



Flower girls – Chloe and Kerry Jennings



The Bride with (*from left*): chief bridesmaid Giselle Gimblett flower girls Chloe and Kerry Jennings, the father of the bride, Eamon Jennings and bridesmaids Jemma Jennings and Klara Lethbridge



Karla and Russell met seven years ago in London where they were both living and working at the time.

Karla explains: "I was house-sharing with one of Russell's best friends (David, who was the best man at the wedding). Russell had just come back to England after travelling and I thought he was really interesting and 'worldly'. We were friends for a few months but I realised that I liked him as more than just a friend when I saw him talking to another girl in a bar. I got a bit jealous and realised I needed to do something about it. Luckily for me, he made the first move at a house-party three months later (as I still hadn't plucked up the courage). That was in July 2000 in Kennington, London (in the house I shared with the best man)."

So what brought them to Malta?

"We were tired of London and wanted a change of scenery, however we needed to stay in Europe due to Russell's work (he needs to be in a European time zone). Malta was an easy first-step for us as it's English speaking and we liked it so much that we stayed."

They had discussed getting married and then Russell surprised her with a proposal over dinner at The Xara Palace. "That is why The Xara Palace was such a special place for us to get married."

Russ takes up the story: "After we had discussed getting married I had to wait a while so



The bride with her father, Eamon Jennings

that Karla would think that I had forgotten, and I could surprise her properly. We were having a nice dinner and I thought – "It's now or never!" I didn't have a ring at that point because I knew that Karla, being a designer herself, would have strong opinions over what she would like. Well, she does have to wear it for the rest of her life after all. It would have been fun to do the whole down-on-one-knee thing or perhaps get the waiter to serve up the ring in one of those big presentation dishes but really it felt like it should be a private thing between us and not a public spectacle."

The Xara Palace was obviously their first choice of venue and they were delighted to be able to married there. Apart from having a special attachment to the hotel due to the engagement they also wanted to be able to

wow their non-Maltese guests with the location.

"We were looking for something typically Maltese and historical, and Mdina is both! We felt that once we had booked The Xara Palace, it set the tone for the day. We tried to strike a balance between a contemporary wedding to suit our personalities, with an appreciation for the ambience and grandeur of Mdina and the Palazzo. We built the day around the beautiful location; even our outfits were influenced by Mdina. The dress became slightly more formal than envisaged and the colours on the day were picked to fit in with the surrounding limestone walls, gold, beige and brown - we used pinks in the flowers to contrast and keep the colour scheme fresh. We wanted a modern wedding but also to be respectful to the importance of the event and surroundings," the couple said.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK CASSAR