

An Indian at Heart - Posy Chisholm Feick Writes a Spectacular Book on Indian Weddings

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Vigorous beats of the dhol rocked the Royal Ontario Museum and the glitter, splendour and finery of an Indian wedding came alive. Posy Chisholm Feick's spectacular new book on Indian weddings, 'The Sacred Fire' was launched on Wednesday, October 16 amid lavish celebrations. The former Toronto journalist attended eight different weddings in Jaipur, Calcutta, Mumbai and Delhi to capture the vivid colours, vibrancy and excitement of an Indian wedding which breathes through every page of 'The Sacred Fire.' 'I feel like all the big brides myself,' said Ms. Feick dressed as a Punjabi bride in a gorgeous bright red suit and ardently sought out by an army of well wishers and media persons from all across the world. 'I feel like eight brides in one,' she said.

The unique launch involved creating the Indian wedding experience for all the guests. An exquisitely decorated mandap, traditional canopies, ceremonial flowers, a small pandal for mehndi application, turban and saree tying booths were all part of the brightly transformed ROM. Popular Bollywood numbers played in the backdrop to make the experience real. Sanjay Agnihotri and Gautam Sharma of Suhaag magazine were instrumental in bringing together all the elements required to create the wedding ambience. This included a short enactment of the ceremony by local models...A troupe of bhangra dancers accompanied by a dholi announce the arrival of the barat and the groom. An ornately dressed bride waits with her friends, garlands are exchanged. The pandit chants the mantras and performs the ceremony. Turbaned servers passed around goodies which included traditional mithai including barfi and rasogullas.

'I really wanted Toronto to understand why I loved India so much,' said Ms. Feick who first visited India when she was just nine years old and has been going back ever since. 'I madly fell in love with India, she says. Ms. Feick describes the whole feeling of being in India like being at home. 'The wonderful feeling that I get from the whole of India, from the people. It is something that never happens anywhere else in the world,' she says.

The book reflects both Posy's life long affection for India as well as her deep knowledge of India's diverse cultures. 'I always wanted to do a book about all the different castes in India. I wanted to bring together all the different kinds of weddings - Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh... Marriages in India - arranged marriages really work. It is a happy country.'

'The Sacred Fire' strings together eight different kinds of weddings - Rajput, Buddhist, Kayastha, Sikh, Muslim and also those from Calcutta, Agra and Delhi. The 128 page colourful book reveals the rich diversity of the customs and practices in South Asian weddings which Posy brings alive together with her colleague the talented photographer, Sheila McKinnon. The book will be available at ROM shops and Indigo bookstores. The proceeds from the sale will be donated to The Royal Ontario Museum's South Asia Endowment Fund and the Balika Sadan Children's Centre in Jaipur.

