

ASIA weddings & HONEYMOONS

ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL MAGAZINE
FOR TODAY'S BRIDES AND GROOMS

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OCT 2013 - JAN 2014





DREAM
WEDDINGS

ENCHANTING MONGOLIA

NOMIN & BATKA'S SPECTACULAR
WEDDING, DESCRIBED BY MANY
AS MONGOLIA'S "WEDDING OF THE
DECADE", WAS EVERY BIT AS COLORFUL
AND ENCHANTING AS 'THE LAND OF
THE ETERNAL BLUE SKY' ITSELF.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISMAN STUDIOS





“AS MONGOLIA IS STILL A DEVELOPING COUNTRY THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A WEDDING PLANNER WHO CAN ORGANIZE, NOR A FLORIST TO SOURCE FLOWERS, OR RENTAL COMPANY FOR PROPS, SO WE HAD TO DO EVERYTHING OURSELVES, FORTUNATELY WE BOTH SHARED THE SAME VISION OF OUR DREAM WEDDING.”

-NOMIN



AMAZING RACE

Managing nerves while nimbly deflecting his fiancée's persistent questions, namely what were they doing at midnight in the middle of nowhere, Bat-Erdene Gankhuyag ("Batka"), under a colourful canopy of fireworks illuminating the steppes of Mongolia, proposed to the love of his life Nomin.

For their wedding Batka and Nomin chose the spectacular Terelj Hotel, located amidst the beautiful forests

of Terelj National Park, as the venue for their vows. Terelj, translated, is a type of Rhododendron unique to East Asia. The enchanting property, which the couple co-developed, is a source of immense pride and joy, literally a labor of love during which their passions for each other fully blossomed. "It is the only five-star hotel in Mongolia that balances the beauty of nature with the luxury we were seeking," says Nomin.

Surrounded by steppes (grasslands) a mere 37km outside Ulan Bator,

Terelj National Park is populated with glacial lakes, tall stands of forest, hot springs, a Buddhist monastery, and variety of exotic flora and fauna including brown bears and over 250 species of birds. As if to accentuate the amazing environment TV programme, The Amazing Race, featured the park in a recent episode.

Amazing and auspicious, it was also the location Batka and Nomin chose for the official dinner bringing their respective parents together for the first time.

MODERN FAMILY

Celebrating the beauty of the natural environs was the primary inspiration of their ceremony, secondary was balancing generations. “In Mongolia older people prefer traditional ceremonies, while the younger generation enjoys a more modern style,” observes Batka, “we wanted to have the best of both worlds.”

Thus the day started with a traditional ceremony with Batka, Nomin, and their adorable twin sons dressed in richly decorated Mongolian traditional clothes, called deel, which includes traditional headwear,

loose calf length tunics, and leather boots with upturned toes.

One of the most colourful items of Mongolian dress is the traditional head wear as there are distinct styles for young and old, men and women, and special ceremonies like weddings; in all there are over 400 different styles.

In tandem with stylish Mongolia dress are the traditions rich in symbolism. One of the most important for brides required Nomin to start the first fire of the day in the stove and boil tea offering the first bowl (of tea) to her husband, from

then on every meal the husband will be served first to symbolize that a new family is formed.

“I was so afraid the fire wouldn’t light up in front of all our family as it’s considered very bad luck,” says Nomin, “thankfully, it lit up fast and strong, I almost shouted out with joy and relief!”

Another source of joy - and relief, was the weather. All forecasts leading up to the wedding day indicated cloudy and rainy weather. “We were prepared for the worst,” says Batka, “but it turned out to be the one perfect day of the year to have an outdoor wedding.”



TWO OF A KIND

One of the favorite moments for both Batka and Nomin was their first dance. They’d prepared during a midnight session with the help of professional ballroom dancers. “It was a lot of fun,” says Batka, “and then to see all our friends and family join us on the dance becoming one was incredibly touching.”

The festivities lasted 22 hours, over 2 days, with everyone from father of the bride to wait staff participating at every turn in the revelries. “My mum organized the best Mongolian wedding ever,” recalls Nomin, “everybody was able to experience a small part of lost history, while celebrating in style amidst beautiful natural splendor.”

Amazingly the exquisite style of the event required an extraordinary effort – and expense, on part of the determined and detail conscious couple to realize their wedding. Nearly every decor item from 90 boxes of flowers flown in from Korea to dining chairs and tables were sourced and sent in from abroad.

“As Mongolia is still a developing country there is no such thing as a wedding planner who can organize, nor a florist to source flowers, or rental company for props,” recalls Nomin, “so we had to do everything ourselves, fortunately we both shared the same vision of our dream wedding.”



“BATKA AND NOMIN’S WEDDING WAS
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- BEN & ERIN CHRISMAN

MAD ABOUT YOU

When it came to selecting a photographer they would entrust to capture the images of their dream wedding Batka spent hours researching and reviewing “thousands” of images. “He would show me a selection (of images) and together we would identify the ones I liked,” says Nomin, “eventually we identified a portfolio of images that we both absolutely loved.” To their relief the photographer of choice, Ben Chrisman of Chrisman Studios, was available.

Their due diligence paid off with a breathtaking kaleidoscope of colourful imagery, each memorable frame a testament as much to Chrisman’s prodigious talents as an affirmation of Batka and Nomin’s shared vision.

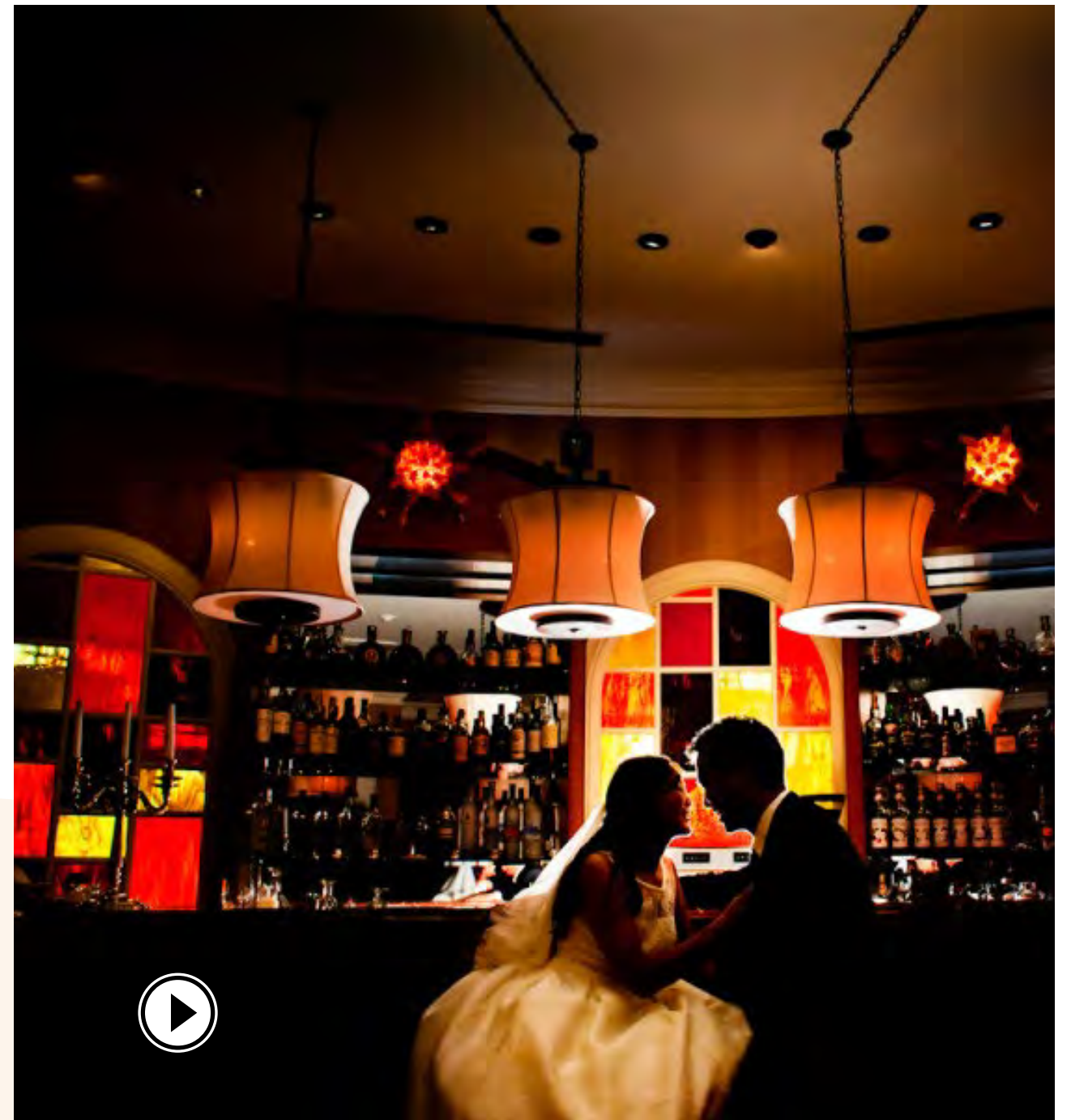
Two images in particular are especially memorable for Nomin. First, is the one of her son on the doorstep of the Ger (Mongolian yurt). “Traditionally it’s not allowed as its considered bad luck,” explains Nomin, “but it shows so much of my son’s personality; he is always pushing boundaries.”

Second is the image of her husband on the phone holding a red umbrella while dressed in traditional clothes, “I love how it shows tradition and technology binding together.”

A picture perfect summary of what many are describing as Mongolia’s wedding of the decade. An observation echoed by Ben & Erin Chrisman, universally recognized as two of the world’s top wedding photographers, “Batka and Nomin’s wedding was the biggest and most elaborate celebrations we have ever seen.”



**DREAM
WEDDINGS**



DETAILS

WEDDING VENUE:
www.tereljhotel.com

PHOTOGRAPHY:
www.chrismanstudios.com

BRIDE'S DRESS:
Vintage Valentino

GROOMS WARDROBE:
Norton & Sons,

FAVOR/BONBONNIERE:
Organic handmade key
chains and brooches

BEHIND THE SCENES

**BEN & ERIN
CHRISMAN**



BEN & ERIN CHRISMAN, UNIVERSALLY
RECOGNIZED AS TWO OF THE WORLD'S
BEST WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS,
ROUTINELY TRAVEL THE GLOBE, FROM
ANTIQUA TO VENEZUELA AND ALL
DESTINATIONS IN BETWEEN, CAPTURING
IMAGES THAT SET THE STANDARD
FOR CREATIVE EXCELLENCE.



WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF MONGOLIA?

Ben: Everyone was so nice to us from the very beginning; very hospitable, very warm and welcoming. We were so impressed by that.

Erin: We immediately loved the landscape of the countryside and where the hotel is located - beautiful mountains rising up around green pastures, horses grazing in the distance.

WHAT WAS THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT OF THE MONGOLIA WEDDING?

Ben: For me it was when we first arrived at the hotel. Since Nomin and Batka own the hotel, they had reserved the entire property for the hotel guests, and none of them had arrived yet. So Erin and I had the whole hotel to ourselves for a full night and day - it felt a lot like the

movie "The Shining" running around the quiet empty halls all alone.

Erin: For me it was the traditional Mongolian ceremony inside the ger (or yurt). I had never experienced anything like it, and I felt like I was witnessing something very special, a centuries-old wedding custom that was totally unique to me.

WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT TO THE MONGOLIA TRIP?

Ben: The biggest challenge for me was overcoming the expectations of shooting a wedding in Mongolia. We don't know anyone else who has shot a wedding there, so we felt a lot of pressure to really show Mongolia, to show the landscape, to show what it felt like to be there, and to show what makes a Mongolia wedding unique.

Erin: For me it was the language barrier. Of the 500 or so wedding

guests, only a handful could speak English. So it was difficult doing things like coordinating our portrait ideas, and just understanding what was happening at any given time during the ceremony and reception. We really had to pay close attention to voice intonation and expressions to be able to anticipate moments and emotions.

DESCRIBE ANY UNIQUE MOMENTOS OR PRICELESS MEMORIES FROM YOUR MONGOLIA EXPERIENCE?

Ben: The rehearsal dinner was the first event we shot at the wedding, and I was watching the guests enter the room, greeting each other. I noticed that all of the men would greet one another by exchanging these ornate marble tobacco vessels. They all had one, and they would do a sort of handshake wherein they slid their hands together with the tobacco vessels, and swap them

during the handshake. They would admire one another's containers. This is the only place I have seen this custom. So at some point during dinner, an older man from the rural areas summoned me over to him, and showed me his tobacco container. Then he scooped some out and motioned for me to have some. I asked him how to do it, and he said you snort it. I snorted it right off the little scoop, then realized later you are supposed to put it on your hand first then snort it. The man just kind of laughed. I appreciated him initiating me into the custom, inviting me in to the inner circle so to speak.

Erin: The first time I rode a camel was in Mongolia - I'll never forget that! And from a fashion standpoint, I became absolutely obsessed with the colorful Mongolian boots. During our free time after the wedding, we went into the city to try to find some, but I was never able to.

WHAT'S THE SECRET TO WORKING / TRAVELING WELL AS A COUPLE?

Patience, and letting the small things roll off your back. We are actually great travel and work partners. We're both mellow, calm people,

and we both understand that things can go wrong easily during a travel wedding. So a huge priority for us is communicating, being patient with one another and always looking out for each other so things can go as smoothly as possible.

WHAT WAS YOUR OWN WEDDING LIKE?

Our wedding was small, intimate, and unique. We were married in the burned-out ruins of a chapel built in the 1800s on an old farming village in Campeche, Mexico.

