

Leigh & Mark

19 DECEMBER 15



CEREMONY
Coniston Chapel

RECEPTION
Parkfields Farm

PHOTOGRAPHER
Sarah Clements Photography



Romance, History & Love

Mark Shera surprised partner of eighteen months, Leigh Chalmers, with a romantic proposal during a holiday in Mexico. The couple had spent time in the UK, where Leigh met Mark's parents for the first time, then catching up with Leigh's family for a Mexican holiday. "On our second to last night Mark arranged a romantic dinner for us both, at an amazing open-air restaurant, overlooking Acapulco Bay, he proposed in the restaurant's look-out area!"

Not quite eighteen months later, Leigh and Mark exchanged vows in front of their families and friends, in the beautiful chapel at Coniston in Mid Canterbury. The venue had personal significance for Leigh. Formerly the Flemington church, it was where she had been christened and her great-grandfather is on its war honour roll. "When he went to war, he was gifted a bible from the Flemington church, which my sisters did a reading from during our wedding ceremony."

Leigh wore an exquisite, romantic wedding gown, designed for her by a Wellington designer. While on a girls' weekend in the capital, Leigh and her friends discovered a bridal boutique, and Leigh "instantly fell in love" with the vintage, soft, romantic, lace and silk style. "They helped me design my perfect dress and the numerous trips to Wellington for the fittings added to the excitement of it all." The end result was stunning, in true romantic style. Leigh's bridesmaids wore gorgeous turquoise, knee-length dresses, matching the ties of the groom and his groomsmen, striking in black and grey.

Photos were taken at the chapel and in the surrounding gardens. They moved on to Leigh's parent's property, Parkfields Farm, for more photos,





where all enjoyed an "English Garden Party". Beautiful homemade treats featured, catered by Leigh's mother and sister (who also created the delicious supper, served later that night). "We cut our amazing wedding cake in the afternoon, so this was served along with the afternoon tea, which worked fantastically." Family and group shots were taken in her parent's garden, with the bridal party then travelling to the nearby beach and cliffs for further photos. Linseed and radish crops were flowering, adding "amazing colour" to the images.

The farm's old granary shed was transformed for the reception, with fresh flowers, fairy lights, lanterns and silver candelabras. "It took a lot of work ... but it exceeded our expectations ... Mark's pride and joy was the bar, which he made himself from two very old wooden wool presses found in a shed on the farm, and a beautiful slab of macrocarpa he spent many hours sanding, oiling and varnishing!"

The newlyweds and their 110 guests enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner – featuring ham, lamb and beef that had all been produced on the family farm and supplied to the caterers – dancing the night away to a





Tip of the day

Keep a clear idea of what you want and what is important to you for your wedding day – it is so easy to get overwhelmed with ideas on the likes of Pinterest and from other people.

great band. The new Mr and Mrs Shera are planning a honeymoon to Cambodia and Vietnam mid-year, "three weeks of adventure, history, sun and relaxation".

Leigh says they did have a rough budget but didn't do very well sticking to it. "Our excuse was that we are only doing this once so let's have our dream wedding!" ■



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