

SPECIAL WEDDINGS ISSUE

# Town & Country

ESTABLISHED IN 1846

## THE LOOK OF BRIDAL 2004

FABULOUS  
GOWNS

BEST-  
DRESSED  
GUESTS

PLUS:  
INSPIRING  
REAL-LIFE  
WEDDINGS

FEBRUARY 2004  
U.S. \$4.00 CANADA \$5.00  
FOREIGN \$5.00

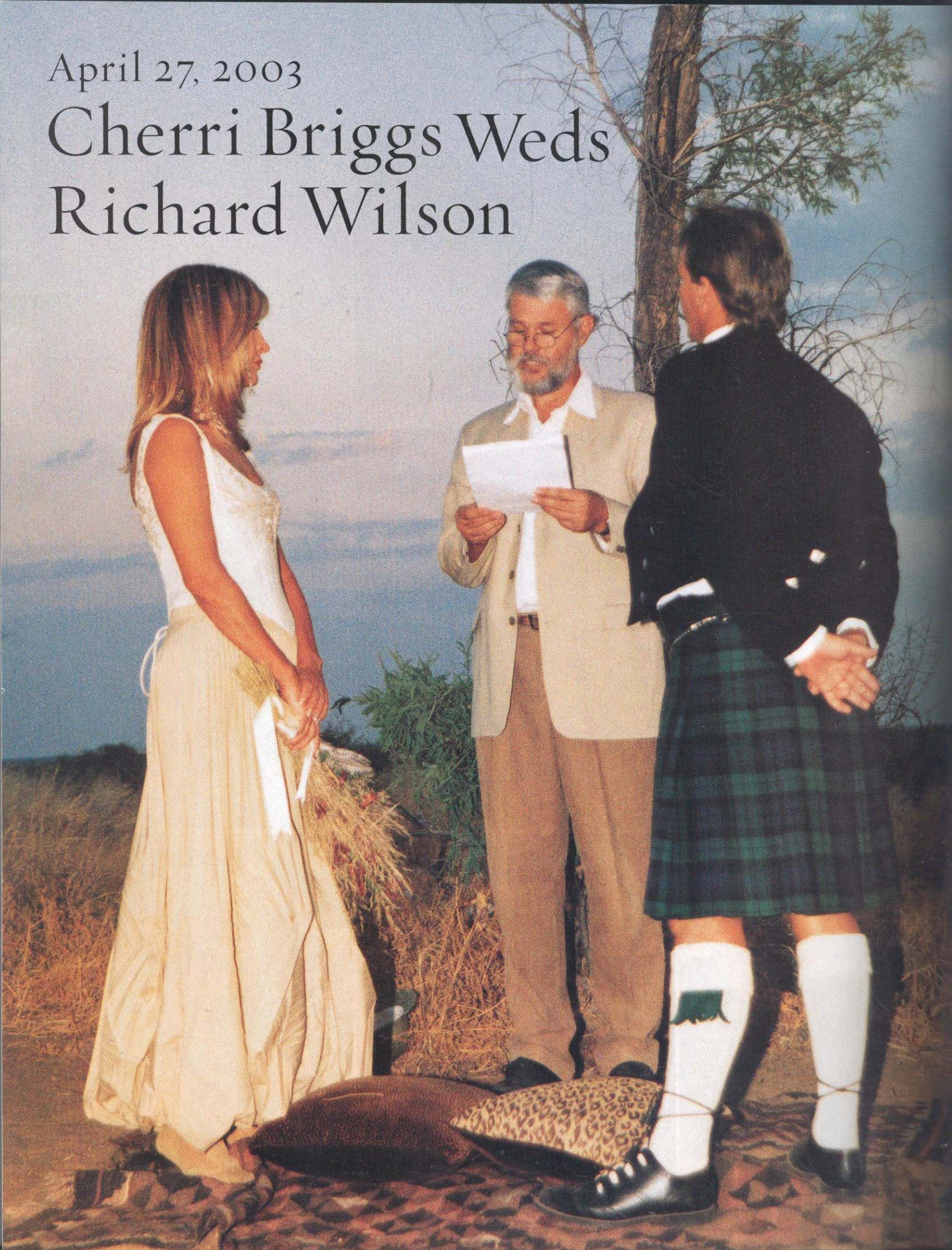


Our bride wears  
Amsale



April 27, 2003

# Cherri Briggs Weds Richard Wilson





**Cherri Briggs**, the owner of Explore, Inc., a custom-safari company based in Colorado and Botswana, and **Richard Wilson**, a Scottish-born, South Africa-based exporter of traditional African crafts, were married at the Deception Valley Lodge in the Kalahari Desert in Botswana. **How They Met:** Both were staying at the Zambezi Waterfront Lodge in Zambia. "I was training for a kayak trip I was going to be leading in Mozambique, and Richard was buying crafts from local Zambians," Cherri says. "Richard and I are truly nomadic. But luckily we have similar migration patterns."

**The Proposal:** Six months later, Richard proposed on top of South Africa's Table Mountain, famed for its views of Cape Town and the Indian and Atlantic oceans. "He's a big-time romantic," Cherri relates. "He's Scottish and can't help himself."

**The Guests:** The fifty-five attendees included friends and family from America, Scotland, England and South Africa, many of whom went on safaris in the days preceding the ceremony. (The Kalahari hosts a small migration of zebras and wildebeests and is the permanent home of kudus, springboks, oryxes and the famous Kalahari lions.) Also attending were a dozen or so San people (commonly known as Bushmen), three of whom performed a trance dance the evening before the wedding. "The healers' spirits leave their bodies and ask God for good fortune—rain, successful hunting or, in this case, a blessing for our marriage," Cherri explains.

**The Ceremony:** Braam LeRoux, an Afrikaner and a former missionary who has lived among the San for twenty-seven years (and advocates for land rights on their behalf), officiated, reading a text by Gloria Steinem, a close friend of the bride's. "It was written like a meditation," says Cherri, "that emphasized our connection to the land."

**The Reception:** The wedding feast consisted of Champagne, warthog and forty pounds of Mozambique prawns that friends had driven up from Johannesburg (a ten-hour journey that was delayed four more hours at the border—the Botswana customs officials had never before seen prawns). Dozens of delicate hand-painted ostrich eggs, gifts from the bride and groom to all of their guests, were carefully transported by another friend, while still others were enlisted to bring up a large stereo system after the band canceled just a week before the wedding. What's more, since the lodge,

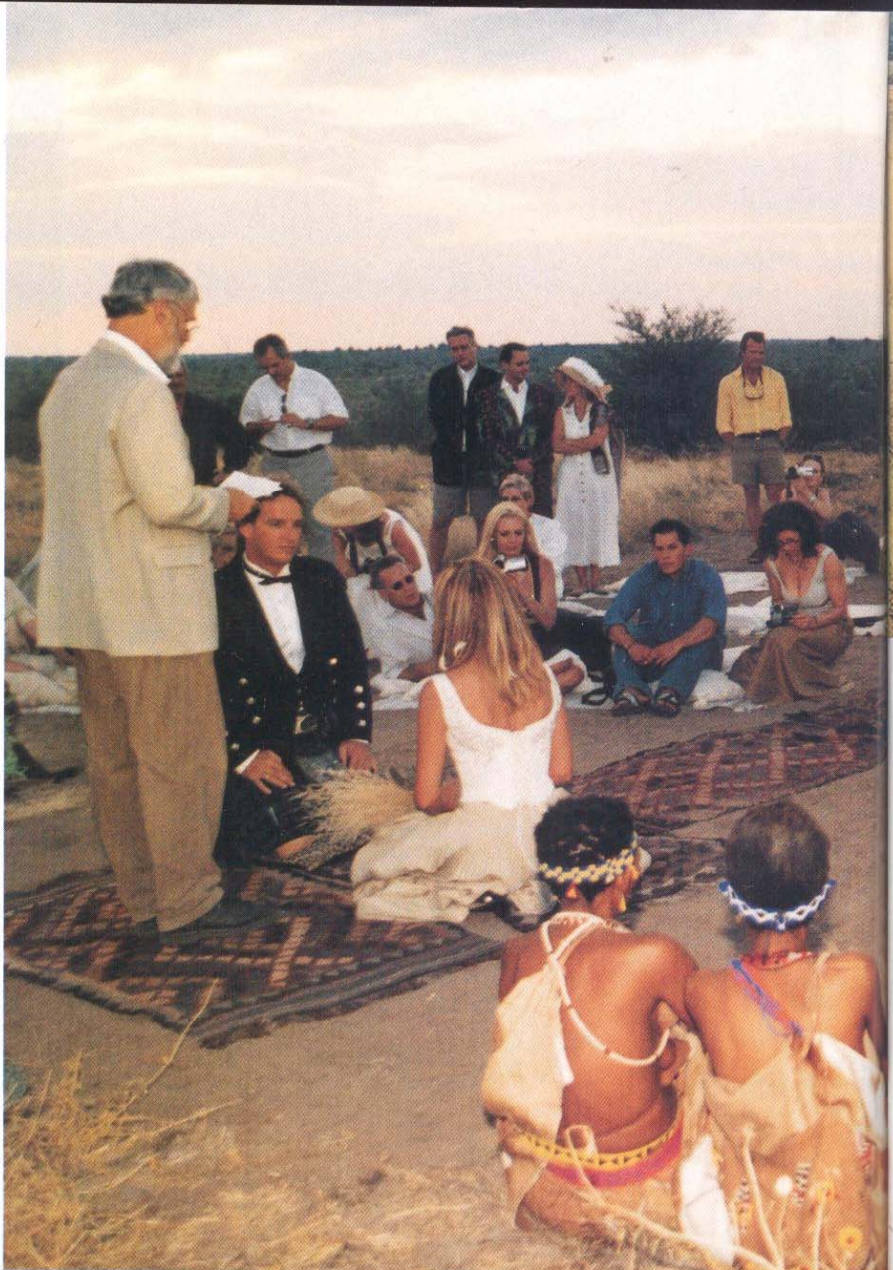
American-born Cherri Briggs and Richard Wilson (above right and opposite) were married by their good friend Braam LeRoux under a shepherd's tree in Botswana's Kalahari Desert. The groom, originally from Scotland, wore a kilt, much to the delight of all the guests, but particularly the local San people, who came dressed in their own traditional garb.



which was chosen for its absolute remoteness and pristine natural beauty, has only five rooms, "we had to set up a mobile camp with about twenty *Out of Africa*-type tents," Cherri explains. "Basically, this wedding could never have happened in such an out-of-the-way, impossible place if my cronies in the safari business hadn't been so helpful and so incredibly professional." **The Bride Wore:** The International style—a pleated skirt picked up in New York, a pearl-beaded off-white bustier (borrowed from a friend in L.A.), Italian cowboy boots (bought in South Africa), jewelry from Paris and, in her hair, bright white feathers that Cherri says she found "blowing like a fan along a road in the Okavango." (The nearby heron to whom they had recently belonged had encountered a fish eagle and no longer needed them.) "My one true indulgence was to fly my hairdresser up from Johannesburg," Cherri says. "If you have a bad hair day in the Kalahari, it's *really* bad." **The Honeymoon:** "Because both of us travel so much," Cherri says, "we're constantly in beautiful lodges and hotels. So instead we drove into the Moremi Game Reserve, jumped into a boat and camped out on an island under a mosquito net. When we awoke that first morning, there must have been fifteen elephants grazing a few feet away." ❧



Before the sunset wedding ceremony (top right), guests enjoyed a few days of safaris, including an all-girls outing led by the bride herself (bottom right, standing in hat). Opposite: Among those in attendance were John Chase, a Botswanan friend of the bride's who walked her down the aisle (middle left); friends from Minneapolis and Aspen (top right); and colleagues from Africa, including Neil Kendrick, a Botswanan guide, here holding the skull of a Cape buffalo (bottom right). Not wanting to miss out on the festivities, local wildlife made frequent cameo appearances.







TOP RIGHT, MIDDLE LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT;  
OPPOSITE: TOP RIGHT AND BOTTOM RIGHT)