

## WEDDING, ENGAGEMENT, ANNIVERSARY &amp; COMMITMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

## TOGETHER

Location, Location,  
Location

Couples are choosing unique sites for their weddings



1. Guests watch a couple's first dance on the dance floor of Vibiana, an L.A. cathedral built in 1876 that has been remodeled into an event space. Photo by Callaway Gable Photography.  
2. For this wedding under a canopy of trees, Bella Weddings & Events in L.A. worked closely with the bridal couple and the florist to create this natural look. Small wood stumps held bowls of petals for guests to throw. Photo by Josef Isayo.

fountain and hundreds of tiny lights.

"It's one of the more unique spaces I've seen," Gustafson said.

Everything has to be brought in, including tables, chairs and linens. And for security reasons, "the site management company requires that a valet be brought in to watch people arrive and depart," she added. "It cuts down on people being able to wander in."

## Transformed locales

Russell and Lily Hollander of West Hollywood were planning their wedding at a boutique hotel when they realized they were making a mistake.

"We looked at each other and said, 'This isn't the wedding we want,'" Russell Hollander said.

They hired Banta as their wedding planner and she told them about Marvimon near downtown L.A. Built in 1924 by an Italian race car driver as an automobile showroom, the 7,000-square-foot space has been remade into a loft with a garden courtyard. "It's sort of a blank palette where you can do your own thing," Russell Hollander said. "It was important to us to make it very personal to us."

The Marvimon allowed the couple to put a different twist on one tradition in particular. Instead of walking down the customary wedding aisle, they walked hand-in-hand down a 30-foot-long loading dock. The dock door opened on cue to reveal them to the 96 guests seated in front of them.

"As soon as it opened and we walked through, everyone started laughing, then cheering and clapping," Russell Hollander said. "It was the best wedding entrance ever. It was important to us at the beginning of the wedding that we set a tone of fun and that everyone saw us come down together."

A former 1980s smog check center, the Smog Shoppe in Culver City is now a 6,500-square-foot event site featuring solar-powered indoor and outdoor spaces. With 15-foot wooden ceilings and vintage furnishings, the oversized garage seats up to 200 and opens up to a lush garden courtyard.

Joo and Jacob Koo of West Hollywood decided to get married there so that they could have everything they wanted, including the Swedish/Asian fusion chef they favor.

"You rent the venue, and the rest is kind of up to you with their supervision and the person you hire," Jacob Koo said. "What makes Smog Shoppe really cool is that it's a green event center, self-sustaining, and the flora and plants around create a great vibe."

The Koo's main goal was for their guests to have a good time. They said response from their guests was that it was the coolest wedding they'd ever been to.

"Our guests had never been there or anywhere like it," Jacob Koo said.

— Sophia Fischer, Special Advertising Sections Writer

Los Angeles Times  
CUSTOM PUBLISHING

This page was edited and designed by the Custom Publications staff of the Los Angeles Times Advertising Department. Questions or comments? Contact Darlene Gunther at 213.237.3133 or e-mail her at darlene.gunther@latimes.com. For advertising inquiries, contact Sandra Gilson at 213.237.4646 or e-mail her at sandra.gilson@latimes.com.

## Julie Rousseau — Rishad Olpadwala



André Vippolis

When Julie Rousseau, 36, and Rishad Olpadwala, 35, met at some friends' engagement party in L.A. in 2005, there was an instant attraction and a common professional bond — at the time both were in TV commercial production. And over a five-year courtship, their relationship remained strong even as he moved to Ithaca, N.Y., for grad school and Rousseau moved to Manhattan.

To help bridge the geographic distance, Rousseau, a freelance TV commercial producer, made Olpadwala a journal called "Tois et Moi," ("you and me" in French). It chronicled how their relationship began, starting with a matchbook from the Venice bar where they had their first special moment. They became engaged in Santa Monica last year.

But the couple faced a bit of a challenge when it came to planning their wedding. Olpadwala, who is employed at a sustainable energy company, and his parents, Deenaz and Porus Olpadwala of Albuquerque, N.M., and Ithaca, are Zoroastrian. Zoroastrianism is an ancient Indian religion. Rousseau, who grew up in Southern California, was brought up Roman Catholic by her French parents Nicole and Michael Rousseau of Santa Monica. Neither the bride nor the groom practice a religion, but their strong attachments to their respective cultures made it important to blend them at their wedding.

"I love that I am French, and I love that Rishad is Indian and that we both have another culture in addition to being American," Rousseau said. "That really represents who we are — a mix."

They decided to honor those roots by having two services at their May 30 nuptials at Inn of the Seventh Ray in Topanga Canyon. The Zoroastrian ceremony, performed in Parsi, was presided over by two priests. The mothers of the bride and groom performed the Achu Michu ritual — a symbolic Parsi blessing, circling coconuts, eggs and rock candy around the couple's heads, cracking the eggs and coconuts on the ground, then draping garlands around the couple's necks. After Olpadwala changed from a traditional Parsi *dagri* into a suit, the Christian part of the ceremony began. Rev. Elizabeth Nordquist asked the 195 guests if they supported this marriage. They answered, "We do!"

At the outdoor reception, the deejay played Indian Bhangra and French songs. The couple's first dance was to "La Vie En Rose," and the dessert was a French croquembouche.

But then came the surprise of the evening. Together the fathers of the bride and groom got up and made a speech together. They expressed their thanks for this happy day in three languages — English, French and Gujarati — with each sentence spoken in alternating languages. The bride's father spoke the first sentence in English, the groom's father repeated it in French, and the bride's father spoke again in Gujarati, expressing their sentiments together in languages not familiar to them. The gesture was like the icing on the couple's exotic cake.

Said Rousseau: "I was incredibly touched. I couldn't believe my father-in-law was speaking French, and I was so proud that my father was speaking Gujarati. They really showed me that our families were embracing our separate cultures."

— Emerson Patrick, Special Advertising Sections Writer

## Maggie Tsai — Kevin Lo



Focomova Photography

Kevin Lo didn't have to slay a dragon to win Maggie Tsai as his bride. But he did have to prove his worthiness as a groom in some unusual ways. In keeping with their wedding theme, reminiscent of their years of travel together, the Pasadena couple followed an ancient custom called the Chinese Wedding Door Game on the morning of their wedding day. Lo, 28, who works in a restaurant, was blocked from entering the room where his bride-to-be awaited him.

He had to overcome challenges put to him by Tsai's bridesmaids to prove his love. Among them were doing pushups and singing a love song. "We're kids at heart," said Tsai, 26, who works in administration for the Panda Restaurant Group. "We have a lot of fun together."

The couple met online in 1997 when Tsai was 14 and Lo was 16. On their first date, they went to see the movie "Ever After," a remake of "Cinderella." "Kevin asked me, 'Will you be my Cinderella?' I said yes."

After dating for four years, they moved in together. Their wedding on May 30 had an international flair reflecting how much they love to travel.

Since they met, they've visited Germany, Switzerland, France, Great Britain, Turkey, Greece, Italy, China and Taiwan. "I fell in love with traveling," explained Lo. "It blew me away, realizing there were other things to see other than the U.S. — the cultures, the history of the buildings, the different foods we tried. It's something we enjoy doing together."

"We travel well together," Tsai added. "We always have something to talk about and share with each other. We have a very strong friendship within the relationship."

Their wedding was a celebration of their journey and sailing into the future together. Planned by Ada Chan and Amanda Ma of Fresh Events Co., the festivities took place aboard a yacht docked in Marina del Rey with 185 guests attending. The wedding invitations looked like boarding passes and the pre-ceremony event information was printed on what looked like luggage tags. The wedding programs looked like passports.

In tribute to their almost 12-year relationship, a video love story was played. It showed them wearing clothing from the 1920s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and the present. They wanted it to appear as though they'd been traveling through time together and were now continuing their journey.

Looking back at the worldwide adventures of two teenagers who fell in love and knew they were meant to be together, the words of a popular song reflect their story. A song they have on their wedding website is Shania Twain's "You're Still the One."

— Rena Dictor LeBlanc, Special Advertising Sections Writer