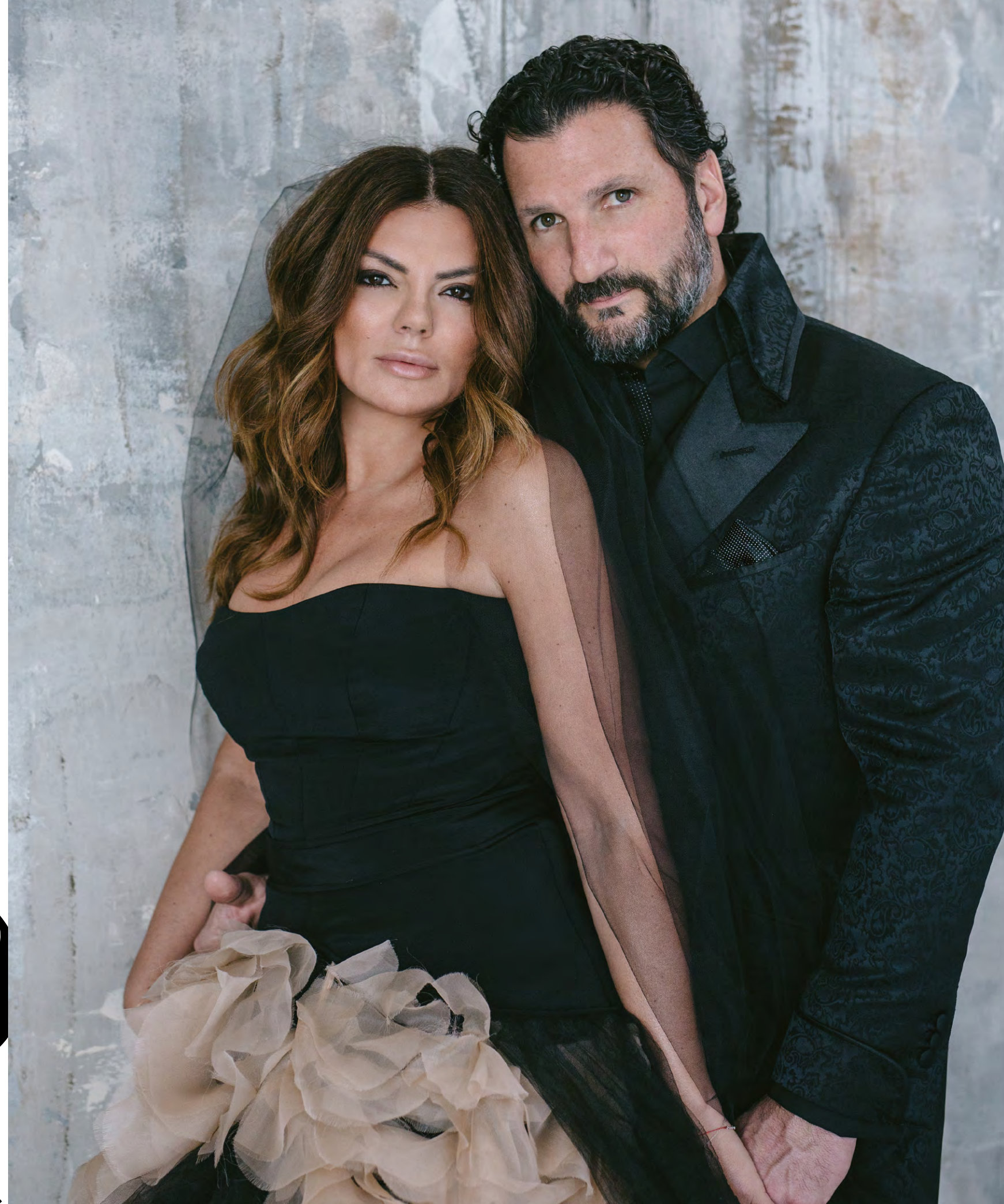


"DROP JAWS & MAKE HEADS TURN."

NATASHA KOIFMAN
*masters CAREER, and now
MARRIAGE, as she WEDS her
equally INTRIGUING partner*
ANTHONY MANTELLA.

INTERVIEW *andrea mclean*



1. The importance of aligning your business model with your life and belief system is consistently immaculately executed. Themes of authenticity, integrity, and realness are apparent in any area of your business, philanthropic endeavors, and personal life that you choose to share. How important was it to integrate these core beliefs into your wedding, and how did you go about this in terms of location, dress, guest list, flowers, etc.?

You say that Oscar Wilde quote: “Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.” I kind of live by that rule, because I think that it’s really important to make sure that you’re living your most authentic life. So when we got engaged and were talking about our wedding, it was important that it be meaningful for both of us. We really looked at what is important to us, so certainly looking at the people who were there, we wanted to make sure that everyone who was there was genuinely someone we cared about, and who cares about us. We both know so many people, and it wasn’t about having so many people there; it was actually more about having people there that we cared about, and vice versa. We made sure that every part of the wedding, the ceremony, the reception, was something that would mean something to us and also would be meaningful for our loved ones.

Even right down to the location! When we got engaged, one of the things that I had said to Anthony was that I really wanted to get married outdoors, somewhere you didn’t really feel you were in the city. We talked about different locations all over the world, quite frankly. We also didn’t want to get married somewhere there were lots of weddings, like a wedding venue. It was interesting how this kind of popped up. A really good friend of mine owns this property in King City; he had just bought it and said, “I know you wanted to get married outdoors, so are you interested in it?” And as soon as I saw it, it was like this is where we should get married. It was a beautiful barn area in King City, and it really did feel magical.

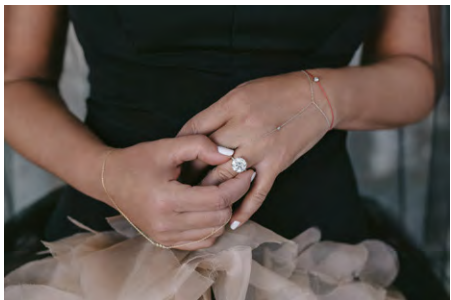
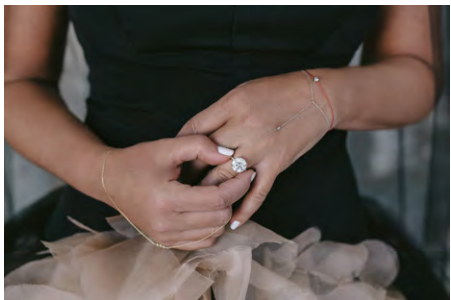
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Romance.
PREVAILS.
AND it's
PERFECT.



2. Iconic women throughout history, such as Grace Kelly, Princess Diana, and most recently Meghan Markle, have all added incredibly personal touches to their wedding days. From personalized thematic gowns to seemingly scandalous modifications to ceremonial traditions, each of these incredibly influential women has chosen authenticity over tradition in one way or another. What were the most personalized elements of your wedding for both you and Anthony?

There are a few things. One was that my son gave a speech that, to this day, when I think about it, I tear up. It was really, really beautiful; I don't think there was a dry eye in the crowd. One of the things that he said was, "I watched you do it all in the last 28 years, but I haven't watched you walk down the aisle, and it makes me extremely happy to be a part of this." So it was really moving and touching. Anthony's brother and sister-in-law spoke, and that also made Anthony well up. So I think the speeches, and how people really did feel the love at the reception and the ceremony—it was quite incredible.

I think the other thing that was really special, certainly special to us—it felt like it created a moment—was we did a lantern-lighting ceremony. After the ceremony was finished, we really wanted to make sure that it wasn't just about us, that it was about also our loved ones who were there. We wanted them to make a wish by lighting these lanterns and sending them off into the world. That was quite special, and we did it to "Stairway to Heaven."





We are both big music lovers, so the music was another big highlight of the entire evening. We chose five different musicians to play with this one band, so there was music constantly happening. Anthony really curated the music to a T. The other thing that we did was to encourage our loved ones to sing a song or jam with the band, because we have so many friends in the industry. So it was really special to have that. Bunmi, who's my vice president at NKPR—she sang a song. Our friend Joey Scoleri, who worked for Live Nation, sang a beautiful song. So there were all these special moments.

Another highlight: We are both big foodies, but I'm not a "fancy" foodie—so we had things like Dairy Queen Blizzards as a snack. We had Fidel Gastro; Matt Basile from Lisa Marie—he was our caterer. So it was really a little bit unexpected. We really curated the food so that we considered what everyone loves to eat. I'm a big '80s dessert fan, so Jos Louis, candies, all of that. I chose all the different candy that was there, I worked with bake shops to come up with these Jos Louis type of desserts. We also had Loblaw's white cakes, because that's my favourite cake. We didn't go fancy, we just really looked at things that were genuinely important to us. Last but not least, for officiants, we looked at who would be interesting to officiate at this ceremony, who was in our lives when we first met, because we have only been together just over two years. Our friends Craig Lawrence and Lark, from New York, officiated for us. We went to New York about ten days after we met, because it's sort of my home away from home; and they were the first people I introduced Anthony to, and they officiated our wedding.

A BOND LIKE no OTHER.

3. I want to touch specifically on your dress. You can't walk into just any bridal boutique and find this incredible dress. How did you choose it, and what was the process you went through to arrive at this remarkable gown?

Well, it was interesting. I go to a lot of evening events, so I have a lot of black evening gowns, and I wanted it not to feel like an evening gown. I wanted it to truly feel like a wedding gown. And I really believe there's no one that designs wedding dresses like Vera Wang. There are a lot of amazing designers out there that do beautiful evening wear, but the way she designs and corsets a dress is like no other—truly. Every gown feels like a couture gown, so I flew to New York and went to a few different places. I went to Zuhair Murad and actually one of my gowns was from Zuhair when I originally planned on wearing three gowns—but by the second gown, I was just like "Nope, I'm putting on my jeans and T-shirt." I also went to Naeem Khan and found beautiful dresses and actually bought one just for an event, but they weren't quite the dress. I went to Vera Wang and I saw a dress that I liked, and it was similar to the one I ended up having made, but it needed to be modified. I worked with Vera Wang on really modifying the dress to the way I wanted it—obviously making it more black and really tailoring it the way I need it. I actually ended up doing two dresses from Vera Wang; my second gown for the reception was also from Vera Wang.

4. You have built a phenomenal, international reputation on "strategic partnerships." Has this "strategic partnership" changed or enhanced how you view or conduct business? How has married life with a blended family influenced your business and/or philanthropic endeavors?

It's interesting; I mean, there are a few things. One, when we got together, he really is a breath of fresh air because he is so different from me. Like, I'm pretty serious. I'm pretty straitlaced. I work a lot, I'm happy working a lot. And he adds this incredible dimension of fun into my life, and into our life together. It's almost like the perfect balance for both of us. I bring myself to him and he brings himself to me, and it really works.

I've never really had that before. There's always been a sense of imbalance in previous relationships—not even in a bad way, just that they always felt like there was something



ISSA PARTY WITH A STAR STUDDER GUEST LIST.



missing at different times. With this relationship, I never feel that. He's actually the only person I've gone into business with. We started our angel investment company about eight months ago and we've made a few really interesting investments. We just jibe and work so well together; we do that podcast together, called *The F Words*. It sounds so cliché, and I guess I've been searching for this for a very long time, but they say that when you find that person, you know it.

We knew it pretty quickly, because within the second or third date, he said, "Well, I'm going to change my Facebook status. Will you?" And I laughed, because *who does that?* But he was so authentic; there was no game-playing. I am what I am, and he's always present, all the time. It's refreshing. You don't find that very often. So for me, I didn't have to think about it; it just happened. Even getting engaged, and the way we got engaged it just all kind of happened.

We knew we wanted to get married, but didn't talk that much about it. And then we were in New York City after a Formula E race. We were walking past a jewelry store; we walked in, and he was like, "Oh, do you like this ring?" And it was a little awkward, because what do you say? But literally five minutes later, we were engaged! And he hadn't planned it, either; it was just one of those things. That's how our life is, and I think that's important. You have to be open; you have to flow. We live together; we do business together, and life just feels a lot more fun with him in it.

People tell you that you meet that person at different stages—sometimes you meet them in your twenties and sometimes you don't meet them until your forties. Or like my friend Jeanne Beker, she didn't meet her guy until her sixties. When you know, you know.

5. What was your favourite element of your wedding event—from the planning process to that stunning gown, to the ceremony, reception, guest list, flowers, song choices, location, anything; what was your favourite detail?

I would say for me—it's probably different for Anthony, but for me, it would be my son's speech. It was extremely moving. If you ask Anthony that question, it would probably be his brother's speech. You know, ultimately it was about the people who were there, and those speeches really set the tone for the expression of love and vulnerability that evening. If I think about the next day, we sort of looked at each other and asked, "Do we feel different?" And we really did. We really felt married. We've both been married before, but neither of us had felt different before. I think a lot of that had to do with our loved ones and that overall expression of love.