



Real Life Wedding Story

# East meets west

By Taeko and David Hill (nee Hambrook-Tofts)

Sometimes nature gets in the way of the best laid plans

Photography: David Morphew

**THE MEETING...** I went to visit a friend in London in autumn 2006 and it was in a bar one evening that I met David. He quite rightly thought I was a little bit Japanese and tried to impress me with his visit to Japan the previous year, but his chat-up line was shattered when I found out that he didn't go for the culture or on business but to support Liverpool FC! I teased him for the whole evening and our relationship blossomed from there.

**THE PROPOSAL...** David proposed after Liverpool FC lost to AC Milan in May 2007 – I guess he had nothing else to lose! I think I added to his misery though as after he popped the question I was silent as it had come out of the blue, so a very nervous David added a shy 'please?' which melted my heart – how could I refuse? He phoned my parents in Japan the next morning to ask for my dad's permission and we immediately set the date for August 10, 2008. We chose my platinum solitaire round-cut diamond engagement ring together from Tiffany's, which is also where we purchased our wedding rings.

**THE PLANNING...** Once David managed to establish what kind of venue I wanted, he found The Kingscote Barn in Tetbury and it took our breath away when we arrived to view it. Knowing there was no other venue for us we booked it for the following summer. Then, in January 2008, when we returned from a friend's wedding in California I became ill with what I thought was a sickness bug; it wasn't and I discovered I was pregnant. David was over the moon, however I was a little shocked and it meant we had to make some swift decisions – the most important being bringing the wedding date forward. I called The Kingscote Barn immediately and they were so helpful in rescheduling our date which was made even trickier by the fact I am a



teacher and our big day needed to be in the school Easter holidays. We settled on March 27, 2008, which actually worked out well as my parents were coming to the UK the day before for my brother's wedding on the 29th!

I had already ordered my dress but I had to check if it was possible to have it made in just nine weeks, and my beautiful antique kimono silk shoes were handmade especially quickly by Hetty Rose. Even the caterer we'd booked was available on our new date. It seemed as though all of the important things magically fell into place!

**THE DETAILS...** Due to the much shorter timescale, our budget changed dramatically, so it was lucky I wanted everything fresh and simple, mainly to avoid stress and the potential for things to go wrong! We decided on a Japanese theme based around the colour yellow



because of my car, Kiki, a yellow Suzuki Ignis!

I wanted the theme carried across everything from the bouquets and floral arrangements to the favours and table settings. I ordered our invites online from the USA and was amazed when they arrived later that week. We chose a simple Japanese-style card with three embossed characters meaning love, peace and happiness, and I ordered two Japanese-style scrolls with the same characters to decorate the pillars. I found a Japanese website where I ordered Darumas – good luck dolls – for our favours and the supplier even painted them yellow and added our wedding date at no extra charge.

Although the colour theme was yellow, I chose a more appropriate brown taffeta dress with a light yellow ribbon from Coast for my two bridesmaids, Lorna and Sarah, and I matched them with brown peep-toe spotty shoes from Poetic License. They also wore cream shrugs from Monsoon and David had a local vintage jewellery maker create shell pendant roses on ribbon for them to wear as necklaces.

David, his dad Peter (who was also his best man), my father and the ushers wore vintage kimono silk ties and yellow rose buttonholes. My bouquet was a simple yellow spray of roses and gypsophila; my bridesmaids had smaller versions of the same bouquet and the flower girls carried daisies.

**THE DRESS...** I wore my dream dress: 'Liz Taylor' by

Candy Anthony. I love vintage fashion and because I was getting married in a barn, I didn't want to have a floor length gown with a train. I fell in love with the dress the moment I tried it on and I was doubly pleased because there were many elements that still made it flattering even though I was getting a little bump! It was so comfortable and really set the tone for the day because I was able to move freely yet still feel very special.

**THE DAY...** When I woke, I was surprised I didn't feel tired despite staying up into the early hours with my youngest brother making origami cranes for the name places. Everyone left for the venue and I followed behind in my car with my two bridesmaids. Driving was pretty difficult because my dress had loads of netting and the veil kept getting in the way, but it would have been wrong to go to the venue in another vehicle! A friend played our chosen music on an ipod, all of which were simple Japanese songs except the one we walked down the aisle as man and wife to, Elvis Presley's version of 'You'll Never Walk Alone'.

At our reception each table was named after a type of sushi rather than numbered. David and I were delighted to find that because we didn't have a huge number of guests, everyone mingled really well and I think it was a great idea not to have a top table as it was easy for us to talk to everyone. Our caterer made us a very simple three tier carrot cake, with cream cheese icing and it was topped with two origami cranes made from



I'll never forget seeing David's wedding ring shining on his finger and how different I thought he looked with it on