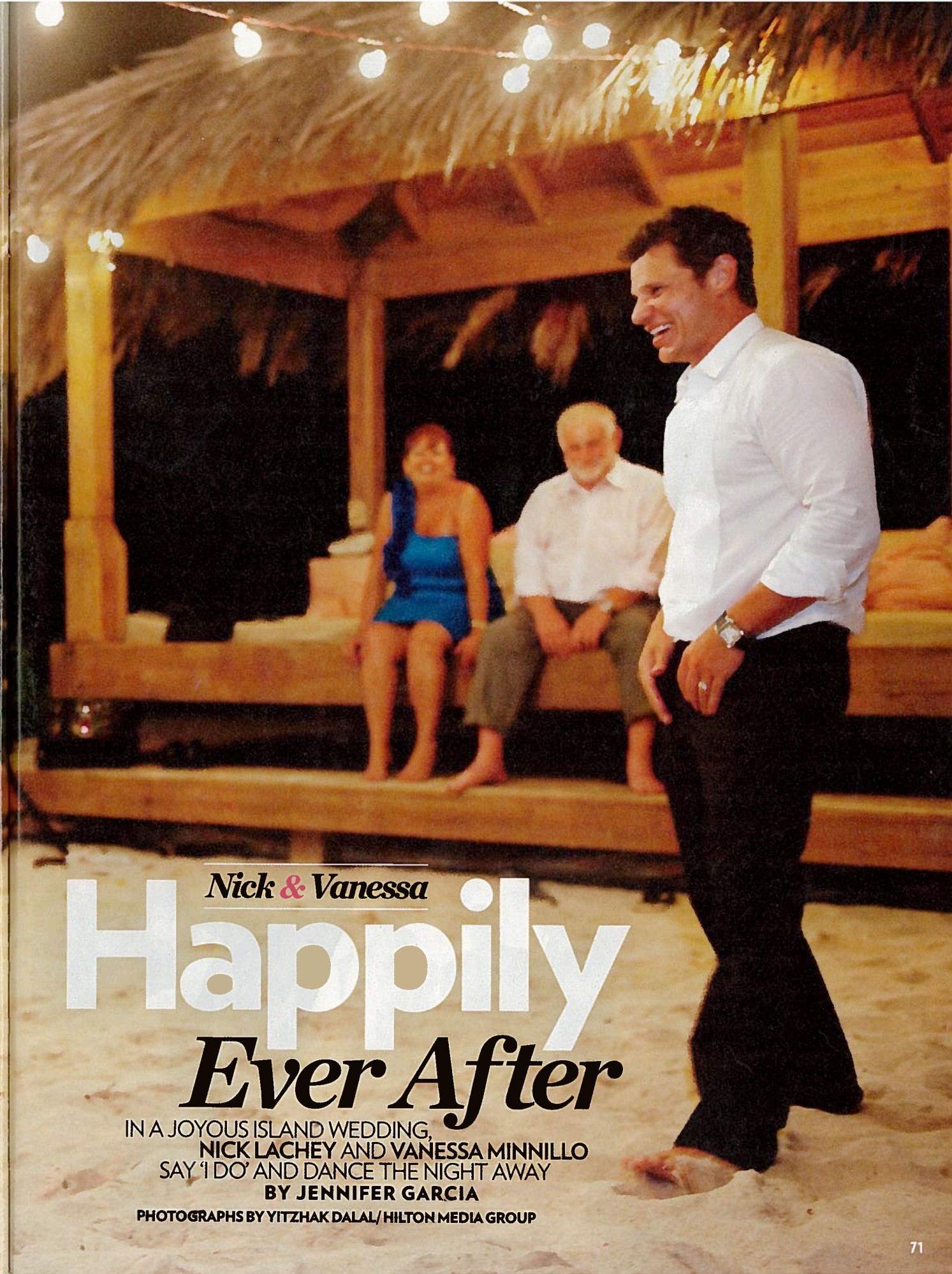


Dancing Duo
Minnillo and Lachey
boogied on the
sand to a playlist of
their favorite songs
created by best
man Drew Lachey.



Nick & Vanessa
**Happily
Ever After**

IN A JOYOUS ISLAND WEDDING,
NICK LACHEY AND VANESSA MINNILLO
SAY 'I DO' AND DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY
BY JENNIFER GARCIA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY YITZHAK DALAL/HILTON MEDIA GROUP



and and Wife
overcome by
ions." says Minnillo
the ceremony).
Lachey: "The only thing
nervous about was
ing through my tux!"

During their five-year relationship, Nick Lachey and Vanessa Minnillo had planned out much of their future together—except for one important day. “I’ve envisioned when I get pregnant, my nursery, names... but I never really had this vision of my wedding,” says Minnillo. After the couple got engaged last November, “we toyed with the idea of having a big ceremony,” says Lachey, “and felt it just wasn’t our style.”

In the end it didn’t matter how many people were at their July 15 nuptials, held on Sir Richard Branson’s private Necker Island in the British Virgin Islands: Lachey, 37, only had eyes for his bride. “It literally took my breath away,” he says of the first moment he saw Minnillo, 30, in her two-piece Monique Lhuillier ensemble. “It’s a moment you fantasize about, and I was certainly not disappointed.”

Nor were their guests (35 close friends and family), who had been kept in the dark about the wedding location. The invitations by Lehr & Black were purposefully vague, asking guests to simply bring their passports. After arriving for the four-day celebration, including a day of “wedding Olympics” (everything from inflatable sumo-suit wrestling to beach volleyball), the group gathered in Branson’s mountaintop living room, overlooking the ocean, for the main event.

Soon all eyes were on the bride, who walked down the aisle on the arm of her father, Vince. Her lace-corset top was embellished with rose-and-crystal detail and paired with a hand-tufted silk-faille skirt. “Nick wanted me to look traditional with modern flare,” says Minnillo, who wore diamond studs Lachey had given her during their first year as a couple. *The Sing-Off* host donned a Dolce & Gabbana tuxedo; during the ceremony—which Lachey’s father, John, officiated at—the couple exchanged bands by New York jeweler David Bader, who



Minnillo (left) opted for a “very natural look,” she says. “I wanted Nick to see me.” Lachey (below) got dressed with dad John and best man Drew.

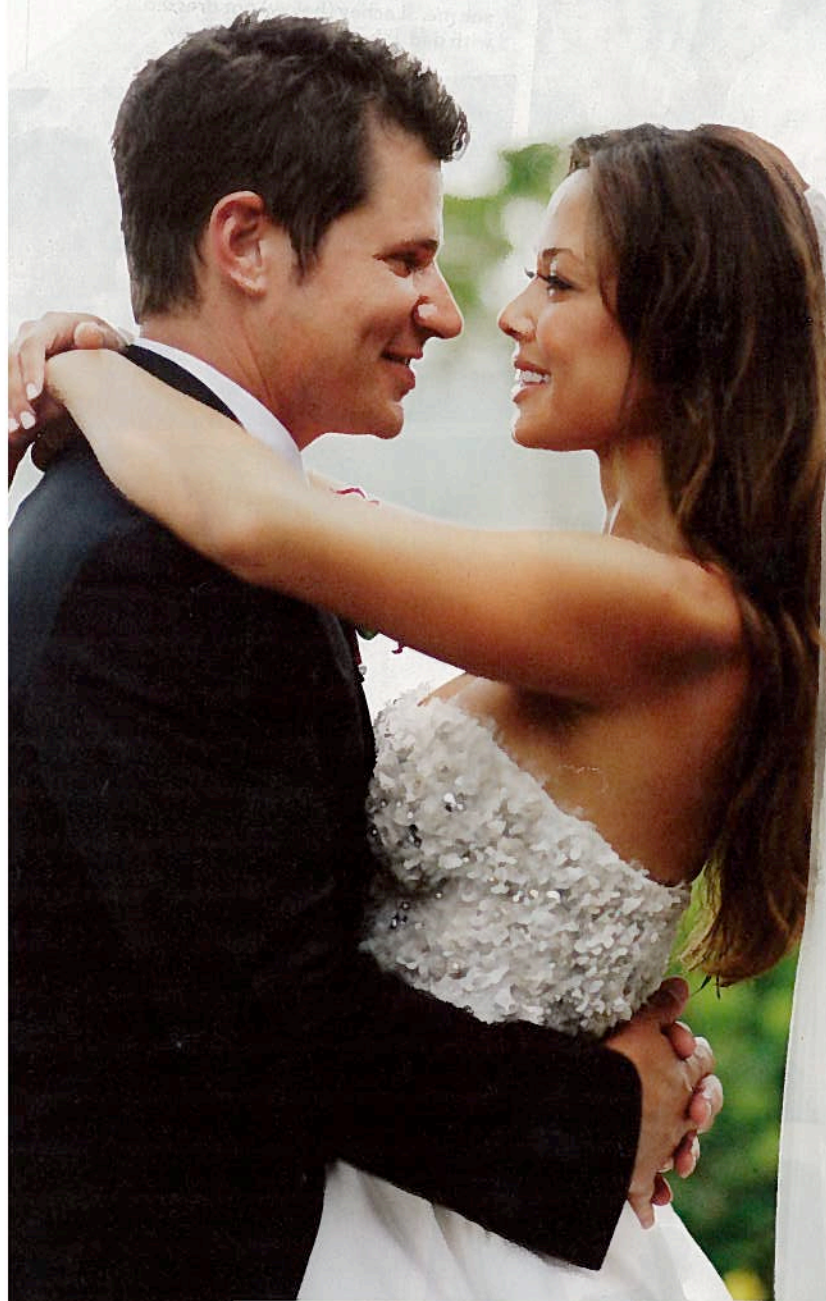


Just the Two of Us After the ceremony, they escaped the near 90-degree heat for a “moment together to take it in,” says Minnillo.



They were wed (above) by Lachey’s father and a local pastor, Paul Ricketts. Right, Minnillo changed into a second gown by Simin Couture to cut the cake by Georgetown Cupcakes.





Mr. & Mrs. Lachey remember vividly that moment," says Lachey. "Because it meant I could finally kiss my bride."



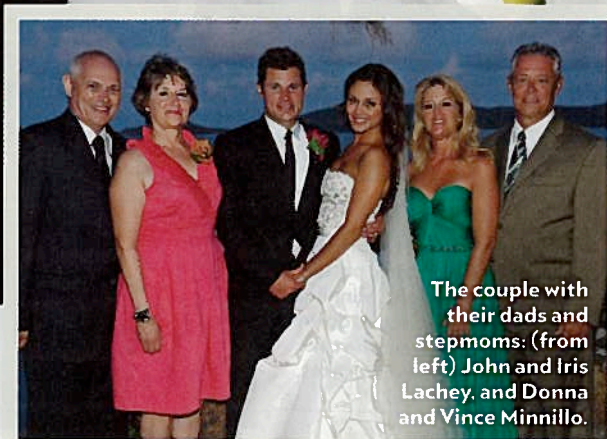
After jumping in the pool together, the couple watched fireworks on the beach.

had designed her Asscher-cut engagement ring. The moment, says Lachey, was "intensely beautiful."

Following the ceremony, guests were led inside, where celebrity wedding planner Sharon Sacks had created one 42-ft.-long table topped with cream Italian linens and "beautiful white flowers of different varieties," says Minnillo, *Wipeout's* new host. The night's menu reflected the couple's favorites: slow-braised short ribs for her ("I'm a meat-and-potatoes kind of girl!" she says) and pan-seared sea bass for him.

Later the party moved to the beach, where best man Drew Lachey and matron of honor Jennifer Birmingham-Lee made emotional toasts. For their first dance, Minnillo surprised her husband by flying in musician Steve Tyrell to perform Louis Armstrong's "A Kiss to Build a Dream On," a song that "sparks something special in our hearts," she says. The couple released paper lanterns into the sky and spent the rest of the night sans shoes and under the stars. The fairytale evening, which will be captured in an upcoming special airing July 30 on TLC, was completed with a 10-minute fireworks show. "My favorite part," says Lachey (whose previous marriage to Jessica Simpson ended in divorce in 2005), "was watching the fireworks together as husband and wife."

After returning from their week-long honeymoon, the newlyweds will be ready to focus on those other plans they made long ago. "For us, this is just a stepping-stone to do what we ultimately want," says Minnillo. "And that's to start a family together." ●



The couple with their dads and stepmoms: (from left) John and Iris Lachey, and Donna and Vince Minnillo.