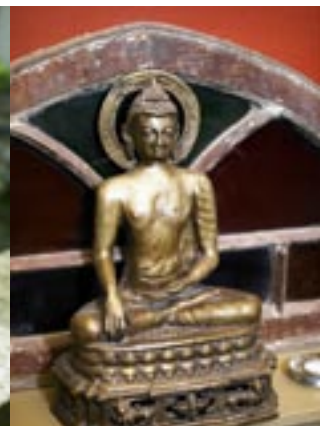




# A PERFECT FUSION

*Helen Vickers & Kevin O'Rourke*  
Matara, Kingscote Park, Gloucestershire

"The venue inspired the theme – relaxed fusion – with orchids being a big feature. We even designed an orchid motif for the stationery," says Helen





"What made it really special were all the details that pulled the day together. Helen organises events for a living and has a superb eye for details," says Kevin

**THE BRIDE**

*"When Peter, our Master of Ceremonies, announced us as Mr and Mrs O'Rourke for the first time, it seemed like the cheering was never going to end!"*



*"I felt ecstatic, excited and more beautiful than ever"*

**LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT?** When Helen met Kevin in London in 1999, she was wearing nothing but a towel, after stepping out of the shower. Kevin had come to visit his brother, Edward, who was living with Helen while his flat was being done up. Helen made an instant impression, and the pair started dating a few months later. "One of my good friends said he knew within days of meeting us both that we would end up together," says Helen.

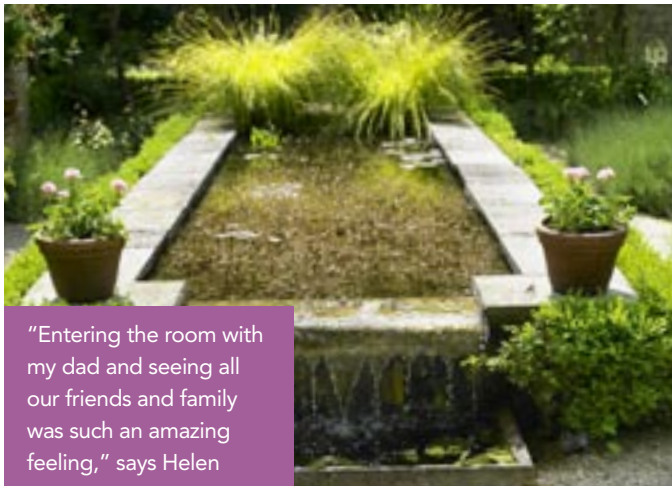
**THE QUESTION:** When Kevin, a web designer, proposed in Marrakech at Christmas 2004, it came as a complete surprise. "It was the last night of our holiday," says Helen. "I was tired and ready to turn in for the night, but Kevin was adamant that we should go for a walk around the main square. I remember standing there – with all the fabulous sounds and smells – and being still for a moment with snake charmers to my right and fortune tellers

to my left. Then I turned around to find Kevin down on one knee asking me to marry him! Marrakech was one of my favourite cities in the world – now it's by far my number one place!"

**WHERE AND WHEN?** "Kevin and I are extremely laid-back, so we wanted our wedding day to be fun and informal," says Helen. "We wanted somewhere really unusual and we loved the idea of having the ceremony and reception in the same place. Neither of us has any connection with the Cotswolds, but as soon as we saw Matara (matara.co.uk), we knew we had to get married there." Matara is a fusion of East and West, ancient and modern, with a Japanese strolling bridge, a labyrinth, a walled meditative garden and stunning sculptures, all set in 28 acres of countryside.

**THE LOOK:** The venue inspired the theme – relaxed fusion – with orchids from Frances Fenwick Floral Design (francesfenwick.co.uk) featuring prominently. "I had a bouquet of orchids, as ▶





“Entering the room with my dad and seeing all our friends and family was such an amazing feeling,” says Helen



◀ did my bridesmaid Sarah,” says Helen. The buttonholes, corsages and table decorations also used orchids (real and silk ones), while crystals hung from the dome of the Hilarium, the room where the couple were married. “The colour scheme was ivory, magenta, and French navy with lots and lots of crystals,” says Helen. “There wasn’t a dress code for guests – we just wanted everyone to have a great time.”

**THE OUTFITS:** Helen wore Jenny Packham’s ([jennypackhambride.com](http://jennypackhambride.com)) Opal design. “It was sparkly, sheer and absolutely beautiful,” says Helen. “I’d seen her dresses in *You & Your Wedding* and knew instantly she was the designer for me. I wore shoes by Emmy ([emmyshoes.co.uk](http://emmyshoes.co.uk)) and a bespoke tiara by The Real Princess Company ([therealprincesscompany.com](http://therealprincesscompany.com)). Kevin wore a French navy suit with a white shirt and ivory tie, and handkerchief by Marc Wallace ([marcwallace.com](http://marcwallace.com)), as well as the crystal cuff links Helen had bought him as a wedding present.

**THE CEREMONY:** “We both love all sorts of music from all over the world, so the choice of songs was very important to us,” says Helen. “Our first dance was to *Sweet Thing* by Van Morrison and our DJ played *Like A Prayer* by Madonna to finish the night.” The readings were from *Ulysses*,

by James Joyce. “We wanted the readings to be fun, memorable and something people wouldn’t have heard at a wedding before,” says Helen.

**LET’S PARTY!** “Our caterers Relish ([foodwithattitude.co.uk](http://foodwithattitude.co.uk)) had really innovative ideas to complement the fusion theme,” says Helen. Starters included frittata with courgette, red pepper and mushroom, and mini dill and prawn tartlets. Main courses featured Thai lime and coconut chicken, Tandoori spiced mahi-mahi, and rosemary-skewered fillet of lamb with mint yoghurt. “We had a wonderful swing band called The Dizzy Club band ([dizzy-club.co.uk](http://dizzy-club.co.uk)), which played Irish music during the champagne reception, and swing and jazz during the evening,” says Helen. “Our friend David Fall (07772 730 634) is a top DJ, so the dancefloor was packed all night. Later in the evening we served cones of fish and chips. After leaving the wedding party, the band came back to the house next door where lots of us were staying and carried on playing Irish drinking songs. The house party eventually finished just after sunrise!”

**THE BEST DAY OF OUR LIVES?** “On the day, I felt ecstatic, excited, the most beautiful I’d ever felt and hugely relieved and thankful that everything had come together so well,” says Helen.

Photography: [lovegroveweddings.com](http://lovegroveweddings.com)





### Helen's top tips

- Make the most of every moment because it's over very quickly.
- Meet face-to-face with all your suppliers before you book them so you know they understand what you want.
- If you've got friends who are good at something, ask them to help – we found our friends only too happy to be part of our day.

### A personal touch

Kevin says designing and producing their own stationery was a highlight of the wedding preparations. "We spent a weekend up at Helen's parents' with reams of paper, several rolls of sticky tape, a guillotine and lots of wine. We cracked through it in no time, with only the odd hiccup (blame it on the wine!)," says Kevin. For him, the worst part of the planning was deciding on the guest list because he has such a big family.

*"The house party eventually finished just after sunrise!" says Helen*



"The speeches had us all laughing one minute and crying (happy tears!) the next," says Helen.



For more on Helen's wedding visit [youandyourwedding.co.uk](http://youandyourwedding.co.uk)