



Photography: Caroline Ryan



Sitara: Quite the opposite. Baltis are some of the most hospitable, peaceful and interesting people I have ever met. The landscape in the mountains is breathtaking. I feel privileged to have experienced such a different and exotic way of life, and I try to return every two years to visit.

TB: How old were you when you knew you wanted to be an actress?

Sitara: I was five or six years old. I read books day and night as a kid; I was a total bookworm. I would imagine that I was the main character in the novel and go about my life as that character! However, growing up in rural Ontario, so far from any entertainment industry, I didn't realize I could actually BE an actress until I moved to Toronto at age 19.

TB: What was your first job?

Sitara: I studied classical and contemporary dance for 18 years, so that was how I got into the industry. My first gig was as a dancer in *Deepa Mehta's* Bollywood Hollywood. I was in awe the entire time I was on the set, and felt like I never wanted to leave. I just knew it was where I wanted to work. I started studying acting and focused on making my life about the acting industry. I was lucky; I worked with renowned acting coach *Cindy Tanas*. I went from 'starving artist' to 'out-of-work' actor to eventually being able to pay my rent! That was sweet.

TB: What do you do for fun?

Sitara: I see my family. My sisters and parents are the greatest people I know. Now that I split my time between Toronto and Los Angeles, I'm hard-pressed not to have fun!



I'd accentuate my wedding gown with traditional gold Pakistani and Indian jewellery.

Wedding daydreams

“So fun to daydream about a wedding. My gown choice would be sleek, classic and elegant. I'd want to look like a goddess, soft and beautiful and powerful all at the same time – hey, it's my day – I'll be goddess-like if I want! Hmm, easy to see how one could turn into a bridezilla, I'll try to keep that in check when the real thing happens.

Back to the gown. I'd accentuate it with traditional gold Pakistani and Indian jewellery. As for the ceremony, I would want it to be simple and unique. Funny story: a few years ago I played *Tina* in *Tony and Tina's* Wedding for months, and I have to admit a really traditional wedding just doesn't appeal to me anymore. I guess the dinner theatre ambience took all the magic out of it for me. My wedding will be free of convention: A beautiful garden setting followed by a party under silk tents. I would want to treat my guests to a great evening of exotic food and drink, great music and relaxed fun.”