

MODERN LUXURY

# Brides

SOUTH FLORIDA &amp; THE CARIBBEAN

## Passion *in* Paradise

COUTURE CREATIONS BY  
CAROLINA HERRERA,  
OSCAR DE LA RENTA & MORE

OCEAN-TO-TABLE:  
FRESH BIG-DAY DINING

ARTISANAL INVITES, HAUTE  
HEADPIECES, SWEETSCAPES  
& OTHER 2012 TRENDS

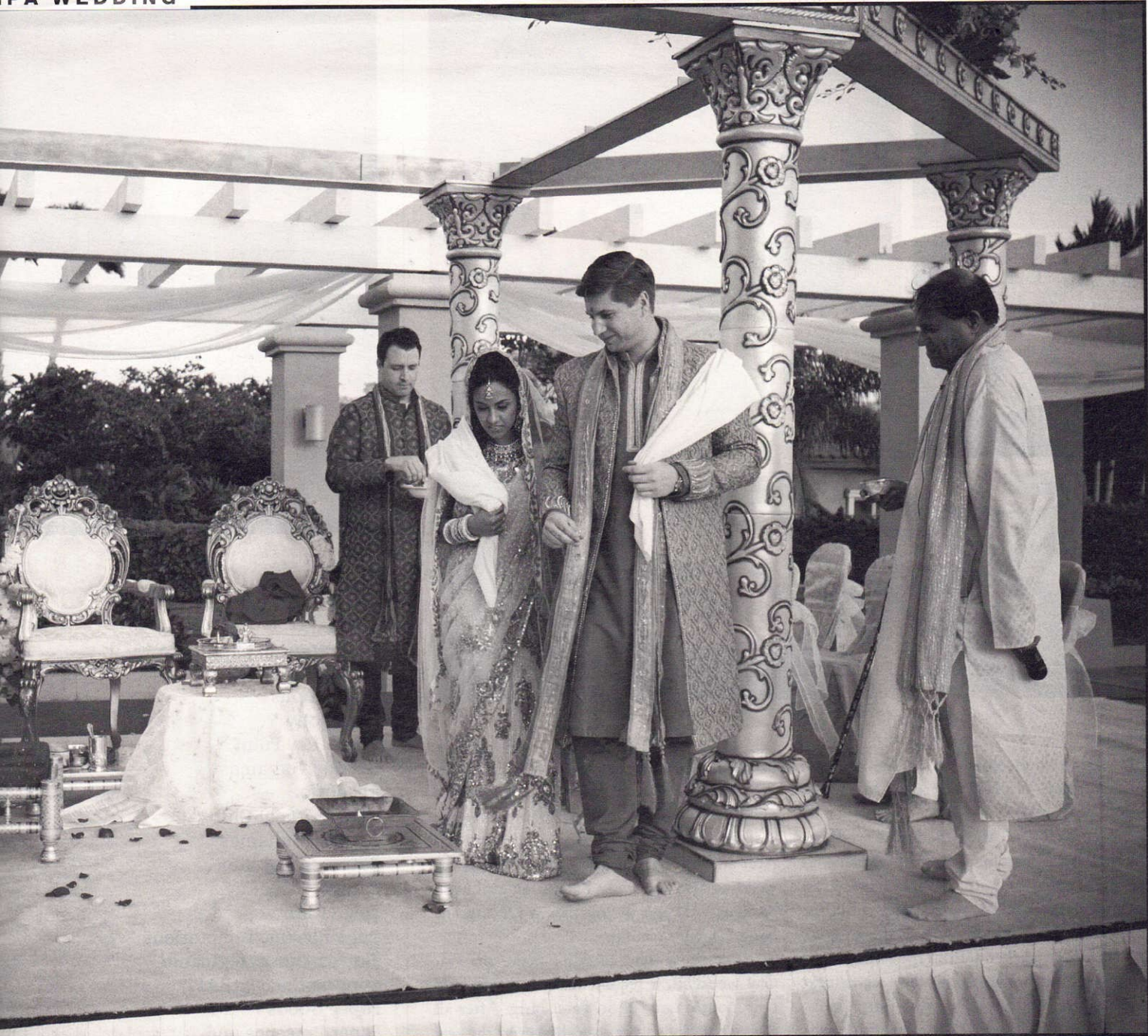
*Honeymoon Hotlist!*  
*Stunning Getaways Near and Far*

**PLUS**

*Affairs to Remember from  
Palm Beach to the Bahamas!*







SASHA CHATANI & CHADD LUCAS *March 4 & 5, 2012*

## Take Two

How better to celebrate a couple's differing cultural backgrounds than with contrasting back-to-back weddings?

By Margit Bisztray |  
Photography by Aaron Lockwood Photography |

Many couples face the challenge of having their two cultures meet in one celebration. Holding two weddings hardly sounds like simplifying things, but Sasha Chatani and Chadd Lucas did exactly that.

The couple's first date was, literally, a historic one. It was Sept. 11, 2001, and, like most Americans, the University of Miami undergrads had watched the news all day. To unwind, they met mutual friends at a tavern in Miami's Coconut Grove, and that first

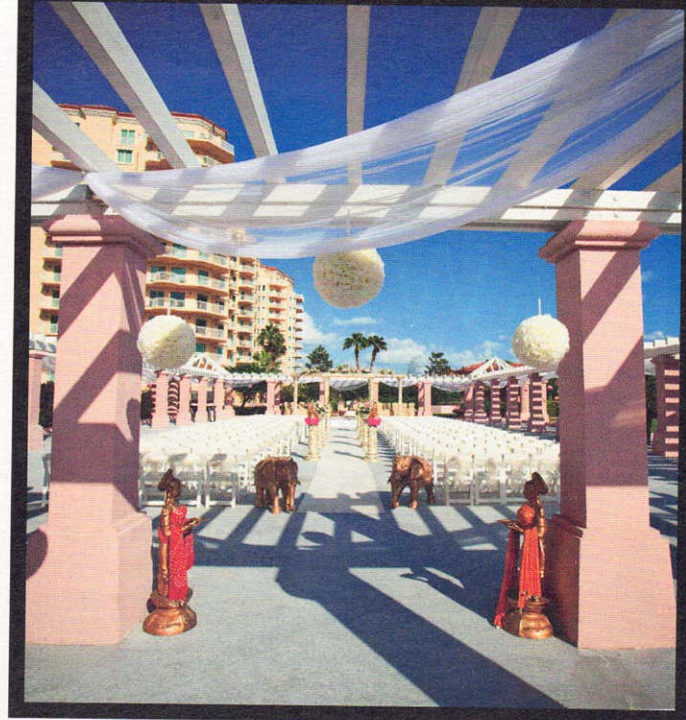
attraction lasted. After graduating from the MBA program at Emory University in 2008, the couple—she of Indian descent and he, a Lutheran from Pennsylvania—settled in New York. In 2010, Chatani returned to her apartment after “a normal workday” to find it brimming with roses. As Lionel Richie's “Endless Love” played, Lucas bent down on one knee and proposed.

The couple shopped for venues and chose the Vinoy Renaissance St. Petersburg Resort





Clockwise from top left: Via meticulously designed flowers, the cake incorporated a variety of rich hues; 250 attendees witnessed the nuptials outdoors on a perfect day; the first reception nodded to Indian traditions; the couple enjoys a second dance as husband and wife; the bride's glittering jewels; paper goods came directly from India; the bride's hands with intricate *mehndi* patterns



& Golf Club for its elegance and old-world charm, and because it had sufficient venues to accommodate a multiday celebration for 250 guests.

Festivities began two days before the weddings with a *mehndi*, or henna ceremony, where the bride and female guests had their hands and feet intricately painted, symbolizing luck.

For the Indian ceremony Friday, the couple wore apparel custom-made in New York. The families congregated on a covered, pillared stage known as a *mandap* with the *pandit*, or officiate. Rituals included a "walk around the fire" (a fire pit) representing the journey of marriage.

"As a child, I always imagined my wedding as an Indian one," says Chatani. "It's about families joining, not just individuals."

A *sangeet* party in the Sunset Ballroom featured Indian street food (*chaat*) as well as Thai and Southwestern cuisine. Friends performed a Bollywood dance and the music of Indian DJ Firoz soon had everyone on their feet dancing.

On Saturday, it was time to do it all over again, this time in a classic, Christian, white wedding (the bride is Catholic) in the hotel's sea garden. The groom's hometown pastor officiated. In a Melissa Sweet dress with lavish tulle and Jimmy Choo shoes, Chatani married Lucas for the second time. A plated four-course meal, with entertainment by the Miami band Higher Ground, finished the evening.

Shannon Wilson, president of Table 6 Productions, enjoyed planning the contrasting events. "The Indian ceremony was fun, colorful and unrehearsed," she says. "The Christian one was solemn, moving and deeply religious. After, it was the only time I saw the bride cry."

To celebrate diversity, sometimes it takes two. ■

## [ The List ]

**Coordination** Shannon Wilson, Table 6 Productions

**Venue/Catering** Vinoy Renaissance St. Petersburg Resort & Golf Club

**Florals/Décor/Lighting/Staging** Palloo's Flowers

**Paper Goods** Brought in from India

**Dress** Melissa Sweet

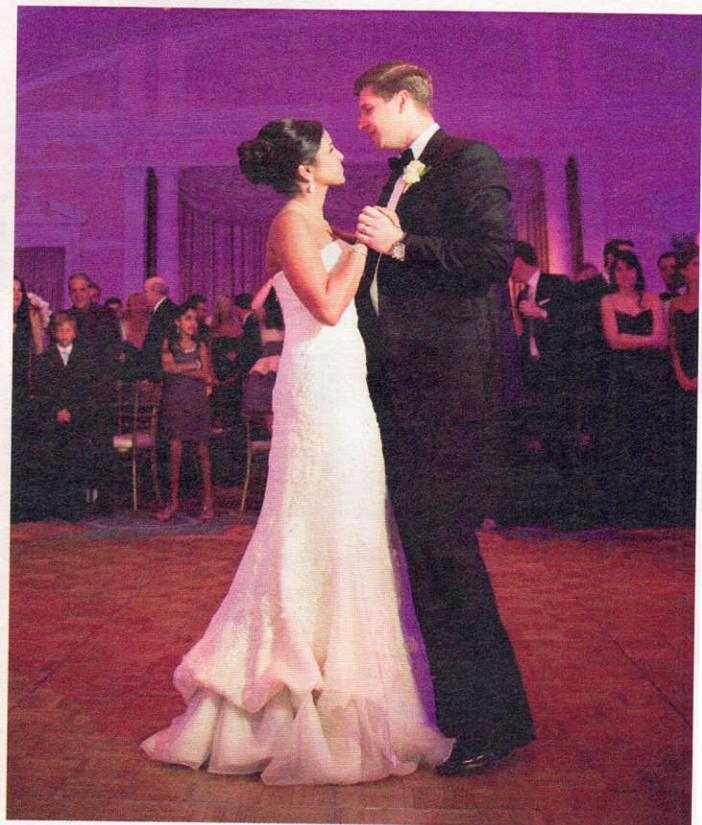
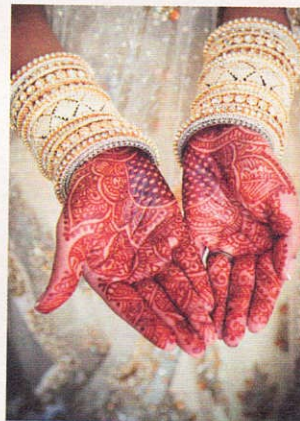
**Shoes** Jimmy Choo

**Bride's Ring Designer** Hearts on Fire

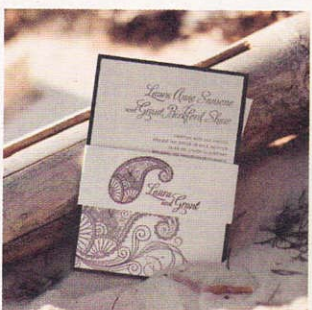
**Hair** Michele Renee

**Entertainment** DJ Firoz and Higher Ground

**Cinematography** VH Video







## [ The List ]

**Coordination** Shannon Wilson, Table 6

**Productions**

**Ceremony**

Kitten Key Point, Cat Cay, Bahamas

**Reception**

Cat Cay Yacht Club, Cat Cay, Bahamas

**Catering** Bay Star

Catering, Cat Cay Yacht Club

**Cake** Elegant Temptations

**Florals/Décor/Lighting/**

**Staging** ConceptBAIT

**Paper Goods**

Paper Presence and

Not From A Box

**Dresses** Ines Di Santo and

Oscar de la Renta from

Ever After in Miami

**Shoes** Christian Louboutin

**Bridesmaid Dresses**

Lula Kate from

Bella Bridesmaid in

Tampa

**Groom's Tux** Tom James

of Tampa Bay

**Rings** David

Alexander Jeweler

in Tampa

**Entertainment** Tropics

Entertainment, Higher

Ground, DJ Coro

**Cinematography**

Voila Cinematic

Clockwise from top left: Each guest was flown in by charter helicopter; Elegant Temptations shipped a sparkling confection, complete with blushing roses; conceptBAIT was tapped for its thoughtfully constructed details, like these dense floral centerpieces and sparkling draperies pinned with chandeliers (below); invitations hinted at the beachy-chic theme of the ceremony; decadent hors d'oeuvres treated guests to the flavors of the Caribbean.

practice in counseling, says. "The island is just magical—a place where we can really unplug and relax."

To that end, they made the wedding weekend itself as magical and relaxing as possible for their guests as well as themselves, marrying classic luxury with seaside comforts. The Yacht Club was host to all the couple's guests for the weekend, from the Friday night rehearsal dinner to hosted lunches, served next to the glittering, crystalline freshwater pool.

The bride and groom married near Sansone's father's house on Kitten Key Point. On the bride's side was her stepmother, who she calls "an unpaid wedding planner," and her actual planner, Shannon Wilson of Table 6 Productions. "Without their help, this event would have never happened. I like to think of myself as organized," Sansone says, "but the necessary attention to detail for planning this wedding was something I was not capable of during chemotherapy."

Because Cat Cay is a privately held island with limited resources, the 130 guests were chartered in from Miami—after their commercial flights were met—as was the food, the flowers, the cake and just about everything else for the party. In addition, the island has no hotel, so the wedding party and guests were quartered in the residents' beachfront homes.

In the end, not a single, stylish ball was

dropped. The couple's goal—to have a "really fun party, with good food, good wines and good music"—was reached. Shaw arranged a stunning fireworks display as a special treat and, in deference to island culture, the wedding also featured a Bahamian junkanoo band as well as a string trio, a DJ and the band Higher Ground.

For those who couldn't make the Cat Cay weekend, a second reception was held two months later in St. Petersburg. After all the celebrations were over, however, the real one began: the duo recently bought their first house together in the Tampa area. And, best of all, Sansone is cancer-free and able to look back on her favorite moment of the ceremony as a metaphor for life—walking down the aisle over uneven ground toward Shaw, on sky-high, sparkly blue Louboutins, without reservations. ●

