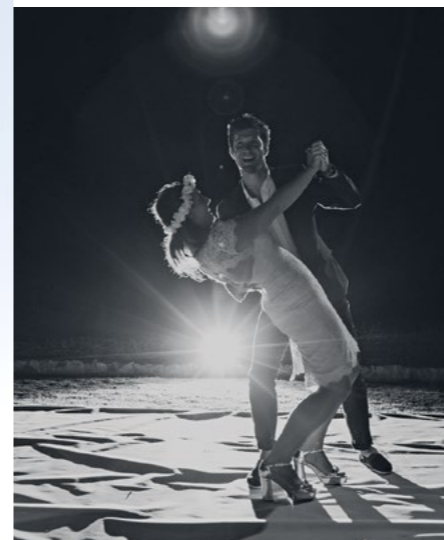


FRONDS & FAMILY

A Melbourne couple gathered loved ones and let the good times roll, tropical style, on Koh Samui. By JESSICA MATTHEWS

Photographed by ERIC RONALD



From left: the reception ended with dancing on the beach in Koh Samui; the bride wore a Monique LHuillier dress and Le Louvre veil.





Clockwise from far left: Samujana villas; the bride's "dream" Miu Miu shoes; final prep; fan-style wedding programs; the groomsman in summer suits.



"We had a Slim Aarons-style party. I remember looking around and thinking, 'I've never seen a pool this full. Ever!'"



IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT. Polly Viska was wandering down a street in Paris when a chance encounter made her weak at the knees. The object of her affection sat behind a shiny window at Miu Miu and had jewel-encrusted silver straps and a cute chunky heel. Even though she hadn't planned the rest of her bridal look, she just knew.

"They were my dream wedding shoes," gushes. "I went back three days in a row but thought, 'I don't know what my dress is yet, so I'd be stupid to buy them.' On the plane home they were all I could think about. I couldn't get these shoes off my mind!"

Then came a cruel twist of fate. Back in Australia, when Viska decided to make the purchase, they were nowhere to be found. "I went to every Miu Miu shop and looked everywhere online — no one had them," she says. "Eventually Mum found a place in the US with a pair, so she gave them to me as a surprise."

It wasn't the first time Viska found love overseas. The public relations manager at Mecca Brands first met her husband, Nicholas (who goes by Roger) Larkins, on holiday in Thailand. "It was that time between school and uni," she says. "I went with the girls, he went with the boys. We turned a corner and bumped into each other."

That was 11 years ago. These days the couple is based in Melbourne, where they both grew up. Roger proposed in the Victorian coastal town of Lorne during a holiday. "We went for a run and got to my favourite lookout point, and he was like, 'I've got a really bad stitch,'" says Viska. "When I turned around, he was down on one knee. All these people were out on their balconies cheering." ▶

The bride's father, Peter, cracks open some Pol Roger champagne.



From top: the wedding took place on a grass embankment above the beach to save heels becoming sand-bound; bridesmaids in matching banana print, and all-white for the ceremony.



There were also plenty of guests to cheer them on at their wedding. Roughly 120 people made the trip to Koh Samui in Thailand for the occasion in April. Viska says the date fell during that “freaky week this year when Easter ran into Anzac Day. So it sort of became a festival.”

The couple arrived at their accommodation and venue — the luxurious Samujana villas, located on a quiet stretch of beach — one week before the wedding. “When everyone else arrived, we had celebratory drinks,” says Viska. The couple also made welcome packs for guests, including a map of the island, information on local restaurants, sunscreen and personalised sunglasses. “My theory was if people are flying to Thailand, it needs to be easy when they get there.”

And easy it was. “Every morning, people would wake up and have breakfast and go swimming together,” she says. At one point, about 90 guests were in an infinity pool at the couple’s villa. “We had a Slim Aarons-style party. I remember looking around and thinking, ‘I’ve never seen a pool this full. Ever!’”

And all this took place before the wedding. You might wonder how it could be topped, but that would be to underestimate the bride, who is, after all, a PR manager. Viska planned the marriage to a tee: from the ceremony held on a grass embankment by the beach (“nobody wants to get their heels stuck in sand”) to the delicious Thai menu (a coconut ice-cream bar replaced a traditional wedding cake) to fireworks that exploded during the couple’s bridal waltz (actually more of a dance-off to an Etta James/Tupac mashup).

Fittingly, the bride wore a short white Monique Lhuillier frock which she describes as “my perfect party dress”. Of course, she also wore her beloved Miu Miu, although not for the whole night. “They got a bit uncomfortable later on, so I kicked them off,” she says. Sole mates or not, nothing was coming between this newly married girl and the dance floor. ■



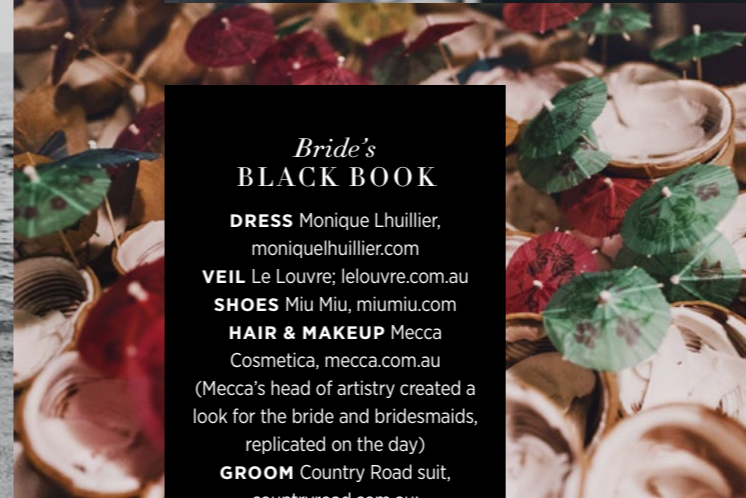
“The couple made welcome packs for guests, including a map of the island, information on local restaurants, sunscreen and personalised sunglasses.”



From top: toasts under a canopy of fairy lights; during the speeches; a coconut ice-cream bar in place of a traditional wedding cake.



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Bride's BLACK BOOK

DRESS Monique Lhuillier, moniquelhuillier.com

VEIL Le Louvre; lelouvre.com.au

SHOES Miu Miu, miumiu.com

HAIR & MAKEUP Mecca Cosmetics, mecca.com.au

(Mecca's head of artistry created a look for the bride and bridesmaids, replicated on the day)

GROOM Country Road suit, countryroad.com.au; Toms shoes, toms.com

VENUE Samujana villas, Koh Samui, samujana.com

DRINKS: Champagne Pol Roger
WEDDING STYLIST Go Samui Weddings and Samujana villas, gosamuiweddings.com

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO Eric Ronald, ericonald.net

INVITATIONS Viska Print, viskaprint.com

BRIDE'S TOP TIP “Relax.”

