

YVONNE DESIGNS 'POSH' WEDDING DRESS FOR KAREN McDONALD

Cheshire designer, Yvonne Gillon has created the ultimate exclusive wedding gown which will transform Coronation Street's Karen McDonald ready for her Posh and Becks style wedding to Steve.

For Yvonne, based in Marple, Cheshire, this has not only been a fantastic opportunity to showcase Northwest talent, but also to demonstrate that she is a people designer, working in close partnership to help fulfill clients' wishes and in this case to help Suranne Jones aka Karen realise her dreams.

"Obviously, we had to consider the storyline and the character that Suranne plays," said Yvonne. "Initially, I thought that Karen would opt for something wacky and we approached Granada with one of my previous designs - a soft white kid leather gown featuring Swarovski crystal zips, but surprisingly she wanted a traditional wedding gown created by a designer."

Yvonne continued,

"Even though the brief was for a traditional gown, I wanted to incorporate a quirky element into the design, which we were actually able to do because they wanted to use red in the theme. I also had to look at Suranne's body shape and decide what was going to suit her and flatter her wonderful figure. However, I know that television distorts size and my main criteria in designing is to make people look slim, tall and elegant.

The design, in champagne duchess silk satin, complements Suranne's olive colouring superbly. The boned bodice gives a slim-line figure which comes down to a curve over the tummy and has a small collar which folds over the neckline. The skirt has most of the fullness built into the back with a layer of French lace scalloped from the side seams to form a train at the back so that the appliqued tulle cascades over the silk satin. The integration of red into the theme was a bit difficult because Yvonne had to ensure that it wasn't tacky. Although the gown was for Karen McDonald, it also had to reflect Yvonne Gillon so red and cream silk flowers were put together in a cluster and draped on the front of the gown. Red shoes were also added to give a completely different look. The sleeves veer away from tradition and are a unique feature. Styled in lace they are completely separate from the dress, just slipping onto the upper arms, rather like a fingerless glove, but with a cascading frill at the wrist.

"We decided to go for something extraordinary - as Suranne has lovely shoulders, we needed to show them off and this did the trick! The first impression of the gown is pure silk satin elegance, but as the whole picture emerges, you then see the fabulous French appliqued tulle." said Yvonne.

The headdress 'garnet and pearl boughs' is courtesy of **Sarah Fitzgerald at Euphoria Couture Ltd**, Preesall, Lancashire and is handmade from antique coloured crystals and vintage faux pearls.

Yvonne added,

"I contacted Sarah and asked if she had a red tiara which I knew would not only continue the red theme but at the same time, look elegant. They sent us one which is superb along with some beads used in the tiara which we sewed very discretely onto the veil and the lace on the gown. Although Suranne had originally wanted a long veil, I managed to persuade her that a waist length one would reveal more of the exquisite lace at the back of the gown."

The ultimate challenge was for Yvonne and her team of six to complete the dress in two weeks from initial design to final fitting to ensure that it was ready for the start of filming at the beginning of January.



"It was quite stressful, particularly trying to include the fittings and work around Suranne's schedule," said Yvonne. "Although I've designed for celebrities before, this is the first time that I have worked for television. I have to admit to feeling nervous prior to the screening, but I know Suranne looks good and at the final fitting I knew it was right because I could smile without trying. The gown is so feminine, quite a contrast to Karen's character and when she eventually put on the finished ensemble, Suranne's absolute true beauty shone through. What makes it all worthwhile is that Suranne is so happy. She said - I love it, absolutely love it!"