

The married couple walk along the beach on Baselin Island, Gabriela in her Oliver Tolentino dress, Payam in his Hackett suit

# GABRIELA MILODA

*Blue seas, white sands and panoramic views – beautiful Balesin Island in the Philippines made for an exquisite beach-chic day for Gabriela and Payam*

*Photography by CHESTKNOTS*





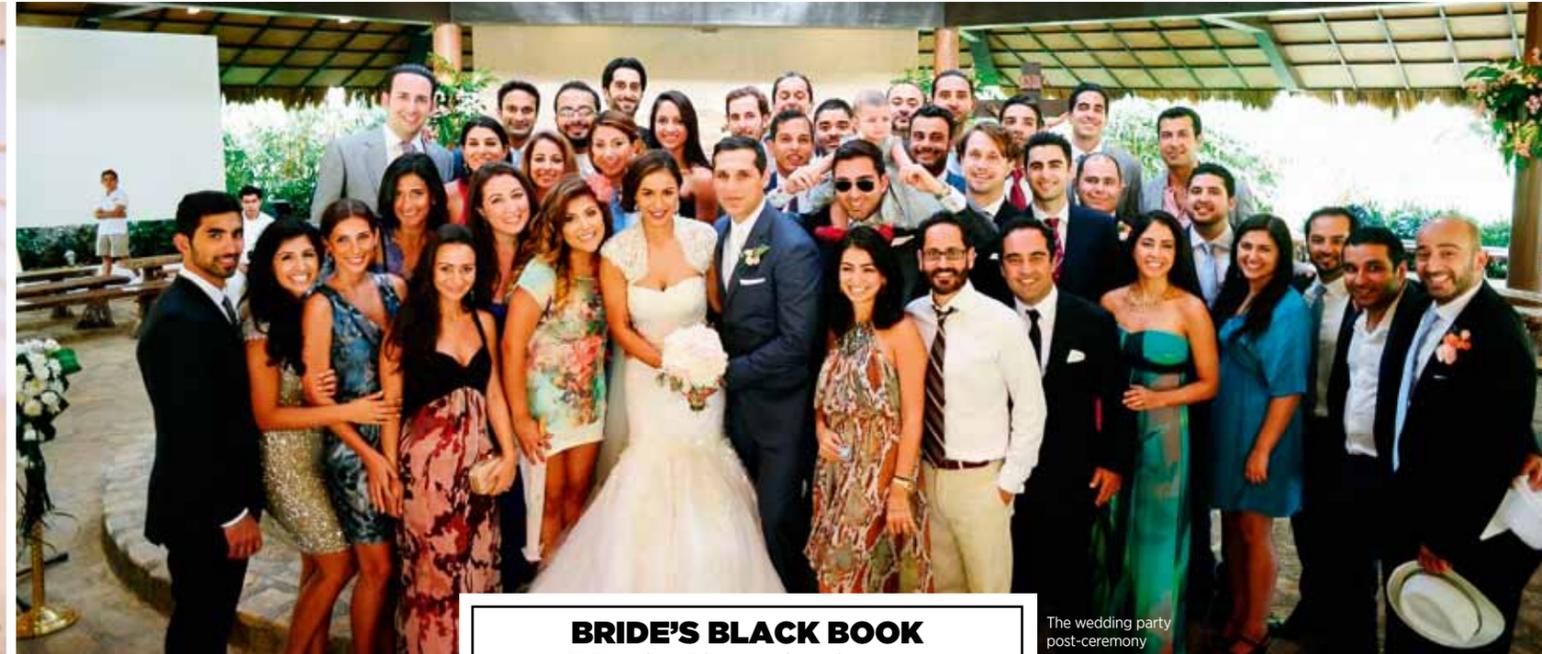
Gabriela and Payam during the Bahai ceremony



The photobooth was filled with props, a Polaroid camera and a chalkboard for messages



Twinkling Luna Lychee Jimmy Choo heels



The wedding party post-ceremony



Gabriela's mermaid dress was created by Oliver Tolentino, a Filipino designer based in West Hollywood



**F**ew brides can credit their fiancés with pulling off a proposal that includes involving their sister, mum and dad, parents-in-law and Paris. But, following over a year of living long-distance, (Gabriela in Switzerland and Payam in London), and a joint move to Dubai, the scene was set for the grandest of gestures, with video messages from family and a Tiffany diamond ring from Payam, 35. "It was definitely the most amazing surprise anyone has done for me," says Gabriela, 30.

With the wedding in just six months time, the couple settled on Balesin Island in the Philippines. "I'm half Filipina/Swiss and Payam is English with Persian roots, so we thought it would be an interesting destination. Plus, we both love the beach, so a tropical island was a no-brainer!" Gabriela laughs.

In preparation for 150 guests flying in from all over the world for their three-day wedding, Gabriela started from scratch with the planning, creating moodboards and joining Pinterest to get her inspired, along with help from a wedding planner and, most notably, the bride-to-be's mother. "She helped turn my ideas into reality and did everything that I wasn't able to from Dubai. She also designed the table names, place cards, save the dates..."

The incredible three-day event included a 'white party' welcome dinner, Catholic and Bahai ceremonies, and a beach party, with both cultures bonding over a shared love of "food,

dance and having a good time." For the "beach chic" theme, the couple made the most of the gorgeous nature of the colourful island, "complementing the landscape with flowers, lanterns and candles." Lots of little personal touches, such as seashells scattered on tables, parasols for the girls, panama hats for the boys, and a photobooth which helped "to make our personalities shine through."

Designed by Oliver Tolentino, Gabriela's bespoke mermaid dress was off-white with draping made out of French solstice lace, crystals and silk organza and complemented by Siman Tu earrings from Sophie's Closet, a crystal headpiece by Oliver Tolentino, and a seven-row diamond bracelet from Lane Crawford.

Food was a particular highlight, as Balesin is renowned for having the best in the country. "We aimed for an international cuisine with Asian elements, with seafood and beef carvings, and, of course, Persian lamb kebabs, as a tribute to Payam's roots. We got so many compliments!"

After dinner, Payam, looking dapper in his Hackett suit, took to the dance floor to serenade Gabriela with *L-o-v-e* by Nat King Cole. "I didn't expect him to surprise me, let alone sing. It was such a sweet gesture," Gabriela smiles.

With so many beautiful elements making up their picture-perfect wedding, it was important to take time to drink it all in, Gabriela says. "I treasured and consciously savoured every single minute, because there isn't a more wonderful feeling in the world than seeing all these amazing people there to celebrate and show their love and support of your marriage." ■

Payam's Prada shoes and groom accessories



Stealing a moment on the beach to really take in the wedding



Pretty parasols were provided for the women, and panama hats for the men



**BRIDE'S BLACK BOOK**  
**DRESS:** Oliver Tolentino, [Olivertolentino.com](http://Olivertolentino.com)  
**SHOES:** Jimmy Choo, [Jimmychoo.com](http://Jimmychoo.com)  
**JEWELLERY:** Sophie's Closet, [Sophiescloset.com](http://Sophiescloset.com), Lane Crawford, [Lanecrawford.com](http://Lanecrawford.com)  
**MAKE-UP:** Professionella Maquillage, +63 917 577 2266  
**GROOM'S OUTFIT:** Hackett, [Hackett.com](http://Hackett.com)  
**VENUE:** Balesin Island, Philippines, [Balesin.com](http://Balesin.com)  
**FLORIST:** Flowers by Rosabella, +63 917 522 3855  
**INVITATIONS:** Printsonalities, [Printsonalities.com](http://Printsonalities.com)  
**WEDDING PLANNER:** Complete Work Inc, [Jpmontilla.com](http://Jpmontilla.com)  
**MUSIC:** Camerata Jazz, +63 927 296 5119  
**DJ:** DJ Miro, +63 917 889 4165  
**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Chestknots, [Chestknots.com](http://Chestknots.com)  
**VIDEOGRAPHER:** Mayad, [Mayastudios.com](http://Mayastudios.com)



The bridal dress gently blows in the breeze on private island, Balesin



Gabriela designed the dresses for flower girls Isabella and Raika, and the suit for Charles



Gabriela with her bridal party, all in different shades of coral and salmon pink

