

# realweddings

A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

### Planning A Wedding?

Theme Wedding Invitations. Free Samples & Catalogs. Get Yours!

V V

### Island Resort Wedding

We Make Dream Weddings a Reality! Get Nothing Less than Elegance.

Ads by Google

Features

Articles

Style

Fashion

Honeymoons

Vendors



## Features

[Back to features](#)

### Heidi's Irish Hoolie

By Lauren Kramer

Photography by Robert McGee

Vol. 6, Issue 2, No. 11 October 2006



LARRY RAHN KNEW HE'D MET AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN WHEN he and Heidi Carton were first

introduced in Cabo San Lucas nine years ago. Heidi was on vacation with a group of girlfriends. One morning, the friends were preparing for the day when the power in their room went down. The women walked down the hall, and knocked on a door where they knew a group of guys had just checked in. They asked to use the power outlets in the guys' room to finish their preparations, and a friendship was immediately formed. "We hung out for the rest of the trip," says Heidi.



It would take another two years for Heidi and Larry's friendship to develop and blossom into romance, but by 2004 Larry knew two things for sure: he wanted to spend the rest of his life with Heidi. And he wanted his marriage proposal to blow her away.

He spent months planning, eventually selecting Las Vegas as the proposal destination. "I took her there under the guise that it was for her birthday in May 2004," he recalls. He'd arranged for a limousine to pick them up and escort them to a helicopter for a tour of the Grand Canyon. But one thing he hadn't planned was the freak boating accident that would leave his arm in a sling just a few days prior to the trip.



Since he didn't have a free hand to hold the ring box, he put it in his sock. The helicopter touched down on the canyon rim, champagne and flute glasses appeared and with this magical backdrop, Larry proposed to his future bride.

Thirty-four-year-old Heidi, a dental hygienist from Vancouver, wanted time so she and her mother Helen could plan this wedding to the last detail. "My mom and I are best friends; it's like we have one brain," she confesses. She scheduled the date for July 8, 2006, booking the Vancouver Club as the venue. Then, the planning began.

Born to Irish immigrants who hail from Dublin, Heidi grew up with a strong Irish influence. Her father, Raymond Carton, had opened the first Irish bar in Vancouver, the Blarney Stone, and his daughter's first memories are of spending time at the Gastown pub.

As a child, Heidi had visited Ireland every summer, and when she turned 18 she went to live there with her family for a year-and-a-half. "Ireland is a really big part of my life," she says. "I consider myself Canadian, but Irish, too."



It was natural for her to give Ireland a presence at her wedding. but Heidi wanted to avoid the Irish cliches of shamrocks and leprechauns. "I needed to incorporate Ireland into the wedding in a very meaningful

way," she says. She chose a harp as her thematic point, using it on her invitations, in an ice sculpture and on the place settings. She also hired Helen Krantz, a concert harpist to perform during the reception dinner.

"Heidi and her mother spent two years planning this wedding, working on it every day," says Larry with admiration.

Heidi hand-wrote the invitations and place cards in calligraphy, stamping them with a harp and embossing them for additional flourish. For wedding favours she made bonbons in orange, green and white, the colours of the Irish flag, and placed them in pink and brown boxes. Worried that the weather would be too warm, she purchased fans in Chinatown and stamped and embossed them with the couple's names and the wedding date. She also made certain that her guests would be constantly entertained once the ceremony at St. Augustine's Church in Vancouver was over.



When the 140 guests arrived at the Vancouver Club for the champagne reception, Heidi's mother Helen had arranged a performance by a string quartet from the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. After dinner, Flamenco dancers drew guests into the atrium, where Irish dancers began their performance, doing hardshoe dancing and the Riverdance. "They were fabulous, and the Irish folks at our wedding--approximately half the guests--went absolutely wild," Heidi recalls.

Later, a Neil Diamond impersonator appeared. "I wanted people to be reminded that this was not just a formal wedding, but an Irish hoolie," says Heidi. "Neil Diamond's songs fit well with all generations, and I wanted the guests to know they could have fun and go wild."

With a 26-month-long engagement, Heidi had grown tired of looking at white dresses. "I wanted something different, something with impact," she recalls. When Heidi's mom, a former model, saw a stunning pink gown designed by Romona Keveza at Garden of Eden Bridal, she convinced her daughter to try it on. "It was gorgeous--just a faint shade of pink, but different enough," says Heidi, who wore the gown with a cathedral veil.

Despite her efforts to organize every last detail, there would be two surprises for Heidi on the day of her wedding. The first was her father's speech. "He spoke about how Heidi has been everything to him, how there's been nothing else in his life that's comparable to her," says Larry. "There was a moment where there wasn't a girl in the room with a dry eye, it was such a touching speech."



The second was a balloon arrangement that one of Heidi's bridesmaids had made. First she asked everyone to fill out a postcard--sans postage stamp--addressed to the couple. On the back thereof, they had to write a promise to Heidi and Larry, attach the postcards to a balloon and release it on the patio. "The idea was that kindhearted, good Samaritans would find the postcards and mail them to us," says Heidi, of the 150 balloons that were released into the air.

To date, 12 of them have found their way home. "Perhaps there'll be more when we get back," she mused, as she and Larry prepared to depart for the honeymoon on a Mediterranean cruise.