





Michelle Howells, married Christopher Griffiths, both 30, at St Mark's Church, Angel, followed by a reception at 1 Lombard Street on 28th February, 2015.

REAL WEDDINGS

FROM A DISTANCE

Having moved to Australia just after their engagement, Michelle and Christopher organised their day from the other side of the globe, with help from Skype and a wedding planner

*Images courtesy of
Cristina Rossi Photography*

Michelle and Christopher met on their first day at the University of Cardiff but didn't start seeing each other until a year-and-a-half later. With a long friendship under their belts, their first date was a relaxed affair at a Moroccan restaurant – with mates describing their romance as similar to Monica and Chandler's love match in *Friends*.

And much like the infamous sitcom character, Chris planned a romantic proposal guaranteed to bring a tear to your eye. "We were walking across the River Seine in Paris on a very bright but cold day when we came to the Pont des Arts," recalls Michelle. "I'd always wanted to see this bridge and was so excited, taking lots of artistic pictures. As we made our way into the middle of the bridge, I turned around and Chris was on one knee. It was perfect. Chris had a padlock in his pocket, which we wrote on, locked to the bridge and threw the key into the river, locking in our love."

The couple fixed a date 10 years to the day after they shared their first kiss, and worked backwards from that, giving them nine months to plan their wedding. However, having relocated to Australia just a few weeks after their engagement, planning proved logistically difficult. "As we no longer lived in London, planning anything was tricky, especially with the time difference. Deciding on a venue, considering we weren't able to see any, was a really difficult decision," says Michelle.

The solution came in the form of wedding planner Ayshea Donaldson, who recommended key suppliers from her little white book of contacts, from the venue at 1 Lombard Street to London photographer Cristina Rossi. "We trusted Ayshea and when we saw the venue for the first time, three days before the wedding, we absolutely fell in love with it," explains Michelle.



A JETSETTER DRESS

After trying on over 40 different styles, Michelle found her perfect gown back in her university town, visiting Laura May Bridal in Cardiff. "The boutique took so much time with me, even putting me in contact with a local stockist in Australia so I could attend fittings for my chosen dress," she reveals.

Despite her exhaustive search, when Michelle tried on the *Sarah* dress by House of Mooshki, she was in no doubt that this was *the one*. "I fell in love with the lace and when I had it on I felt so happy. I stayed in touch with the designer, Olivia at House of Mooshki, too, who really helped me out with some last-minute adjustments. I visited her in her London studio just four days before the wedding," she adds.

The couple found a navy blue tuxedo with black lapels for the groom while shopping in Melbourne, but when it came to choosing the outfits for their attendants, they had to rely on internet searches and Skype, eventually settling on a coral dress by Alfred Sung for the bridesmaids and a navy suit for the ushers.

"We were really lucky with the weather. It could have been horrible in February but was crisp and bright." - Michelle

WINTER WONDERLAND

When it came to the flowers, Michelle knew what she wanted, the only problem was sourcing it in the depths of winter. A lifelong fan of blousy blooms, the bride chose a mix of ivory and blue hydrangeas, complemented with coral roses for a pop of colour. "It wasn't easy to get hold of hydrangeas in winter but our great florist, Pem, and her contacts at Vauxhall flower market worked their magic," she says. "Pem really understood our vision and found some spectacular coral amaryllis to line the aisle in the church too."

For their reception venue, the couple chose simple touches designed to emphasise the beauty of the space, with a mix of centrepieces; candelabras with roses and clear vases filled

with hydrangeas.

The cake, made by Michelle's aunt, tied in with the colour scheme too. As well as their three-tier showstopper, the couple commissioned a selection of mini sweet treats for their guests, from macarons to cake pops, made by Abigail Bloom Cake Company, which were then served to guests at the table as dessert.

LET US ENTERTAIN YOU

Despite the distance, the couple found planning their day an enjoyable experience. "It was lots of fun putting it all together. We kept thinking of the guests and how they'd enjoy the day," explains Michelle. A London bus 'filled with champagne' took guests between the ceremony and reception, where a kids' corner awaited the smaller guests complete with vintage computer games and a table of craft materials. Older guests, meanwhile, were able to strut their stuff on the dancefloor to live band The In Laws and DJ Liam. ♥



Michelle and Christopher's contacts

Photographer | Cristina Rossi Photography | cristinarossi.co.uk

Ceremony venue | St Mark's Church | stmarks-clerkenwell.co.uk

Reception venue | 1 Lombard Street | www.1lombardstreet.com

Wedding planner | My London Wedding Planner | www.mylondonweddingplanner.com

Bride's dress and accessories | House of Mooshki | www.houseofmooshki.com

Bride's hair | Amanda Tironi Bridal Hair | www.amandatironi.com

Bride's make-up | Zoe Cornwell Make-Up Artist | www.zoecornwellmakeupartist.com

Ushers' suits | TM Lewin | www.tmlewin.co.uk

Pageboys' suits | Debenhams | www.debenhams.com

Bridesmaids' dresses | Alfred Sung | www.dessy.com

Flowers | Pemizett Flowers | pemizett@btopenworld.com

Mini cakes | The Abigail Bloom Cake Company | www.theabigailbloomcakecompany.com

Transport | First Choice Wedding Cars | www.firstchoiceweddingcars.co.uk

Entertainment | The In Laws and DJ Liam | www.functioncentral.co.uk

Wedding night | South Place Hotel | www.southplacehotel.com