



## A TOUCH OF IRELAND

Irish couple **John** and **Tanya McManus** were married on 4 December 2006 at Palazzo Capua in an unforgettable wedding organised by Jacqui Cassar from Magic Moments. Tanya tells her wedding story to *IDO*

PHOTOS BY MARK CASSAR



The couple did not want normal, formal shots, but wanted the photos to be as natural and fun as possible



John and I met in Canada, and after a two week holiday in Ireland we made the decision to move back. Making such a major change in our lives we knew that we would be together forever and marriage would be the next step. Family and friends kept asking when we were going to take the plunge and we kept responding with "someday" or "eventually we'll get there" and finally after about five years we decided that the time was right. I actually started looking for a place to get married before John's actual proposal, but eventually he took me off to the very first spot we stopped at on that two-week holiday five and a half years previous. As we looked out at the mountains, he proposed. It was perfect.

We started by trying to decide what to do: get married in Ireland, in Canada, or abroad, and eventually we decided that our wedding day was "all about us" and going away, just the two of us, was the perfect plan. I started searching on the Internet at all the possibilities for marrying abroad and they were endless. I wasn't keen on having our ceremony in a foreign language and then having it translated into English because, for me, that would be like being married by the translator. Then I came across Jacqui's website, Magic Moments. I had never considered Malta, I didn't know anything about it other than a relative had been there on holiday once, but the deeper I got into Magic Moments the more I liked this option. Jacqui's website was so easy, it had a fantastic wedding package option, it was filled with so much information about different ceremonies, venues and little extras to custom make your wedding and a price that



Bernie and Peter with the couple during the wedding vows

was right on target. Her website got us hooked on Malta. We researched the area and found it to be particularly beautiful and steeped in history with great weather to boot, so our minds were made up.

John and I were having a civil ceremony but we didn't want it in a typical run-of-the-mill registrar's office. I had a picture in my mind of how I wanted our ceremony to take place and once I relayed my thoughts and ideas to Jacqui, she put her creative genius to work. We really liked the look of the Victoria hotel and when we came across the Palazzo, I fell in love. It was exactly what we were looking for; we wanted a romantic and intimate place to have our ceremony and Palazzo Capua was just that. In addition to having our

wedding ceremony there, we had the entire place to ourselves for the entire 24 hours, it was absolute heaven and our suite was fit for a king (and queen). We also chose the Victoria Hotel to stay in and they did not let us down, the staff bent over backwards for us and went out of their way to make our stay pleasurable.

We met Jacqui the day after we landed in Malta and proceeded to the registrar's office to get all the paperwork organised. Later that evening we got a huge surprise as in walked John's cousin Bernie and her husband Peter Brueggeman from Germany to share our special day with us - talk about unexpected! So we all sat down and celebrated with loads of drink. >>



"This one is for later in life," John joked

<< Finally the day was upon us and I was actually perfectly calm. We had the entire Palazzo to ourselves so all the girls headed over to get ready. As we walked in, there was a bunch of flowers sitting on a table and the girls said "that must be your bouquet". I had arranged with Jacqui to have Calla Lilies for my flowers and these were not Calla Lilies. I said nothing and just thought to myself "these will look just as nice". When we got settled in the suite we got under way with the beauty regime. First up for me was my make-up and when Claire was finished and I looked at myself in the mirror I was on the verge of tears and ruining it all. Then to add to it all, Richline finished my hair and set me off again. I finished the look off when I stepped into my wedding dress and did everything I could not to cry again. I made my way down the beautiful carved staircase of the Palazzo and there waiting for me at the bottom was my gorgeous husband-to-be, looking so handsome, beaming up at me.

These three shots were taken by Jacqui herself, with impressive results

As we took some initial photos, Jacqui went to get the flowers and produced the most beautiful bouquet of Calla Lilies. I laughed and told her about the conversation earlier and we had a good giggle over it.

The ceremony was held in the main room of the Palazzo which was absolutely stunning, all reds and golds, which as it happens matched my colour scheme beautifully. I walked into the Palazzo on Peter's arm, who stood in for my Dad and gave me away, and when I turned round and saw the set up Jacqui had arranged, I was blown away - it looked absolutely beautiful. The flowers we saw earlier on the table were now decorating the backs of the four chairs tied on with shimmering gold ribbon, and a matching bouquet of reds and golds on the table. It was perfect, better than we could have asked for. Although only about 15 minutes in length, Marthese the registrar made the ceremony so personal and beautiful with her wonderful words, I broke down at the start of my vows and quickly brought everyone to tears with me.

When we finally sealed the deal with a kiss, it was off to Mdina with Mark Cassar and Jacqui to get our photos taken during a private photo session. Mdina was beautiful. The unique surroundings, and Mark's expert eye lead the way to the most beautiful photographs. We have shown everyone we know, including a professional photographer friend, and they cannot get over how lovely and natural they are. We



cannot thank Mark enough for the wonderful job he did, he made us feel relaxed and at ease and I think the pictures say it all.

Before too long it was time to head back to the Palazzo for our wedding feast and we were not disappointed. The food was amazing, the dessert and wedding cake even better. Needless to say when I got up from the dinner table my dress was far tighter than when I sat down.

We cannot thank Jacqui, Mark and the entire hotel staff at the Victoria enough for making our wedding day perfect. I have said it to everyone back home here in Ireland that, if we had to do it all again, we wouldn't change a thing. It was beautiful, and Malta met and exceeded all of our expectations. We will be back. "