



FROM THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA TO THE TINY PICTURE PERFECT ISLAND OF NUSA LEMBONGAN STEVE & GLORIA ADD A DOSE OF ADVENTURE TO THEIR BALINESE WEDDING

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Steve proposed today! We were hiking along a remote part of the Great Wall of China and I was all hot and sweaty, the last thing I expected was for Steve to pop the question.

But the location was perfect: the sun was setting, we had our bare feet dangling off the crumbling wall, and there was no one around for miles. Of course I said Yes!



Steve was there 12 years ago and showed me some photos and we both got shivers down our spines thinking about it, and decided that it would be ideal - the weather, the location, the diversity, the people; we can make this a great holiday with our family and friends.







I find most advice for destination weddings is to get a wedding planner, but I have decided to take this on as my own project. We have been doing a lot of research and really feel a connection with Nusa Lembongan, which is just 30 minutes by boat from mainland Bali. There are no cars, and it has some of the best beaches in Indonesia. It sounds like paradise!

A friend recommended a resort called Batu Karang (www.batukaranglembongan. com), which is set high on a hill overlooking the blue waters and glorious Mt Agung (the towering volcano on Bali.) I contacted the manager, Troy, who told me the resort accommodates around 40 guests and we could have the whole place to ourselves, he added that the ceremony could take place in a garden looking over the ocean, and the 16 April 2011 was free, how did that sound? It sounded perfect!! The wedding is still seven months away but we are so excited to lock in the venue.



I have found a French restaurant call Indiana Kenanga on the other side of the bay. The owner Clement is a Michelin-trained chef who is passionate about food and wine, and all the reviews I have read are first class; so I am thrilled that he has agreed to prepare our wedding dinner. There's just one small problem. How are we going to get our guests from the ceremony on the hill

at Batu Karang to Indiana Kenanga? Steve and I are contemplating putting everyone on scooters but somehow it's not very practical!



We have set up a website for our guests so they can get all the information they need about Bali and Nusa Lembongan. We have a bit of a dilemma, as we want to have a Humanist non-religious ceremony, but have just discovered that in Indonesian, you have to have a religious ceremony for your marriage to be legally recognised.

We're going to have to figure something out!



We are feeling lucky to have so many talented and generous friends that will be involved in

amazing photographer, Cam will be our DJ, Pete the MC, and we are going to ask Carla to sing during our ceremony. Gemma will do makeup and we've asked Leila to be our celebrant, this means we can write out own vows and not perform the religious ceremony in Bali. We have also solved the problem of transporting the guests to the reception venue – we are going to surprise everyone with a sunset boat ride!



We arrived in Bali this morning and jumped straight on a boat. Watching Lembongan come into view was just magical. We met Troy at Batu Karang and he walked us through the venue, which is more beautiful than I could have imagined.

We went through the final details, such as fireworks, candles in the pool, fresh flowers, and Balinese fans for the guests. Everything seems to be under control.













The reality of our dream wedding holiday is finally happening - our friends and family have started to arrive. Everyone is so happy and relaxed, and it's such an honour to know they have made the journey to Bali to celebrate with us. We have four days on the mainland and are planning trips to Uluwatu, the markets, and of course lots of time relaxing by the pool.

Hen and Stag Days! The boys with a bottle of Bintang woke Steve at 7am, they all went white water rafting. We (girls) had a classier Champagne breakfast and I was treated to an awesome day of Balinese cooking, spa pampering and a lovely evening of wining and dining. It was quite an emotional day, I was really touched by the beautiful book of messages and memories the girls put together for me.





It was an early start with everyone feeling fuzzy following last night's shenanigans. We were picked up to catch the 9am ferry to Nusa Lembongan; our hangovers quickly forgotten as we drank in the stunning views. Batu Karang is heaven! We each have our own beautiful villa with a postcard view. By midday we were all lounging in the pool, which set the tone for the next few days: fun, happy times, filled with laughter.



It's been a lovely day filled with massages, and surfing in the sparkling sea. We ended up at Dream Beach, which certainly lives up to its name.

Now we are all having an early night because tomorrow is the big day.



day; writing our own vows created the most

heartfelt moment in our relationship and it was incredible to recite such deep and meaningful vows to each other in front of our friends and family. Everyone loved the surprise boat trip, and the food and service at Indiana Kenanga was truly sensational.

How lucky to find a world-class chef on Nusa Lembongan! We couldn't have picked a better restaurant. The night ended back at the resort with dancing, Champagne, a big pool party, and fireworks for the evening finale. It really has been the best day of my life.

