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# A winter's tale

An Austrian castle, a dress fit for a princess and her very own prince charming made Julia Stahl's fairytale wedding a dream come true



**Festival fun:** Julia Linkert and Tom Stahl met in 2002 at the Bergkirchweih fair in Erlangen, Germany, a famous beer festival that starts with a huge beer fight! "We met when we were both out with friends. We spotted each other on the dancefloor and it truly was love at first sight. A mutual friend introduced us and after chatting together and dancing, we actually became a couple after just four hours of knowing each other!" says Julia.

**Popping the question:** "It was a complete surprise when Tom proposed," says Julia. "Just after Easter in 2007 he took me to the Mavida Hotel & Spa (mavida.at) in Austria for a spa weekend. He really spoilt me and then, during a delicious four-course meal at the hotel, he suddenly got down on one knee and proposed! For a moment I felt completely paralysed and then told him a resounding yes – it was the best moment of my life."

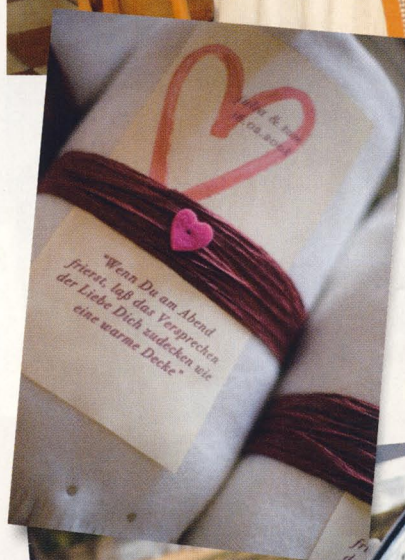
**Where and when:** The couple live in Munich, in Germany but found their dream venue just over the nearby border in Austria. "I've always dreamt of a fairytale wedding in a really romantic setting so when we found Schloss Leopoldskron (schloss-leopoldskron.com) we knew we had the perfect location," says Julia. "It's a beautifully preserved 18th-century rococo palace with breathtaking views of the mountains. Nothing we had seen before could compare to it. There are plenty of rococo palaces in Germany but in most places you can only hire a single room. We wanted exclusive use and we needed plenty of rooms so that all our guests could stay over – so it was absolutely perfect."

**The look of love:** "Our overall theme was 'blushing romance,'" says Julia. "And for colours we went for a mixture of light pink, beige and chocolate brown. Our gorgeous couture stationery from South African designer Elsje Designs (elsje.co.za) in pinks and browns really captured the whole feel. We had 125 guests and our wedding planner, Doreen from Aleit Munich Wedding Co-Ordination (aleit-munich.de), was invaluable. Her attention to detail was amazing and she added lots of beautiful touches like the antique candleabra and beautiful stationery that everyone noticed."

**All dressed in white:** "I'd always dreamt of a romantic classic 'princess bride' dress, so when I found my dress in Haus der Braut (hausder-braut.de), a shop in Munich, in a champagne colour with lots of lace and glitter, I knew straight away it was the one. It was just perfect and suited me so well," says Julia. "My perfume was Be Delicious by DKNY and I wore MAC cosmetics. Tom wore a chocolate-coloured pinstripe suit by Wilvorst (wilvorst.de), with stockists available in the UK. My bouquet was made of light pink roses, which we used throughout the ceremony and reception along with Casablanca lilies, all created by our florist Gärtnerei Aiglhof (gaertnerei-aiglhof.at). I didn't have any bridesmaids as it's not traditional to have them at German weddings."

**The ceremony:** The wedding ceremony was in early February at the Christus Church in the centre of Salzburg, where Julia made her entrance to Bach's *Air on the G String*. "The decoration was kept very simple as the historical church is very beautiful and we didn't want to over decorate it," says Julia. "We placed a few flowers down the aisle and then four large glass vases with simple white Casablanca lilies next to the altar. When I first saw Tom waiting for me at the church I couldn't stop myself from crying. Standing at the front saying our vows was a spectacular moment that we'll both remember forever. It was absolutely perfect."

**Let's party!** After the ceremony, guests were taken back to the palace by white cars decorated with flowers and with 'Julia & Tom's Wedding' ▶





Shuttle' written across the front (see previous page). Pre-dinner drinks of prosecco and bellinis were served in the palace's grand main hall, accompanied by a piano player. The reception was held in the magnificent Marble Hall, a two-storey room lined with marble, hand-crafted stucco work, gold details, open fireplaces and crystal chandeliers. Tables were set with white linen, with centrepieces of soft pink roses and Casablanca lilies in different sized glassware and antique silver candelabras. Each place setting had a personalised menu card and a matching favour box containing a mixture of useful things like aspirin and chewing gum as well as sugared almonds and a love poem. Guests were served a starter of salmon with dill and mustard sauce, soup with 'Nockerln' (Austrian dumplings), a main course of beef filet with potato strudel and a port wine jus followed by Grand Marnier parfait with choux pastry buns, a traditional Austrian dessert, with ice cream and rich chocolate sauce. The cake was a six-tier cream-coloured cake decorated with cream satin and fresh lilies. Each tier was a different flavour, including chocolate, strawberry-cream and lemon and poppy. "Our first dance was to a classic waltz by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and we had a few lessons beforehand," says Julia. "And then there was a DJ who played a good mix of 80s, 90s and R'n'B from 10pm until 5am the next morning. We served traditional German currywurst sausages to keep everyone going and we lasted right the way through until 5am before making our excuses!"

**We loved...** "... the moment when we walked into the reception room," says Julia. "We came in to *Beautiful Day* by U2 and everyone stood up and clapped in time to the beat as we walked in. It completely blew us away! We then proceeded to cut the cake before taking our places as Mr & Mrs Stahl for the first time."

**And another thing...** "The whole day was one big highlight from start to finish!" says Julia. "It was absolutely gorgeous – perfect weather, superb organisation, many wonderful moments, great guests and to top it all off a truly fantastic venue. I'd been so looking forward to the whole day, but I was most excited just as I was entering the church for the ceremony. The only thing that nearly went wrong was Tom's voice faltering at the moment he needed to say 'I do'. He got there in the end though!"

Photography: Julian Fuhrmann ([julianfuhrmann.de](http://julianfuhrmann.de)) and Birgit Hart ([birgithart.com](http://birgithart.com))

### How to get the fairytale feel (without the castle!)

- Add candlelight – if your venue won't allow it, try strings of fairy lights.
- "Stick to a limited colour scheme of soft pinks and neutrals such as chocolate brown, cream and white," recommends Doreen, Julia's wedding planner at Aleit Munich. "Be careful not to combine too many colours. A simple combination of one or two types of flowers looks understated and classy."
- Consider pearls, glass and silver bowls to reflect light and create a magical atmosphere and warm ambience. Put soft pink roses and lilies in silver bowls and surround with pearls for your centrepiece.
- If you're having a winter wedding, consider decorating with crystals and making your cake white and silver.
- Add to the atmosphere with music that's in keeping with the feel of the day, venue and style such as a string quartet or harpist.



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