



Former *Baywatch* star Angelica Bridges and NHL player Sheldon Souray make their wedding a down-home, rocking good time in America's glitziest city

VOWS in *vegas*

BY SHERYL BERK ■ PHOTOGRAPHED BY JADRAN LAZIC

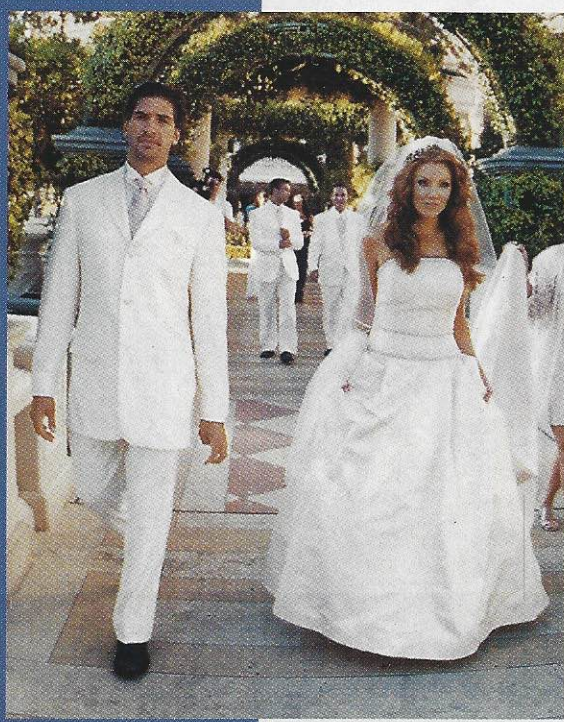
“The Bellagio has that romantic Italian feel,” says Bridges. “And it’s in Vegas, the scene of our first kiss.”

PLANNING A HOTEL WEDDING

More than 1,500 weddings take place at the Bellagio every year, and Angelica Bridges didn’t want her affair to be just “the same old thing. I was determined to do something very personal.”

For this bride the key to creating a unique celebration was the good rapport she enjoyed with her wedding planner, the Bellagio’s assistant director of catering, Andi Maxwell. If you’ve chosen a hotel for your nuptials, here’s how to ensure you’ll have it your way on your big day:

- Go with a pro. Before committing to a hotel, insist on seeing sample photos of other weddings staged there and ask how many of them the in-house planner has worked on.
- Be realistic. “Don’t come in and say ‘I want unlimited champagne, miles of flowers, and a 20-piece orchestra’ if you know you have a small budget,” says Maxwell. Instead, start by describing the mood you want to convey. Be up-front about what you can afford; then your hotel liaison can advise you on what corners to cut without compromising your vision. The cost of the event is typically calculated on a per-guest basis, so the fewer guests you invite, the more extras you can afford.
- Think outside the box—or circle. “Just because most people have round tables of 10 guests, don’t assume that’s the only way to do it,” Maxwell says. For Angelica and Sheldon, she suggested a single large T-shaped table, which was “more family-friendly and casual and yet added a lot of drama.”
- Speak up. Bridges was quick to point out that the Bellagio’s standard wedding menu—though five-star and fabulous—would be too formal for her Southern relatives. “We worked with her to create alternative dishes,” says Maxwell.
- Put it in writing. Your contract should spell out everything, from how the tables will be dressed and what wines will be served with each course to any additional charges (valet, gratuities, etc.) beyond the per-guest fee.



A broken wrist sealed their bond. When Montreal Canadiens defenseman Sheldon Souray was injured in December 2001, former *Baywatch* star Angelica Bridges raced to Canada to play nursemaid for three months. “It was a terrible thing for his career, missing so much time on the ice—but it was great for our relationship,” Bridges says. “Before, Sheldon was always on the road, and we hardly ever got to see each other. With him recuperating we could spend long romantic evenings in front of the fireplace, allowing our feelings to deepen. If he hadn’t gotten hurt, we probably wouldn’t be married today.”

The couple chose the Bellagio hotel in Las Vegas for the wedding,

but the event was definitely more country than casino. “We appreciate the simple things in life,” says the Missouri-born Bridges. Such as? “Pickup trucks. When a friend in New York introduced us, I thought, This is too good to be true. He’s 6-foot-4, gorgeous and drives a truck? Somebody pinch me!”

Souray may have thought *he* was dreaming when his bride floated down the aisle. Bridges wore a pink strapless gown by Paula Varsalona and a king’s ransom of diamonds—4-carat earrings and a 1920s necklace—from Fred Leighton. “I wanted Scarlett O’Hara meets Sophia Loren: very fairy-tale, but also sexy and sophisticated,” she says. “I loved the idea of a nontraditional

pink gown.” Everyone else, from groom to guests, was asked to wear white. “No tuxes or black-tie, nothing too stiff,” Bridges says.

A nondenominational pastor presided at the outdoor ceremony, and the dinner that followed was laid-back—and finger-licking good. “At first the Bellagio folks must have thought I was nuts,” says Bridges. “I wanted baby back ribs, fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, and a watermelon station!” Souray wasn’t surprised that his bride rejected nouvelle cuisine in favor of heartier fare. “She eats like 10 bears!” he teases.

After dinner the party moved to the Bellagio’s nightclub, Light, which is owned by Bridges’s friend Andrew Sasson. “We took over the entire VIP lounge and rocked till dawn,” she says. “It was a crazy good time. The whole wedding was so *us* from start to finish.” ■