



The Classy Rags *bride*

Gareth and I were introduced by my friend Laura, who was living in Barrowford, near Burnley (Gareth's home town). Although he was living in York at the time, we hit it off immediately. Within 6 months, he had upped sticks to Liverpool and we moved in together.

Words: ?????? Photographs: Herve Gillet Photography

The following Christmas, the family and I decided to spend a week skiing in France. There were eleven of us and we rented a fabulous chalet in the heart of Chamonix. It was magical. New Year's Eve was like no other. After celebrating in style, bringing in the New Year in the town square with the hundreds of locals, Gareth took me aside to a beautiful spot overlooking the river. There were hundreds of fairy lights draped around the area which brought the snow capped trees and roof tops to life. Gareth presented me with an amazing Marquise diamond ring and popped the question; I was so taken by surprise! I couldn't say yes quickly enough! After a few tears, we rejoined our family and friends in a nearby quaint pub to celebrate with many bottles of champagne.

We returned from the holiday beaming with excitement and began to plan our big day. Given that both me and my mum, Sue, work in the wedding industry, the marriage couldn't have been more poignant, for my mum particularly. Mum has dressed mothers of the brides for twenty years and now it was her turn! As I work for my mum at Classy Rags, and being part of many wedding shows and events,

meeting many brides, I found myself in the excitement (and anxieties) of planning my own day. I was well aware of the amount there was to organise, so Gareth and I got cracking immediately.

Not a month had passed since our engagement and we'd set the date for August 2007. We'd booked the church and the venue and made great progress in the planning of our wedding but then our lives changed forever when I discovered I was pregnant! This unexpected but wonderful news waylaid our plans so we postponed the wedding to make way for the birth of our baby. We decided to make the most of the fabulous honeymoon we had already booked. We brought it forward and spent two fabulous weeks in the Maldives and Dubai!

Our gorgeous son Oliver arrived in October. Eager to become man and wife, we resumed our wedding plans, with June 26th 2009 set as the new date. Our original venue wasn't available, so we searched for somewhere else and thankfully discovered an even more perfect setting for our reception. The West Tower in Aughton was everything we could have wished for in our venue, boasting wonderful architecture and oozing character. Only thirty minutes ►►



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from Liverpool, the West Tower gives the feeling of being lost in the heart of the English countryside.

I had set my heart on a lace vintage style dress. After trying literally dozens on, I ended up with something completely the opposite! I'm sure every bride knows the feeling of putting that special dress on and realising you have found 'the one'. I was with my mum and sister at the time, their reaction said it all and we all instantly fell in love with the La Sposa by Pronovias. For Gareth and the ushers, we decided on a charcoal grey suit teamed with silver waistcoats.

I felt it was important that my bridesmaids played a big part in the selection of their dresses, as I wanted them to feel as happy and comfortable as I did. At Classy Rags, the three of them tried on a selection of designs and agreed on a beautiful floor length evening gown in charcoal.

The morning of the wedding arrived and my bridesmaids; Kate, Gill, Louise and I arrived at Williams and Coburn hair salon to be pampered by owner Cheryl Coburn, who treated us to champagne and strawberries.

Once our hair and make up were done, we arrived back at my mum's house. Our good friends, Andy and Margaret of Classic Video, Hervé Gillet, our photographer, were there waiting ready to take some 'before' shots of my wedding party.

My father, Michael, passed away five years ago. The day didn't feel the same without him there to walk me up the aisle. My younger brother Ian stepped into the role in my dad's honour. He was wonderful and was there throughout the morning to help me and the bridesmaids with last minute arrangements. During the photographs, Ian presented me with a card and a pair of beautiful diamond earrings from

Gareth. I struggled to hold back the tears so as not to ruin my makeup!

Mum wore a Paule Vasseur outfit with matching shoes and bag. With the help of Sue Auener, her best friend and manager of the Classy Rags Frodsham store (who also worked her magic customising the hat), she looked wonderful.

Finally ready, we left the house to be greeted by our charming chauffeurs and made my final journey as single woman to St Matthew and St James' church in Mossley Hill. Gareth, being a huge car lover, went for a Rolls Royce Phantom for the bride and groom and an S Class Mercedes for the bridesmaids and my mum.

Surprisingly, my nerves subsided and turned into excitement as we arrived at the church. With the church bells ringing, passers by gathered in the beautiful church grounds in the glorious sunshine to see us disembark from the wedding cars.

Nothing prepared me for that moment when I walked up the aisle towards Gareth. I then spotted our son Oliver and it made that moment even more special. Throughout the service (and in fact the whole day) he was an absolute angel and looked so handsome. After the vicar declared us husband and wife, we walked down the aisle. With Gareth carrying Oliver, we exited the church as a family.

The tables at West Tower were dressed with silver candelabras with crystal chandelier style droplets, which in turn were dressed in peonies and antique roses to give an elegant vintage look. This look was also reflected in the cake, which was decorated with a Chantilly lace effect, charcoal ribbon and vintage grey pearl brooches as centre pieces.

Our toastmaster, Dave McGrath, also a good friend, carried out duties in his much loved style. For our favours, I presented every female guest with an

individual piece of jewellery, and for the gents, a generous selection of Hershey's chocolates.

Ian's 'father of the bride' speech was wonderful and made us both laugh and cry. He made us all proud and we knew our dad would have been watching with a smile on his face. Gareth's moving speech preceded that of his best man Neil, who had the room in stitches. At 7.30pm, we began receiving our evening guests. We were all treated to a popular array of swing songs by Marcus Keith, who never fails to please the crowd.

The rest of the evening was spent dancing the night away and making the most of the summer evening with our friends and family before leaving the following day for our second honeymoon, this time in Las Vegas!

Our big day was everything we could have wished for and I wish I could have the day all over again!

SUPPLIER LIST

The following companies helped to make this wedding a great success:

Ashley Men's Formal hire

Tel: ??????????????

Classy Rags

Tel: 0151 722 8033

Cloud 9 Bridal Wear

Tel: 0151 708 8833

Creative Chair Cover hire

Tel: ??????????????

Dave McGrath Toast Master

Tel:

Herve Gillet Photography

Tel: 0151 932 1547

West Tower

Tel: ??????????????

Williams & Coburn Hair

Tel: ??????????????