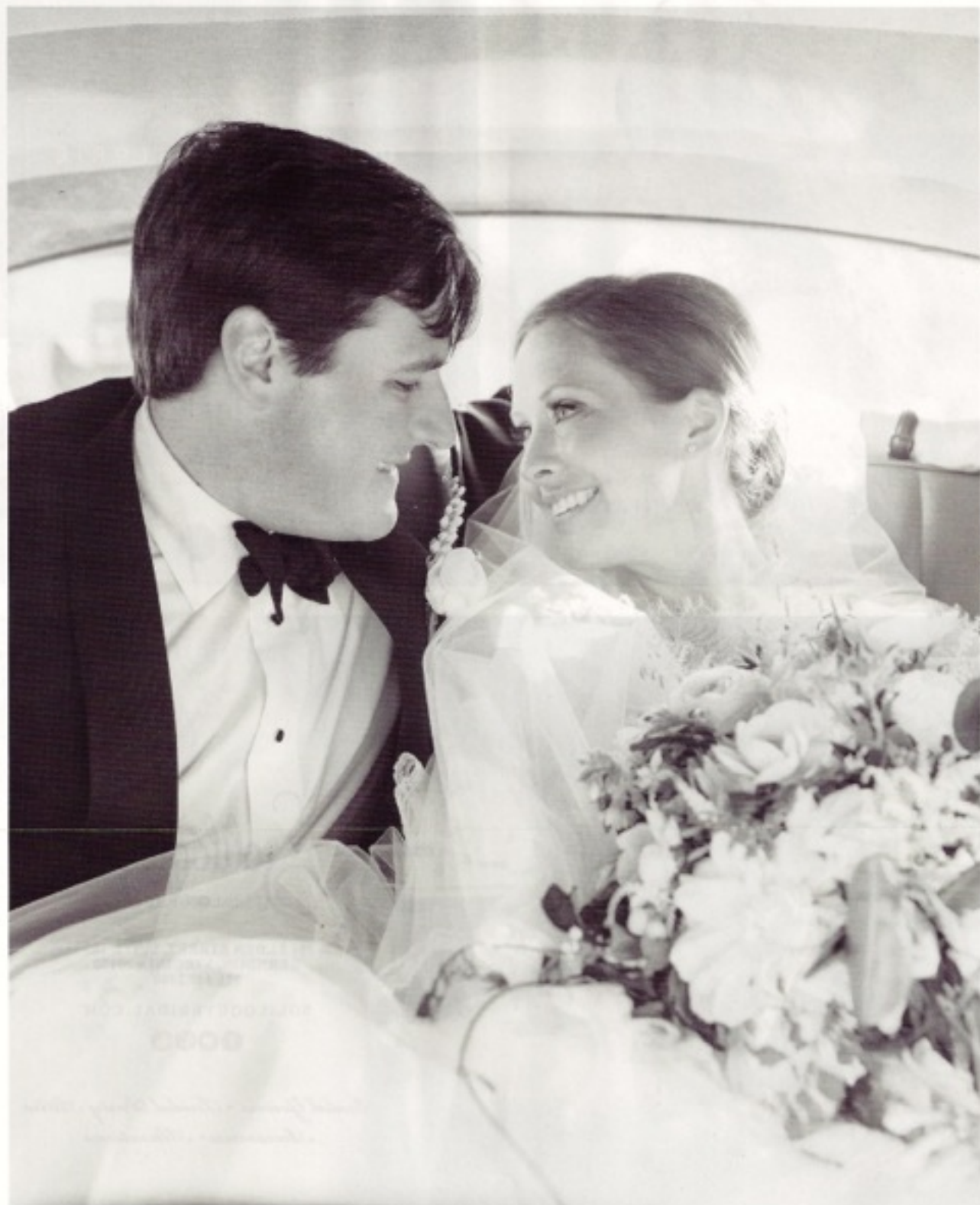


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jessica and hunter 09.07.13

linville, nc

Before Jessica, there was Jennifer. Ok, it's not what you're thinking. The story of Jennifer is not about an ex-girlfriend. It's actually the story of how Jessica and Hunter's history began with a comic case of mistaken identity. Hunter Brush and Jessica Smith were students at The University of the South in Seawater, TN when they were introduced at a party. "I thought my friend said that Jessica's name was Jennifer," laughs Hunter, who continued to call her Jennifer the rest of the evening. Despite Hunter's fumble, Jessica had a sense of humor and agreed to go out with him. They dated for four years of college and began a long-distance relationship after graduation when Hunter went to law school in Knoxville, TN and Jessica moved to Charlotte, NC to work for her family's business. It was difficult to live apart, but they visited each other often, meeting halfway at Jessica's family's mountain house near Linville, NC.

Nine years later in the fall of 2012, Hunter wanted to propose to their alma mater and enlisted the help of Jessica's father to orchestrate his plans. Jessica's father convinced her to travel with him to Seawater under the clever guise of a business trip and Jessica thought they were attending a dedication ceremony of the recently renovated Seawater Golf Course. "Hunter even had the gentleman that was heading up the renovation for the school write a letter inviting me to the 'dedication,'" Jessica laughs. Hunter explained to Jessica that he would be working on a case in Mississippi and could not attend, erasing any chance she'd catch on. "Right before the event, my father suggested that we should drive to the golf course to see one of the new holes that overlooked the bluff, with views that seemed to go on forever," says Jessica. "As we drove up, I saw someone sitting on a stone bench and I immediately knew it was Hunter. When my father brought the car to a stop, he looked at me with tears in his eyes and simply smiled while I stammered over and over, 'What are y'all doing?!' Her dad drove away and Hunter bent to one knee, asking Jessica to marry him on the mountain where it all began. As the final element of his surprise, Hunter drove Jessica to a nearby bed and breakfast where both of their families were waiting to celebrate.

Jessica and Hunter imagined a fall wedding in the scenic mountains of North Carolina and set their date for September of the following year. "For us, going to those mountains was like going home," Jessica explains. They loved the area and instantly knew the Eseeola Lodge near Linville was the perfect venue to host their nuptials. "Dating back to the 1890s, Eseeola seems like a place from another time," says Jessica. "The rustic inn was built in 1936 and with its distinctive American chestnut bark shingles and siding, it's simply a masterpiece." The Eseeola Lodge has several different sites for weddings and Jessica and Hunter chose The Comp, tucked in the shadow of Grandfather Mountain with an organic open-air design and stunning views of the lake and mountains.

Jessica worked with the talented team at WED in Charleston, SC, led by Ellen Cohn-Robinson, to design and coordinate their event. "Ellen was the real deal and I loved her confidence," explains Jessica. "Ellen and her team truly created the exact wedding I'd envisioned. Best of all, I gained some great friendships at WED that continue today." Ellen and Jessica took inspiration from the natural setting and pastoral mountain landscapes at Eseeola and built upon a neutral palette of ivory, soft greens and pale grays. An inspired English countryside theme developed

and they incorporated subtle accents of magnolia blooms. Studio R in Charleston crafted unique custom envelope liners using an antique magnolia print for Hunter and Jessica's save the dates, the perfect complement to their lovely paper suite featuring elegant gold calligraphy. "I commissioned my wonderfully talented friend, Insee Haynes, to design a custom watercolor crest with our initials that were outlined with botanicals and magnolias," says Jessica. The crest appeared throughout their wedding design, featured on welcome party invitations, burrito bag favor tags and the signage directing guests to the reception and the church.

Jessica chose an exquisite, strapless ball gown by Vera Wang in Charity lace, featuring a defined, structured bodice and veiled full overlay. She used the lace left over from hemming to design a delicate off-the-shoulder shrug to wear during the ceremony. "My dress was the most beautiful thing I've ever worn in my life and every detail was spectacular," she says. "The most classic and elegant person I know, my mother, picked 'the one' and I never would have guessed it if it weren't for her. As much as I hate to admit it, mothers really do know best!" Jessica's bridesmaids wore a variety of flowing chiffon gowns by Lisa Rose in a muted neutral hue. "I thought a neutral color would be the most timeless choice," explains Jessica. "So I decided on taupe, which ended up looking fabulous against the mountain landscape."

The couple exchanged traditional vows in a nearby church and a gospel choir led the congregation in "Oh Happy Day" as Jessica and Hunter exited the ceremony. "We're both very laid back and fun and we wanted our wedding to reflect that, while also being something special and memorable for our friends and families," says Jessica. Guests enjoyed a selection of passed hors d'oeuvres and sipped on Prosecco and spiked "Linville Lemonade" cocktails as the sun began to set behind the mountains. Dinner was served on guest tables covered in pale linens and mahogany farm tables set in a long row, while draped fabric and flickering candlelight gave the atmosphere a warm, welcoming glow. Sara Gimshaw of Sara York Gimshaw Design transformed the space, combining the rustic elements of Eseeola Lodge with spectacular arrangements of ivory and white blooms and cascading greenery. A beautiful structure of branches, greenery and hanging votives was suspended from the ceiling above the row of uncovered farm tables, adding drama and dimension.

Dessert included Jessica and Hunter's simple, three-tier almond wedding cake adorned with delicate magnolia bloom pastillage. "Kathy Allen meticulously rendered the leaves and blooms out of sugar and then hand-painted each one with the detail," says Jessica. "All of the guests thought they were real flowers and I now have them in a decorative pedestal serving as a great remembrance of our wedding day." Jessica incorporated her aunt's exquisite heirloom veil into the design as part of a centerpiece of the reception. "It was a lace veil from Beuselt that belonged to my aunt who had just recently lost her battle with ovarian cancer," says Jessica. "She had originally offered for me to wear her veil, but we decided to do something even more meaningful and make it a focal point."

Guests danced all night, taking occasional breaks to indulge in late night snacks including Kitpy Keme donuts and mini blue cheese burgers. Everyone was surprised



by a dazzling fireworks show after Jessica and Hunter exited among a flurry of sparklers. They pretended to leave, but returned to the dance floor to continue the celebration. "Besides our actual wedding ceremony, the late night dance party was my favorite part of the night," remembers Hunter. "It was so incredible being out there on the dance floor with all of our favorite people, just dancing the night away." BH

Event Planning and Design: WED: Wedding Event Design. **Ceremony location:** Crosson Presbyterian Church in Clanton, NC. **Reception Venue and Catering:** The Camp of The Beechlo Lodge at Unville Golf Club in Unville, NC. **Flora:** Sara York Grimshaw Designs. **Baker:** Kathy Allen Fine Cakes. **Party Rentals:** Snyder Rental. **Lighting:** Technical Event Company. **Save the Dates:** Studio R. **Invitations and Wedding Papers:** Artzberger Stationers. **Customized Watercolor Crest:** Innie By Design. **Calligraphy:** Grace Edwards Calligraphy. **Ceremony Music:** Allegro Music and Life City Gospel Choir, directed by Robbi Kenney. **Reception and After Party Entertainment:** Big Swing and The Ballroom Masters and DJ Ben Felton, both through EastCoast Entertainment. **Ceremony Gowns:** Vera Wang from Joan Pflow Bridal Salon. **Reception Dress:** Valentino. **Shoes:** Jimmy Choo. **Bridesmaid Dresses:** Lella Rose from Bella Bridesmaid Charlotte. **Hair and Makeup:** A Stuart Laurence Salon. **Groom and Groomsmen Attire:** J. Michael Coffees. **Jenior Bridesmaid Attire:** Alfred Sung from Bella Bridesmaid Charlotte. **Ring Bearer Attire:** J.Crew. **Power Girl Attire:** Hayden Dima Bridal. **Rings:** Elizabeth Sims, Inc. **Transportation:** Azalea Carriage Transportation and Elite Limousine LLC.

Photography: Corbin Gurkin, www.corbingurkin.com.



