

Malaysian designers offer their spin on royal couture.

Fit for a princess

WITH the impending wedding of Prince William of Wales and Catherine Middleton, we couldn't help but get caught up in the royal frenzy, too. As a run up to the royal marriage, StarTwo asked six homegrown designers to come up with their version of a wedding gown fit for a princess.

Eric Choong Bridal by Eric Choong, 47

First impressions: She's a beautiful young lady who exudes confidence. She seems independent, vibrant and well-grounded. At such a young age, she already shows a very assured sense of style. Her style is elegant and refined, yet modern and fresh, and she is highly aware of fashion trends. She makes a wonderfully refreshing addition to the royal family.

My inspiration: Middleton's sense of style, of course! The neckline and capelet adds a touch of old world sophistication and glamour, much of what she embodies in her day to day life. The silhouette is very sleek and flattering; and the hand folded rosettes together with the flowing layers of softly pleated cascading silk tulle leading to a train which falls 0.9m (3ft) behind, add a touch of drama. This ultra feminine and richly detailed gown truly embraces her youthfulness and elegance, but still makes a regal statement.

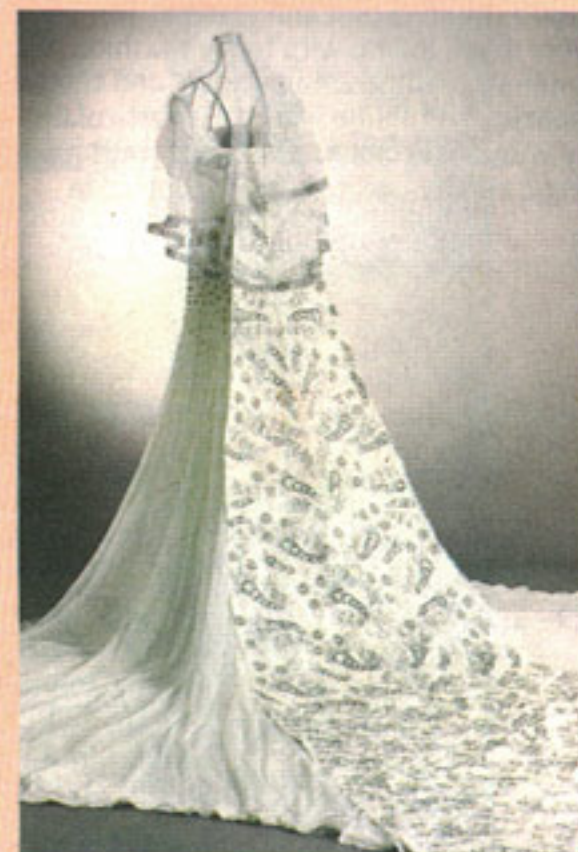
Choice of fabric/embellishments: Delicately beaded French silk lace with a unique pattern created only for Middleton, to honour the traditional styles worn by previous royal brides whom she will undoubtedly be compared with. The lace will be overlaid



Eric Choong says a gown for Kate Middleton must be about pageantry and grandeur, given the historic, ceremonial and global significance of the day.



Melinda Looi's design which says 'I am Catherine Middleton, royalty-to-be'.



Leslie Variyan's gown is classy and has that fairy tale element to it.

with off white silk crepe which gives a heavy drape, creating a flattering slim line silhouette. The scallops on the edge of the lace capelet will be encrusted with freshwater pearls to give it a sense of occasion. I would also add a personal touch to the gown by having something dear to her, perhaps Prince William's Coat of Arms, embroidered into the lace.

What her gown says: It is reflective of Middleton's young and fresh style with a nod to tradition.

A gown for Middleton must be about pageantry and grandeur, given the historic, ceremonial and global significance of the day. Since the wedding will be held in Westminster Abbey, the design would also have to be appropriate for a religious ceremony where the shoulders will have to be sufficiently veiled. I strongly believe the gown must remain true to the bride's spirit.

Variante by Leslie Variyan, 43

First impressions: She looks pretty fit and I think Middleton is very traditional in certain aspects as she is willing to wear her late mother-in-law's engagement ring! She seems like a strong person who knows what she wants.

My inspiration: The gown is classy and has that fairy tale element to it. It is a strapless gown that shows off her physique beautifully. The veil covers her arms, so it reveals a bit but not too much. I'm sure a lot of women dream of being a princess or being treated like one, so on Middleton's wedding day, it is the time for her to be that princess.

Choice of fabric/embellishments: Silk tulle that is cinched at the waist with a silk ribbon belt featuring hand sewn pearls and diamonds. Her veil will be worn with a tiara

of diamonds and the dress will be accompanied by a 4.6m (15ft) silk tulle train, embellished with diamonds, for dramatic effect.

What her gown says: This dress, which is simple, elegant and classy, represents her simplicity and strength of character. The fabrics and precious stones complete Middleton's belief in fairy tales – of how despite being a commoner, she has won the heart of a real-life Prince Charming.

While watching the live telecast of Princess Diana on her wedding day, I remember thinking how exciting it would be if I could design a wedding dress for a princess. Middleton is going to be in public life from now on and everything that she wears will be under scrutiny so while there is a lot of pressure, she must feel confident and comfortable in what she chooses to wear.

Melinda Looi Couture by Melinda Looi, 38

First impressions: She's obviously well-educated, well-behaved, quiet and beautiful inside out. She comes across as someone simple, yet very elegant and feminine. She