



“I DIDN’T WANT SOMETHING TOO TRENDY OR CONTEMPORARY. THE ST. REGIS REMINDED ME OF A SOUTHERN MANSION.”
—ALEXANDRIA LOPEZ

A Crystal Celebration

The St. Regis Atlanta hosts an opulent wedding in the celebrity couple’s hometown.

BY KRISTIN DEVOTO | PHOTOS BY TINA ROWDEN

WHEN AN ATLANTA HAWK GETS MARRIED IN HIS HOMETOWN, ONLY the most captivating setting will do. As Alexandria Lopez began planning her wedding to basketball star Josh Smith, she knew she wanted an elegant and intimate event infused with personality.

With a support team of Atlanta’s finest wedding professionals, the bride produced a wedding celebration that sparkled with the shimmer of more than 8,000 crystals, displayed personality to spare with the creative use of the couple’s monogram, tantalized everyone’s taste-buds with an innovative menu and kept guests dancing all night.

And since luxury and opulence was the wedding’s theme, it’s not surprising that the memorable event was held at The St. Regis Atlanta, which Lopez fell in love with at first sight.

“I knew right then that it was where I wanted to get married,” she says.

The Wedding

Lopez, who first met Smith at age 16, enlisted wedding planner Ashley Baber of Ashley Baber Weddings to help her make her dream of an elegant and intimate wedding a reality. Baber, one of the city’s most in-demand planners, knew the key to planning the dream wedding was nailing down a location. Although the bride and groom initially considered a destination wedding in the Bahamas, they ultimately decided that an Atlanta celebration might make travel easier for their family and friends. Atlanta is also Smith’s hometown, and where the two have lived since 2007, with their 3-year-old daughter Genesis and 18-month-old son Josh Jr.

Baber suggested that a hotel might be the best way to achieve the uncompromising luxury the bride desired, and arranged tours of the event facilities at six of Atlanta’s top hotels, with The St. Regis Atlanta



scheduled in the middle of their day. Lopez had never been to the St. Regis before, but was impressed as soon as she walked in.

“It’s classic,” Lopez says. “I didn’t want something too trendy or contemporary. The St. Regis reminded me of a Southern mansion.”

The gold and silver tones of the hotel became the basis for the wedding’s color palette and the theme of intimate, opulent elegance. Lopez didn’t want to use color, Baber explains, so everything was done in crystal and white, with metallic and glass details to add to the effect. Lighting changed throughout the night, serving to highlight the delicate decor even more. The couple’s new monogram—which had been featured on their wedding stationary—also appeared on menus and carved into a custom ice bar, as well as on the dance floor by the use of customized lighting effects.

Baber worked with The St. Regis Atlanta’s catering sales manager Julia McKelvey to set up the ballroom creatively. Since the ballroom is 9,042 square feet, it would have felt cavernous for the 178 guests at the Lopez-Smith wedding. To

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ensure the intimate feel the bride desired, McKelvey suggested separating one-third of the ballroom space for the ceremony, leaving two-thirds for the reception.

Lopez and Smith were married at the hotel on July 31 at 6 p.m., under a beautifully detailed branch and orchid canopy arranged at the top of a long, white aisle. The bride wore a mermaid-style dress by designer Junko

Yoshioka from New York’s Mark Ingram Bridal Atelier, and stunning diamond earrings that had been a wedding gift from her soon-to-be-husband. Smith had also worked with Fevzi Aydin of Aydin and Company jewelers, to design both Lopez’s engagement ring and wedding band.

The bride was radiant as she walked down the aisle, her veil gracefully trailing behind her as she passed under the sophisticated arrangements that highlighted the aisle and alter, where Rev. Kenneth Marcus from Turner Chapel waited. The couple’s daughter served as one of three flower girls, and their son watched from a family member’s arms. Lopez and Smith exchanged vows as their six bridesmaids and eight groomsmen—including Dwight Howard of the Orlando

Magic and Rajon Rondo of the Boston Celtics—looked on.

The Reception

After the ceremony, guests enjoyed cocktails and hors d’oeuvres outside the ballroom, where they found their escort cards, hand-addressed by a calligrapher. A massive, custom-built bar was adorned with beautiful orchids and candelabras that made it seem as if the wedding was flowing from one space to another. The couple used the cocktail hour to take portraits with their families and bridal party.

As the ballroom was opened for the reception, guests were awed by a striking crystal structure above the dance floor. Designed by A Legendary Event and inspired by a floral version the bride had seen in a magazine, the ceiling treatment was made of 6,250 gorgeous crystals hung on 87,500 feet of white organza ribbon, along with 3,250 20-foot strands of small crystal beads. The crystals sparkled from a mounted trellis, custom-built to allow the ballroom’s existing glass chandelier to twinkle from the

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center. Installing this detail took 15 members of Legendary Events staff about 12 hours, but the end result was captivating.

“The look overall was both contemporary and elegant with just the right amount of sparkle,” says Amy Saltzman of A Legendary Event. “The designs meshed perfectly with the already beautiful St. Regis ballroom, while also capturing the bride and groom’s personal style.”

The rest of the decor complemented the crystal centerpiece and continued using whites, metallics, crystal and glass, resulting in a clean yet opulent look. Specialty stemware mimicked the look of the large suspended crystals in the ceiling treatment. “The stemware added that extra touch to the tabletop along with specialty charger plates and printed menus which sat underneath the glass chargers,” Saltzman says.

The tables were covered with white organza linens over-sewn with silver metallic discs that also reflected the light and shimmered in the room. Dramatic, all-white floral arrangements featured tall and graceful calla lilies, white polar star roses, white garden roses, white hydrangeas, white French



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tulips and large stems of phalaenopsis orchids, all grouped for a contemporary look. Clear acrylic chairs with very clean lines completed the impressive tables. The walls of the ballroom were draped in white fabric, enhancing the room’s intimate feel.

“They played off the white and champagne tones and the crystal in the ballroom,” McKelvey says. “It was probably one of the most beautiful events I’ve ever seen executed. It really was stunning.”

Baber agrees, noting that the specialty lighting bouncing off the hanging crystals and glass elements created a very unique effect. The bride was also thrilled with the decor.

“When I walked into the ballroom, I was in awe,” she comments. “I could not believe how they were able to transform the ballroom. It was absolutely beautiful and definitely exceeded my expectations.”

The bride and groom worked with the St. Regis’ innovative executive chef, Jonathan Jerusalem, to create a menu that would encompass both their tastes and were very pleased with the creativity of the culinary team. Guests were treated to a variety of food stations, including a Southern station that paid homage to Josh’s Georgia roots, as well as pasta and Asian stations that represented some of Alex’s favorite foods.

“The food and beverage experience allowed the St. Regis to showcase its culinary talent and creativity,” McKelvey says. “It fully exemplified what we have to offer. There are no two weddings alike at the St. Regis.”

The couple also chose a clever set-up for the ballroom, leaving

the ceremony space hidden behind a faux wall of drapery until after dinner, when it was revealed as a chic dessert room, with lit dessert and specialty coffee bars, highboy tables with Ghost bar stools, and a spectacular orchid display. White furniture groupings were also moved into the space and accented with candles and more white blooms.

“It was a truly luxurious experience,” Baber says. “The level of attention to the client and the detail from every standpoint was impressive, especially for an event of such magnitude.”

The bride agrees: “I would tell potential brides that if they’re looking for a classic, classy wedding with great service, the St. Regis is the place to go.”

As the night wound down, guests had their choice of many different dessert options, including a cheesecake wedding cake crafted by Classic Cheesecakes & Cakes and a red velvet groom’s cake by Gloria, The Cake Lady—who is also the bride’s aunt. The St. Regis provided the selection of scrumptious sweets on the all white dessert buffet, including white chocolate covered strawberries, macarons, mini crème brûlée, miniature key lime tarts and hand-passed mini vanilla milkshakes. The couple’s monogram appeared again, this time on custom white chocolate truffles.

Between enjoying the variety of food and libations, guests danced the night away under the shimmering crystals. DJ Arthur Vaughn of A&R Sounds worked closely with the bride and groom to select songs for the evening.

“We wanted it to be really youthful, with lots of upbeat songs,” Lopez says, noting that the continually packed dance floor signaled success.

McKelvey agrees that the wedding was a triumph.

“This wedding exuded elegance and class, and was truly a reflection of the bride and groom. Their personalities shone through” McKelvey says. “The St. Regis and everyone else involved was able to execute what they’d hoped for, and in a word, it was breathtaking.” 🍷