A MATCH MADE BY MOM
Mother of the bride’s eye for potential leads to a lasting connection

By Louise Hufkin

In 2013, after completing a master’s degree in international business and management, Nicole Mondey had just moved to San Francisco to start a new job. The move was jarring, but she landed a job at Cisco as a communications manager. Because she was still single, her social life was nonexistent. A friend set her up on a dating site, but she was deterred by the profiles she saw. She decided to take matters into her own hands and started creating online profiles for herself.

Several months later, Nicole and Bryan met. They hit it off and started talking about life in the Bay Area. Their friendship blossomed, and they eventually decided to become romantic partners.

Nicole and Bryan’s relationship grew stronger over time. They shared similar interests and values, and they supported each other through the ups and downs of their lives. They talked about the future and envisioned building a life together.

Nicole and Bryan’s story is a testament to the power of connection. It shows that sometimes, the best connections are the ones that come from unexpected places. They proved that love can arise when two people are open to exploring new possibilities and embracing the unknown.

For Nicole and Bryan, love bloomed in the Bay Area, and they continue to thrive in their relationship. They are a reminder that even in the midst of uncertainty, love can grow and flourish.
Bryan got ready to leave home, he realized somewhat acutely that Nicole probably picked up at the airport.

"I didn't know if I would recognize him," said Nicole, who arrived at the San Francisco airport with a taxi bearing Bryan's name. "I felt like we already knew each other."

The slight awkwardness dissolved as they arrived at Bryan's condo. A few hours later, he was clearly neither wasted nor tired. They went grocery shopping and returned with red wine and provisions for a private dinner. "Is this an amazing cook?" Nicole asked. "It was essentially a romantic, non-romantic first date, but really it was totally romantic." The next day, they took off for a long weekend in San Luis Obispo, where Bryan had attended a wine industry school. "My parents taught me wine," Nicole joked. "It was my first cultural experience."

Just months later, Bryan was invited to Japan for a three-week assignment. Nicole visited him in Tokyo for two weeks, it was then their love became cemented. "They were in love from the day they met," said Bryan. At the couple's October 2014 wedding at Meadowood in Napa Valley, they had two families and friends, and eight attendants. They shared personalized songs that included promises as varied as "reducing the number of pitting piles of clothes left in the house" (Nicole) and working on patient skills (Bryan). After the ceremony, as the sun set, the two slipped away to toasting outside, wine, where they remained until after breakfast.

Before entering the wedding tent, the couple stopped first to take a few deep breaths. "They walked into a storybook," Nicole said. "The beauty of the day was completely overwhelming, and the magic of that was captured by the love they felt."

During the dances and speeches, Nicole, of course, gave special thanks to Bryan for what all joined as their "amazing marriage."

Lover Ruffin from the San Francisco Chronicle wrote: Send your stories of surprising weddings or collaborations at lover.ruffin@sfchronicle.com.

AT A GLANCE
Venue: Meadowood
Napa Valley
Catering: Meadowood
Flowers: Nancy Liu Chin Designs
Coordinations: Kelly McLeskey Dolata and Megan Delehanty, A Savvy Event
Rentals: France Lambert, Archive Vintage
Barbera, Whitehorse, La Tabali Linen
Cakes: Sweet on Cake
Bride's gown: Betsy by Hartley White
Groom's suit: Pronto Uomo
Photography: Jessica Burke Photography
Stationery: Forever Happy
Signage: Siwson Custom Chair (Michelle Hitzman)

Clockwise, from top left:
Nicole's bouquet by Nancy Liu Chin Designs
Hors d'oeuvres included ahi tuna tartare sitting area by Archive Vintage Rentals
Framed photo and chalkboard signage by Sworn Custom Chair
welcomed guests.

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ON THE COVER
Rocking the fringe: Nicki Bluhm wears a Dien-von-Nobis ribbed fringe dress, $120.50, Selos Fifth Avenue, Union Square, Couvreu Zenos plume plumed jacket, $165, Barneys/New York, S.F., cream leather sandals and black heart ring, Sybil's Own, Pajigis S-B, Photograph: Russell Vip
Styling: Donery Blunt
Hair & Makeup: Katie Weis
Shot on location in Snow Lake in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.

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