

She's in **FASHION**

Renowned bridal designer Charlotte Balbier – known for her love of glamour and all things pink – poured her creative expertise into her all-out gorgeous day

Photography | Polly Alexandre





If there's a gene for grade-A wedding styling, then Charlotte Balbier and her family have definitely got it. She's the third generation in a fashion dynasty that began in the Sixties at her grandparents' bridal boutique in Manchester and continued with her mum, the award-winning designer Amanda Wyatt. Today, brides flock to Charlotte for her glamorous aesthetic and love of intricate beadwork, lace and embroidery – but it was her wedding to fiancé Edward (Teddy) Bedford this past December that proved to be her biggest career challenge to date.

"Designing my own wedding dress was one of the hardest things I've ever done," Charlotte admits. "I changed my mind several times and had more than 15 styles that were nearly 'The One.'" In the end, she went for 'The Two' – a diaphanous ceremony dress and Old Hollywood-inspired evening gown. Add to that original designs for each of her eight bridesmaids, and it's clear that Charlotte worked hard to earn her "amazing, magical, romantic" celebration at Iscoyd Park in Shropshire. Here, she shares what she's learned about dream dresses and big-day styling from the experience...

I knew I'd found The One when I didn't want to take it off. A silk-organza ballgown skirt with French lace trim and three-quarter-length sleeves made me instantly feel like 'me'.

My evening gown was all very last minute. I only found the lace for it two months before the wedding! I named the dress 'Iscoyd Park' and my day gown is called 'the Charlotte'; both will be in my 2015 collection.

I want to look back years from now and still think my dresses are fresh and elegant. I have always adored Grace

Kelly's wedding style, and even today her gown is relevant and beautiful, so she was my inspiration.

Accessories can transform your look. After our church ceremony, I traded my cathedral-length veil for an Art Deco-inspired hair band that complemented my engagement ring. In the evening, I put my hair up and added an ivory and gold hair flower by my mum, Amanda Wyatt.

Always stay true to you. When it came to hair and make-up, I just wanted to look like the very best version of myself.

For the bridesmaids, I went for red-carpet ready, Oscars style. They wore midnight blue chiffon but I made sure all the designs were very different. I wanted each dress to be glamorous and also perfect for their figure, style and personality.

My flowergirls were little fairytale princesses. I designed their silk dresses with big tulle skirts, then accessorised with bows in their hair and marabou capes. Like me, their dresses had a sash with an oversized, hand-tied bow. Instead of floral bouquets, they carried white bunny bears from The White Company.

We even used wedding-dress material to decorate the venue! Every table and chair was covered in a fabric from the Charlotte Balbier and Amanda Wyatt collections – with lots of sequins and lace (the theme was glamour, after all).

I'll be honest, the reception styling was mostly me. But I'm lucky, because Teddy absolutely loved every detail and the colours I chose: golds, pinks, metallics and ivory.

We planned little surprises for guests throughout the day. Along with the orders of service, we handed out 'kissing bells' (when guests ring them, the couple is meant to kiss!). And we had our own mixologist and bespoke cocktails: The Buster Bear, dedicated to our dog; The Tilly Woo, for my parents' dog; and The Bedbier, a combo of Teddy's surname and mine, and the nickname our friends use for us.

I put the groom in charge of lighting and entertainment. Teddy's passionate about live music and booked a band playing gypsy-style music for the day and early evening. Later in the evening, he managed to get DJ Graeme Park, from The Hacienda in Manchester. We started dancing at 6pm and didn't finish until 1am – the atmosphere was electric! ▶





SEEK & FIND
Seating details were printed on escort cards and hung from a wishing tree. Rose and Ruby Paper Co designed all the stationery.



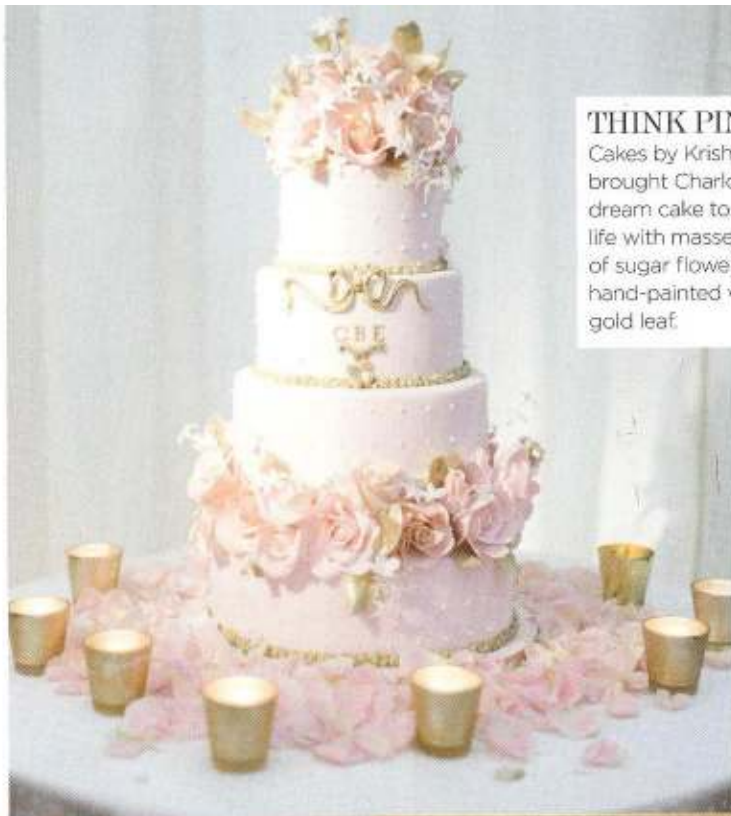
“The marquee was lit with hundreds of candles - it was really romantic.”



SWEET DREAMS

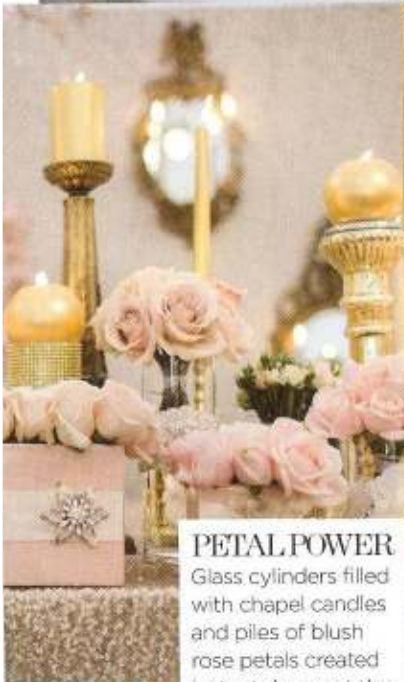
A dedicated dessert room held brownies, sorbets, Eton mess shots and other treats by Vanilla In Allseasons, plus cake pops and biscuits by Freya's Fancies.





THINK PINK

Cakes by Krishanthi brought Charlotte's dream cake to life with masses of sugar flowers hand-painted with gold leaf.



PETAL POWER

Glass cylinders filled with chapel candles and piles of blush rose petals created instant drama at the venue's entrance.



THE DREAM TEAM

Photography alexandreweddings.com

Bride's and bridesmaids' dresses

charlottebalbier.com

Bride's accessories

amandawyatt.com,

charlottebalbier.com,

rainbowclub.co.uk,

belovedbridal.co.uk,

vintagestyler.co.uk,

jimmychoo.com, freyarose.com

Venue iscoydpark.com

Planner london-bride.com

Flowers redfloral.co.uk

Stationery roseandrubbypaperco.com

Cake cakesbykrishanthi.co.uk