



No jacket required

Tonya and Francois swapped the wedding traditions for an informal party by the sea



The proposal: “We’d been together six years when Francois popped the question,” says Tonya Human, who met Francois van Schalkwyk at a hockey party. “We were on holiday in Mauritius and were celebrating the fact that I’d just quit my previous job. We were enjoying a meal at a fancy restaurant when, suddenly, Francois was on his knees asking me to marry him – it was a huge surprise! I said yes immediately but the whole evening afterwards was a complete blur.”

Location, location: “We’d always talked about having a wedding by the sea, as we live quite far inland in Pretoria,” says Tonya. “We didn’t want the traditional wedding set-up, so we chose Kelp Cottage, in Kommetjie, on the Western Cape of South Africa (amazingspaces.co.za). It’s a luxury villa on the beach, with magnificent views of the Cape Mountains. We paid for the flights and accommodation for about 20 of our closest family and friends and we also asked people not to buy gifts because of the travelling and accommodation costs.”

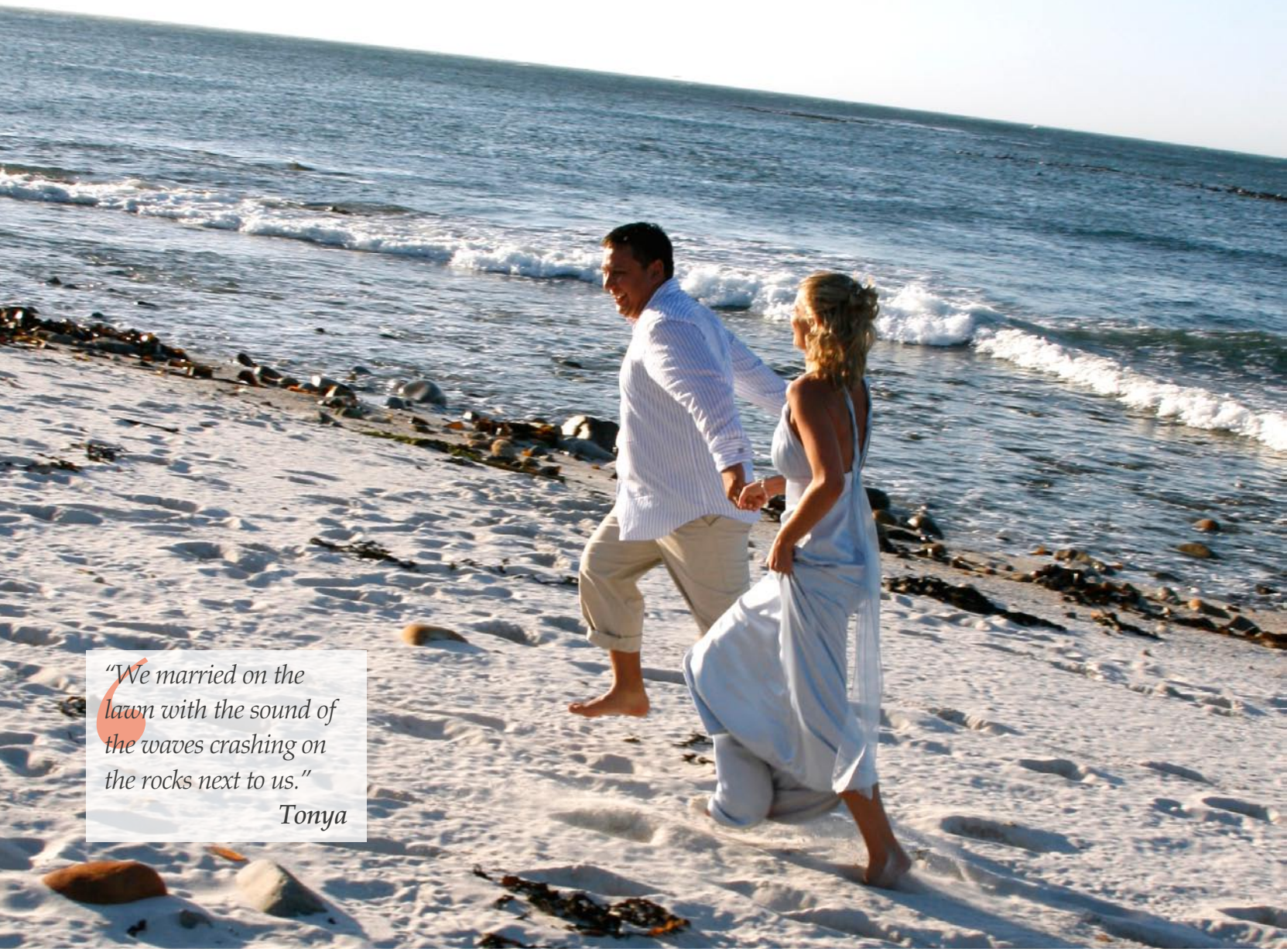
The look: “Our idea was to have a relaxed cocktail-party-at-the-beach theme with about 50 guests. I used the colours of the interior of the house as inspiration – beige, light blue and brown,” says Tonya. “Our wedding planners Wedding Concepts (weddingconcepts.co.za) were great and helped with the decorations, food, flowers, cake – everything except my dress.”

Something blue: Tonya chose a light blue dress to suit the relaxed beach theme. It was made by local dressmaker Elria at The Chamber of Couture (coc.co.za). “My jewellery was a simple silver necklace with light blue glass beads by Ansia Jonck (ansiajonck@hotmail.com), another local designer from Pretoria. Francois’s outfit was very laid back, with a shirt, no jacket and trousers from a local boutique. I didn’t want anything too traditional so I decided against bridesmaids and I didn’t have a bouquet – it’s not my style!”

The ceremony: As guests arrived they were served strawberry daiquiris and sat chatting on the loungers, ottomans and day beds arranged on the villa’s veranda, while jazz band Breakfast Included (breakfastincluded.co.za) played in the background. “An open-sided tent had been set up for the ceremony on the lawn overlooking the beach,” says Tonya. “Because of the surroundings it didn’t need much decoration, but we did have white-washed urns either side filled with a selection of striking tropical foliage. The ceremony was very simple and, with all the excitement, my memories are a bit hazy – apart from the moment when we said ‘I do’. I just felt amazingly calm.”

Beach party: After the ceremony the jazz band played while guests were served canapés and drinks. Food was served throughout the afternoon and there was no formal seating plan so guests could eat and socialise at ▶





"We married on the lawn with the sound of the waves crashing on the rocks next to us."

Tonya



Flowers were bold and minimal, arranged in ocean-coloured planters



the same time. Tonya and Francois also decided against other traditions like cutting the cake and speeches. "The florist Okasie (okasie.co.za) kept flowers bold, minimalist and architectural in style," says Christina from Wedding Concepts. "They used cool shades with the odd warm red tone thrown in."

Food & fun: Food was created by Salt & Pepper Catering (saltandpeppercatering.co.za) and included a selection of canapés, meat and fish kebabs with dips, followed by different main courses of Moroccan lamb and apricot tagine, chargrilled salmon fillets served with minted couscous or Thai green chicken curry with ginger and lemongrass. For dessert there were bite-sized morsels of brandysnap baskets filled with white chocolate mousse; apple, ginger, raspberry and rosewater sorbet; tiramisu; lemon curd and blueberry tarts and fruit kebabs with a mascarpone and lemon dip. "Instead of a traditional cake, we had small individual chocolate mousse cups by Kanya Hunt (+27 82 375 5200, kanyahunt@telkomsa.net), wrapped with chocolate and topped with strawberries," says Tonya. "The jazz band continued into the evening and Francois and I didn't get to bed until 6am the next morning!"

Magic moments: "On the day I felt like a princess – like most brides I'm sure!" says Tonya. "Walking down the aisle towards Francois and my dad, the two most important men in my life, was my favourite moment. I hope guests remember it as a relaxed, stylish day, with fantastic views!"

Photography: I Shoot People (ishootpeople.co.za)
Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen (janhendrik.co.za)

Your guide to a chilled vibe

- "Take inspiration from your surroundings," says Christina at Wedding Concepts. "We used blue to mirror the sea and red to create contrast."
- A variety of bowl-style food is often more entertaining than a formal seated dinner and creates a relaxed, informal atmosphere.
- Tell your guests that the dress code is casual.
- "It's very important to have a Plan B in place for any outdoor reception in case of bad weather," says Christina. "Make sure your venue has some suitable space indoors, just in case."



A seriously cool and chilled-out day with live jazz and great company...

