

Nicola de Lautour & Aaron Carter

Photography: Niels Schipper



With two event managers at the altar, our wedding day was always going to be a fairly well organised 'event'. Throw in the fact that my mother is a wedding planner and celebrant and the chance of anything going wrong was one in a million.

Aaron and I met eight years ago through the sports industry and married on the 21 May 2010 at Oreti Village near Turangi. Thinking back, there was never really a conversation between us about where we were to get married.

While we live in Auckland, neither of us ever imagined getting married in Auckland. It was always going to be a weekend away for family and friends – a time to relax and spend some quality time with the people closest to us, some of whom would be coming from overseas whom we don't see as often as we would like to.

The Taupo region provided the perfect venue, for a number of reasons. It's a place we love to holiday (particularly since my mum and dad have moved there); it's one of our favourite spots to recreate (the mountain biking and trail running is awesome!); and last but not least, it's the area we got engaged in.

Like most weekends in our lives, the weekend we got engaged involved running shoes. On a drive from Taupo through to the National Park, Aaron suggested we go for a run over the start of the Tongariro Crossing track. So we pulled up and got changed into our running gear in the car. Unbeknownst to me, Aaron's 'getting changed' also involved slipping a ring into some tissue paper and into the small pocket in the front of his running shorts.

Just before our 'turn-around and run back' time we reached some waterfalls – which I think was a bit of a fluke – but Aaron seized the moment and suggested we run over to check them out. To be honest, I wasn't overly keen on the idea as it would mean leaving the dry track and getting wet shoes. However, I didn't want to sound wimpy, so off we went. Due to Aaron's higher enthusiasm about the waterfalls (I wonder why!) he got there before me. By the time I came round the bend he was in the grass on one knee.

I can't really remember what he said really, I don't think he can either; he said later his heart was racing a lot more than a normal run! Whatever it was – it ended with a question which I said yes to



FACTS:

Celebrant: The Wedding Angel - Belinda de Lautour (My Mum), www.theweddingangel.co.nz

Venue: Oreti Village, Pukawa Bay, Turangi, www.oretivillage.com

Dress: David's Bridal, Los Angeles, www.davidsbridal.com

Hair: Geneive Smith, GHQ Hair, Taupo, www.ghq.net.nz

Make-up: Yasmine Allen, yasmine.co.nz

Nails: Hayley & Julia, Beauty on Location, Taupo, www.beautyonlocation.co.nz

Photography: Niels Schipper, Niels Fotografie, www.niels.co.nz

Flowers: Sally at Bloomin Flowers, Taupo, www.bloominflowers.co.nz

Cake: Priscilla Brightwell, Taupo, T: 07 378 7724

Suits: Village Squire, Taupo, T: 07 378 7441

Entertainment and favours: The Amazing Travelling Photo Booth, www.theamazingtravellingphotobooth.co.nz

Transport: Dave Sims, Taupo Silver Service Limousines, T: 021 945 079, E: simstaupo@ihug.co.nz

and the run back to the car flew by as we discussed how and when and where we would get married. A fun way to end a run.

So 14 months later we were standing at Oreti Village overlooking Lake Taupo – what an amazing day. We both come from amazingly supportive families and our wedding day was always going to be a great family celebration – we wanted to include as much of the family as we could.

We were even lucky enough to have my mother take the ceremony – Mum became a registered celebrant two years ago –

and it was such a special part of the day to have her and Dad walk me down the aisle and then her marry us as well!

While our incredible bridal party were friends, we had our oldest siblings sign the register for us, our niece and nephews walked up and gave me a butterfly in the ceremony (these were added to my bouquet), one of my brothers did a reading and the other played the guitar and sang U2's "Kite" in remembrance of Aaron's Mum who sadly passed away 7 years ago. She was so much a part of our day – while the song was played, the helium balloons that had formed the aisle were released and floated away. As a final touch, Dad had written a song inspired by Aaron's Mum. He played sang the song at our reception while strumming a guitar.

The theme throughout the day was greens and browns. Getting married in such a stunning natural venue and being big fans of trails and exercising in the great nature landscapes that we are so fortunate to have, we wanted this feeling of natural colours to come through in everything we did. Once we'd decided this, it made planning all the detail pretty easy really. The flowers were beautifully done with lots of greens and browns and a few orchids, the table decorations were small mosses, flaxes and river rocks, the bridal party were in browns and the table cards and place names all tied in, too. The aspect we loved about the venue was that every part of the wedding could happen there. Once guests arrived on the Thursday or Friday, they didn't need to leave!

Directly after our ceremony, guests walked up the driveway to the reception room (that also overlooked the lake) and while the bridal party went off for a few photos, our guests made use of a photo booth. This was a perfect way to provide them with something to do (other than drink and eat of course!) before the reception and also doubled as favours for them. The photo booth printed two copies of each photo – one for our album and one for the guest.

We had a great night of celebrations and then a fantastic day the next day, too. Our wedding was on a Friday, and Saturday dawned perfectly cloudless so we had a fabulous day eating, drinking and playing tennis with our guests.

What could top off such a perfect day? How about a couple of honeymoons! Yes, we tripped down to the South Island soon after the wedding, but then also tied in a family wedding in Vancouver as a second honeymoon. This trip also took us to Las Vegas and finally Los Angeles where we donned the running shoes once more and competed in a 25km trail run event. A perfect end to an engagement and wedding adventure. ♥



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