

WEDDING OF THE YEAR 2009

The winners!

Congratulations to Melissa and Dominic Pepper, who, thanks to your votes, won the grand final. Here's a snapshot of the fabulous day that earned them the Wedding of the Year title. *Images by Tara Lee Photography*

It all began when Melissa and Dominic crossed paths on a night out in London. "We'd spied each other in a bar one evening on Regent Street, but we went our own ways without talking to each other," recalls Melissa. "Much later that night I was leaving another bar and bumped into him on the street. He helped me and my very drunk friend Hayley – who was later to become my bridesmaid – on to a bus and asked me to text him to let him know we'd got home safely. After a couple of months we arranged a date: ice skating at Alexandra Palace.

"I fell in love with Dom because of his sense of fun," she continues. "Our first dates included trips to the zoo, visits to museums and a 'magical mystery tour' to Brighton, which he organised himself."

Dominic can pinpoint exactly when he fell in love with Melissa: "It was over two dates," he says. "The first was when we were eating chocolate crêpes on Brighton beach, just after a kiss on the pier. The second was during an afternoon at Colchester zoo, Melissa surrounded by goats!"

After four years Dominic decided to pop the question. "We were on holiday in Thailand, and it was Valentine's Day," says Melissa. "We'd just finished dinner on the beach when Dom disappeared for 20 minutes. Then, champagne, red roses and a quartet of singers appeared, and he got down on one knee and pulled out a gorgeous ring. I was over the moon and of course I said yes immediately."

The couple set a date, and began to plan a fabulous '50s-style wedding at Gaynes Park...



The bride: Melissa Wagstaff, 30, police research analyst
The groom: Dominic Pepper, 28, police officer
The date: 7th March, 2009
The venue: Gaynes Park

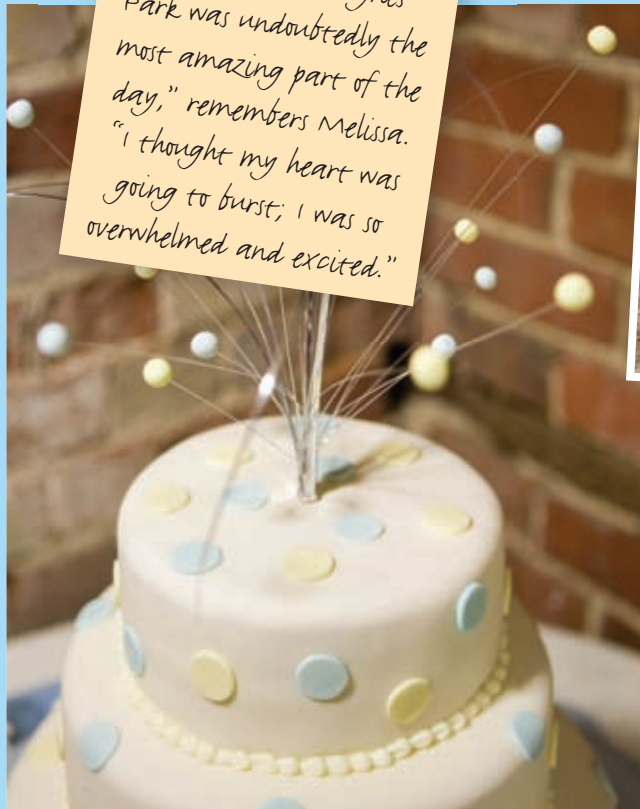


The flowers were all artificial, and had a vintage look. The bouquets were ivory roses with pearls, and were finished off with an ivory frilly trim.



As a surprise on the morning of the wedding, Melissa hired a 1967 GT500 Mustang for Dominic.

"Seeing Dominic beaming at me as I walked up the beautiful open air 'garden path' aisle at Gaynes Park was undoubtedly the most amazing part of the day," remembers Melissa. "I thought my heart was going to burst; I was so overwhelmed and excited."

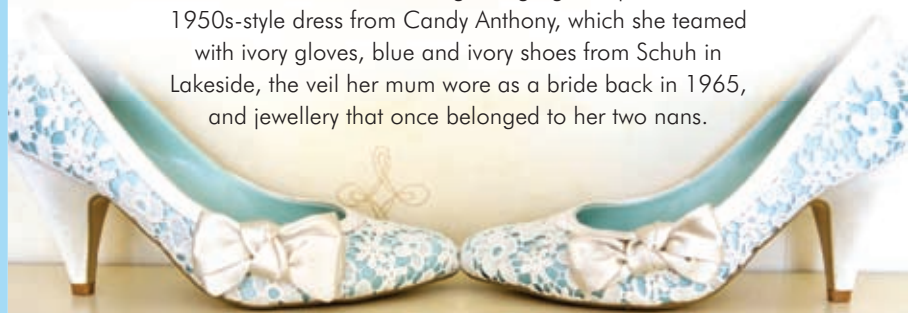


The three-tiered cake was made by a family friend and featured lemon and blue polka dots.



Melissa's five bridesmaids all wore champagne-coloured prom dresses from Debenhams. The six-year-old flowergirl wore an ivory dress and faux fur bolero, also from Bhs.

The bride looked stunning in a gorgeous pale blue 1950s-style dress from Candy Anthony, which she teamed with ivory gloves, blue and ivory shoes from Schuh in Lakeside, the veil her mum wore as a bride back in 1965, and jewellery that once belonged to her two nans.



All you need is love

The tables were named after Beatles classics

"I was gobsmacked at how beautiful Melissa looked," says Dominic. "I felt like the luckiest man in the world. The majority of my male friends also commented on her beautiful dress, which I thought was quite funny from a bunch of rough and tough policemen!"

"For our favours, we had pin badges supporting the Breakthrough Breast Cancer and Marie Curie Cancer Care," says Melissa. "A number of our family and friends have been affected by cancer so it was a fitting tribute to them."



CONTACTS

Photographer: Tara Lee Photography
www.taraleephoto.com
Venue: Gaynes Park
www.gaynespark.co.uk
Bride's dress: Candy Anthony
www.candyanthony.com
Transport: Eleanor Hire
www.eleanorhire.co.uk
Disco/toastmaster: DJ Clay's Mobile Disco
www.djclay.co.uk
Centrepieces: Balloonarama
 01279 639 564

The groom wore a navy three-piece suit with a pale blue tie, all from TM Lewin. "He also wore some very shiny shoes, which I thought looked like tap shoes," laughs Melissa.

