



After years of attending services at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity, Stephanie Frehse knew the Lempesis family, but somehow had never met pappu Pete's son Dan. The patriarch remedied that by setting the two youngsters up on a blind date and a year later, Dan was gearing up to propose.

But fate stepped in (again) and changed up the would-be bridegroom's plans when Stephanie opened a credit card statement that showed a major—a one-in-a-lifetime kind of major—purchase from a jeweler. Dan was standing right there as it happened and broke into the hallmark of their relationship: laughter. "We both started cracking up," says Stephanie, "because all his hard work to surprise me fell through." Nonetheless, Dan told her to relax, that nothing would happen for a while. But later that very night, during a visit to his family's Folly Beach home, they took a walk and Dan popped the question as dusk settled over them.

Soon after, Stephanie went about planning their wedding with the aid of A Charleston Bride and inspired by her hometown's moodier side. "I love the way Charleston looks after a storm at sunset," says Stephanie, "so that's where we started—dark and stormy." That translated into posh gray French furniture, violet florals, and black tapered candles. And for Dan? He got a "man cave" lounge area with a wall of beer taps and a cigar roller.

When the day rolled around, everyone headed back to the church where their story started, and both Stephanie's grandfather and her father walked her down the aisle. After the bride and groom were pronounced husband and wife, the congregation headed to Lowndes Grove Plantation where Stephanie danced first with her husband, then with her dad and pappous. "The reception could have been over after those dances and I would have been a happy camper," she says. And to that, we say *opa!* —*Hannah Chillag*



(top) Invitations, hand-delivered to each guest, were tied with velvet ribbon in a rich shade of Bordeaux. (above) To find just the right flowers at the tail end of winter meant flying blooms in from Holland, Japan, Israel, and Australia. Two enormous arrangements guided guests to the entrance of the reception. (left) "I'm a no-fuss kind of girl who grew up in a large family of boys," says Stephanie, explaining her low-key beauty on the glamorous day. "It wouldn't have felt right to be made up in a way that wasn't me."



(top) Charleston's Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, where the couple wed, was built in 1958, but its Byzantine style has roots that reach back to late 400 A.D. (top right) The five-tier cake crafted by Patrick Properties Hospitality Group was adorned with shimmering sugar pearls, tiny blue crabs, and oyster shells as an ode to the couple's love of seafood. (middle) Cookies baked by Stephanie's childhood Greek school teacher and boxed by her mother and grandmother were offered as favors. (above) Slate tiles anchored the reception tent in the same cool blue-gray that pervaded the décor.



vendors

Wedding design: A Charleston Bride
Florals: Stems Floral Design by Jonie Larosee
Photography: Timwill Photography
Venue: Lowndes Grove Plantation
Catering, bar service, cake: Patrick Properties Hospitality Group
Linens: BBJ Linens
Tables, chairs, lounge area sofas, china, stemware: Snyder Events
Lounge area chairs: 428 Main Vintage Rentals
Lighting: Technical Event Company
Stationery: Studio R Design
Calligraphy: Elizabeth Porcher Jones
Bride's gown: Lazaro (available locally through Gown Boutique of Charleston)
Beauty: Updo Charleston (hair); Moore MakeUp (makeup)
Menswear: Groom's own

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