

A Homegrown Affair

THE MEGAN SWEET AND ALEX JUNES WEDDING

STORY BY KATHERINE LACAZE ■ PHOTOS BY DON FRANK

For Clatsop County locals Megan and Alex Junes, their Sept. 29 wedding in Surf Pines was a truly homegrown affair, with friends and families contributing from start to finish to pull off the event.

Both Alex and Megan grew up on the North Coast—the Astoria/Knapapa area and Gearhart area, respectively—with families active in their communities. They met several years ago when Alex was on a group date with another girl at the bowling alley, accompanied by a friend who invited Megan to stop by. It wasn't long before they were asking mutual friends about one another, which led to nearly three years of dating.

After getting engaged in Maui in December 2017, they agreed they wanted their wedding to be close to home. Finally, they decided upon the backyard at Megan's childhood home. The only problem, Megan joked, was she and her brother had thoroughly enjoyed—and destroyed—the backyard in their youth. It took nine months to revitalize the outdoor space, installing new landscape and fresh grass. Her parents, Denele and Chad Sweet, as well as several family friends, pitched in to accomplish the giant task.

"It was an army who put this all together," Megan said. "We completely redid the backyard for this wedding."

Not only was this a project Megan's parents wanted to get done, it also saved the couple money on the venue and gave them the familiar and "very Clatsop County" setting they desired, Megan said. They took advantage of the natural beauty of the newly renovated backyard and added their own touches as well. One of Megan's favorite features was a chandelier they handmade using chicken wire and tall, white-plumed Pampas grass. Megan said it was one of several unique decoration ideas that came together nearly last-minute.

On the day of the wedding, more than 200 guests gathered in the Sweets' backyard for the ceremony

and reception. Although a large tent was set up, the altar was situated in the open. Guests toughed out the rain—which was steady throughout the entire day—for the ceremony.

"It was the definition of an Oregon Coast wedding," Megan said.

The couple encouraged semi-formal attire for the affair but did not set a specific dress code. The groom and his three groomsmen wore suits and ties, and Megan's father chose a partial suit. The bride wore a floor-length, sleeveless dress. She was determined not to make her maid of honor and bridesmaid pay hundreds of dollars and be miserable in dresses they didn't like. So she told them they could choose their own long dresses, as long as they fit into the wedding's neutral color scheme, featuring beige and cream tones.

The boutonnieres and bouquets for the wedding party also incorporated whites, creams, and dusty rose. Because of Megan's love for olive branches, the arrangements included Italian Ruscus, which has a similar appearance. The flowers were designed by Cannon Beach florist Basketcase, owned by Debbie Nelson, a friend of the Sweet family.

Other longtime friends and community members involved were Chef John Newman, of Newmans at 988 in Cannon Beach, as the caterer and John Chapman of Seaside who served as the DJ. The cake and cupcakes were made by one of Alex's longtime family friends, who brought supplies down from her home in Washington to do the baking at his mother's house in the days before the wedding.

Another special element for the couple was that the ceremony was officiated by Alex's father, Brian Junes, who had already acquired his license to officiate Alex's older brother's wedding.

"We both love our families a heck of a lot, so we wanted to make sure our families were a part of it," Megan said. Knowing they would be emotional, the couple asked him to read off the vows they had written down, which was "the best way forward for both of us," Megan said.

After the wedding, the couple spent a week at home to help clean up from the wedding before heading to Oahu, Hawaii for their honeymoon. ♥

