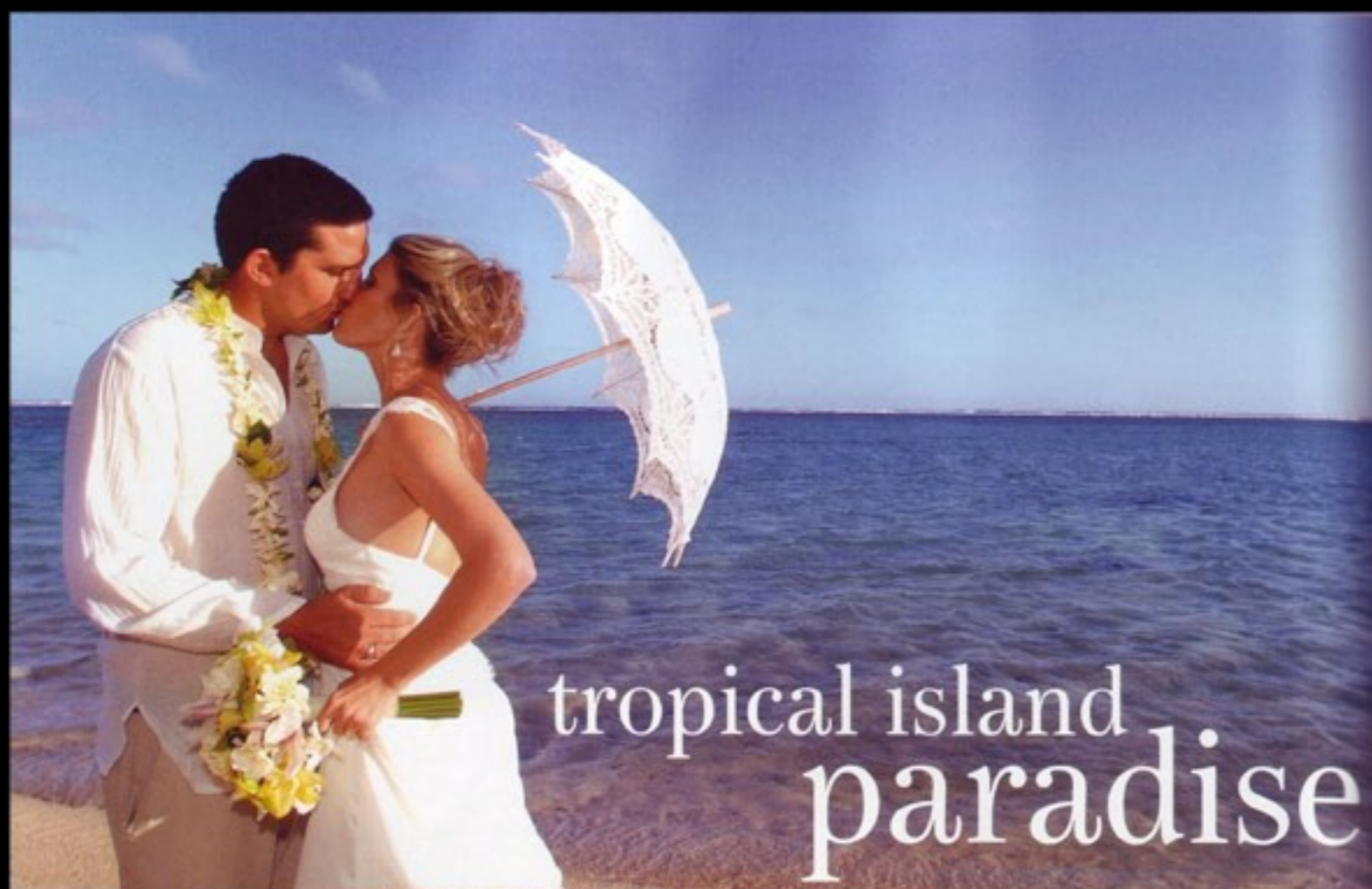


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# BR TO BE DE

REAL-LIFE WEDDINGS YEAR BOOK



tropical island  
paradise



**SONJA MCGRATH & TIM WALKER**  
JULY 6, 2007  
RAROTONGAN BEACH RESORT AND SPA, COOK ISLANDS

**Beach bride** Fittingly for a couple who were engaged while swimming in the ocean, Tim, 29, and Sonja, 24, wed on a beach in the Cook Islands with their family looking on. The Gold Coast-based couple relied on the wedding co-ordinators at the Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa to plan their perfect tropical wedding. Everything from the cake to the bride's bouquet of gardenias and orchids was arranged by the resort.

**Suitable attire** "I wanted a classic looking dress that didn't look out of place on the beach," says Sonja. La Bella Moda created a gown for the bride with a low-cut back, a sweetheart top and cuffed lace shoulders. The groom opted for a beachy look instead of a traditional suit. "Tim has spent his whole life on the beach, and shorts and thongs are his style," says Sonja. "We think that suits aren't meant to be worn at the beach." Instead, Tim wore three-quarter length cream-coloured Okanui shorts, a white shirt and a garland of orchids. All the men at the wedding wore colourful cotton Okanui board shorts to fit the tropical theme.

**Time for family** Tim and Sonja opted for an intimate family wedding with just 15 guests, all members of their immediate family. "It was a week-long family get together!" says the bride. "To have our grandparents travel to the Cook Islands was unbelievable, and underlines the tremendous family love and support we have received throughout our lives."

**Reception** After a ceremony on the beach, a dinner reception was held beneath a private marquee adorned with green and purple orchids. "The table setting and the view was something no one will ever forget," says the bride. "And Tim gave a speech that was quite intimate and left him teary-eyed," reports the bride. The couple celebrated their union with friends when they returned home to the Gold Coast. Says Sonja, "Tim gave another speech, this time without tears. I think it was because his mates were there."



SONJA & TIM

**CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE PAGE:** The newlyweds share a kiss. Sonja chose a gown designed by La Bella Moda that was classic, but not out of place at the beach. The bridal co-ordinators at the Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa made the bride a bouquet of gardenias and orchids. Sonja's sister Emily, a make-up artist, styled the bride's hair and make-up. Sunset on the Cook Islands. Tim wore beach attire instead of a suit. The man at the wedding wore Okanui board shorts. Sonja loved spending time with family.



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