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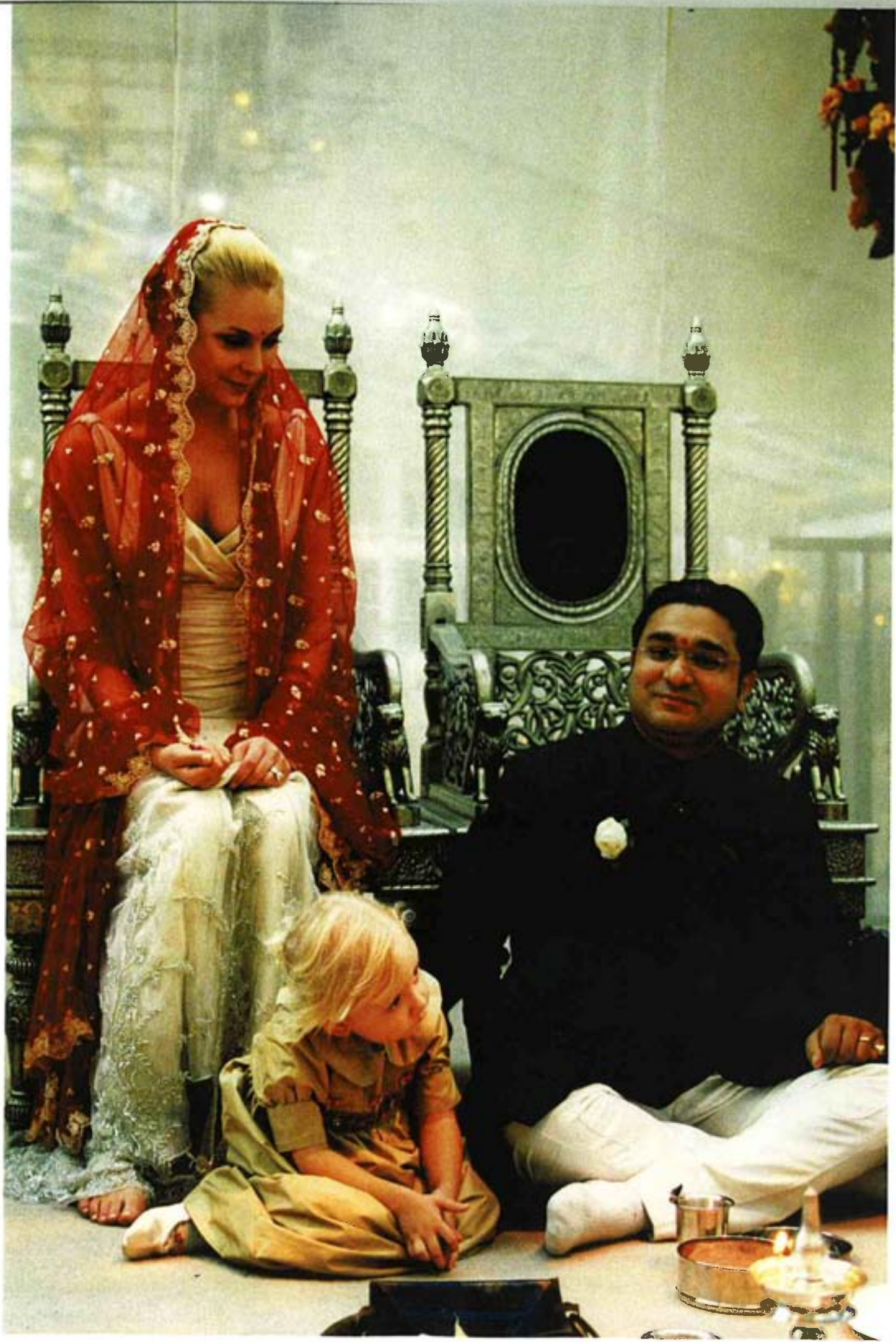
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ISSUE 38



# MICHELLE BONN ANGAD PAUL &

REGENT'S PARK, LONDON, 10 October 2004

WHEN INVITATIONS TO the wedding of Michelle Bonn and Angad Paul began to grace the mantelpieces of friends and family, guests were left in no doubt that both the bride's Jewish and the groom's Hindu heritage would be honoured at their autumn celebrations. 'On the RSVP we asked people to email our special domains michelle@jindu or angad@hinjew,' says Michelle, 'so that the half-and-half style of our wedding was reflected from the very beginning.'

The invitations invited guests to a full day that began with a civil ceremony at The Landmark hotel, near Regent's Park, attended by 100 family and friends. After this, 300 guests were invited to a marquee in the grounds of London Zoo, where they enjoyed a traditional Hindu blessing, followed by a champagne reception, and then a Jewish blessing before dinner.

The choice of the zoo as a venue was a poignant one as it's the site of the Ambika Fountain, built in memory of Angad's sister Ambika, who died of leukaemia when she was very young. The fountain was commissioned by Angad's father, The Lord Paul of Marylebone, who also stepped in with much-needed

funds in the early Nineties, when financial difficulties meant the zoo was in danger of closing.

Having set the style of the wedding on their invitations, the juxtaposition of the two cultures continued throughout the day. In a specially commissioned two-tier marquee with sunken dance floor, Michelle, an entertainment lawyer, and Angad, a steel industrialist, created two different environments.

'We split the marquee into two distinct sections,' says Michelle. 'The Hindu half was very ornate, using bright oranges and fuchsias in the seating, cushions, candles and flowers; the other was a cool, classic cream-and-white design with each table individually spotlighted. During the Hindu blessing in the colourful section, which later became a chill-out bar area for guests who didn't want to dance, guests gathered around us quite informally. But during the Jewish ceremony they were seated for dinner at candlelit tables.'

With such an ambitious schedule, the couple had to be careful about timing, so the blessings were tailor-made to include some, but not all, of the wedding customs from each

culture. Both Michelle and Angad honoured the other's parents by touching the feet of their new in-laws, and the Hindu celebration included the garland exchange and walking around the fire, known as the *agni*. The Jewish ceremony included a psalm, an address and the traditional seven blessings, read by close friends from both sides. Michelle's best friend Melissa Papadakis read a passage from *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*; and the blessing took place under a floral *chuppa* (canopy) of white roses, white lilies and stephanotis, designed by Ming Veevers-Carter. This was later replaced by a mirror ball above the dance floor.

The couple also asked Alison Price, who managed the event and the catering, to create dishes reflecting both backgrounds. Canapés included mini-bagels with cream cheese and smoked salmon or chopped beetroot, mini naans with chopped liver and sieved eggs, tandoori chicken wraps, cauliflower pakora and mini-tuna burgers with pickled ginger.

Even Michelle's outfit reflected the cultural blend.

BOTH MICHELLE AND  
ANGAD HONoured THE  
OTHER'S PARENTS BY  
TOUCHING THE FEET OF  
THEIR NEW IN-LAWS

She complemented a pale gold couture dress of beaded tulle, by celebrity favourite Neil Cunningham, with a veil for the civil ceremony and the Jewish blessing. Her hair was styled by Simon Maynard and make-up

designed by Ruby Hammer (both arranged for her by Jonathan Phang, Michelle's former boss at IMG Models, where she was in-house lawyer).

For the Hindu ceremony, however, Michelle switched to an ornate red veil, which Angad's mother, The Lady Paul of Marylebone, had sent over especially from India. 'It was threaded with gold and absolutely beautiful, but it was also very heavy,' Michelle recalls. 'It's no wonder Hindu brides always look so serene, because it was quite difficult to move around much while I was wearing it. Angad wanted to sit on the floor during the blessing, which is the more humble Hindu way, but I simply couldn't get down there.' To spare Michelle's blushes and allow her to sit, Alison Price sourced two silver thrones from a theatrical props company, Farley.

Throughout the day, guests enjoyed the music of a string quintet assembled by Lone Madsen, a Juilliard-trained cellist who is one of Michelle's clients. The quintet played for the civil ceremony at The Landmark, performed a special arrangement to accompany the Jewish psalm, then played at the reception.

In fact, music became something of a theme for the day, as it is one of Angad's big loves (besides Michelle and films – he was executive producer on Guy Ritchie's *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*). It was this passion for music that gave the couple the idea of naming each table after a different

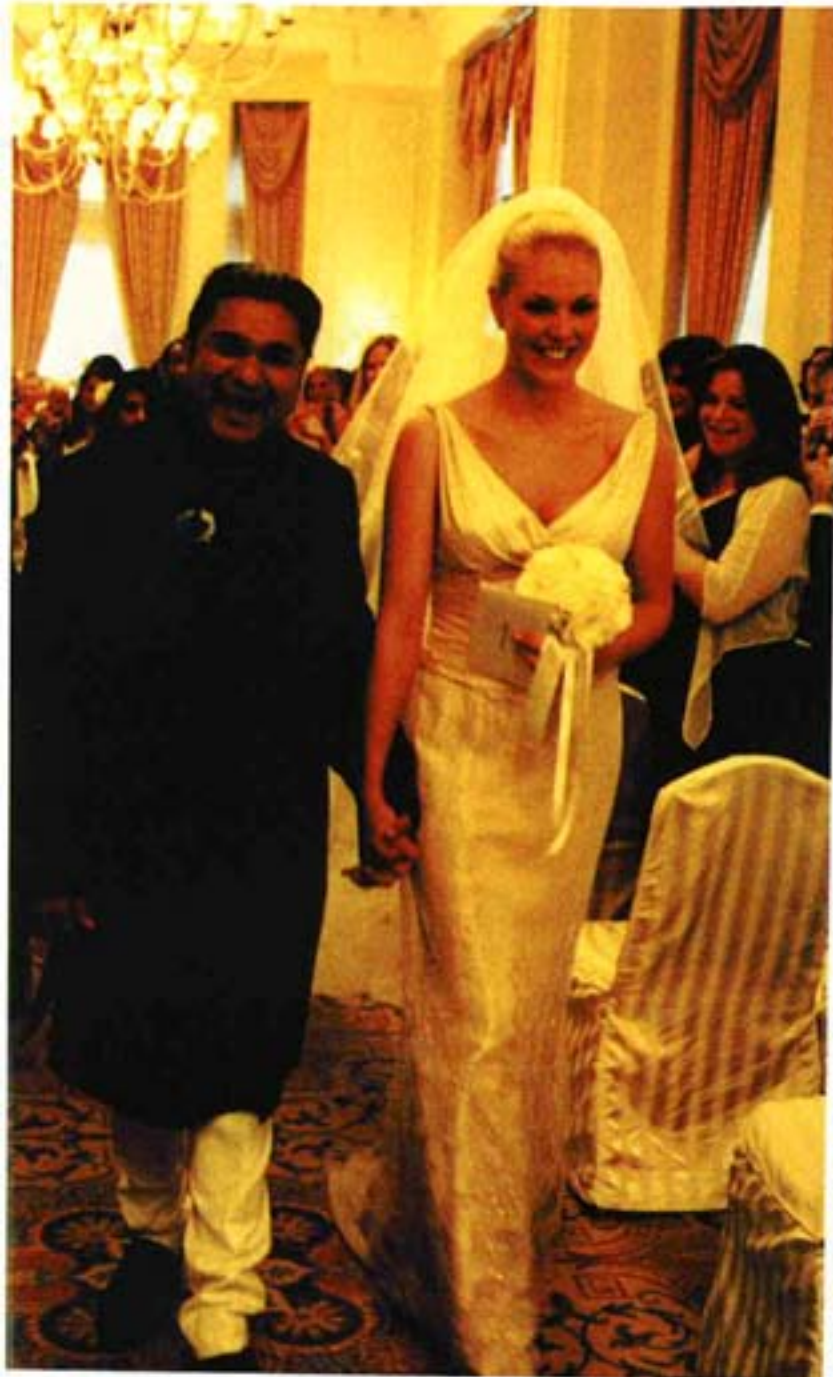


Inside the marquee, the Jewish blessing took place beneath a chuppa of white roses, lilies and stephanotis

genre, from disco to acid jam. Not surprisingly, Michelle and Angad named their own table 'new romantics'.

However, Michelle decided against individual place names, so as not to 'clutter' the simple white table theme. Instead, guests' names were written at the top of printed menus at the centre of each table. And, as so many of the guests did not eat meat, the menus were printed on both sides. One side featured a first course of duck *confit* salad and *foie gras parfait* followed by roast fillet of sea bass in a banana leaf; the other included a vegetarian first course of curried mushroom, cucumber, baby spinach and tomato on latkes, followed by *confit* of aubergine with *tian* of dahl.

Although the first two courses were served at the tables – a mix of rectangular and circular tables, to prevent the seating looking too regimented – the dessert course was more informal. A buffet was set up in the colourful Indian area, where guests could choose from key lime meringue tarts, passion fruit cream, coconut pudding, *rasmalai* (sweet ricotta squares with nuts) and knickerbocker glory.



PREVIOUS PAGE Michelle and Angad with the bride's niece, Georgia, during the Hindu blessing. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The couple were married in a civil ceremony at The Landmark. A floral arrangement in hot colours for the 'Hindu' area. Cushions for Indian-style seating. Michelle touches her in-laws' feet. As alcohol is not allowed before a Hindu blessing, guests were served fruit coolers. Table decorations included crystalware by Jasper Conran and candles in vases lined with white rose petals. Hindu sweet cakes. The bride with friends Roberta Harris and Cynthia Gabay

After dinner came the speeches, where both fathers spoke, as did the two best men, Mesh Chhibber and Karan Paul, and even Michelle was teased into standing up and thanking everyone for coming before pointing out that, for once, she didn't have anything to say. Angad rounded off the speeches by announcing that it was time to move on from the sentimentality of the day and get down to some

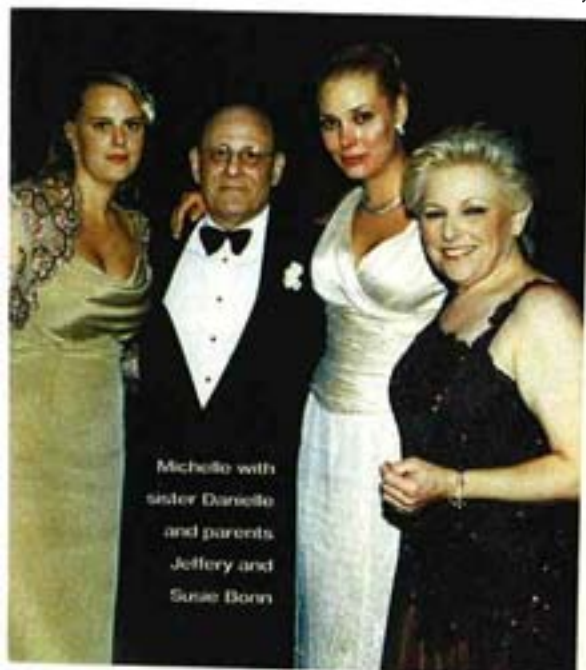
serious dancing, at which point Adam Ratzker, resident DJ at Aura nightclub in St James's, London, kicked off the evening with the newlyweds' first dance, *Never Knew Love Like This Before* by Stephanie Mills.

'We wanted to pack a lot into the day, so we were keeping to a really strict timetable,' says Michelle, 'especially because we'd invited even more friends for the party after dinner and I didn't want to run late and have them arrive halfway through the speeches. I'm so glad my sister Danielle was there, because she had such a calming effect on me, although it was me who actually held things up when I tried to find something old, new, borrowed and blue just before the civil ceremony. I kept everyone waiting a while then, which may have worried Angad a little.'

But Angad knew Michelle well enough to know she would

turn up – in fact, he's known her since she was just 17, when the pair first met at Pucci Pizza on the King's Road. 'We only started dating five years ago,' says Michelle. 'We lost touch for a long time but while I was working in Hong Kong, a friend brought up his name in conversation and it prompted me to call him. When I came back to London, we met up for a date and that was it. I don't think I left his house from that day on.'

A civil ceremony, two blessings and a lavish reception for 300 would be celebration enough for most couples, but for Michelle and Angad, their marriage was destined to turn into party central. Following the London reception, they took a few days rest in Capri before travelling on to India, where people wouldn't stop throwing parties in their honour. 'We had six nights of parties in Delhi, four nights in Udaipur in Rajasthan, and two nights in Mumbai,' recalls party-girl Michelle. 'In fact we didn't stop celebrating until the beginning of November!' ■



Michelle with sister Danielle and parents Jeffrey and Susie Bonn

AFTER A CIVIL CEREMONY, TWO BLESSINGS AND A LAVISH RECEPTION, THEY PARTIED UNTIL NOVEMBER

HOW IT WAS DONE

**THE CEREMONY** The civil ceremony took place at The Landmark (020 7631 8000), right; followed by a Hindu and a Jewish blessing in a marquee at London Zoo (020 7499 6374)



**THE RECEPTION**

Guests enjoyed hot and cold canapés borrowing from both Hindu and Jewish cuisine, followed by dinner that included a main course of sea bass or centifolia with asparagus and cauliflower ravioli. All the catering was by Alison Price & Company (020 7840 7040), who also managed the event and decorated the marquee. The marquee itself was an apex-style with transparent roof panels and glazed window panels specially made by Owen Brown (01332 650 000).

**THE CAKE** The couple decided against having a traditional wedding cake and instead sent a cake to Great Ormond Street Hospital.

**THE DRESS** Michelle's pale gold dress of beaded silk tulle over silk satin was designed by Neil Cunningham (020 7437 5703), who also created her veil.

**THE FLOWERS** Ming Veivers-Carter of Veivers-Carter Flowers (020 7237 8800) arranged the flowers in two styles, to reflect the cultures of both the bride and groom. These included simple cream and white for the bride's bouquet (below) and tables, and urns of richly coloured bougainvillea, hydrangea, orchids, geraniums, gloriosa and marigolds (a traditional flower at Indian celebrations) for the Hindu-styled seating area.

**TABLE DECORATIONS** The white table theme included crystal glassware by Jasper Conran and candles in vases lined with white rose petals.

**THE GROOM'S OUTFIT** Angad wore traditional *achkans* (the knee-length, high-collared coat) designed by a friend,



Raghuvendra Rathore, who is a fashion designer and cousin to the Maharaja of Jodhpur.

**THE BRIDESMAIDS**

Maid of honour Danielle Sekul and her daughters, Georgia and Harriet, wore dresses designed by Danielle and

made by Pacharani Couture (020 7722 0843). Angad's nieces, Anika, Ashma and Shaila, wore white dresses by Vera Wang.

**PHOTOGRAPHY** Eliana Maffei and Beatrice Raggio are based in London and Italy, and specialise in reportage and fashion-style wedding photography (00 39 010 251 8282, 07833 988 972, www.elianamaffei.it).

**THE VIDEOGRAPHER** Mickey Lee from Mediamixer (www.mediamixer.co.uk) recorded the day.

**THE BAR** The after-dinner bar was set up and run by Aura of St James's (020 7499 6655).

# LAURA BIAGINI & BENJAMIN RICHARDSON

PALAZZO TURSI, GENOA, ITALY, 27 November 2004

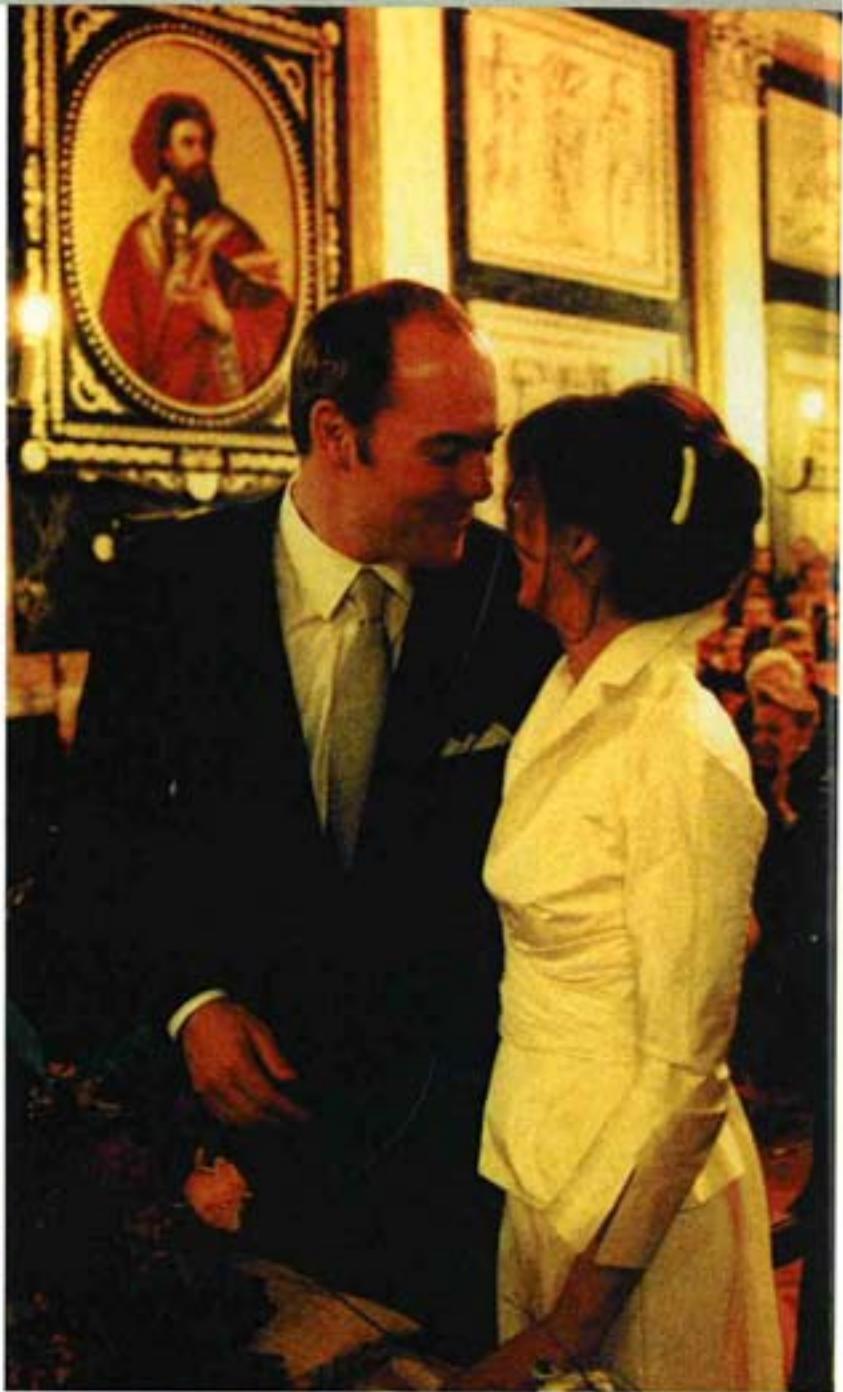
AS THE AUTUMN sunshine warmed the pavements of the Via Garibaldi in Genoa last November, bemused passers-by were treated to an impromptu procession of more than 200 people in all their finery, as Italian-born Laura and new husband Benjamin led friends and family on foot from their wedding ceremony at an aristocratic palace to their nearby reception.

'We chose a civil ceremony at the Palazzo Tursi, followed by a party at a gentleman's club on the same road,' explains Laura. 'Via Garibaldi is at the heart of historic Genoa and, as the two venues were so close, we decided to walk.' The decision was taken partly because the couple

wanted everyone to enjoy the city's beautiful architecture, and partly because many of their guests had travelled from the UK and Laura wanted to make their lives easy by booking them into hotels close by.

'At least 100 people had flown in, and most chose to arrive early or stay on for a short break afterwards – so, for quite a few days, every Ryanair or BA flight in and out of Genoa had someone on board connected to our wedding. We made sure that no one was staying more than five minutes' walk from our venues.

'After the ceremony, we gathered outside the palazzo and walked slowly along Via Garibaldi. Benjamin and I



PREVIOUS PAGE The new Mr and Mrs Richardson leave the civil ceremony at Palazzo Tursi. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Cutting the cake: the bride arrives with her father, Lorenzo. Saying 'I do' at Palazzo Tursi. Posing with friends Andrea, Chicco and Marco Salvatico. The bride with her mother, Mirella. The 16th-century Palazzo Tursi. At the reception at Circolo Artistico Tunnel, guests dined in three adjoining rooms then came together in the central room for the speeches. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP Autumnal table centres complemented the crisp cream of Laura's bouquet. Laura with family friend Pino Trotta. NEXT PAGE, MAIN PICTURE On the balcony at Palazzo Tursi







started at the front but were soon surrounded by people – not just guests, but curious onlookers who stopped to wish us well. It was very relaxed and it meant that Beatrice, our photographer, could take the natural photos we wanted.'

But while the photos went according to plan, the start of the celebration was not quite as Laura had anticipated. 'Our ceremony was at five o'clock and when I arrived, all the guests were waiting outside the venue, which was a bit unnerving. They were gathered on the first floor, looking down, and my first reaction was 'Oh, my God, what's going on?' Then everyone started clapping and I found myself greeting my guests *before* I got married. But, although I didn't make the grand entrance I'd expected, it turned out well because everyone agreed it was a nice touch.'

It's traditional in Italy for a wedding to be held near the bride's home and for Laura – who was born in Pisa but lived in Genoa for 15 years – there was no question that their celebrations would be anywhere other than Genoa. British-born Benjamin was in full agreement. 'I think guests

from the UK were surprised at the beauty of the city,' says Laura, 'I knew it was the perfect place. I had to fly back and forth a few times, which was a bit hectic, but at least I knew where to look and who to trust.'

To introduce the style of the wedding, the invitations were designed by an old firm of typographers, based in the historical centre of the city. 'We chose sepia-coloured ink and some fabulous cream paper, which was slightly rough to the touch and had an antique feel to it,' says Laura. 'The wording on one side was in Italian and came from my parents, and the other side was in English, from Benjamin's. I also found this great map of Genoa in the tourist office, rather like a little drawing, which I adapted to put with the invitations to our English guests.'

Even the old, wood-panelled patisserie the couple commissioned to make the cake was the most famous patisserie in the city. 'With the budget we had, I knew we could have the elegant wedding we wanted in Genoa,' Laura admits. 'If I had tried to do something similar in Britain I think I would have gone bankrupt!'

The couple first met nine years ago via what Laura describes as a 'sort of' blind date. 'At the time, Ben was playing rugby for the Genoa team and I was great friends with Marella Bollesan, the daughter of the coach. As Ben didn't speak any Italian then, Marella was looking for someone who spoke English to take him out for dinner and entertain him.' The rest, as they say, was history.

And it was the historical flavour of Circolo Artistico Tunnel, the gentleman's club housed

in an old palazzo, that inspired the style of their wedding reception. 'The rooms have stunning frescoes, big dramatic curtains, high ceilings and a fantastic chandelier, so we didn't want the tables to look too fancy, just elegant,' says Laura. 'We tried to create a Caravaggio style, using lots of pears, pomegranates, grapes and roses, with a candle in the centre of each table arrangement.'

Before dinner, the couple served aperitifs with local specialities, such as fried vegetables and mini focaccias, in the club's entrance hall, where the big marble stairs were candlelit and two buffet tables were decorated with dark red and orange roses and berries. 'It was very atmospheric and very autumnal,' explains Laura. 'I chose the colours carefully and we did a trial with the florists beforehand to make sure the colours were just right.'

For the dinner itself, guests were seated in three adjoining locations: the main room where the newlyweds sat, and a smaller one on either side. The big, wide doors were left open so that the arrangement still felt open-plan and every-

WE TRIED TO CREATE A CARAVAGGIO STYLE WITH PEARS, POMEGRANATES, GRAPES AND ROSES AND A CANDLE IN THE CENTRE

one could see through to the other rooms. 'People mingle before dinner and again afterwards, so in Italy it's not a big deal if everyone doesn't sit in the same room or hall to eat,' explains Laura. 'In fact, it worked well. Each room had a lovely, intimate feel to it and then everyone gathered in the central room for speeches.



IN KEEPING WITH THE STYLISH SURROUNDINGS, LAURA CHOSE AN ELEGANT TROUSER SUIT

exactly 20 any more and I always associate princess-style dresses with church weddings, and that's not what our day was about.'

Instead, she matched a cream silk taffeta jacket and trousers with a simple, stretch, net-covered corset top, and finished the look with a cashmere wrap and a bouquet of cream calla lilies. There were none of the usual deliberations over attendants' outfits, either, as bridesmaids are not a strong tradition in Italy.

'What pleased me most about our wedding was the beauty of the venues and the fact that everything was located along this one breathtaking road,' says Laura. 'I just wished that the day had passed more slowly. I didn't feel emotional so much as happy. We really wanted to get married. I know that sounds strange because obviously that's what all brides and grooms want – but, after nine years together, everything about the day just seemed totally natural.'

'Benjamin and I sat at a round table, too, because I don't like those seating plans where the bride, groom and their families all sit in a long row at a top table.'

Laura says the food itself, provided by the club restaurant, was 'unbelievable'. 'I've been to weddings where the food was nice, but not fantastic. This menu was totally fresh. In fact, we had to keep changing it according to what might be available nearer the time. For instance, the fish course wasn't confirmed until a few days before the wedding.

'We also chose a cake made of crème Chantilly with sponge strawberry and orange spirals. It was basically a light dessert, because the dinner was quite rich and we didn't want people to struggle with a heavy cake, too.'

In keeping with the surroundings, Laura chose an elegant trouser suit by Le Spose di Giò. 'I was never going to wear a dress,' she admits. 'I'm not

HOW IT WAS DONE

THE CEREMONY

Laura and Benjamin were married in a civil ceremony at the Palazzo Tursi, via Garibaldi 9, Genoa (00 39 010 557 6834), a recently restored 16th-century palace, which is home to the present-day city council.



**THE RECEPTION** The couple had dinner and a party at gentlemen's club Circolo Artistico Tunnel, via Garibaldi 5, Genoa (00 39 010 277 0069). Its rooms are decorated with frescoes and chandeliers (bottom picture). The dinner menu, by the club restaurant, included ravioli with swordfish, risotto flavoured with a dark meat sauce, grouper filets with zucchini and Sicilian-style potatoes, and slices of veal with mushrooms and vegetable flan. Dessert was rice ice cream with hot blackcurrant sauce. Glazed almonds – Italian conifetti – were arranged in trays as favours (pictured below).



THE HOTELS

Guests stayed at a variety of hotels nearby including Jolly Hotel Plaza (00 39 010 83161); Locanda di Palazzo Cicala (00 39 010 251 8824); City Hotel (00 39 010

5545); Hotel Metropoli (00 39 010 246 8888) and the Bristol Palace (00 39 010 592 541).

**THE INVITATIONS** The antique-style invitations were printed on both sides – one in Italian and one in English – by Cartoleria Cancelleria Tipografia (00 39 010 247 4558).

**THE FLOWERS** (pictured top) Laura wanted the clean lines of calla lilies to complement her elegant surroundings. Maiden Decorazioni Floreali (0039 337 316 666) arranged a classic bouquet of cream calla lilies for Laura and decorated the tables and reception hall with arrangements of autumnal orange and red roses with berries.



**THE CAKE** The five-tiered cake was made of crème Chantilly, decorated with sponge spirals flavoured with orange and strawberry, and was from a traditional patisserie in Genoa, Villa (00 39 010 277 0002).

**THE OUTFIT** Laura chose a trousers suit: a cream silk taffeta trouser suit and top were by Italian bridal design house Le Spose di Giò, 81 Ebury Street, London SW1 (020 7901 9020, www.le-spose-di-gio.it) and her shoes and cashmere shawl were by Arianna (00 39 010 562 559).

**THE PHOTOGRAPHY** Elana Maffei and Beatrice Raggio are based in London and Italy, and specialise in reportage and fashion-style wedding photography (00 39 010 251 8282, 07833 988 972, www.elanamaffei.it).