

A full-length photograph of a smiling bride with blonde hair, wearing a white strapless wedding dress and holding a bouquet of red and pink flowers. She is standing on a wooden deck outdoors. The background is slightly blurred, showing greenery and a stone wall.

# Astra

## Featured Bride

*Bonnie Frankland*  
*married Steve Bradley*

**BACKGROUND TO THE WEDDING:** Steve and I had successfully put off getting married for some time. Getting together at such a young age we had the perfect excuse for avoiding the normal peer pressure as I was only 16 when we met and no one expects it to last! I really didn't have any burning desire to get married. I knew Steve was the one, and I was confident in our commitment to each other, but I just couldn't see myself in a white dress going through all the formalities. Instead we prioritised travelling overseas, and buying a house. I'd actually become very staunch in my belief that we'd happily be "boyfriend & girlfriend for life". Naturally I had to eat my words. But it's a lady's prerogative to change her mind...

**TELL US ABOUT THE PROPOSAL:** Steve and I had gone away with a big group of friends to Kai Iwi Lakes for the weekend. We'd spent a great day at the lake, with a fair few drinks, sunshine and good company we were both in a happy (and pretty tipsy) place. We snuck away for a bit of a snog and then Steve suddenly got all serious on me and proposed! When we came back to the group Steve turned off the music and announced our engagement – our friends went nuts!



**HOW DID YOU KNOW YOUR GROOM WAS “THE ONE?”** Because no one makes me laugh more than Steve, it also helps that I am ridiculously attracted to him. I love the contradiction of a gruff kiwi bloke with tattoos who is so incredibly sweet and loving.

**WHAT WAS THE FEELING YOU WANTED FOR YOUR WEDDING DAY?** I really wanted it to feel relaxed. The whole idea of standing up in front of friends and family made me feel really awkward. I wanted it to have that big family reunion feel where there are kids, bare feet, beer and a bbq. No formalities; no overt religious tone. I wanted people to feel involved and loved.

**THE PHOTOGRAPHER:** I was so lucky to find the photographer I did. In hindsight I chose rather haphazardly, picking the first local guy that was recommended. It was pure luck that I got someone as awesome as Aaron. The fact that you got a full set of high resolution images on CD so you can print however many you want at any time is brilliant (and surprisingly not the norm!) What was extra special, was Aaron's suggestion to try something a little “different”. So... at 5.30am on my wedding day I was at Long Bay Beach, knee deep in water, in nothing but my veil, arms raised to the dawning sun. A pretty cold but incredibly way to start a special day. I will remember it forever and although it was a bit daunting Aaron was absolutely professional and made me relax within seconds. I treasure those photos so much.



**CATERING:** We actually did “Bring a plate” (instead of gifts) to help us accommodate so many guests and keep the costs down. We brought in ‘Broncos’ (a spit roast company) to cook and carve a lamb and a pig on a spit. The rest of the guests took it upon themselves to deliver one of the “predefined” salads, nibbles or desserts and it was divine! As Steve said in his speech, “If you don’t like the food, you’ve only got yourselves to blame!”

**WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT?** I think it was just at the end of the photo session when my little sister, Jess, and I were wading back across the creek. We were laughing so hard, trying to stay dry and relaxed because the photo session was over and we were headed to the party. It was a great moment of just pure fun, enjoyment and dresses!

**WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IF YOU DID IT AGAIN?** I would order more booze! We actually ran out on the day but luckily my MC and a sober driver came to the rescue and did a mad dash to the local Liquor King.

**WHAT WOULD YOU GIVE AS ADVICE OR RECOMMEND TO OTHER BRIDES?** Remember to bring a pre-prepared picnic for the bridal party for the post wedding photo shoot! Bubbles, nibbles whatever you need to keep the smiles and energy levels up.

**WERE THERE ANY DISASTERS?** I really wanted an outdoor reception. I was adamant that having marquees on my parents’ front lawn was going to be fine. However, I wish I had listened to my friends who encouraged me to reconsider. The stress as I got closer and closer to the big day, thinking about how much money I had invested in the event, and that could all be ruined and wasted by an unexpectedly cold or wet night had me freaked. In the end I caved and luckily found a great local venue that was available. I could have saved myself a lot of pain had I not been so stubborn.





**THE GOWN:** When did you try on the gown? Was it the first/last or somewhere in the middle? I thought I really knew what kind of dress I wanted. Very low key, something soft, floaty and white that was part beach dress, part cocktail. Mum came with me for one designated “try on” day and I tried on about eight that were all lovely and fitted the bill perfectly. I then popped into Astra and didn’t think any of their designs would suit. Oh how wrong I was! I only went to two stores in the end and managed it all on one day!

**WHO CHOSE IT FOR YOU?** It was actually Lori, the company director of Astra Bridal, based at the Takapuna branch who suggested I try it on. I had reluctantly gone into the fitting room with a few dresses just for fun and Lori grabbed a few more. I liked the fact that the owners are also very hands on with the clients.

**WHAT MADE THE GOWN SPECIAL FOR YOU? WHY DID YOU CHOOSE IT?** It was the exact image of what I thought a classic wedding gown would look like. It was literally, straight out of my subconscious. For me it was all about unfussy detailing and smooth clean lines. I put it on, and although it was the absolute antithesis of what I thought I wanted for my day – it made me feel amazing. I got a flutter in my heart and I knew it was love at first sight.

**WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT NOW?** I decided to sell the dress so that someone else can have as much pleasure out of it as I did. It was FAR too pretty spend the rest of its life in the wardrobe! Plus I never want to have “that day” in the future where I go to try it on and no longer fit it! No thank you! So instead I am selling it on Trade Me and donating the money to charity.

## Bonnie’s dream team

**Gown:** Astra Bridal - Astra Design

**Bridesmaid Dresses:** Black Multi-dress by nzgl.

**Mens Suits:** Frank Casey Suit Hire. (Black shirts & black pants.)

**Hair:** Rodney Wayne, Albany Westfield.

**Makeup:** Napoleon, Albany Westfield (inside Farmers)

**Flowers:** Grooms mother (Maria) and sourced from Foodtown, Takapuna (would you believe!?!)

**Location:** Ceremony – Waiake Beach, Torbay. Reception – MERC Centre, Long Bay.

**Entertainment:** Us! And a friend of my brother’s who was the DJ for us in the evening.

**Stationery:** Invitation postcards created with our own pictures at [www.vistaprint.co.nz](http://www.vistaprint.co.nz)

**Photography:** The amazing Aaron Goodwin. [www.aarongoodwin.co.nz](http://www.aarongoodwin.co.nz)

**Transport:** Two classic 1997 BMWs (1997 was the year we met) lent to us by our mate, Ricky.

**Celebrant:** John Russell JP.

**Anyone else you can think of?** My fabulous MC, Jenene Freer, who kept everything running so smoothly, and 150 people under her spell!

