

VOGUE

EDITOR'S LETTER



Model Vanessa Axente,
photographed
for 'Softly spoken',
from page 76.

As any bride-to-be knows, planning your perfect day is a deeply personal affair, and for me it's no different. Next month, my partner David and I will be marrying in front of immediate family as part of a group holiday to the exquisite Kokomo Private Island in Fiji. Given that for us both this will be our second marriage, and symbolises the coming together of two little families to make one big one, it felt fitting to keep the occasion intimate. You can read about my own choice for a destination wedding (and a bridal party made entirely of kids) from page 162.

For this special issue, *Vogue's* talented editors have also curated their pick of fantasy dresses, beauty looks, flowers, rings and more, while experts offer insights into how to conceive a truly contemporary and distinctive event.

Whether you choose to be married in Australia or abroad, our edit of weddings offers inspiration for both. On these pages you'll find celebrations in Italian villas, a French chateau and museum spaces in both London and Miami and, closer to home, nuptials nestled among classic coastal and rural properties unique to our beautiful country.

In creating your own dream wedding, remember that as long as love is centre of your celebrations, everything else will fall into place.

Edwina McCann

EDWINA MCCANN EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

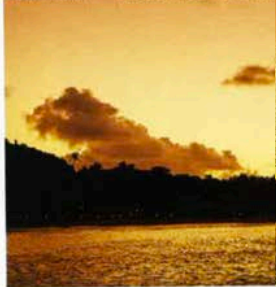
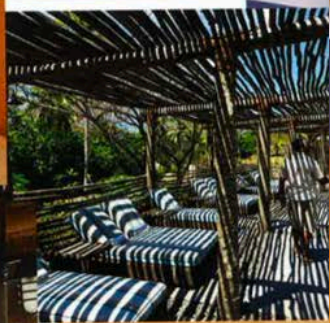
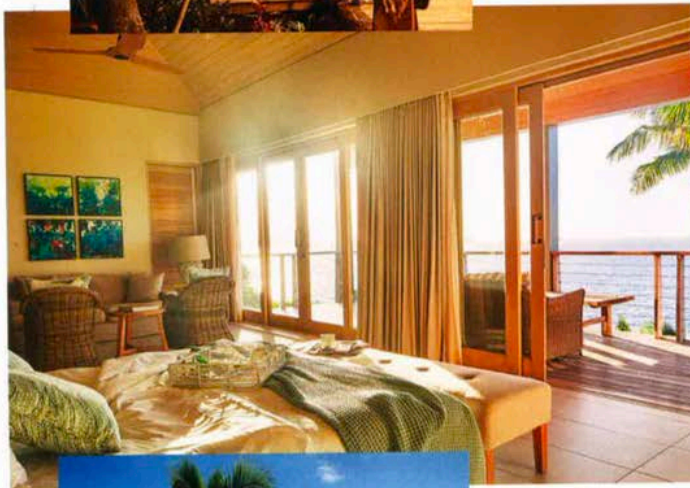
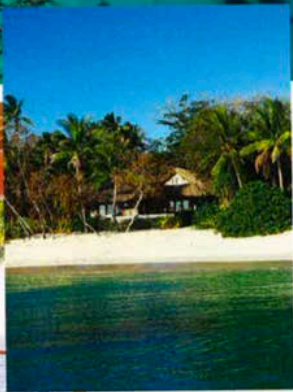
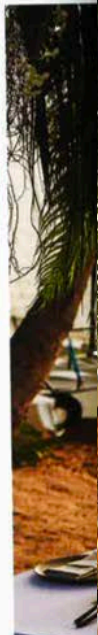
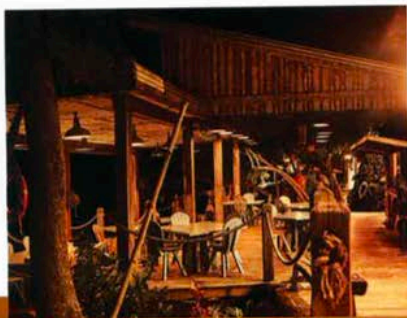




HAVEN ON EARTH

For her upcoming nuptials, *Vogue's* editor-in-chief Edwina McCann will be treating her family to a beautiful holiday that doubles as a destination wedding.

These pages night and day: the pathway between two villas at Kokomo Private Island Fiji leading to a sparkling sea and the soon-to-be lantern-lit aisle. For the wedding party as they head to a ceremony on the sand.



Clockwise from top left: the rustic charm of overwater bar and restaurant Walker D Plank, venue of the wedding dinner; turquoise waters greet guests arriving at the jetty by seaplanes; luxury accommodation tucked amid lush tropical gardens; day beds beneath a recycled timber shade emulate the relaxed luxury vibe; laid-back on-deck dining at the Beach Shack; a private infinity pool just metres from shore; sustainably designed open-plan villas feature traditional Fijian touches.



Private dining experiences allow guests to choose their dream menu and location on the island.



Kokomo Private Island painted gold at sunset.

When it came to deciding where my partner and I would get married this year, there was no question for either of us: Kokomo Private Island in Fiji, where we holidayed last year, was the only choice. The destination is everything we want and also hope our marriage will emulate: fun, happy, with a caring commitment to quality. It helps that the island was created by billionaire property developer Lang Walker, who knows how he and his family like to holiday. Every detail is considered with a passionate perfectionist's eye, and every effort has been made – and no expense spared – to ensure it's one of the most relaxing holiday experiences in the world.

While it would also make the perfect honeymoon spot with absolute privacy guaranteed, the true beauty of being married at Kokomo is that unlike many six-star resorts, it caters to intergenerational guests as well as couples. Families, including grandparents and grandkids and everyone in between, are all welcome.

Our marriage is a second one for both of us and will symbolise the coming together of two little families to make one big one. It's important to us, then, to have family the focus of the day. The only guests will be our parents, siblings and their spouses and the whole wedding party will be made up of kids – both our own and our nieces and nephews. My father will also celebrate his 80th birthday on the island in the same week, making our getaway an absolute family affair.

We've planned a simple beach ceremony and Kokomo will organise all the details, from the creation of a beautiful green foliage arch, to legalities and providing a celebrant or priest. Music will be courtesy of the island's ukulele band, who will become a touch football team after the ceremony (to keep the teenagers occupied while the adults have a celebratory champagne at sunset).

Our group will then walk barefoot up the beach to arrive at a spectacular dinner setting at Walker D'Plank, a character-filled, seaside restaurant named in honour of the island's founder. And it's not just any chef cooking dinner. I can't claim to be a cook, but I certainly knew the name Cory Campbell. The Australian chef's exceptional resume includes time spent at Vue du Monde, Bea and the famed Noma in Copenhagen, so luring him to the island was quite the culinary coup for Kokomo. He makes the most of the island's kitchen garden and can be seen daily out on the wharf waiting for the catch of the day. His passion and experience working with locally sourced produce makes his take on the menu exceptionally good. Campbell lives on the island with his young son and health-practitioner wife and his kitchen is mere metres away from the jetty.

Walker's commitment to excellence in food and wines is equalled by his passion for preserving and protecting the local marine environment. The resort is built in a remote and lightly populated area south of the main island of Fiji, and the surrounding reef is pristine. There are plenty of Nemos to be found snorkelling less than 10 metres from your villa, but if you travel out to the reef to snorkel or scuba dive you will be transported into an underwater world reminiscent of *National Geographic* photography. It's pure magic.

The resort employs marine biologist and zoologist Cliona O'Flaherty. "The marine life here blows my mind," says O'Flaherty, who has lived and worked all over the world. She tells me about the eight resident green turtles and the blacktip reef shark nursery that both use the beach in front of Walker D'Plank as a playground. But her real passion is her project for the Manta Trust, which has been set up to study the local population through acoustic tagging. "For my scientific career it is undoubtedly the greatest thing I will ever be a part of," she says.

O'Flaherty's preservation project also includes growing different species of super coral buds near to the shore, which guests can name and help replant on the reef. As part of our wedding, our kids will be naming and planting coral buds, and after we depart they will receive photos by email to keep them up to date with their coral's development.

Our wedding is planned for July and both sunshine and humpback whale sightings are pretty much guaranteed. But I have a plan B should the weather turn. Tucked among the green gardens, the spa's main pavilion is one of the best examples of the island's stunning interiors and doubles as a spectacular place for a ceremony, too. It also has a calmness that reverberates from the surrounding private treatment rooms where guests indulge in facials using natural Sodashi products.

Thanks to Kokomo, my soon-to-be husband has not experienced a single bridezilla moment leading up to our big day. In fact, the only problem we've faced is insisting our very disappointed friends can't join us. Because although we love them dearly, we decided to celebrate this special time by splurging on a magical family holiday that doubles as our wedding, instead of the usual bridesmaid's hangovers. ■