

It was love at first sight. Shortly after emigrating from his native Ukraine, Maksim Chmerkovskiy was visiting family friends in New York's Long Island, when he happened to drive past Oheka Castle. "I thought it was very Gatsby-esque," the professional ballroom dancer recalls of spying the 109,000-square-foot French-style chateau. "I remember I wanted to strive for the ability to organize a wedding in a place like that."

When that dream came true, at 7:30 p.m. on July 8, the 37-year-old couldn't keep his emotions in check. Waiting for his bride, fellow *Dancing With the Stars* pro Peta Murgatroyd, to join him under the lisanthus- and hydrangea-covered chuppah, the Tom Ford-clad groom started crying as soon as he heard the first strains of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. (The arrangement was a nod to Murgatroyd's 16 years of ballet training, but



"When she showed up at the door, it was unreal," he recalls. "She looked incredible."

"It took them weeks and weeks and weeks to make my dress," says Murgatroyd. "Every single bead was hand-done."

Maks & Peta

Dream Wedding!

A castle, a ball gown and an epic first kiss. **Chmerkovskiy** and **Murgatroyd** invite *Us* inside their magical vows **BY SARAH GROSSBART**



Chmerkovskiy says he's also "a ginormous fan.") When Murgatroyd's mom, Suzanne, walked down the petal-strewn aisle carrying the couple's 6-month-old son, Shai, "I lost it," admitted Chmerkovskiy. But that was nothing compared to his first glimpse of Murgatroyd in an ivory, pearl-encrusted Karen Sabag Couture ball gown, cathedral-length veil and heels she purchased during their first visit to Ukraine, in 2012. "By the time she appeared, I was so emotional, I didn't care what it looked like," he says of his tears. (Murgatroyd cops to avoiding eye contact with dad Derek: "I would have had no makeup left!") As alumni of the ABC reality show including Candace Cameron Bure, Nyle DiMarco, Chmerkovskiy's best man and brother Val and bridesmaids Rumer Willis and Sharna Burgess looked on, the duo's close friend Greg Havio led a 30-minute nondenominational ceremony that they had written themselves. "It has both of our cultures mixed in," says Murgatroyd, who performed the Jewish tradition of walking around her groom seven times.

For the grand finale, the pair, whose on-off relationship spanned five years and included a dramatic onstage proposal in December 2015, exchanged self-penned vows. Chmerkovskiy admits his delivery was rocky — "People were telling me, 'You're going to see her walk down and you're going to know exactly what to say,'" he says, "What they didn't say is, 'You're going to see her, freeze up and forget what you wanted to say,'" — but his words still touched the New Zealand native, 31. "It was beautiful; he made me cry," says Murgatroyd, who says she spoke about wanting to be with him

“IT WAS A EUPHORIC EXPERIENCE. ACTUALLY. SEEING MAKS WAS EVERYTHING. IT WAS AWESOME.”

MURGATROYD TELLS US OF WALKING DOWN THE AISLE



1. For their July 7 rehearsal dinner, Murgatroyd chose a Karen Sabag Couture dress — the same designer who crafted her wedding gowns. **2.** She gifted her seven bridesmaids with Homebodies robes: "I wanted to get ready with my girls and bask in the moment." **3.** To achieve her desired "royal, vintage" look, Murgatroyd avoided colored flowers. Instead, Metro Floral Decorators' Danitte Beegel made a bouquet of white peonies. **4.** Baby Shai (with mother of the bride Suzanne) "didn't say a word," says Murgatroyd. Adds Chmerkovskiy, "He was watching the whole ceremony!" **5.** Chmerkovskiy gave his groomsmen, including brother Val and *DWTS* pro Tony Dovolani, bow ties from the Tie Bar.



"until we're old in a rocking chair together." Then, as they exchanged bands designed by Jacqueline Nerguizian of JN Jewels and sealed their union with a kiss, "a giant rainbow came out," says Chmerkovskiy. "People lost their s--t!"

DANCE, DANCE REVOLUTION

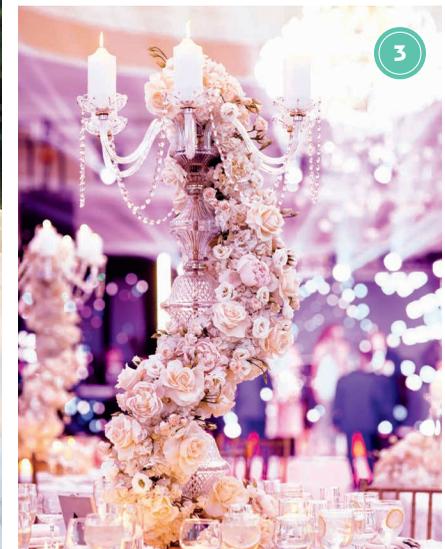
The reception that followed was equally epic. "The second we were married and there was a broken glass, it was wild," says Chmerkovskiy, a spokesman for LivOn Labs supplements. Having spent the preceremony cocktail hour indulging in a dozen food stations, Macallan-laced spirits and vodka ("We definitely had to have that," he explains. "We had a lot of Russians and Ukrainians"), their nearly 300 guests were primed to celebrate. When the newlyweds were presented as husband and wife in the floral-filled ballroom (Metro Floral Decorators' Danitte Beegel crafted an eight-foot wall of flowers for guests to pose with and even hung white vendela roses from the chandeliers) "it was an awesome moment," recalls Murgatroyd. "Everybody was clapping and so happy for us!"

As they indulged in a five-course meal (among the dishes: filet mignon, stuffed chicken breast and pan-fried red snapper), attendees listened to toasts from Val and matron of honor and wedding planner Nicole Volynets, then watched as the newlyweds opened the dance floor by swaying to Tyler Ward's cover of Rihanna's hit "We Found Love," the song they used to make out to in L.A. clubs. Eschewing the intricate paso dobles and Argentine tangos they regularly nail on *DWTS*, "we just held on to each other," says Chmerkovskiy. "We didn't want to perform." Besides, adds the All Things Fam and Glam blogger, her handcrafted tulle skirt "was too heavy to even spin."

A quick change into a feather-covered Karen Sabag dress and platform sneakers ("Best thing I



1. Chmerkovskiy kissed his bride as the groomsmen (in Onik Design) and Amsale-clad bridesmaids looked on. **2.** When they were pronounced husband and wife "everyone's energy was incredible," she says. **3.** Murgatroyd dubbed the rose-and-candelabra centerpieces "so elaborate and beautiful." **4.** Florist Beegel and her team started setting up the space the day before. They even brought in acrylic bars filled with flowers. **5.** Chmerkovskiy says her reception dress "was somehow even better than the first." **6.** The tiers on the cake were layers of vanilla, red velvet and chocolate.



“IT WAS THE WEDDING OF MY DREAMS FOR SURE. IT WAS UNLIKE ANYTHING THAT I COULD IMAGINE.”
CHMERKOVSKIY TELLS US



did," says Murgatroyd) fixed that. The Peta Jane tanning products creator joined the skilled crowd (Chmerkovskiy estimates "80 percent" were trained dancers) on the dance floor as the 15-piece band from DJ Legacy Entertainment — a group a teenage Chmerkovskiy used to perform with at restaurants in Brooklyn — played an endless stream of dance hall music that Murgatroyd dubs "duff duff" songs. (On repeat: Don Omar's "Danza Kuduro.") Raves Murgatroyd, "They were playing every song that we love to dance to. Everyone was just having the best time." Guests even lifted the couple into chairs for the hora. A heights-averse Chmerkovskiy says he was wary when his pals leaned his chair, so his wife could steal a kiss, "but it was amazing." Another standout moment came when dancers crowded together to form a circle. "Everyone

got a turn at going inside," recalls Murgatroyd. "It was completely lit!"

LIFELONG PARTNERS
Things didn't begin to dim until nearly sunrise. Though the band packed up at 2 a.m., the couple simply led their pals into the library where iPhones served as makeshift DJs. Finally, at 4:30 a.m., guests retreated to their rooms at the castle. But as Chmerkovskiy sees it, their celebration is just beginning. "We've had a lot of exciting things happen in the last couple years since we got back together," he explains, "culminating in having a child and the wedding of our dreams. But what's been the most incredible is I wake up with more love than I went to sleep with. I've always dreamed of being this grumpy old man sitting with my beautiful wife of decades and the only person I see next to me is Peta." His bride has the same vision. "I know it sounds corny, cheesy, everything else," she says, "but I honestly believe we're soul mates."



The Celebration Continues!

» Not your typical postwedding brunch: On July 9, the newlyweds hosted what Murgatroyd dubbed "a hangover afterparty" at Brooklyn's McCarren Hotel & Pool, where they had their 2016 baby shower. "We had all-day alcohol and a pool volleyball tournament," she says of the afternoon bash. And in a nod to her Australian roots (she moved there as a baby), they posted "Aussie lingo people had to say and photo booths with Aussie props." Raves Chmerkovskiy, "It was incredible."