



A BALI THEME

Sarah Azzopardi and **Matthew Zammit** got married at the registry office on 2 July. When they learned about the idea of a symbolic wedding they turned to wedding planner Jacqui Cassar of Magic Moments to celebrate their union at the groom's residence in Madliena on 14 July. Here, they tell us all about their unique wedding

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTIAN SANT FOURNIER



Sarah with her sister Charmaine Stubley



The couple's daughter Ella was one of the flower girls



The bride with her in-laws Johanna and Alex Zammit



"We first heard about the possibility of holding a symbolic wedding after speaking to Jacqui at one of the wedding fairs last year," says Sarah. "Later she suggested we read the March issue of **I DO** to see how she had organised a symbolic wedding for a Japanese couple. Since the venue (Matthew's parents' home) was not a registered place for a civil ceremony, it was the perfect option to have a magical wedding in the gardens.

"The catering was entrusted in the hands of James Caterers, and they did a fantastic job. The food was excellent and very abundant. The staff were very professional and polite with a menu that was in keeping with our Bali theme. Later in the evening we opened a BBQ table and this too was very well organised by the staff and Jacqui.

Since the wedding ceremony took place at sunset, the music was suggested by Matthew's mother, Johanna, and consisted of original Balinese chilled out sounds. This went on until the dancing began later on in the evening. We were entertained by Ozzie Lino and he was perfect! He played the right music at the right time and had us, as well as our guests, dancing the night away.

"The lillium flowers were also prepared by Johanna, and were placed in beautiful large transparent vases on white linen covered tables, protected by white umbrellas purposely bought in Bali for the occasion. The gardens looked magical with 18 white traditional Balinese flags hung from curved bamboo poles."

Johanna adds, "Sarah was given away by my husband Alex and was welcomed by 250 guests mostly young friends of the couple and, of course, their families."

Matthew tells his part of the story: "Sarah and I met eight years ago, while she was on holiday in Malta, at the Black Gold Bar in Sliema. Sarah was out celebrating her birthday and it was love at first sight. We had been thinking about getting married for a couple of years but something always came up and we kept postponing it."

Sarah continues: "We decided to go travelling to Asia and Australia and it was then that we realised we wanted to get married. What confirmed our decision was the birth of our beautiful daughter Ella. She was born on 20 June 2004 on Father's Day.

"Three months ago we decided to tie the knot and immediately contacted Jacqui to help us out. We choose 14 July mainly due to guaranteed weather. As we didn't have a back-up venue we needed the weather to hold up and it was magical. There was a slight breeze throughout the evening that kept us cool."



Above: A special poem was written and read by Natalie Anastasi during the ceremony

On right: Sarah with her flower girls: Ella Azzopardi, Mya & daughter Ella Zammit

Johanna describes Sarah's dress: "She wore a beautiful gown in silk georgette which she bought from Wedding Bells in Valletta. It was the first dress that she saw and she bought it straight away. Alexia and Marquita were so helpful and kind."

Sarah agrees: "The dress was perfect - I loved it! I carried a shower of orchids especially created for me by Qronfla of Balzan. It was great because all I did was explain our theme and left everything up to them. The bridesmaids carried a loosely hand tied posy of matching orchids with little crowns on their heads. They looked adorable."





The bride with her friends Donna Bonello, Yana Azzopardi and Ambra Cauchi



The groom celebrates with Nathan Stubley, Nick Abela and Edward Sant Fournier



Jamie Sammut in mid-air about to dive into the pool



The couple were given a rousing send-off by Victor Bajada, Nick Abela, Nathan Stubley and Edward Sant Fournier

"My make up was done by Vanita and my hair by Georgette at Sophisticut of Msida. We kept the look very natural to go along with the wedding theme.

The beautiful photography was at the hands of Christian Sant Fournier. We wanted his journalistic style shots, no posing just everybody having a great time. No pressure, just fun, after all it was our wedding!

"Although the wedding was planned in three months the idea was discussed over a longer period of time. This gave Johanna, who owns the shop Bali Stuff, time to bring over all the materials and decorations from Bali. She took on the brave task of organising the venue decorations along with the help of her husband Alex, Matthew and myself. It was a real team effort."

Johanna points out that holding a wedding at home entails a lot of preparation and planning. "This caused a lot of stress in order to organise kitchen facilities and everything that was needed to seat the guests during the symbolic wedding ceremony. We all wanted to create a unique venue never seen before in Malta and went into great detail with everything. It was not the usual traditional wedding, but very magical and serene at sunset, and then vibrant and lively afterwards. The witness Jamie Sammut ended up cooling himself off in the pool and cooking hotdogs for the after party which went on till 4.30am."

Sarah and Matthew both wanted to say a special thank you to everybody who worked so hard to give them the perfect wedding. "We are forever grateful for all the hard work and dedication from Johanna that kept us all going. We had benches to make, bench covers to sew, and everybody chipped in. Matthew's Aunt Luana was kept busy sewing all the bench covers and cushion covers while Alex and Matthew were building benches and painting the woodwork all in preparation for the big day.

"My sisters Charmaine and her husband Nathan, and Claire together with her son Lewis and her daughters Ella and Maya, came over especially for the wedding from the UK. Our friends Daniel and Cecille Borg Olivier gave us a surprise and turned up at the wedding from Denmark."

Meanwhile Jacqui from Magic Moments, was chosen to conduct the symbolic ceremony and was entrusted to take care of the proceedings throughout the evening, so that the family could enjoy themselves.

"We were really happy with her service," says Sarah. "She was so professional and discreet, almost invisible. She kept in mind everything we asked her for and got right on with it. We asked her to conduct the symbolic ceremony herself and we got to put in some of our own lines to make it more personal. We also asked her to decorate the cake and the cake table which looked absolutely gorgeous. Johanna had placed three glass candle holders on one side and a beautiful vase of lilies opposite - simple and beautiful. Even the DJ had commented on how efficient Jacqui was throughout the evening and we would highly recommend her service to any couple planning their wedding."

On her part, Jacqui explains her role at this unique wedding. "I had been told of the ideas and colours during our meetings but it wasn't until I saw everything put together that I truly understood. They went for strong vibrant colours - very rich reds and violets combined with crisp white that just set the scene but instead of white sand they were walking on green grass...it

looked perfect with all the multi coloured lanterns lit up. There were so many and I know as I lit all the candles! All you heard were ooh's and aah's throughout the evening and as you can see from the photos, it was very magical. The venue seemed to keep changing as the night wore on with seating areas in every corner and subtle lighting. I thoroughly enjoyed this wedding and will be inspired for quite a while."



Sarah with her sister Claire Azzopardi

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