

EXCLUSIVELY JOINING THE 'X FACTOR' STARS ON THEIR LOVE BOAT

# 'IT WAS THE BEST DAY OF OUR LIVES – WE FEEL CLOSER THAN EVER'

**CHLOE-JASMINE WHICHELLO AND HER FIANCE STEVI RITCHIE TELL OK!'S KIRSTY HATCHER ALL ABOUT THEIR ROMANTIC BLESSING ON A YACHT IN CYPRUS, HER THREE DRESSES AND THEIR PLANS TO START A FAMILY**

When the news first broke that Chloe-Jasmine Whichello and dad-of-one Stevi Ritchie had got together during the live *X Factor* shows in 2014, our jaws hit the floor. With her plummy accent and supermodel looks and his down-to-earth, bloke-next-door persona, they were the last duo we expected to find romance. However, they proved their critics wrong and, nearly two years on, the unlikely couple are still going strong. In fact, last week they cemented their love by having their relationship blessed on board a luxury yacht in Cyprus!

OK! was there to witness the former *Celebrity Big Brother* stars exchanging their vows on the *Ocean Flyer*, and every moment of their special day was as eccentric and unpredictable as the couple themselves! While Chloe arrived with her bridesmaids – Tereza Masoura and Laura-Eve Thyer – in a white London landalette adorned with ribbon, Stevi pulled up in a BMW convertible. The blessing took place at 6pm on Wednesday June 29, and Chloe looked gorgeous in an ivory Aphrodite bridal gown designed by Belinda Chorley of Beyond Burlesque, accessorising her flowing silk dress with Wearing Memories jewellery and Yull shoes. Meanwhile, Stevi looked dapper in a grey Claudio Lugli suit.

Opening up about the moving ceremony, Stevi tells OK!: 'The whole thing was amazing. It was the best day of our lives. For me it does feel like we've just got married. It feels like she's actually Mrs Ritchie.' Chloe adds: 'It was fabulous. It was so special and we feel very committed to one another.'

Stevi admits that the pair both became emotional as they shared a kiss in front of their guests, telling OK!: 'Chloe cried and then I had a tear in my eye. She looked gorgeous. It was quite emotional and we feel closer than ever. We're so in love.'

The emotional ceremony was followed by an evening featuring fireworks, personalised chocolate, vanilla, lemon and strawberry cakes, dinner, live singers, a DJ set, Cypriot dancing and plate smashing until midnight. And both Chloe and Stevi also took turns on the mic! While Stevi performed Rick Astley's *Never Gonna Give You Up*, Chloe belted out Amy Winehouse's version of *Valerie* alongside their *X Factor* co-star Lauren Platt, who attended with her boyfriend Conor Knight.

The evening's festivities saw Chloe change into another two Beyond Burlesque gowns, the first a silver metallic dress with black lace for some dancing, then a delicate beaded ivory gown to end the night. Stevi also changed into another Claudio Lugli suit, which he completed with a Next bow tie. Ending with a bang, Chloe accidentally threw her bouquet with a little too much vigour and it landed on the edge of the yacht before falling into the sea! Luckily, a motorboat was on hand to rescue the beautiful flowers and return them to a giggling Chloe and her guests.

However, while the smitten pair had a magical day on board their love boat, it's not all been plain sailing. The couple, who got together in December 2014 and then later became engaged in July 2015 (Stevi hid the ring in a bag full of tissue which he gave to her following dinner in a restaurant), had originally been

planning to get married on July 2 at Longleat House in Wiltshire. Sadly, their plans never came to fruition after Chloe's parents – who she describes as 'old-fashioned and traditional' – encouraged Chloe to postpone their plans.

'We were going to get married but my family didn't agree with Steven not having a house, so that's why we're not getting married,' Chloe tells us.

Stevi and Chloe also briefly split in April this year amid claims from Chloe's 'friend' that







Above: Stevi and Chloe  
aboard the *Ocean Flyer*,  
where they exchanged  
vows and engagement  
rings (facing page)



The couple say their vows in front of their guests



Stevi had been 'bullying' her. Although they insist that this is not the case, Stevi does admit, however, that his insecurities caused him to lash out at Chloe and say 'nasty things' to her in the spur of the moment.

'We've both been as bad as each other but it's me more,' he confides. 'I'm a lot happier now than I was before. I was in a real dark place when it was all over the news about us splitting. It's hard having your life commented on.' Thankfully, this episode seems to be behind them, and when we catch up with Chloe and Stevi before they jet off to Cyprus for their special day, they excitedly tell us about their blessing at a million miles an hour.

Chloe, 25, smiles as she tells us: 'Stevi truly is my best friend. We're two years in and we're growing with each other.' Stevi, 35 – who is dad to eight-year-old daughter Summer from a previous relationship – adds of Chloe: 'I've met a gorgeous woman who I never expected to fall in love with.'

Here, the lovebirds tell us about the friction between Chloe's parents and Stevi, the

insecurities they've battled as a couple and why Stevi would like Chloe to be pregnant by next year...

#### Tell us about your blessing ceremony...

**Chloe:** We're having the ceremony on a yacht called the *Ocean Flyer* and then the rest of the time we're staying in an amazing villa. It was hard to choose which yacht to have because they're all so beautiful, so we just picked the biggest one!

#### What made you choose Paphos?

**Chloe:** Cyprus is the island of love and Aphrodite's birthplace! Our planner Sharron Masoura [of Exclusive Yacht Weddings] suggested it. I met her when I was working with a bridal designer and then I had this weird idea about blessing our relationship.

#### Why did you want to have a blessing?

**Chloe:** I just thought it could be one of those fun things that couples do. You know cinema, Harvester, yacht blessing...

**Stevi:** A blessing is the closest thing you can get to a wedding. It's a pre-wedding celebration.

**Chloe:** It's a promise that we're going to get married. It will only put good vibes into our relationship after all the s\*\*t we've been through.

#### So why aren't you getting married?

**Chloe:** We were going to get married but my family didn't agree with Steven not having a house so that's why we're not getting married.

**Stevi:** Yeah, pretty much.

**Chloe:** We were also freaking out because we thought we're going to have this massive wedding and then not have anywhere to live.

**Stevi:** Another reason was because too many people were getting involved with the planning.

**Chloe:** It wasn't our day any more. This big wedding was being organised but we had no control. It was so overwhelming. There was even talk of me riding in on a tiger!

#### When was the original wedding planned for?

**Chloe:** July 2. We had everything booked for Longleat. We looked at Blenheim Palace, too, but it was so expensive. We were talking about doing a TV show and it was turning into a joke. I didn't want it to be a publicity stunt.

#### How are you both feeling about the ceremony?

**Chloe:** I'm so excited. I can't wait to be immersed in Cypriot culture.

**Stevi:** I think it will be amazing.

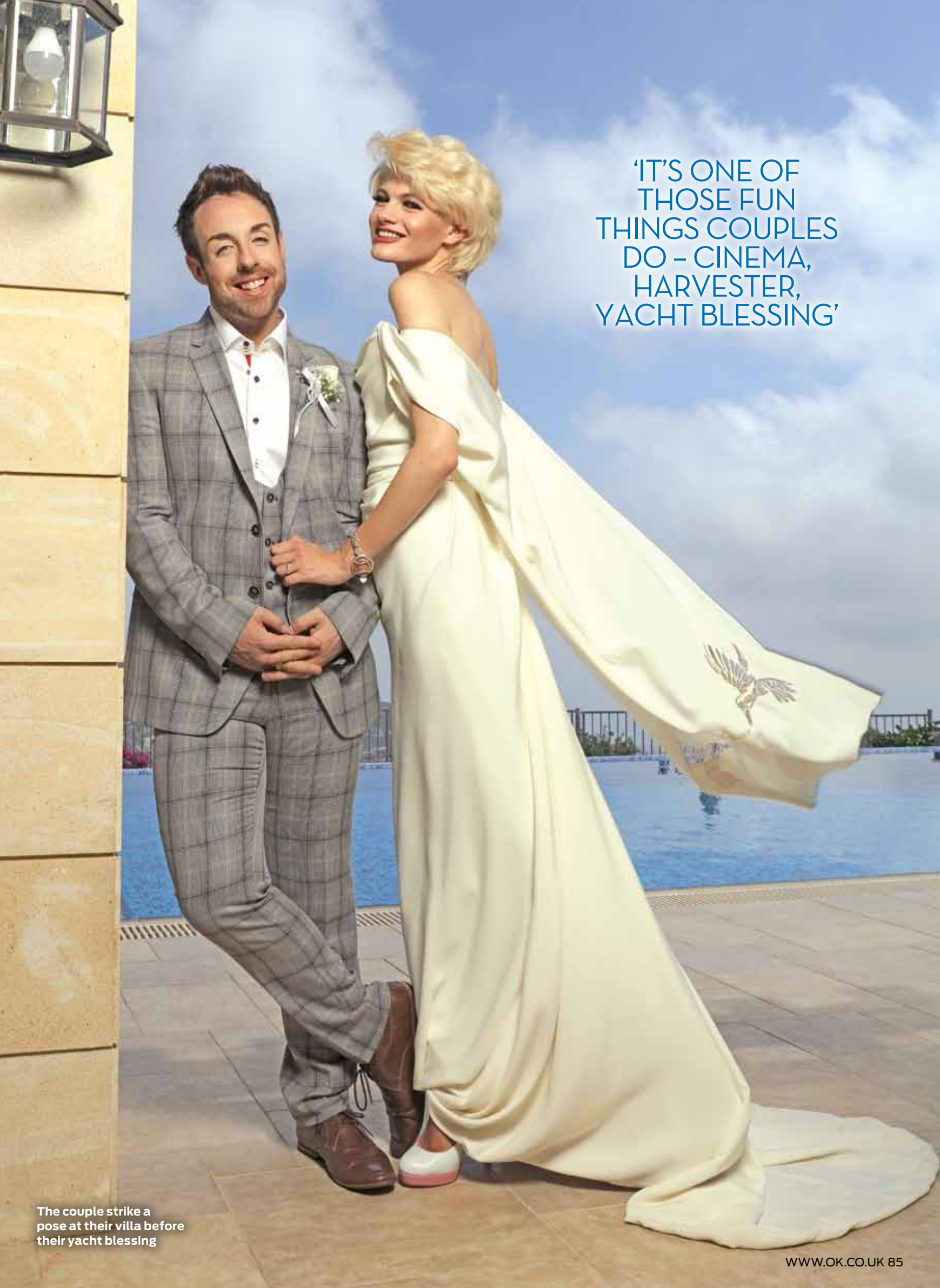
#### Do you think there will be tears?



Above: The couple share a kiss on board the *Ocean Flyer* (right). Far right: The first of Chloe's three Beyond Burlesque dresses





A full-page photograph of a wedding couple. The groom, on the left, is wearing a grey checkered three-piece suit over a white shirt with a red tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The bride, on the right, is wearing a long, flowing, off-the-shoulder white gown with a long train. She is looking back over her shoulder at the groom. They are standing on a paved terrace next to a swimming pool. In the background, there is a blue sky with light clouds and a villa building. A quote is printed in the upper right corner of the image.

'IT'S ONE OF  
THOSE FUN  
THINGS COUPLES  
DO - CINEMA,  
HARVESTER,  
YACHT BLESSING'

The couple strike a  
pose at their villa before  
their yacht blessing





'He truly is my best friend,' Chloe says of Stevi. 'We're two years in and we're growing with each other'

**Stevi:** I don't know, I'm quite emotional anyway. I think I'll be emotional when I see Chloe in her dress. We've been through so much.

#### What are you both wearing?

**Stevi:** I've got a gangster suit from Claudio Lugli. It's a magical suit because it's the one boxers like Amir Khan and Tyson Fury wear before they win big fights!

**Chloe:** I'm wearing a bridal dress and two other dresses from Beyond Burlesque. I met designer Belinda Chorley four years ago and I fell in love with her beautiful garments.

#### Why did you want three dresses, Chloe?

I just thought there's only going to be one yacht blessing in our lives, so why not do it right? I can't imagine wearing the same thing all day; it's like not showering for days! It has cost a lot, but if you can't spend your money on pretty dresses then why are you alive?!

#### Are you exchanging rings?

**Chloe:** We were going to get new rings but because we've got engagement rings we're exchanging them.

#### When did you get an engagement ring, Stevi?

Chloe bought it for me in October.

**Chloe:** It's a white gold band. Everyone expected us to split up after *CBB*, so it was my way of showing that I'm committed to Steven.

#### Did you have personalised vows?

**Chloe:** Yes, and we've got a Christian prayer. We'll be saying a few lines about how happy we are about reconnecting and our love for one another. We've said that if we're ever having a hard time we're going to read our vows back to one another.

#### Who's blessing you?

**Chloe:** Captain Andreas Masouras. He's Sharron's husband George's brother. Her daughter Tereza is going to be a bridesmaid, too. I had a Vivienne Westwood dress made for Summer [Stevi's daughter] and got her glow-in-the-dark heels, but unfortunately she can't come. It's a shame.

#### Is that because of school?

**Stevi:** Yes. I'll be thinking of her all day. We couldn't really do it another time because we're both very busy over the summer with gigs and

I'm going to Japan to make the video for my second single with Japanese girls and pugs!

**Chloe:** That will be our honeymoon!

**Stevi:** I'm really sad she can't be there but she'll be at the wedding. She'll be chief bridesmaid.

#### How many guests are you having on the yacht?

**Chloe:** We just have a few people flying out like my friend Laura-Eve Thyer, who'll also be a bridesmaid. We don't want loads of celebrities there. They're not a priority to us.

**Stevi:** From *The X Factor* Lauren [Platt] is coming, but that's pretty much it. It's more of a personal, intimate thing.

#### Did you invite Simon Cowell, Stevi?

I did through his PA but unfortunately because of *The X Factor* and *America's Got Talent* he's too busy. But I thank *The X Factor* for bringing us together.

#### What about Cheryl, Chloe?

I sent her an invite but she's busy. It's not a wedding so I wouldn't expect her to come. We invited everyone to the wedding and they confirmed, but then we had to say it's not going to happen.

#### Are you disappointed a lot of your friends and family won't be there?

**Chloe:** We would have loved to have more people there but we feel completely betrayed by some people who have sold stories about us. For people to say that we're fake or we were getting married for money is so hurtful. I cried when I saw that. It's disgusting and we've been through hell. We know we're not Posh and Becks or Kate and Wills – we're Chessex [Chelsea and Essex]!

#### So are your parents attending the blessing, Chloe?

**Chloe:** No, it wouldn't be fair if my family came when Steven's father can't fly.

**Stevi:** He's got a bit of a prostate problem at the moment. He also had a minor stroke when I was younger.

#### Are your parents also not attending because they don't approve of Stevi not having a house, Chloe?



Above: Chloe arrived in a white London taxi (far right), with Tereza Masoura and Laura-Eve Thyer



Above: Guests arrived on a bridal bus. Below: Stevi turned up in style







'It was hard to choose which yacht to have because they're all so beautiful, so we just picked the biggest one!' says Chloe

My parents are very traditional and they believe nothing should be rushed in life.

**Will their absence cast a cloud over the day?**

**Chloe:** No, if it was a wedding they'd need to be there. My parents were really involved with wedding planning and they were looking at all the venues with me. Then last year they found out Stevi didn't have his own house, and that was a real shock for them.

**What do your parents make of Chloe's parents not approving, Stevi?**

**Chloe:** I don't want to bring them into it because I think that would really upset my mother. She's said if I bring the family into it then she'll have to say something about what Stevi's done to me.

**What did Stevi do to you?**

**Chloe:** I really don't want to go into it but she's still very raw about it. They have forgiven him, but they'll never forget. They'll get there when it comes to trusting him again.

**What do you have to say about that, Stevi?**

Our parents are just totally different. Mine aren't as posh or as old-fashioned as Chloe's.

**Chloe:** I will never say a bad word against my parents because they're the reason I'm here. We've just had a completely different upbringing. My mother is very conservative and doesn't drink.

**When did your parents meet?**

**Chloe:** During *Celebrity Big Brother*. They were there every time we were up for eviction.

**Do you still live at home, Stevi?**

Yes, in Colchester with my parents. But I'm not there loads because I'm either performing or at Pontins.

**Chloe:** You can't just buy a house for the sake of it. Steven is very careful with his money. What's the point of having this massive wedding and spending all of your money and putting yourself in a worse position? There's no rush for us to get married.

**Are you looking into buying a house, Stevi?**

The house I was going to get in Essex fell through. I think that was a blessing in disguise. It was a sign to say don't rush into anything and wait for your mortgage to get approved. I was refused one because this business is very touch and go, but as soon as I get the approval I'll be looking in Aylesbury and Hertfordshire for a house for us.

**Chloe:** We'll also be closer to my parents as they're moving from Bath to Oxford to be nearer my brother who's at Oxford University.

**Do you think your parents will approve of you marrying Stevi once he owns a house, Chloe?**

They're overly protective and very traditional. They think people who have known each other for under two years getting married is way too soon. We want to get married, but we need the house first.

**Do you have any wedding plans for next year?**

**Chloe:** No. Steven's got to earn my family's trust back first. Some of the things he's done they don't agree with.

**Stevi:** I know, I've said some horrible s\*\*t. We all make mistakes. I'm only human.

**Did you say things to Chloe or her family, Stevi?**

To Chloe. I'd never say anything bad about her parents.

**But you don't want to go into what happened?**

**Stevi:** I wasn't abusive or violent. I did say some nasty things to her in the spur of the moment due to my insecurities. I don't know if it's because I was stressed, too. I was an emotional mess and overworked. The comments really upset her and I said things that are not normal to say to a loved one. I totally regret it. We all says things we don't mean but in the end love always prevails. ▶





**Above:** Chloe danced in her second dress of the day, before cutting the cake in her third and final outfit (above right)



**Chloe:** It was abnormal behaviour. I felt really helpless and I took it all very personally. But I had faith in him and I followed my heart.

**It was reported back in April that you'd split. Was it because of what happened?**

**Stevi:** Yes, it's down to my insecurities. I wasn't being supportive.

**Chloe:** It's the past and it's private. But it was a big wake-up call, wasn't it?

**Stevi:** Massive. We've both been as bad as each other but it's me more. I'm a lot happier now than I was before. I was in a real dark place.

**Chloe:** The break-up was hard but I kept thinking, what would my life be like if Steven wasn't in it? He truly is my best friend. We're two years in and we're growing with each other. He's becoming more trusting and I've forgiven him.

**When you split, one of your friends claimed Stevi was a 'bully', Chloe...**

That's not something I'd like to talk about. I don't know who said it but a friend wouldn't do that to me. They did it to make money.

**Stevi:** I'm not a bully. People who know me know I don't have a bad bone in my body. I've said some horrible things but I'm not a bully.

**You called Chloe a 'schiz' on Lorraine...**

**Stevi:** I didn't mean it like that. I meant eccentric because she's crazy in a fun way.

**Where have your insecurities come from?**

**Stevi:** I don't know if it's because I'm an average Joe – I used to weigh 20 stone ten years ago. Chloe is beautiful and classy and I'm the total opposite! I used to work in McDonald's and Burger King. But I've been going to the gym five times a week and eating loads of protein and veg. Now I weigh 14 stone and I'm feeling good.

**How long did you split up for?**

**Stevi:** About three weeks. I went to a holiday park for two days and Chloe went on a Jason Vale juice retreat. We were texting the whole time.

**Did you feel better after the retreat, Chloe?**

Yes, I was smoking 40 a day and drinking 20 coffees – my head was all over the place. It helped me shut everything out. I had to reassess what I wanted.

**Did you call off your engagement?**

**Chloe:** I took my ring off.

**Did you propose again, Stevi?**

Yes, I took Chloe to a spa.

**Chloe:** I didn't know if I had it in me to forgive him. It was really serious.

**Did your time apart end up helping the relationship?**

**Chloe:** It made us appreciate each other more. It made us realise we need to put more trust and communication into the relationship.



**Above and above centre:** Chloe threw her bouquet a little too vigorously and it ended up in the sea!



Chloe and Stevi were joined by *The X Factor*'s Lauren Platt and her boyfriend Conor Knight





Stevi performed Rick Astley's *Never Gonna Give You Up* for the guests on board



### Did both your insecurities play a part in the break-up?

**Chloe:** Unfortunately yes. I felt crushed by everything. I have suffered very badly with crippling insecurity. I would get booked for a modelling job and I wouldn't go. I felt like this ugly, undeserving creature.

### Where has your insecurity come from, Chloe?

It's basically been since I was on *The X Factor*. It's people's negative comments, my awful skin. I was literally living this hell with cystic acne. But I've finally been able to take on modelling assignments again and I'm doing *Through The Keyhole*.

### On *Celebrity Big Brother* you also spoke about struggling with alcohol, Chloe...

Yes. The blessing could be bigger but if there were loads of people coming and they all wanted to get drunk, I don't think I could handle that. We're having an alcohol-free blessing on our part. We don't need alcohol to enhance our relationship.

### Are the two of you still planning to have children together?

**Stevi:** I want Chloe to be pregnant next summer. I know I'm a dad already, but I'm no spring chicken!

**Chloe:** My family are very traditional. I can't have a child out of wedlock. I love children but I'm still so young, I'm only just turning 25. But Steven's friend Grant Collier is a psychic and he thinks I'm going to become pregnant with a boy!

**Stevi:** Watch this space! **OK!**

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Above and above left: The couple's special day ended with a bang – they were treated to a spectacular fireworks display