

HEAVENLY DAY

It seems fate took a hand in reuniting Madeleine Crewe-Read and her childhood sweetheart Sam Sangster

WORDS BECKY DONALDSON

By the time Madeleine Crewe-Read returned to London after marrying childhood sweetheart Sam Sangster (a horse racing bloodstock agent), she'd clocked up a fair few air miles. Jet-set wedding trips included a three-stop honeymoon, dress fittings in Tel Aviv and pre-ceremony recce trips to Barbados before the wedding.

The five-day event, almost a year after Sam proposed on the same Caribbean island, peaked with their wedding at Nikki Beach and included a drinks party at the Sandy Lane Hotel, a boat trip for 200 family members and friends – with dancing and “who can play music the loudest” contests – a girls’ lunch for Maddy’s closest friends and a ‘white party’ on the beach, the day after their ceremony.

“By the end of the week I was left thinking, ‘I don’t want any more attention, I’m done’,” jokes a bashful Maddy when we meet near her family’s jewellery business in south-west London – her day job, which she fits around teaching yoga.

The ‘white party’, which

was attended by the couple’s society friends, received some attention in the press when pictures from her Instagram account were run in a newspaper. “I didn’t just take my wedding clothes off and put a bikini on, that was the next day, and we had this – quite naff but amazing – party on the beach.

“Everyone wore white and most people were in bikinis because we were swimming. We had inflatable white swans in the pool – the kind of thing you see on *The Only Way Is Essex* – but really fun. And one of my friends who goes to Burning Man [festival] loaned me a huge bright-green headdress with feathers.”

Being a yoga instructor, Maddy was already in shape, but like most brides wanted to make sure she looked her best for her big day. “I started going to the gym six months before the wedding and I did see muscles appearing on my arms,” she explains. “But I wouldn’t be able to sustain that level of commitment after the wedding, so I reverted to just yoga. I also don’t like to worry too much about what I eat. My ring is being resized because I’ve put on weight since the wedding,” she laughs.

Although the event was grandiose in many ways, Maddy sought to make some money-saving choices, such as designing her own invitations (“I didn’t want them to be too fussy”), doing her own make-up (“I know my face better than anyone, so ▶

TOP TO BOTTOM
The couple
partied on the
beach with
family and friends;
confetti flew
as they left the
church; making
their vows







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Madeleine dances with the carnival dancers; Sam and Madeleine with their bridesmaids; the wedding ceremony; drummers from the Barbados Police band; the wedding was set on Nikki Beach; Madeleine hitches a lift from her groom to save her Liz Martinez dress OPPOSITE The clean blue and white decor at the venue complemented the stunning Barbadian beach location



I just bought a load of Charlotte Tilbury”) and to her friends’ surprise they didn’t hire a wedding planner, but they did get by with a little help from their parents.

FIRST DATE

“We went out for about a year and a half when I was 16 and he was 17 and then Sam moved to Australia and I went to live there just as he was coming back. I moved back to London when I was 28 and after only a week or so I bumped into his sister, who is a friend of mine, and she said, ‘You should call Sam, he’s single and living in the country’. So I got in touch and we were together for three years and now we are married. I just knew I’d end up marrying him the second time around – there was no reason we broke up the first time, we were just young.”

PROPOSAL

“When we were on holiday in Barbados he took me to a beautiful spot that overlooks the sea. Then he said, ‘This has always been my favourite view; and it is about to become even more important,’ then got down on one knee. Sam has been going to Barbados since he was small and it holds a very special place in his heart. He’s good friends with a lot of the locals who have known him forever, so it’s like home for him.”

BUTTERFLIES

“When Sam proposed, butterflies began circling around and since then we have seen them in the weirdest places. Just before the wedding, we had a lunch for my granny who was too old to travel and two butterflies appeared at the table – and we were eating inside. People say that they are spiritual. We had a butterfly theme at the wedding on the invitations and menus and gave everyone butterfly bracelets that we made specially.”

THE SERVICE

“On the day Sam proposed, he already had the wedding largely planned out in his head. He’d already found the church – it was just down the beach from the venue and perfect. So I went from not being engaged to suddenly speaking to the vicar – that same day! He was so sweet and a little hard of hearing; he kept calling Sam, Tom. He also forgot to mention the rings during the service and told everyone that he loved me. His microphone kept buzzing with static so he said he’d ‘have a word with God’ to sort it out. He was a real joker.”

THE DRESS

“I’d been looking in London, but actually didn’t think I was a wedding dress person. I didn’t ‘wow’ about anything until I went to a place in Islington called Angelica Bridal. They stock a designer called Liz Martinez, but they only had three of her dresses, so I thought on the off-chance I’d get in touch with her in Israel [where the brand is based] to find out where else they are stocked. And they said, ‘Why don’t you just come here?’ So I went dress shopping in Tel Aviv with my ex flatmate. It is the

most amazing place. My friends were like, ‘Why can’t you find a dress in England?’. I met Liz herself, and tried on all these dresses and she said, ‘No, you’re having that one’, so I didn’t argue with that.”

JEWELLERY

“Mum was really amazing in helping me source all the jewellery from

the suppliers at Heavenly Necklaces [Madeleine’s family-run company], including silver citrine butterflies on a blue thread with ‘S’ and ‘M’ engraved inside the wings for the bridesmaids (the ushers had pins with the same design). I wore a bracelet my grandpa had given to my granny and its nautical flags spell out, ‘I will lie beside you tonight’. My granny died soon after our honeymoon and we were very close. I felt like she was with me when I wore the bracelet, so it became even more important.”

THE BRIDESMAIDS

“I had six bridesmaids who wore lace-top white dresses from NA-KD [an online shop that’s great for inexpensive bulk-buy dresses]. I also had one male bridesmaid. He took one of the same dresses that the girls were wearing and had it made into a waistcoat. In the morning they all came to our house with Champagne, fruit and pastries. While we were eating and drinking together in the sea, three tiny newly-hatched turtles appeared on the beach beside us and we helped them into the water. I think it was a good omen!”

WEDDING PLANNING

“We did it all ourselves. But we did have Sam’s mum to help us and she was amazing – she knows the island really well and did loads of touches, like wanting the entire church to smell of jasmine. She also organised carnival dancers, which I didn’t know about until it happened, they followed us down the beach to the venue after the

ceremony. And before we sat down to we had fire dancers and a Barbados P band, which again she organised. Also a gospel choir called ‘the first choral B choir’ and a band we danced to into the night called Brando. My parents were amazing and supportive. Mum allowed to take endless time off work to fly to to get my dress fitted. She also helped with the stationery, guest list and – of course – the jewellery. We actually couldn’t have done it without the help of our parents.”

TABLESCAPES

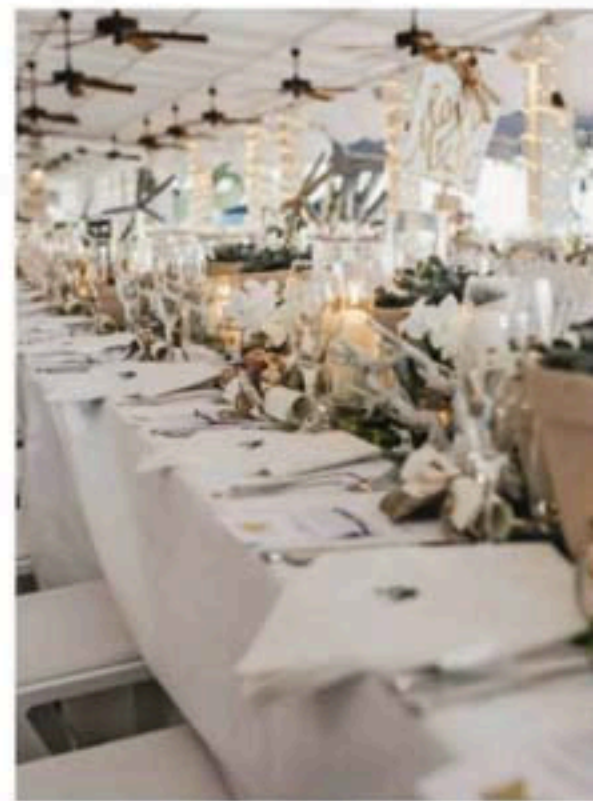
“That was also Sam’s mum. She has such good taste. The colour scheme was blue and white, so quite Cuban looking. We had white driftwood tables, white candles and she hung lanterns from the ceiling. Even the events manager at The Lone Star restaurant said she’d never seen it look so beautiful.”

FOOD AND DRINK

“People could choose from a menu, which included coconut prawns, crispy sea bass or seared beef – it was delicious. We wanted to keep all the produce local, so we didn’t serve any Champagne, but rum punch instead. We also had an espresso Martini bar, as Sam loves them. We were going with a rum cake but we had invited a couple of guests who don’t drink so we decided to go down a more traditional route. Besides, there was enough rum everywhere and we wanted our guests to be standing by the time the dancing started.”

HONEYMOON

“We actually went on a honeymoon as well. I said to Sam, ‘We don’t need to go anywhere else, this is quite enough!’ I didn’t know where we were going, nobody told me. We ended up in Mexico, Panama for two days and then Costa Rica. So three really cool places.” ■



‘I WENT FROM NOT BEING ENGAGED TO SUDDENLY SPEAKING TO THE VICAR - THAT SAME DAY!’