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Cover

The September 2021 Wedding Resources Fall issue features the wedding of **Vijal and Shivam**. The cover photo is provided by NSPG Media (www.nspgmedia.com)

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Mehndi Artist: Amrita



Photos Courtesy: Sona Photography

Dhara & Mitesh

16

#DhaTesh2020Vision - the union of Dhara Patel and Mitesh Patel - finally happened on 29 May 2021. It was a traditional Gujarati wedding ceremony, with colors of love and festivity all around.



Photos Courtesy: NSPG Media

Vijal & Shivam

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As they say the marriage of Vijal Patel and Shivam Joshi was a match made in heaven! Both physicians by profession are, in all respects, the ideal couple - sharing many things in common. Apart from their shared profession.



Photos Courtesy: Noor K Photography

Aditi & Alexander

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It was in the beautiful and bountiful season of spring, the season of love and hopes, that Aditi Patel and Alexander Mas tied the nuptial knot. The date was April 10, 2021.



Photos Courtesy: NSPG Media

Mamta & Arjun

42

The wedding was supposed to be a big party of more than 400 guests in July 2020 at a big hotel near Disney and Universal Studios.



Photos Courtesy: Asaad Images

Ruhi & Parag

48

Dance played the role of a catalyst in the relationship of Ruhi Vasavada and Parag Patel. These college mates had already known each other.



Photos Courtesy: Haring Photography

Sangeetha & Saeid

60

Beaches and the seaside played a very special role in the relationship of Sangeetha Ramkumar and Saeid Kazerooni.



Photos Courtesy: Digital Dream Studio

Uthara & Michael

66

Love transcends all borders and creates an eternal bond between two loving souls. The marriage of Uthara Rajasekhar and Michael Burceseu is a living example..

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To serve and support members of the Indian subcontinent community with an inspirational and educational magazine and to empower readers with an awareness of local, national and international news, events, and social happenings.

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Editor's View

Dear Readers,

By now, I am sure you must be getting tired of me telling you how excited I am about this month's articles. But I do get excited about a lot of things which are related to India, Indian culture, Gandhi ji, Indian weddings, Hinduism, Education, Indian American kids, and much more. The list goes on and on.... And that is why I love being managing editor of *Desh-Videsh*. I am sure some of you must have noticed when I quote golf champion Arnold Palmer in my writings or in my bio. He said, "If the mark of happiness is loving what you do, and doing what you love, then I am the happiest man who ever lived." And getting paid for that is the icing on the cake! Frequently my friends ask me when I am going to retire. My answer to them is that I am already retired. When I used to manage my software/hardware company, I was working. But managing *Desh-Videsh* is my hobby; my passion - and that is what people do when they retire.

Enough about me. Let us come to the current topic. The September issue of *Desh-Videsh* is one of four special wedding resource issues we publish every year. The other months that we publish special wedding resource editions are March, June, and December.

In this issue, we have a variety of wedding stories ranging from COVID-19 weddings to post COVID-19 weddings. Our brides and their families have come up with very interesting and creative ways to celebrate their "BIG DAY" in spite of the COVID pandemic. When I am reading and editing these wedding stories, the most interesting thing I find is the way guys propose marriage to their soulmates!

Alec proposed to Aditi amidst the natural backdrop of the mountains of Vail atop a hill while watching the sunset together. Arjun proposed to Mamta at Central Park, NYC. Parag proposed to Ruhi on Brooklyn Bridge in Manhattan, NYC. Saeid proposed to Sangeetha (with her favourite emerald ring) on Makalawena Beach in Hawaii. Shivam proposed to Vijal at a scenic overlook of Ka'a'awa Valley in Oahu, Hawaii. I hope these romantic proposals will give some ideas to guys who are ready to propose to their soulmates. I would also love to see stories of some forward-thinking girls' proposals to their shy guys.

Speaking of romantic proposals, let me talk about the short article "The Love Poems from *Thirukkural*" that I have included in this issue. Yes, this is the same *Thirukkural* from which I usually quote management lessons and life lessons in my "Word to Live By" column in the past. The *Tirukkural* is divided into three books with aphoristic teachings on virtue, wealth, and love.

Tirukkural is considered one of the most widely translated non-religious works in the world. After reading a few chapters of *Thirukkural* in English, Gandhi ji said: "I wanted to learn Tamil, only to enable me to study Valluvar's *Thirukkural* through his mother tongue itself.... There is no one who has given such a treasure of wisdom like him."

Mentioned in the article "The Love Poems from *Thirukkural*" is the work of Kannan, a self-professed Tamil poet who has translated several Kurals in poetic language. I am so inspired by these poems that *Desh-Videsh* Publishing will soon publish them in book form!

Let me close my column by reminding all of you that because of the Delta variant of COVID-19, we have postponed all our 2021 bridal expo shows. Soon, we will announce the dates of our 2022 shows.

Until then, be safe and be well!

Raj Shah
Managing Editor



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Dhara & Mitesh



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#DhaTesh2020Vision - the union of Dhara Patel and Mitesh Patel - finally happened on 29 May 2021. It was a traditional Gujarati wedding ceremony, with colors of love and festivity all around. These virtual lovers became real-life partners, festooned with the blessings and best wishes of their family and friends.

The bold and brawny Mitesh Patel and the delicate and charming Dhara Patel had one thing in common: They both believed in the "nobody has got time to waste" principle. They started dating online; and - after texts, chats and video calls - wasted no time in quickly arranging a meeting with each other's families. It was an instant hit with both sides. Such compatibility created the concept of #DhaTesh2020Vision in Dhara's mind, and she decided to let it happen.

It was time for Mitesh to take the next step: proposing to his lady love. He proposed to Dhara with the wedding ring in the presence of family and friends. Thus, #DhaTesh2020Vision saw the light of reality.

The marriage took place on 29 May 2021 at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, Orlando. The wedding



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rituals were held in the morning, and the reception was held in the evening. 370 guests were invited. Following traditional Indian rituals, they had the pre-wedding ceremonies of the Grah Shanti, Mehndi, Pithi, Garba, and Sangeet.

For the marriage, both Dhara and Mitesh chose red and golden clothing. Matching with it, the Mandap was a beautiful peacock in white and gold, with grand dark florals being added to the top corners of the Mandap. A path was created with flowers and candles lining both sides of the grand entrances of the bride, the groom, and others. The groom came in a White Gladiator jeep playing the Ramleela song "Tattad Tattad".

The reception outfits for Dhara and Mitesh were in shades of black and white. Hence, the decorations

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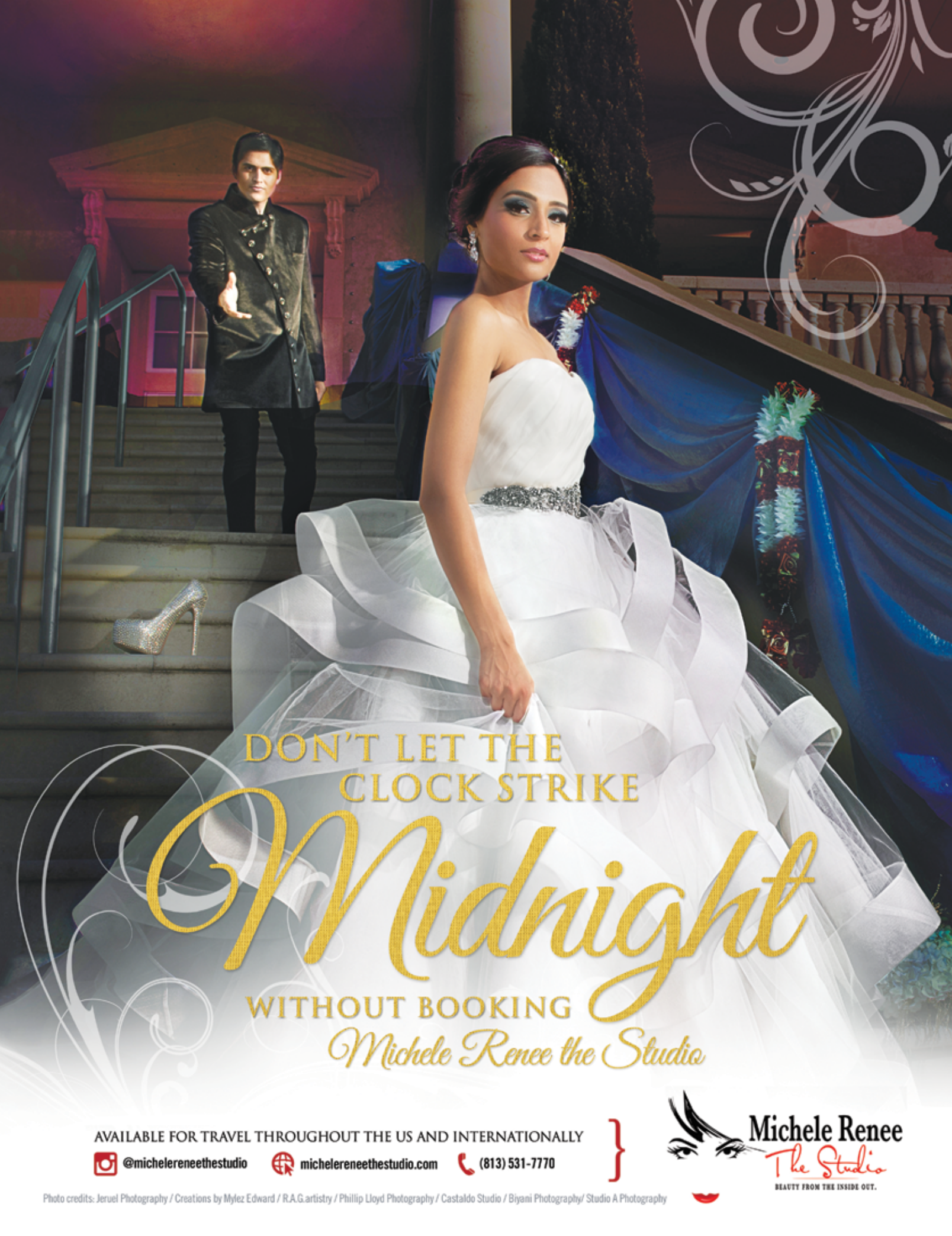
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were set to highlight them in contrast - featuring elements of white, gold, and champagne, with a touch of crystal. There were centerpieces of crystal trees, and candles on the guests' tables; and the stage was all in gold, with a Mr. & Mrs. Sweetheart table set quite close to the dance floor.

And oh, was there dancing! DJ Krish Entertainment rousinglly fueled the festive mood. Dance tracks were mixed by the couple, who had chosen heart throbbing romantic and emotional numbers, especially Bollywood hits. With all the positive vibes and festivities, the #DhaTesh2020Vision was truly a blockbuster celebration!



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Vijal & Shivam

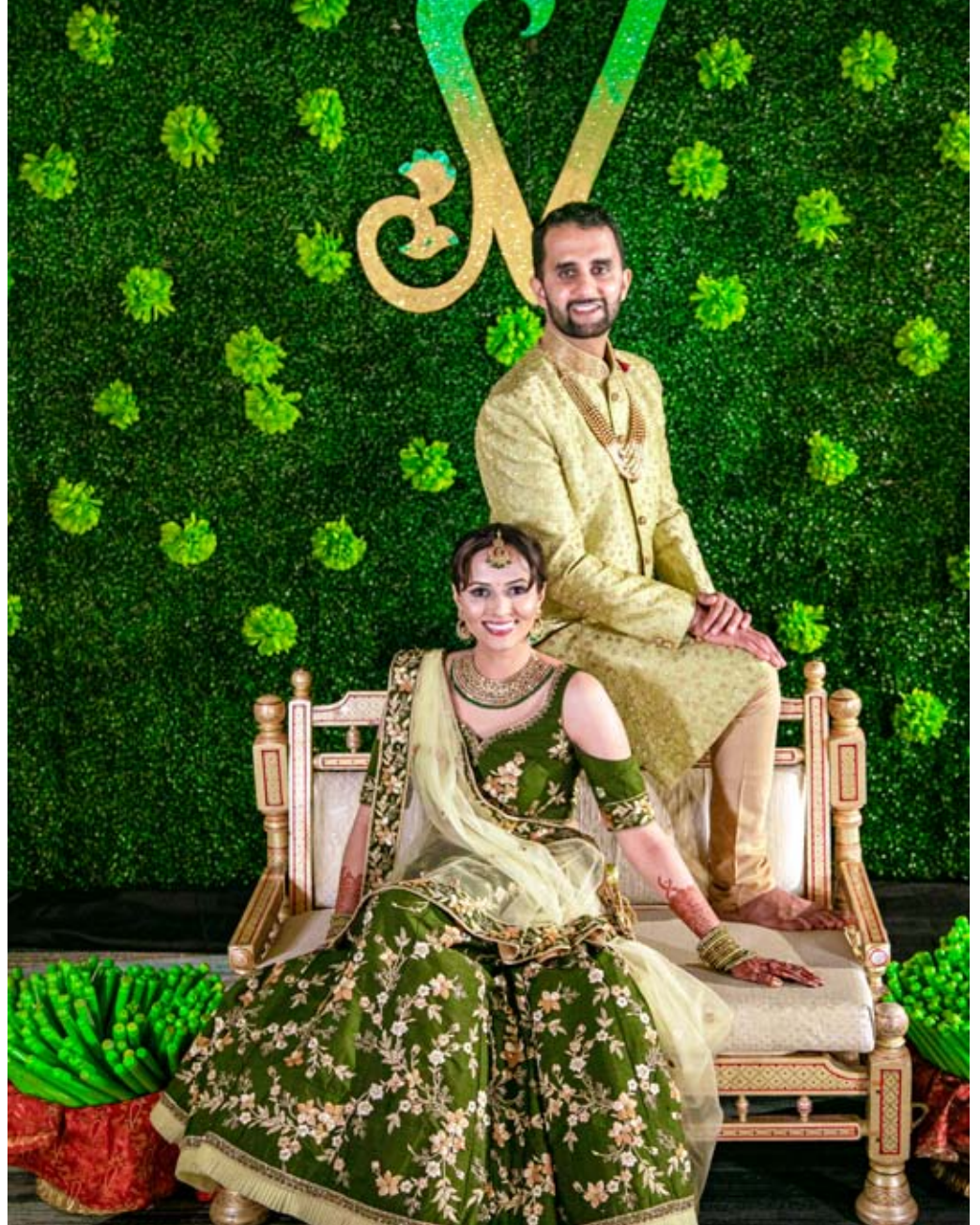


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As they say the marriage of Vijal Patel and Shivam Joshi was a match made in heaven! Both physicians by profession are, in all respects, the ideal couple - sharing many things in common. Apart from their shared profession, for instance, they both grew up in Central Florida and had more than 40 Facebook friends in common. However, they had to wait until 2017 to meet each other. Romantically, they met on their first date. These two bird-lovers became lovebirds very easily, and their soulmate bond quickly grew stronger.

Shivam proposed to Vijal in 2019-and that, too, spectacularly. On a trip to Hawaii, he took her on a surprise helicopter trip (in heaven) to Honolulu Island. Stopping at a majestic mountain vista overlooking Oahu's Ka'a'awa Valley, he got down on one knee and soulfully proposed to her. The awestruck Vijal (her heart in the clouds) had only one answer: 'Yes!!'

The prenuptial ceremonies; marriage; and reception were fixed for 28-30 May 2021. It was an elaborate and lavish celebration full of festivities and vibrant colors. The venue was





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fixed at Omni Orlando at Champions Gate, Orlando, FL. The prenuptial ceremonies included a welcome dinner and the Grah Shanti, Pithi, and Garba ceremonies. Each event had its own color theme.

The welcome dinner was a combination of gold and black with purple flowers, with the couple wearing purple and orange outfits. The theme colors for the Grah Shanti were yellow and orange, with red as an accent color; with a red floral Ganpati for the Pujas. The Pithi was in front of a flower wall of red, orange and yellow flowers. The Garba had the colors of green and gold.

There were 230 guests present for the marriage and reception. Wedding colors were autumnal ones - shades of orange, with accent colors of dark purple, maroon, and gold. There was a floral Mandap following the color scheme; and walkways with rose petals in orange and ombre. Even the garlands were orange and ombre. The food was fully vegan, as the groom was a pure vegan.

At the reception, the color scheme was blue, with an accent of flowers from the Mandap. There were twinkling golden lights; overhead chandeliers; and gold glitter/shimmer décor on the stage. The bird-lover couple taking wing on their own breathtakingly lovely journey together included a gold birdcage with flowers as the centerpiece on their sweetheart table.

The couple danced Rumba and Bachata style dances. Later, Vijal - an ardent Madhuri Dixit fan - danced to her hit songs. Vegan food was served throughout the weekend, starting



from Mexican cuisine to pure Indian delicacies. The couple hired specialists - including choreographers, guitarists, and catering companies - to make everything perfect.

With the indoor mask restrictions being lifted, the guests could enjoy the wedding freely. It felt like a new beginning for the couple, as well as for the guests.

Congratulations to the happy lovebirds!



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Aditi & Alexander



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It was in the beautiful and bountiful season of spring, the season of love and hopes, that Aditi Patel and Alexander Mas tied the nuptial knot. The date was April 10, 2021. The lush greenery, tenderly kissed by occasional moist showers, created magical moments of romanticism and togetherness - a perfect beginning for the new life of the couple.

Aditi met Alexander in their ninth standard school year when both went to a Spanish language class together. The two teenagers became good friends, and the two of them have remained so ever since. During their final year of college, Cupid struck them - and they fell in love.

Alec proposed amidst the natural backdrop of mountains of Vail atop a hill while watching the sunset. Pleasantly surprised, Aditi ecstatically and lovingly agreed!

Then it was time for marriage. The couple looked for an off-beat venue. After scouting, they found The Secret Garden at Paradise Spring in Lithia - a perfect place. This magical venue does indeed feature a concealed,

beautiful secret garden (coily nestled in the back of the property) that was of prime attraction for both Aditi and Alec.

Although the Covid restrictions limited their guest list, the couple was able to include 145 for the wedding and 148 for the reception. Among the pre-wedding ceremonies, they celebrated the Grah Shanti, Mehndi, Pithi, and Sangeet with great vigour and joy. The Mehndi was performed under colourful Rajasthani umbrellas, with everyone dressed in pink and orange attire. The Pithi was a joint celebration, with everyone dressed in yellow and white. Everyone put Haldi on the couple; and the most fun part was the couple's jumping in the pool together after the Pithi.

The marriage took place in the secret garden. The Mandap was set between two trees with touches of red, light pink, and white, along with a variety of roses. The groom, who arrived in a Jaguar, passed through an aisle and up steps glittering coruscant with brilliantly luminous lanterns.





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The reception was organized under the tent and around the pool on the patio. The clear tent offered an extraordinary view of a heavenly sky; and the star-like string lights made the sky look all the more beautiful. The celestially lovely bride danced with her husband to "Say You Won't Let Go" by James Arthur. The father-daughter dance was to "Maine Tere Liye Hi Saat Rang Ke Sapne". There were intermittent rains, but that did not put a damper on the celebrations. Instead, it was like heaven's blessing being bestowed on the newlyweds' loving partnership.



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Mamta & Arjun



NSPG Media

The wedding was supposed to be a big party of more than 400 guests in July 2020 at a big hotel near Disney and Universal Studios. Ultimately the marriage of Mamta Purohit and Arjun Patel had to be organized with 50 guests at DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando Airport on 23 January 2021.

Mamta and Arjun's hearts became loving partners through the dating app 'Dil-Mil' meaning meeting of hearts. After a few months of virtual dating, they had their first real date in Orlando. Arjun proposed to his lady at Central Park, NYC, two years later. Mamta was touched by this gesture and elated to say 'Yes. It was April 2019 and the couple decided to tie the knot in July next year.

Like many others, the Covid Pandemic jeopardized their plans too. However, it was their wedding planner Carly who did not deem their enthusiasm and organized an excellent traditional Indian event on 23 January 2021 with 50 guests. Among the pre-wedding ceremonies were the Mehndi, Ganesh Puja and Pithi. All were celebrated inside the Hotel.

As a prelude to the beginning of the new life the next day, they organized a welcome dinner with royal attires in navy blue and golden. In tune with the royal style, the centerpieces had lanterns with white flowers. The couple and their friends also danced to various Bollywood songs along with Latin American pop, Bhangra and Garba.

This was a kind of reception for them as Covid restrictions prevented them from having a reception. To Mamta's utter surprise, Arjun performed really well. Arjun was completely mesmerized at the look of Mamta at the Welcome dinner. Both were spellbound to see the excellent décor at the welcome dinner.

The wedding was a simple indoor ceremony with organic greenery and Mandap with roses of different colors. The groom came on a horse carriage with a dholi player and both the parties dancing to the beats.

After the wedding, they enjoyed an after-party with their friends.

It was a perfect wedding ceremony of two persons belonging to the same tradition of a close-knit Indian family, who preferred to celebrate with people who wholeheartedly blessed and wished Mamta and Arjun lifelong happiness and marital bliss.



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Ruhi & Parag



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Dance played the role of a catalyst in the relationship of Ruhi Vasavada and Parag Patel. These college mates had already known each other. But it was a Raas dance program in 2011 - and perhaps, the eternal love story of Radha-Krishna associated with it - which drew them closer to each other. They started dating at the end of 2012. Yearning for a permanent bonding with his lady love that would span eternity, Parag proposed to Ruhi in Manhattan, on the iconic Brooklyn Bridge.

The wedding date was fixed for 28 February 2021. Following the Covid restrictions, they limited the number of guests to 100. The couple chose Rosen Shingle Creek at Orlando, Florida as their wedding venue.

The pre-wedding ceremonies were full of surprises and festivities. The Mehndi was done at home. But the Pithi was held as a grand celebration, preceded by an innovative adaptation of the traditional 'Mosaru' celebration. The Mosaru involves the welcoming of the bride's paternal family by her maternal relatives. Ruhi's maternal uncles made a gala baraat-style procession for the bride, culminating in the Pithi ceremonies. The color theme and dress code for the Pithi comprised the traditional shades of maroon, gold, orange, and yellow.





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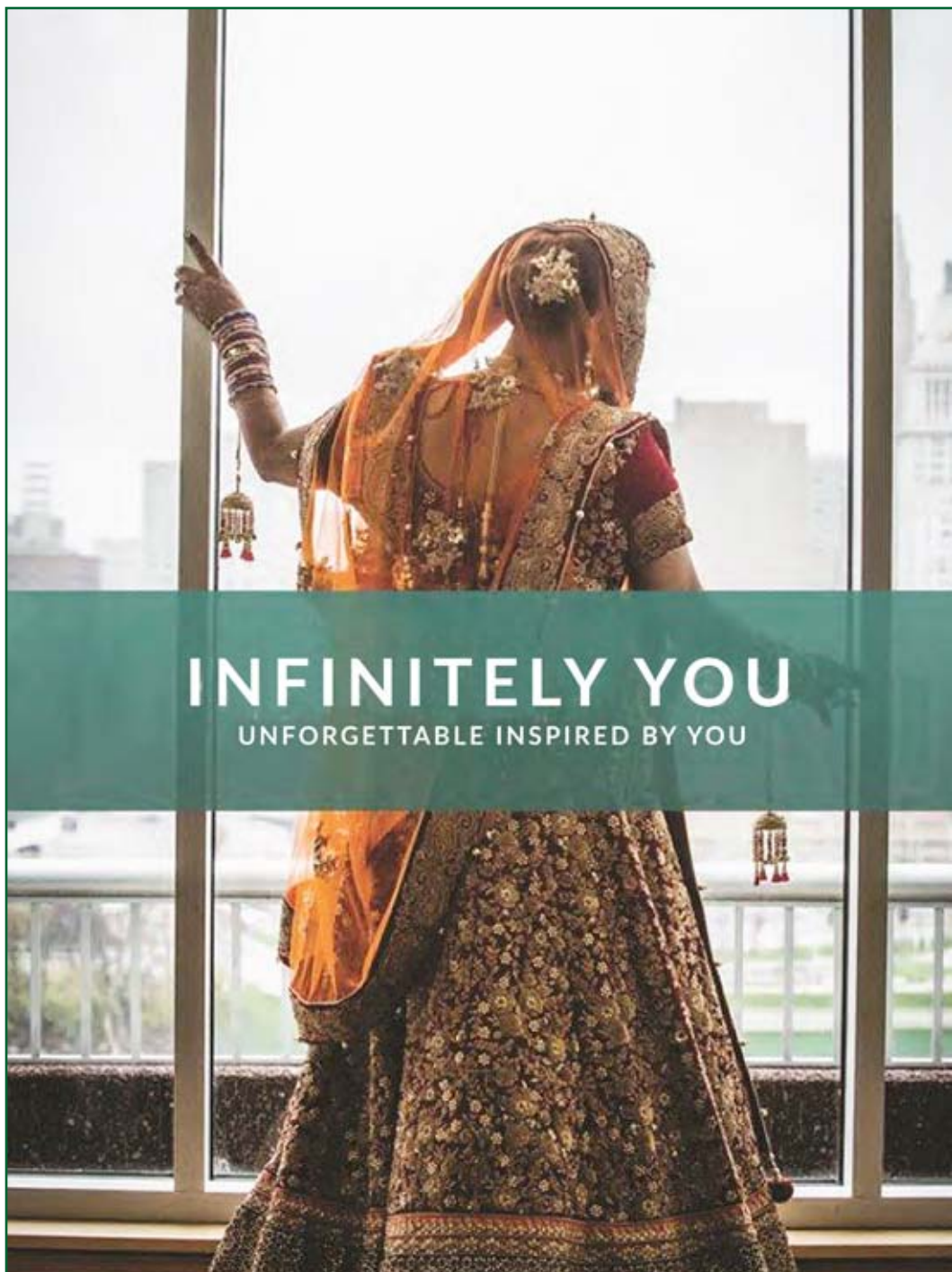


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Sangeet décor was natural and simple, with touches of gold and green. The spectacular part was the wonderful dance performances by the couple. Parag and Ruhi performed a skit dance program narrating the story of their relationship from childhood to marriage!

The wedding color theme consisted of rustic flowers in shades of white and light pink with a touch of magenta.

The couple customized their marriage rituals in a unique and special way. They changed the ritual of 'Antarpat' wherein the groom's face is covered while the bride walks down the aisle. To enjoy the surprise and appreciation of seeing his bride, the 'Antarpat' was done after Ruhi walked down the aisle. The exchange of glances between the two lovers was a moment of pure joy and satisfaction for them both!

The wonderful dance performances by all the friends of the couple were a real celebration of the wedding of a couple bonded by the rhythm of the dance.



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Sangeetha & Saeid

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Beaches and the seaside played a very special role in the relationship of Sangeetha Ramkumar and Saeid Kazerooni. Their life story includes not just one, but two, popular tropical destinations of many romantic couples: They got engaged in Hawaii and tied the knot in Miami.

Sangeetha and Saeid met at a party in 2015. An instant connection sparked between the two. As a result, they kept in touch and gradually grew closer. Finally, during a March 2021 camping trip on Makalawena Beach in Hawaii, Saeid proposed to Sangeetha with her favorite emerald ring, sitting on a rock.

On July 11, 2021, the couple tied the knot with the blessings and best wishes of their family and friends in Miami. The location was chosen exclusively for the special benefit of a dearly beloved relative, Sangeetha's 96-year-old grandma, who lived there and wouldn't have been able to have joined the marriage party elsewhere.

The Mehndi and Sangeet ceremonies were melded into a single event and celebrated on the Venetian Lady Yacht on the tenth of July, prior to the wedding. The brilliant and spectacular starry sky of Miami cast a magically enchanting spell over the entire event. In harmonious synchrony with the sky (twinkling with white stars), the décor included



a celestial blue carpet, white linen, white lounge furniture, and bistro lights. The décor featured white rose centerpieces, jaunty ostrich feathers, and pink rose accents. The guests were served champagne; and the yacht was divided into a Mehndi corner and a dance show for Sangeet. Sangeetha's favorite Gujarati food was served.

The celebration had the feel and flavour of a traditional South Indian marriage. Due to there having been rain on the previous day, the festivities had to be shifted inside the Americana Ballroom of the Loews Hotel in Miami. But the wedding planners, the décor company, and Saeid did a fantastic job of creating the customary venue inside. The wedding had a garden theme (complete with passion-red flowers and an indoor banana tree), along with a tropical pearl background with regal gold touches.

The ballroom was filled with the usual loud and hearty cheers of the invitees, as is typical in Indian

”

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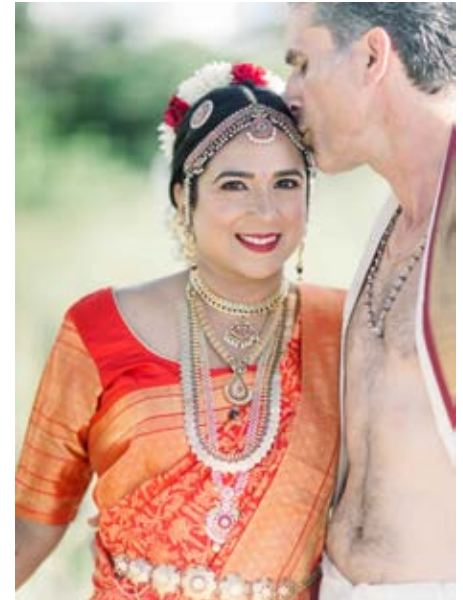
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marriages. Sangeetha was so happy; and finally, she broke into tears of happiness and fulfilment when her grandmother blessed them. The persistently supportive efforts of Sangeetha's family made the event beautiful and helped make it flow smoothly, signalling a happy life for the couple.



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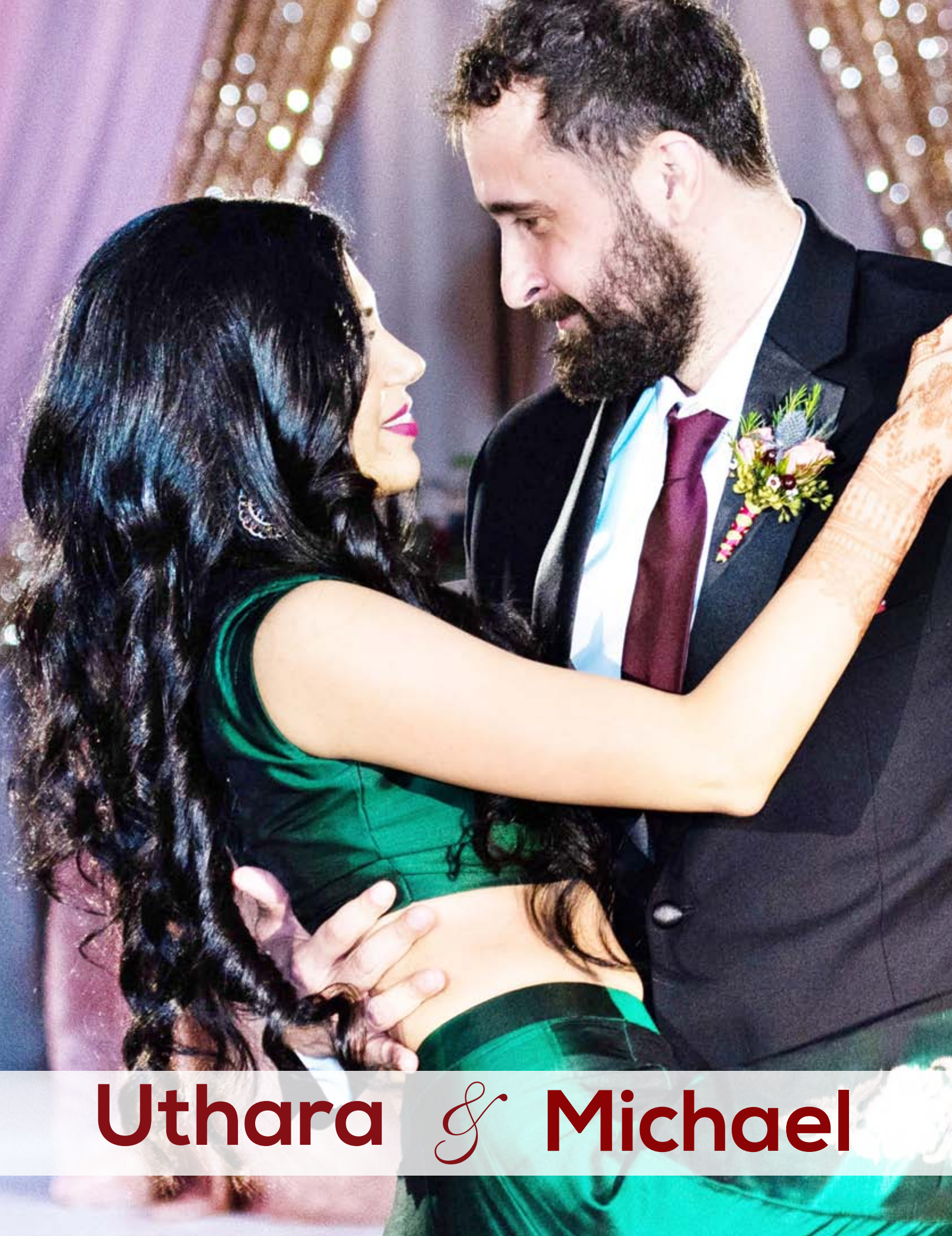
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It's a small world. Uthara and Michael went to the University of Central Florida and even had a class together! But they never got introduced to each other. It was at the Medical School that they met again and the strangers became friends and gradually fell in love with each other.

After three and a half years of dating, Michael proposed to Uthara at Crete. After a trek on the Samaria Gorge, he asked Uthara to bring out some snacks from the basket. To the utter surprise, Uthara found a Sapphire ring inside the basket. Michael designed it for his sweetheart and proposed to her with that ring in the picturesque location.

The marriage took place at the Holy Trinity Reception Center of Orlando in the presence of 180 guests. Among the pre-wedding ceremonies, Mehndi was celebrated with great enthusiasm amidst the color theme of gold and burgundy.

The marriage had the unique factor of being the first Nair/Menon Hindu Wedding in Central Florida. Follow



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ing the traditional white, gold and yellow color theme of Keralite marriages, there were yellow and white fresh flowers at the marriage ceremony. Followed by the traditional Hindu wedding in the morning, a civil wedding took place in the evening.

The reception had a beautiful blend of Indian and East European traditions and cultures. There were fresh flowers of red, pink and orange colors along with matching centerpieces. The couple danced to the hit Bollywood song Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga. Two lovers put their hands together for a wonderful journey ahead.

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Love Poems from the *Thirukkural*

The *Tirukkural* (also called the *Kural*) is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 short couplets of seven words each. The text is divided into three books; with teachings on virtue, wealth, and love. Considered one of the greatest works on ethics and morality, it is known for its universality and secular nature. It was originally written by Valluvar (also known as Thiruvalluvar), around 300 BCE, in the Tamil language.

The text came to print for the first time in 1812. It has been translated into at least 41 Indian and non-Indian languages, making it one of the most translated non-religious works. As of 2014, the English language alone had about 57 versions available, which is estimated to have crossed 100 by 2020.

The *Kural* has been widely admired by scholars like Ilango Adigal, Kambar, Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, Constantius Joseph Beschi, Karl Graul, George Uglow Pope, Alexander Piatigorsky, and Yu Hsi. This has made *The Kural* very popular in the ethical, social, political, economic, religious, philosophical, and spiritual spheres.

We are very thankful to Kanan – a farmer, founder of Seer7 Timeless Solutions, a doting father, self-professed Tamil poet, bilingual blogger, and translator – who has generously given us permission to reprint his poetic translation of The *Tirukkural*. The following love poems come from the third book of The *Tirukkural* called Love. I have selected poems from Chapter 110 through Chapter 114. Enjoy!

Raj Shah
Managing Editor

Her gorging eyes
Gaze in two ways:
One gaze inflicts the malady.
The other gaze is the remedy
For that malady.

Chapter 110: Reading the cues
– Kural 1091

ॐ

For any disease
The cure lies elsewhere.
My girl, bedecked with jewels,
Is herself the cure for
The ailment she induced.

Chapter 111: The joy of making love
– Kural 1102

ॐ

What is the soul
to the body?
Such is the bond
Between me
And my lady.

Chapter 113: In praise of love
– Kural 1122

ॐ

A certain beauty lies
In this pliant girl:
Oh, the way she smiles,
Gently, her heart melting,
When I look at her!

Chapter 110: Reading the cues
– Kural 1098

ॐ

Which is the moon
And which is the girl's face?
Unable to discern,
The baffled stars have
Strayed from their course.

Chapter 112: In praise of her charms
– Kural 1116

ॐ

The girl, bedecked with splendid
jewels,
Is my very life
When she is with me,
And brings on death
When she leaves me.

Chapter 113: In praise of love
– Kural 1124

ॐ

The five senses of
Sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch
Come alive
Only with this girl
Of gleaming bangles.

Chapter 111: The joy of making love
– Kural 1101

ॐ

Long live the moon!
I shall love you too
If only
You can be radiant
As my girl's face.

Chapter 112: In praise of her charms
– Kural 1118

ॐ

Ignorant folks
Sneer at me
When they see me.
Ah, they haven't been through
What I have undergone.

Chapter 114: Shedding shyness
– Kural 1140

ॐ



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Email: suman_mg@hotmail.com

Host: Indo-American Arts Council

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Contact: 904-351-6655

Email: talentshow@jaxics.org

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Contact: 248-469-7693

Email: info@vedantamidwest.org

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Contact: 954-846-9895

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Contact: Jiten Patel 407-924-7015, Email: info@gujaratisocietycfl.com

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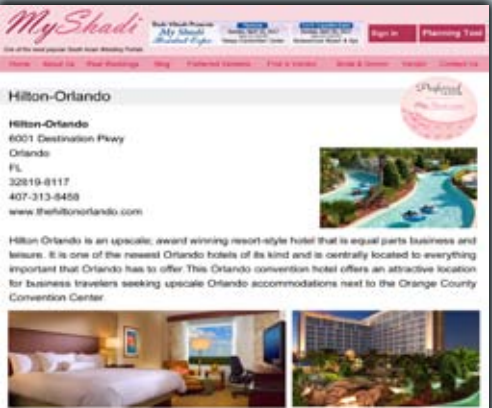
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