

Our Wedding Show

featured articles

Why We Chose To Marry In Singapore

by Ming Lee, 1 September 2005



When Cornelius van de Westhuizen asked girlfriend Antoinette to marry him, she had only one request: That the wedding take place in Singapore. Although Cornelius, 33, who is self-employed, had never ventured out of his homeland of South Africa, he decided to make his wife's dream come true.

"Antoinette worked in Singapore for a couple of months in 1998," says Cornelius. "She kept describing to me how clean and orderly the country was. I became quite curious as well."

In March this year, the couple jetted into town to complete their nuptials. But both realized they would need professional help to organize a wedding in a foreign land. So, in January, they wrote to the Singapore High Commission in South Africa and sought their recommendation for an established wedding planner.

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Soon, they received an email from Hannah Chong, a wedding specialist from Heaven's Gift. Since 2000, Hannah has coordinated and assist in many wedding celebrations for Singaporean couples and earned praises for her personalized service and efficiency.

In fact, Cornelius says it didn't take him and Antoinette long to decide to engage Heaven's Gift as their wedding planner. "They were the first company to respond to me, so I was impressed by their efficiency," he offers. Right from the word 'go', everything went ahead without a hitch.

"While other couples might feel a little insecure leaving everything to a wedding planner based halfway round the world, I felt the opposite with Heaven's Gift," says Cornelius. Whatever decisions he and Antoinette made were done through the Internet, as Hannah's constant emails kept them updated about the progress of the coordination.

This was especially important as Cornelius and Antoinette's brief to Heaven's Gift was somewhat different from the conventional, reveals Hannah. "They wanted to marry in a Buddhist temple," she says. "So our primary task was to find one with the appropriate ambience." Eventually, she managed to arrange for the ceremony to be done at [Shuang Lin Temple](#) in Toa Payoh.

And indulge in the bliss of not having to prepare for their nuptials the couple did. After landing on March 9, they were whisked away by the ever-hospitable Hannah to Chinatown, where they got their wedding outfits done for the ceremony, scheduled for the following afternoon.

Of course, nothing beat the moment they exchanged their 'I Do's in the temple hall. Although the whole ceremony took only half an hour, Cornelius says it will remain etched in his and his wife's memory for the rest of their lives. Both initially wanted just a straightforward solemnization, but Hannah had suggested including a blessing ritual as well – "to make it more meaningful". And they were thrilled with the result.



Some couples might prefer a three-day celebration party, but Cornelius and Antoinette say they were delighted with this simple do. They wanted to spend the day with just each other, so they didn't invite any of their family members or friends to attend the ceremony here. "Anyway, we felt it was a little expensive to ask everyone to fly over for such a short stay," explains Cornelius.

Another reason they chose to hold their wedding in Singapore was its accessibility to nearby countries. Cornelius and Antoinette travelled to Bangkok two days after their wedding, and then to Kuala Lumpur to catch the Grand Prix, which both are fans of.

"I enjoyed everything about my wedding totally," says Cornelius. "The country is gorgeous and it's so clean. Singaporeans are very helpful and kind. There was once, when we couldn't decide what food to choose at a restaurant, those at the next table even recommended the dishes to try. It would never have been the same anywhere else in the world. I'm so glad we got married here."

Heaven's Gift – The Wedding Consultants is at 20 Maxwell Road #08-01A Maxwell House. For more details, log on to www.heavens-gift.com. For appointments, call 6220 0378.

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