

# MODERN LUXURY WEDDINGS

**SOUTH FLORIDA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

*THE NEW  
ROMANTICS*  
Fall for the Season's  
Swoonworthy Looks

*PLUS*  
Scenting Your  
Wedding, Registry  
Refinement &  
Baubles to Last From  
This Day Forward

## JANINE & JEFF

MIAMI'S HOTTEST CELEBRITY  
CHEF COUPLE SAYS "I DO"

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# SOMETHING NEW

## ISLAND ESCAPE

Newly transformed after a \$50 million renovation, **Hawks Cay Resort** ([hawkscay.com](http://hawkscay.com)) in the Florida Keys is an idyllic place to say "I do," according to newlyweds Sara Elster and Hunter Spiller. After Hurricane Irma postponed their original wedding date, they became the first couple to walk down the aisle after the grand reopening last fall. "I was so impressed with Jennifer Tacey and her knowledge of the property," says Sara. "She explained the various venue options in detail and how their individual layouts could make for the perfect day." Situated on 60 oceanfront acres on Duck Key—halfway between Key Largo and Key West—the reimagined resort is the largest in the Florida Keys, and the venue opportunities are almost endless. If you don't mind a few wedding splashes at your ceremony, tie the knot on the Dolphin Deck (120 guests), which overlooks the Atlantic Ocean as well as the resort's playful pod of resident bottlenose dolphins in their natural habitat. Other ceremony options include the palm tree-lined Sunrise Lawn (250 guests), picturesque Sunset Lawn (150 guests) and roses in the sand-style Sunset Beach (50 guests). Additional reception venue options range from poolside at either Oasis Cay (60 guests) or Coral Cay (200 guests), as well as a luxurious waterfront ballroom (350 guests). "Only guests say our wedding was the most beautiful one they've ever seen," adds Sara, who chose the Sunrise Lawn for her ceremony and Oasis Cay for the reception. "The entire team went so far above and beyond for us and we will be back at least once a year to celebrate."

Flowers by JH designed the arch for Sara and Hunter's wedding at Hawks Cay Resort's Sunrise Lawn.

By Kara Frankel // Photography by Core Studios

SCENE  
florida keys wedding

SARA HIRTER &  
HUNTER SPITLER

October 20, 2018  
Ceremony & Reception: **Hawks Cay Resort**  
Photography by **Care Studios**

**THE COUPLE:** Sara Hirter and Hunter Spidler first met on a lobstering trip in Key West when sparks flew. The Sarasota couple got engaged during a day of boating with friends at The Cove sandbar when Hunter got down on one knee and proposed to Sara on the bow of the boat.

**THE PARTY:** The couple chose **Hawks Cay Resort** in the Middle Keys for their wedding. "Hunter and I were blown away as soon as we walked in the lobby," recalls Sara. "It was beautiful and it just felt right." When they picked a date in September 2017, they never could have guessed that their wedding would be sidelined in the wake of Hurricane Irma. While **Hawks Cay** was severely impacted and had to close in order to undergo a major renovation, the couple decided to stick with their dream venue and postponed their wedding until the reopening. When they arrived, Sara remembers, "We felt like A-list celebrities walking onto the red carpet. Everyone knew us, knew our story and was so appreciative that we were back." Their ceremony took place on the water and they danced under a full moon and twinkling stars.

"The entire night was perfect," says Sara.

**THE HONEYMOON:** The couple enjoyed their stay in the Keys for their honeymoon and explored the islands together. —SB



Clockwise from left: Sara locked garters in a Justin Alexander gown and while Hunter looked sharp in a Joseph Abboud suit; **Hawks Cay Resort** in Duck Key provided a gorgeous venue for the couple's nuptials; the bride's best friend Valerie Witchey designed invitations in the couple's blue-and-white color scheme.



From far left: Wedding planner Peggy Russell topped tables with nautical-inspired touches including lanterns and navy napkins; the florists at **Flowers by J & J** incorporated white roses into the bride's bouquet.

THE LIST

Wedding Venue & Catering: **Hawks Cay Resort**, [hawkscay.com](http://hawkscay.com)  
Wedding Planner: **Peggy Russell**, Destination Wedding Studio, [destinationweddingstudio.com](http://destinationweddingstudio.com)

Bride's Gown & Veil: **Justin Alexander**, The Perfect Dress, [theperfectweddingdress.net](http://theperfectweddingdress.net)  
Bride's Shoes: **Badgley Mischka**, [badgleymischka.com](http://badgleymischka.com)  
Bride's Hair & Makeup: **Studio Marie Pierre**, Hair & Makeup, [studiomariepierre.com](http://studiomariepierre.com)

Groom's Suit: **Joseph Abboud**, [josephabboud.com](http://josephabboud.com)  
Floral: **Flowers by J & J**, [jaysflowers.com](http://jaysflowers.com)  
Cake & Favors: **Sweet Savannah's**, [sweetsavannah.com](http://sweetsavannah.com)  
Invitations: **Valerie Witchey**, [valeriewitchey.com](http://valeriewitchey.com)

Rentals & Linens: **Over the Top, Inc.**, [overthetopinc.com](http://overthetopinc.com)  
Entertainment: **DJ Guru**, [djguru.com](http://djguru.com)  
Photography: **Marika & Bob Carr**, **Care Studios**, [carewedding.com](http://carewedding.com)