

FEATURE

Celebrating true love

MR ROMANCE HELPS POP THE QUESTION

Proposal consultant comes up with the ultimate event

SAYING "I love you" can be a daunting experience.

That is why some choose to express it with a horse and carriage ride in Paris or declare their love with a message in the sky. French man Nicolas Garreau is the founder of Apoteo Surprise, a French company which specialises in creating romantic surprises and extravagant marriage



proposals for lovers who want to pop the question.

With an aeronautical engineering degree, Mr Garreau wanted to work in Formula 1 but was always a romantic at heart.

Mr Garreau said many Australians have visited his website and have travelled halfway across the world to say "I love you" with an unconventional proposal.

"I am a specialist in romance and my job is to help men declare their love," said Mr Garreau.

"For that I offer my website proposeinparis.com, which offers 30 romantic experiences to say 'I love you'."

Since 2006, Mr Garreau has planned about 1000 romantic surprise and marriage proposals.

He said it was very difficult for many people to express their love to someone.

"Most of my clients are men, who have come from all over the world," he explained.

"During a journey or a weekend in Paris, they want to amaze their sweetheart in a unique way."

Mr Garreau said all his ideas, planning, co-ordination of romantic experiences and marriage proposals are kept confidential, so the men can take the credit of the over-the-top declaration of love.

"The women never know that their sweetheart contacted a romance specialist - they think he organised it all by himself," he admitted.

"And I can swear that when a woman sees her photo and a message of love displayed 30 metres at the base of the Eiffel Tower, she is really amazed by what her love did for her."

In a business where he creates romance, Mr Garreau said Valentine's Day can be too commercialised.

"During Valentine's Day, women hate that men forget to offer flowers," he said.

"And if men offer only flowers, women think their love is not romantic and creative enough - this day can be a trap for some people. That is why I often suggest to men to be romantic every day of the year, not just on February 14."



FALLON HUDSON

Taxi rank meeting led to a beautiful romance and firm commitment despite tribulations

True love stands



TWO HEARTS ONE LOVE: Natasha Graham and Simon Hern will be married on Valentine's Day after meeting at a taxi rank in Mackay's CBD. PHOTO: PETER HOLT

WHERE there is life there is love.

Singer and songwriter Joni Mitchell was spot on when she sang "All I really want our love to do is bring out the best in me and you".

When Natasha Graham met the love of her life Simon Hern, she was waiting at a taxi rank in the Mackay CBD.

At the time, little did she know Mr Hern would be the man who would stick by her in sickness and in health, long before they said "I do".

That is the beauty of love, it pops up when you least expect it.

This Valentine's Day, after three years together, the couple will tie the knot, in an intimate ceremony with friends and family on the Gold Coast before holidaying in Bora Bora.

The amazing chapter in Simon and Natasha's love story is the support, love, compassion and strength they both had during a dark period of Ms Graham's life.

Last year she was diagnosed with leukaemia, and they both put their lives on hold, where she had to move to Brisbane to receive treatment.

After undergoing chemotherapy and receiving countless blood and platelet transfusions, Ms Graham is now in remission.

"After a long 18 months, I can't wait to become Mrs Hern," she said.

"Simon is my best friend and we have had the sickness and health, now

we want the happily ever after."

Ms Graham said there was no real reason they wanted to get married on Valentine's Day.

"We had been engaged before I got sick and we had to postpone our wedding, but I was happy being engaged.

"But then we decided to get married at the last minute.

"We were travelling to Bora Bora, so we thought why not get married before

"He kept asking me out but I wouldn't, because he was a little younger than me.

"But I eventually came around and went on a date and I was smitten."

Ms Graham said she always dreamt of being married in Bora Bora, but was happy to be married in the company of her family.

She said they may also have a wedding ceremony while they were on holiday.

"After all we went through we wanted to share our happiness with those who are close to us," she explained.

Ms Graham said after her battle with leukaemia and Mr Hern's unconditional love and support she knew he was a keeper.

"I knew that Simon is the man for me," she said.

"He sat by my bedside every day when I was ill.

"I was in hospital for five months and he was there with me."

Mr Hern said there were many wonderful things about Ms Graham.

"She is a really determined and a driven person and I love that about her," he said.

"She is opposite to me - I am very relaxed and don't put myself out there too much."

Mr Hern said there was no question about it, he was going with Ms Graham



Simon is my best friend and we have had the sickness and health, now we want the happily ever after

that.

"So we are going to have a small wedding with friends and family."

She said their first meeting was far from romantic.

"It was at a taxi rank in town," she laughed.

"We got to talking and he had a wonderful sense of humour and then he asked me out.

Apply now for funding from the Hail Creek Mine Community Development Fund

Hail Creek Mine has invested nearly \$1M in the communities of Nebo, Mackay, Mirani, and Sarina through our Community Development Fund since its inception in 2006.

Through the fund, we proudly partner local groups and projects that deliver sustainability to these communities in skills, education, and training; employment; economic development; health and wellbeing; art and culture; and the environment.

We are now accepting applications for the first round of funding in 2012. Applications close Thursday 8 March 2012.



Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto Coal Australia is proud to be part of the central Queensland community and committed to the future.

To apply for funding for your local project or organisation please contact Hail Creek Mine's business services advisor Marie Cameron on (07) 4951 6437 or marie.cameron@riotinto.com.

www.riotintocoalaustralia.com.au