

# Once Upon a Dream

Lucia Tait and Vishal Tolani's stunning wedding encompassed three days of celebrations in Hong Kong for their 115 guests

**W**HEN LUCIA TAIT FIRST met Vishal Tolani in New York through mutual friends, neither was expecting love to blossom. But that's exactly what happened when the pair met again in 2012 at a wedding in Marrakech.

Lucia had lived in New York for more than a decade and was working as the senior stylist for online luxury fashion retailer Moda Operandi; meanwhile, Vishal was based on the other side of the world, running his family's watch business in Hong Kong. After a year of long-haul flights and 12-hour time differences, Lucia took the plunge and moved to Hong Kong in late 2013.

Vishal's proposal followed swiftly after in February 2014, on a beach in Koh Samui

at sunset. "It was just the two of us—very authentic, romantic and not a bit cliché," recalls Lucia. "Even though I knew it was coming, it was truly the out-of-body experience everyone tells you it will be."

Although Vishal chose the engagement ring himself, featuring Lucia's birthstone sapphire, he did have her send some photos for inspiration—and they ended up with a very special piece. "I wanted a non-traditional ring with a vintage feel," she explains. "When Vishal placed the ring on my finger, the sapphire's pear shape was upside down. I liked that it was even more unique like that, so I've never worn it any other way."

After deciding to hold the wedding in Hong Kong, their overseas guests were the couple's top concern; they chose the US Thanksgiving





*Lucia & Vishal*

WHERE China Club (welcome dinner), Hindu Temple of Hong Kong (Hindu ceremony), The Lawn at The Upper House (Hindu wedding reception), The Butchers Club (wedding ceremony/dinner)



holiday weekend to allow more flexibility. The couple also wanted to keep the wedding relatively small and intimate, with only 115 of their close friends and family invited.

Lucia enlisted Michele Li of The Wedding Company to help with planning. “I was engaged within three months of moving here, so Michele’s experience in Hong Kong was invaluable.” The search for “different and dynamic venues that showcased Hong Kong’s unique character, places that were more than just a standard packaged banquet” proved to be a lengthy one, but she finally found a winning trio in the China Club for the welcome dinner, The Lawn at The Upper House for the Hindu wedding reception and The Butchers Club at EdItus for the final wedding ceremony. Lucia’s fashion background also played a role, with elements throughout inspired by Chanel, Dior and Dries Van Noten shows rather than traditional wedding themes.

The first night at the China Club paid homage to Hong Kong, with dim sum at dinner and a noodle-making show as entertainment. The couple kept one special secret until the last minute—a surprise civil ceremony that not even their parents knew about. “To get legally married spontaneously and immediately during the first course took the pressure off the weekend, and made the beginning even more exciting for us,” Lucia says.

The second day saw the couple celebrating Vishal’s Indian heritage with a Mehndi henna ceremony at Lucia’s bridal suite in The Upper



*“We didn’t let traditions dictate our choices; rather, we honoured the rituals that spoke to us and made up our own rules in-between. Stay true to what you and your betrothed want, and block out all the noisy opinions and demands that will be swirling around you. All that matters is how you feel on the day” —Lucia & Vishal*



## WEDDING DETAILS

**BRIDE'S OUTFITS** One Vintage dress, Kotur bag, Oscar de la Renta earrings and Michael Kors shoes (welcome dinner); Payal Singhal dress, vintage bag and René Caovilla sandals (Hindu wedding reception); custom Marchesa gown, Suzanne Kalan earrings from Plukka and Kotur shoes (wedding ceremony/dinner)

**GROOM'S OUTFITS** || Sarto (welcome dinner and wedding ceremony/dinner), custom-tailored traditional outfit from India (Hindu wedding reception)

**HAIR AND MAKE-UP** David Gouygou from BruneBlonde and Kamen Leung

**WEDDING PLANNER** Michele Li at The Wedding Company

**CATERERS** China Club (welcome dinner), Café Gray Deluxe (Hindu wedding reception) and The Butchers Club (wedding ceremony/dinner)

**PHOTOGRAPHY** Joyce Yung

**HONEYMOON** Amanpulo in Palawan, Philippines; Singita in Kruger National Park, Sabi Sands Game Reserve and One&Only Cape Town, South Africa



House and a traditional Hindu ceremony at the Hindu Temple of Hong Kong. The reception at The Lawn also had an Indian-inspired dress code for guests and an Indian menu catered by Café Gray Deluxe, including a *kofta* station and custom rose-flavoured mocktails.

The final day of festivities began with an Aqua Luna cruise especially for out-of-town guests, followed by the wedding ceremony and black-tie dinner at The Butchers Club; its dark-romance theme was inspired by Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Botticelli's *Primavera*. One of Lucia's favourite moments was walking down the aisle in her one-of-a-kind Marchesa gown to Lana Del Rey's haunting version of *Once Upon a Dream*. "It made for a few minutes of absolute drama," she recalls. "Because we didn't have a videographer, only the people in that room will know and understand those moments. And I love that." ❧