





IN STYLE
Frances' six maids wore silver Grecian-style gowns (left) and carried parasols to shield them from the heat of the day (above).

FLORAL FAVOURITE
Hydrangea and king proteas (right). Frances and Paul's favourite flowers, added a special touch. Frances' bouquet was a mix of lisianthus, soft roses and silver brunia, a local shrub.



SUN-DRENCHED SPLENDOUR

Frances and Paul's wedding was in full bloom against a backdrop of the golden vineyards of South Africa

A joke and a chance meeting at a Cuban bar in Cape Town was the start of a two-year courtship for Frances Herschell and Paul Whitburn. As Frances popped to the ladies room, she quipped to her sister, "When I come back, I'll have my husband with me!" She returned alone but then almost immediately, as if on cue, Paul appeared and introduced himself. "We were hysterical, and he laughed along with us, not realising what the joke was about," recalls Frances, 31. "We then sat talking to each other the whole night."

In November 2008, plans for their wedding began as effortlessly as that first meeting when Paul, also 31, proposed on the dunes of Paternoster; a fishing village on South Africa's west coast. "Even though the wind was howling, we found a beautiful sheltered spot and opened a bottle of champagne,"



YOUR WEDDINGS



AL FRESCO
The outdoor reception looked gorgeous with armfuls of pretty arrangements. Lamps lit up the lilies, king proteas, soft roses, lisianthus and chrysanthemums, while trays of the same flowers in muted tones were placed around the reception. The cake was covered in rosebuds and the whole celebration had a timeless, romantic feel.

► Frances says. "I smiled so much that night and the next day that my cheeks actually hurt."

The brief for the celebration 14 months later was simple: an unfussy but upscale affair with good company and great food. "We didn't have a particular theme, but a sophisticated feel is what we were after," Frances says. They enlisted the services of wedding planner Hannes Loubser at Wedding Concepts to help translate their vision into reality. "Frances and Paul are two of those real, down-to-earth souls," says Hannes. "The operative word during the planning process was 'uncomplicated'."

After looking at several not-quite-right wedding dresses, low-maintenance bride Frances chose her Spanish lace San Patrick gown online – without trying it on first. "I know, huge risk-taker," she says. "But when I saw the picture on their site, that was that – exactly what I wanted!"

Surrounded by sun-drenched vineyards and mountain silhouettes, Frances and Paul were married in a traditional outdoor ceremony on 9 January 2010, a flawless 39°C day. "My bridesmaids wore gorgeous ribboned corsages on their wrists, and my sister did a wonderful reading from *The Velveteen Rabbit* that talks about how you know you're really loved," Frances says. "Paul's sister said the most beautiful prayer, which she wrote herself. It was incredibly special."

Paul was involved in every step of choosing the decorations for the day. "I have the most amazing husband," says Frances. "He sorted out all of the table centres and picked out the flowers, chandeliers and lamps for the venue with the help of the ladies at Leipzig Flowers." The arrangements were made up of a mix of open roses, lisianthus, velvety lamb's ears, arum lilies and alstroemeria, all in soft greys and pinks, sage green and ivory.

After drinks and canapés on the lawn, the



wedding party of 120 moved to a marquee glistening with fairy lights and candelabra lamps for an elegant dinner of salmon gravadlax, fillet of beef, and berry and mascarpone pavlova. Guests then hit the grey and white checkerboard dancefloor for an evening party that lasted into the small hours.

"After we left the reception at about 1am, Paul and I went and sat with our feet in the pool in front of the manor house, looking at the stars," says Frances. "It was such a spectacular day."

FRANCES' ADDRESS BOOK

Photography Christine Meintjes
(christinemeintjes.co.za)

Bride's dress San Patrick (sanpatrick.com)

Venue Vrede en Lust Wine Estate (vnl.co.za)

Wedding planner Hannes Loubser at
Wedding Concepts (weddingconcepts.co.za)

Flowers Leipzig Flowers (leipzigfloraldesign.co.za)

Biscuit favours Roxanne Floquet
(roxannefloquet.com)

