

CANADIAN COUPLES SAY "I DO."

# weddings

once  
upon a time...

Loretta Walsh  
and Neil Shapiro,  
January 6, 2007,  
Riviera Maya, Mexico

# WEDDINGS



**F**or Neil Shapiro and Loretta Walsh, the decision to tie the knot amidst the stunning white sandy beaches and crystal blue waters of the Riviera Maya was easy. With the assistance of LUXE Destination Weddings ([luxedestinationweddings.com](http://luxedestinationweddings.com)), a full-service consulting firm and travel agency specializing in luxury destination weddings, Neil and Loretta celebrated with 40 of their closest friends and family. Guests flew in from Canada and Australia, Neil and Loretta's hometowns respectively. "We both decided we wanted a destination wedding from the beginning," says Loretta. "To be able to hang out with the people we love the most, made the week leading up to our wedding day so personal and fun that it truly was a once in a lifetime experience." Following the beach ceremony, the party proceeded to the Wave Lounge (property of the Azul Beach Hotel by Karisma), where guests sipped cocktails and revelled in the lively atmosphere of a mariachi band. The reception took place in an elegant, well-lit outdoor terrace. "We could not have asked for a better atmosphere. The food was amazing, the guests were all having fun, and Loretta and I were so relaxed. We truly enjoyed ourselves," Neil exclaims. <sup>wb</sup>



*clockwise from top* Neil and Loretta embrace under the blue sky; The bride and groom kept wandering strangers at bay with this sign. "People were still watching from afar, but I hardly noticed they were there," explains Loretta; Loretta was accompanied down the aisle by both her mother and father, who flew in straight from Australia.



*clockwise from top* "The swan design was simply beautiful and romantic," gushes Loretta; Neil and Loretta exchanged vows on the sandy beaches of the Azul Beach Resort; The mariachi band proved to be a huge hit during cocktail hour, as all the guests ended up hitting the dance floor; Guests laughed their heads off the minute they saw old photos of themselves; Thumbprints in Mexico authenticated that Neil and Loretta's marriage was valid.



## wedding planner



**perfect planners** Neil and Loretta owe a lot of thanks to their wedding planners at LUXE Destination Weddings. "We could not have done it without them. They made our wedding planning so much easier and fun," Loretta says. "They looked after every detail, like getting the perfect gift bags for our guests and finding the right flowers for my bouquet."

**bridal style** The stars must have been on Loretta's side the day she went gown shopping because she immediately fell in love with (and purchased!) the first dress she saw: a gorgeous Jenny Packham gown from White, Toronto. "I knew it was the one because I wanted something glamorous enough for the occasion but not so over the top for getting married on the beach," Loretta says.

**flower power** The bride chose to walk down the aisle with her lucky charm (a horseshoe) and a pale pink cymbidium orchid bouquet. The same flowers, along with pale pink roses and greenery, were used as table centrepieces for the reception.



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