



# LOVE IN A SECRET GARDEN

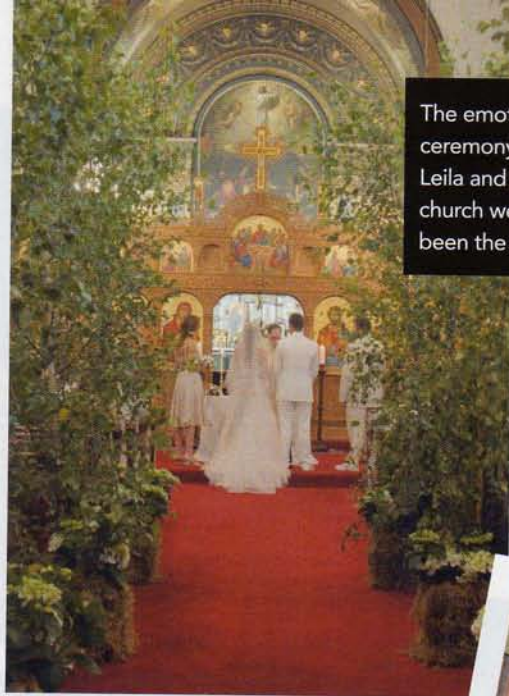
*Leila Azar and Dinny Konig*  
Chelsea Physic Garden, London

The emotion of the ceremony reassured Leila and Dinny that a church wedding had been the right choice

and Dinny were former friends somehow lost touch, then finally back together again thanks to his Rhodesian Ridgeback dog. One day, Leila spotted Dinny at his new workplace and pulled them together. "I'd known each other previously, but there's been chemistry, but I had a hunch it still took us a while of catching up as friends' before we realised we were meant to be together!" The couple went out during which time they launched their business and a dog hotel – before Dinny proposed. "It wasn't a big performance," he said. "I bought the ring the day before and I had a hole in my pocket, so he pulled it out and woke me up and asked me. I said yes."

The London-based couple originally planned a simple wedding, but soon realised they needed more than two days if they were to have a party out of town. They opted for a church wedding at St Mary's Church, Physic Garden (stmarysphysicgarden.co.uk) – a Grade I listed church dating back to 1673. "I had the country-house theme in the middle of my mind," says Leila.

Leila worked with wedding planner, Sarah Jones, from My Wedding Company (myweddingcompany.com) to develop the theme. "I wanted a classic country-style touch of colonial elegance," she says. "I had a theme initially in mind, but I have quite a soft heart," says Leila. "I wanted to mix Hong Kong and my Indian roots, so



**FATHER OF THE BRIDE: NAGY EL AZAR**

*The most special moment for me was the car journey with Leila to the ceremony, when we had a chance to bond. I told her how pleased I was that they'd decided to have a church wedding instead of the simple ceremony they were originally going for.*



Leila's flower girls and maid of honour wore simple dresses with sashes in soft colours to complement the bride's dress



evolved from there. The venue  
the country-style reception we were  
ate with our open-sided marquee  
the beautiful gardens with ribbons

Leila wore a glamorous Monique  
from BrownsBride (brownsfashion.  
t want to feel too much like a doll,”  
kept accessories simple with a pair  
Christian Louboutin shoes and a  
Her bouquet, from florist Mathew  
mathewdickinsonflowers.com – see

is top tips) contained her  
vers, tuberose, as well as  
y proteas. The flower girls  
bridesmaids wore simple  
sashes, while the maid of  
beautiful dress by designer  
n (020 7351 0002). The  
r the men was relaxed, in  
the setting, and guests were  
pale summer suits without  
amed a bespoke cream suit  
nverse trainers.

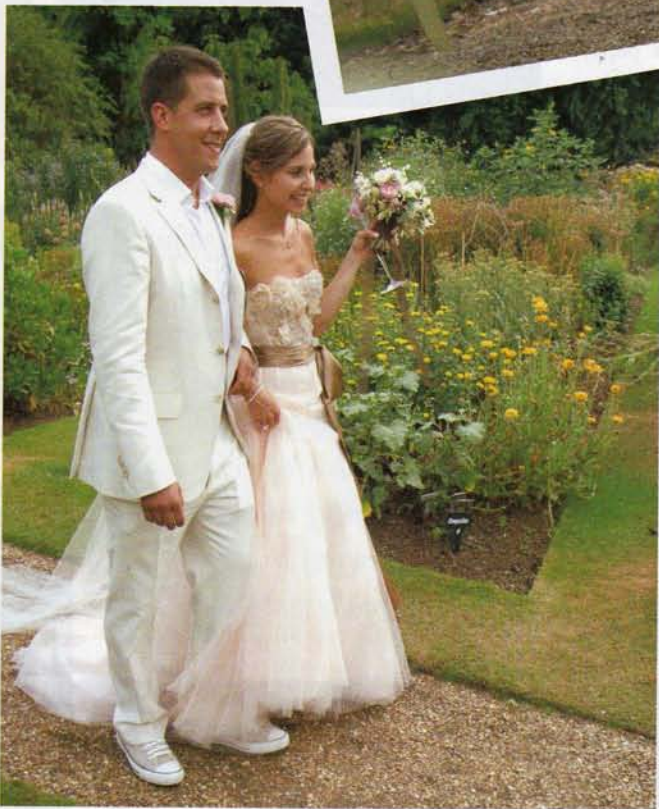
“My father is Greek  
d we initially planned a  
garden. We went to see an  
est to ask if he would  
blessing and he persuaded us  
religious ceremony instead.  
married in the Antiochian  
rch near Regent’s Park and  
as very special. We were  
y religious icons and there  
anting and a communion,  
mazing. I could tell that my  
roud, and we now go to the  
nally for Sunday mass, after never  
the past.”

were jointly crowned in traditional  
front of their 80 guests while the  
our and best man stood beside  
candles throughout the service.  
ne newlyweds travelled to the  
Garden in a Rolls Royce Phantom  
led into a mini bus specially hired  
n.

“Our florist created amazing  
beautiful centrepieces to scattered  
oles and potted hydrangeas in the  
Leila. “He also hung white, pink  
apanese lanterns and wide, long  
the trees – which fluttered ▶



One of the little flower girls discovers the sash on her dress doubles as a great plaything



Leila’s accessories included a family ring and Christian Louboutin shoes. Dinny chose Converse trainers to go with his cream suit





*“The Physic Garden was ideal – a country-style garden right in the middle of Chelsea”*

**THE GROOM**

*“I loved the entire day but it was great when our dog Ludo met us and we had pictures taken with him – before he was whisked away to doggy holiday camp in Wales!”*



Florist Mathew Dickinson created a bouquet of Leila's favourite flowers – tuberoses, roses and tiny proteas



*"We invited our guests to take home the flowers at the end"*



### Mathew Dickinson's tips for your flowers

We asked Leila and Dinny's florist Mathew Dickinson ([mathewdickinsonflowers.com](http://mathewdickinsonflowers.com)) for his tips on creating

that country garden look while sticking to your budget...

- If you're going for a country look keep the style of the arrangements loose and natural, especially the bride's bouquet.
- Work with flowers and foliage that are in season, as this will give you the best quality and best price. Use herbs and garden flowers for added fragrance.
- Try using clusters of little pots with posies of flowers instead of one large piece, and avoid strong colours.
- Ribbons are a very effective but inexpensive way to decorate a space, as are Japanese lanterns.
- Leila and Dinny's hydrangea buckets were about £40 each at that time of year (July) but these can be given away as gifts when the day is over. They're a lovely reminder of the day, as they blossom around the same time each year.



Inspired by the Physic Garden location, each table was named after a different herb which was incorporated into the floral centrepiece



### MOTHER OF THE BRIDE: VIVIEN

*"I just loved all of it. I was very emotional throughout the day and even the following day too!"*





The dessert buffet included a delicious tower of profiteroles with chocolate frills as the wedding cake



Zinc buckets with white tree hydrangeas and hurricane lamps with candles decorated the pathway leading to the marquee



Photography: Keith Appleby (applebyphotography.com)

*“The guests lined the path, waving us off with pretty sparklers”*

◀ prettily in the breeze – and wreaths and garlands over the entrance and the open-air marquee. I wanted flowers with a soft, natural style and I liked the idea of herbs playing a large part, so I named each table after a particular type. Mathew used glass bowls wrapped with rosemary for the table centres and soft greens and pinks in the flowers. Each table centre also had its namesake herb incorporated into it.” Hay bales were used as outside seating and the entrance gate was dressed with a thick garland of herbs studded with David Austin roses. Along the pathway to the marquee, we placed zinc buckets planted with white tree hydrangeas and hurricane lamps with candles.”

**THE FOOD:** The tables were draped with crisp, white linen and decorated with candles and fresh flowers. “We treated our guests to lobster and pear salad, and sea bass or guinea fowl, supplied by The Admirable Crichton caterers (admirable-crichton.co.uk),” says Leila. “There was also a dessert buffet with the most amazing goodies.” Dinny’s favourite dessert is profiteroles, so the couple chose a huge profiterole tower from

Patisserie Valerie (patisserie-valerie.co.uk) instead of a traditional wedding cake. A jazz singer and band entertained everyone, and guests were invited to take away the flowers at the end of the night. “My Dad is Lebanese, so our favours included engraved silver butterfly ashtrays all the way from Lebanon as well as traditional sugared almonds,” says Leila. The couple also had little tote bags made up as keepsakes for guests from out of town. They had the date of their wedding printed on them and contained postcards complete with a special stamp featuring the newlyweds.

**AND ANOTHER THING:** As the couple left at the end of the evening after the dinner and dancing, all of the guests lined the path, waving them off with pretty sparklers. ■