

VOGUE

AUSTRALIA

BRIDES

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Modern weddings that
embrace the moment



Editor's letter



Edwina McCann and David Basha with their children in Fiji. See 'Magic touch', from page 54.

In the years I've published *Vogue Brides* I've always insisted that any staff member getting married be actively involved in the issue and have their wedding included as a non-negotiable. I always thought this was very smart, because there is no one more focused on getting things done than a committed bride or groom. Until it came to me.

My strategy worked for years and then my partner and I decided to get married. Neither of us really imagined getting married a second time, but after years living together during which our two families had become one, we asked the kids and they became as intent on the wedding as the brides-to-be who worked for me have always been. That probably had a lot to do with the fact we asked them if they would prefer a big wedding full of friends and family in Sydney, or a family-only holiday on Kokomo Private Island in Fiji, which would include the wedding. Not surprisingly, they chose the latter, and more than a year later are desperate for the travel bubble to include Fiji so we might return and celebrate our anniversary. Their investment and support of us getting married was the best part. All the kids made speeches, and my daughter Jemima practised and sang Elvis Presley's *Can't Help Falling in Love* as our wedding song surprise, accompanied by the ukulele band from the island. I organised nothing. The island management did it all. We were all completely relaxed and it was totally stress-free.

Our wedding was such a private affair with only our family present and I felt reluctant to publish my own story, believing it was rather indulgent! But when it was suggested that one of my daughters, Luella, might write about it, yet again the family decided it was a good idea and I was outvoted.

Another *Vogue* staffer is featured in this issue: our digital director Julia Frank (see page 62). Together with her husband, she hosted a small family affair at her brother's house in keeping with Covid restrictions, though most of her co-workers attended on Vimeo regardless. She made the most beautiful bride, and we can't wait to meet her and her husband's baby, due later this year.

Our cover star Dakota is an honourable *Vogue*ette, having married photographer Jesse Lizotte, a regular contributor to our magazine. In July this year the couple tied the knot at a registry office in Sydney (turn to page 94) before hosting a reception at the Lizotte family home, which included a live performance by Jimmy Barnes. Jesse's pictures of his wife modelling bridal looks, from page 80, are stunning.

In a sign of the times, we also have a special feature about Covid-safe one-on-one appointments for wedding dresses with luxury retailers and a travel special on home-grown honeymoon destinations that feel anything but familiar.

This year may have upended many wedding plans, but it's also provided the opportunity for many to focus on what's really important in their nuptials: family, friends and the bond between the two most important people at the centre of it all. At the end of the day, isn't it heartening to know that the very human capacity to fall in love will always endure?

Edwina McCann

EDWINA MCCANN EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Magic hour

When *Vogue* Australia's Edwina McCann wed David Basha in an intimate island affair last year, the focus was very much on family. Here, one of her twin daughters, Luella, 14, who served as bridesmaid, recounts a few perfect days in paradise leading up to the relaxed – and barefoot – nuptials.

PHOTOGRAPHS CHRIS MOHEN

In July of 2019 my mother, Edwina McCann, sister, my soon-to-be stepfather, David Basha, stepsister and stepbrother, and I, along with our extended family, boarded a flight to Fiji. After landing, we travelled by smaller plane to Kokomo Private Island.

We soared over bright, blue-green seas, peering out of the window in wonder at coral reefs visible just beneath the surface.

Then, after stepping off the plane, we walked towards the main building where marvellous song and dance erupted. Each of us was given a coconut to drink from and a lei. I could already tell that this holiday would be positively magical.

Our time at Kokomo was flying by, as it does when you are having fun. The under-18s spent it swimming, sailing, scuba diving, fishing and relaxing in the clubhouse, which hosted an array of activities including a pool, air hockey, and to my cousins' and stepbrother's delight, an Xbox.

Before any of us knew it, the big day was upon us.

As the sun rose on the morning of my mother and stepfather's wedding, the air felt electric with everyone buzzing with excitement. In the morning, all the women in the family visited the beautiful spa for a manicure-pedicure, which for me was a highlight of the trip. Then it was time to get ready. We gathered in the larger house and in keeping with Fijian traditions the gentlemen congregated in another villa.

I remember arriving in ours' and seeing my young cousins, Esme and Molly, already dressed hours before the ceremony! They wore beautiful dresses with small pineapples embroidered on them in keeping with the tropical theme, which they adored. We wondered at the chances of their dresses being pristine for any pictures hours later.

We older girls wore lovely white Stella McCartney dresses, which just skimmed our ankles. No one had shoes on. After dressing, the young girls' kind temporary nannies braided and styled all of our hair. →



Barefoot on the beach under a rustic altar and surrounded by children and family, Edwina McCann and David Basha take their vows on the golden sands of Kokomo Private Island in Fiji.





From left: Edwina's twin daughter Jemima Smith, Edwina, talking to her niece Lexi Franklin, her stopdaughter Lara Basha, and Luella Smith.



The bride wore Valentino, while the flower girls and bridesmaids, including Scarlett Franklin (far left), were dressed in Stella McCartney.



Flower girls Molly McCann (left) and Esme Boyd.



Jim McCann gives his daughter a congratulatory kiss.



From left: Luella, Lara, David, Edwina, Jemima and Sam Basha.



Touch football on the beach at sunset.





In keeping with island theme, the bride wore frangipani in her hair and like her husband, abandoned footwear.

We laughed and chatted, unable to contain our excitement. I didn't know what was happening in the boys' villa at that point, however I've been told that it took them exactly five minutes to get into their Okanui board shorts and tees.

I walked into the kitchen where my mother was getting her make-up done. My mum often gets her make-up done. I cannot count the number of times I've answered the door to let a make-up artist in on early mornings as I'm about to eat my breakfast, but this time was so incredibly different.

My mum sat in her dress, looking as beautiful and gracious as ever, and I felt my eyes water as I realised how happy today would make her and make all of us.

Soon it was time for the ceremony. One by one we loaded into several golf buggies and were driven to the beach. We slowly stepped out of the vehicles and took our places according to the traditions of wedding ceremonies, ready to walk down the aisle. My grandfather joined us to take my mother's arm. Everyone was smiling as we walked barefoot down the beach as songs were sung to music played on ukuleles by the Kokomo crew. It was all complemented by the graceful sounds of the lapping water. After taking my place, I turned soon to see my mum walking down the sand with my grandad. She looked absolutely beautiful in her casual midi-dress from Valentino with frangipani in her hair like the rest of us.

I'd never felt luckier than in those moments when I looked at my family and the smiles on new friends' faces from Kokomo.

As the music stopped and our grandfather gave my mum away, I recall seeing the look on my stepdad's face and I that knew my sister and I could not have asked for a better one.

Vows were read and tears of joy were shed and the ceremony concluded. Suddenly a game of touch football was upon us, with the newly united family versus the Kokomo crew. Wedding attire and all, we ran and laughed and hollered. We still aren't sure who won (but I'm pretty sure it wasn't us).

Afterwards we walked down the beach as the sun set with fire torches lighting up the pathway. We sat down for a beautiful dinner and we felt the ambience shift to be more peaceful. We enjoyed course after course of beautiful locally grown or caught food. Then speeches began, and inevitably eyes began watering. We all felt like the happiest people in the world in our family bubble on Kokomo Island.

Now, more than a year later, every time a family holiday is proposed, "Kokomo!" is still the first word on all our lips. I know we will never forget the magic that is Kokomo Island and the Basha-McCann wedding.



Around a softly lit table beneath lush greenery and hanging flowers, guests at the intimate dinner party shared speeches and dined on fresh, locally sourced dishes.