

on the cover



with this *ring* **I thee wed**

A dazzling, radiant-cut diamond engagement ring brightens Chelsea Niemiec's hand, but it's the meaning behind it that ignites an inner sparkle. This 26-year-old beauty is having the time of her life as she and her fiancé Dan Gheesling plan their summer wedding.

by Elaine Perlin Crossley

Ever After feather silk taffeta reception dress in white \$1,490
Erin Cole black & silver brooch \$630
courtesy of Roma Sposa Bridal Atelier,
Birmingham

Pink flower headband: \$37
Lace Gloves: \$14
Pavé Jet Bracelets: \$17.75 each
Hematite Filigree Bracelet: \$47.50
Jewelry courtesy of Lolly Ella Jewelry,
West Bloomfield



Photo courtesy of Marek Dziekonski

A Novi resident, Chelsea was born in Commerce Township to Mary and Scott Niemiec. The oldest of four, she was raised on Union Lake with three younger brothers. She notes, “I was a second ‘Mom’ figure to them while they were growing up, but now the roles are reversed, and they watch over me!”

Chelsea is an alumna of Madonna University, where she double-majored in journalism and marketing. She also studied Spanish for six months at Tec de Monterey, a university in Monterey, Mexico. Her horizons further expanded during a one-year stint of rewarding volunteer work based in Washington D.C. She explains, “I worked with high school girls and took them on mission trips to poor areas to help the needy.”

She is now settled into a full-time career as marketing director at Everest Collegiate High School/Academy in Clarkston. And, having danced since the age of four, she also teaches dance moves to Everest’s varsity cheerleaders and to the moms of students at Orchard Lake St. Mary’s Preparatory School for various events held there.

THE SET-UP

Like most of us, Chelsea has experienced a “dud” blind date or two. She notes, “My mom and my aunt love setting people up. They wanted me to meet ‘Mr. Gheesling,’ a biology teacher and football coach at St. Mary’s. But, I said to myself, ‘No more set-ups!’”

Dan Gheesling has taught or coached some of Chelsea’s young relatives, and those in the family who’d encountered him were determined that “this” match would be different. She continues, “So, they invited him to my Uncle Pat McInnis’ birthday party in December, 2009.” And, how could she miss her own uncle’s birthday?

Well, the “click” echoed throughout the room! The couple had their first date on December 12, 2009, Dan proposed in October 2010, and their wedding is set for July 2, 2011.

Dan, 27, is a graduate of Michigan State University. He majored in business, then obtained a Master’s degree in kinesiology. At present, he handles operations for a private real estate



investment firm and remains the varsity football coach at St. Mary’s. He enthuses, “I get to coach Chelsea’s brother Grant, a running back. It’s not every day you get to coach your future family members!”

He also enjoys national fame as the popular, amicable winner of the CBS reality show “Big Brother 10,” which aired in 2008.

POPPING THE QUESTION

So, how did Dan do it? In October of last year, he was coaching a game at St. Mary’s, with Chelsea and family in the stands. At half time, the announcer asked the unsuspecting Chelsea to come out to the field. She recalls, “I thought I was being given a bouquet of flowers from the football moms to say thanks for teaching them their half-time dance. Then, I heard these words over the loud-speaker, ‘I think Coach Gheesling has something to ask you.’”

Dan came running onto the field, dropped onto one knee with ring in hand, and told

Chelsea he knew he was going to marry her from the moment he met her. “At that point, I went blank,” she recounts. Then, he asked her to marry him, and she gathered enough composure to accept. Duty called, and Dan ran off the field to return to the locker room as their loved ones bolted down from the stands to swarm Chelsea.

WEDDING TWEETS

Here are a few “tweets” from Chelsea about the plans for her big day:

WHERE: “Because it holds so much meaning, the ceremony will be at Orchard Lake St. Mary’s Chapel. The reception will take place at the Marriott Centerpoint in Auburn Hills.”

DRESS, VEIL, COLORS: “My dress is an elegant, yet simple design by Pronovias, and my grandmother Julie LeBlanc will create my veil – it’s a family tradition! My colors are plum and apple green, and I’m leaning toward short bridesmaids’ dresses.”

FLOWERS: “The flowers will be arranged by David McKnight at Emerald City Designs. The flowers will be sophisticated and contemporary, such as calla lilies, orchids and others.”

HONEYMOON: “St. Lucia for 10 days. About half of the trip will be spent in a romantic private cottage at Ti Kaye Village Resort & Spa and the other half at a Sandals resort with a pool, great restaurants and nightlife.”

THE “X” FACTOR

After the wedding, the couple will settle down in Dan’s Wixom condominium with their Maltipoo, Frank. And, hopefully, kids are in the stars.

What makes this couple so compatible? Chelsea responds, “It’s that ‘X’ factor! We just clicked right off the bat. We’re both into our faith, which we feel is the foundation of a strong relationship. We have great talks, we both love guiding kids, and we share similar senses of humor. Since we are each fulfilled from within, it’s easy to think of each other first. We enhance one another and our timing was perfect.”

Dan concludes, “I feel blessed to be marrying Chelsea. I knew the first night I met her that I would marry her because she is such a beautiful person, inside and out. Just by being herself, Chelsea challenges me everyday to be a better person. She is very strong in her faith, extremely supportive, caring and selfless. We always have fun together, and I can’t wait to spend the rest of my life with her.”



Peter Langner v-neck,
empire Xantia gown in ivory
with draped sleeves \$5,790
Maria Elena Flower Veil \$1,020
courtesy of Roma Sposa Bridal Atelier,
Birmingham

Solitaire Rhodium CZ Tennis Bracelet: \$69.50
Teardrop Rhodium CZ Necklace: \$275
CZ Rhodium Stud Earrings: \$27.50
Jewelry courtesy of Lolly Ella Jewelry,
West Bloomfield



Alita Graham gown
with a fitted bodice and tulle and organza
florets at the base of the skirt \$3,190
courtesy of Roma Sposa Bridal Atelier,
Birmingham

Pearl & Crystal Barrette: \$59
Clear Crystal Deco Bracelet: \$65
Rhodium CZ Deco Drops: \$53
Jewelry courtesy of Lolly Ella Jewelry,
West Bloomfield



Marchesa silk chiffon gown
with a ruched and beaded bodice
in ivory \$5,990, courtesy of Roma Sposa Bridal
Atelier, Birmingham

Champagne Tulle Rosette Hairclip
with Rhinestone Accents: \$45
Multi Strand Pearl & Crystal Necklace: \$95.50
Clear Crystal Deco Bracelet: \$65
Jewelry courtesy of Lolly Ella Jewelry,
West Bloomfield



Paola D'onofrio gown in white
with a beaded corset
and straps \$10,490
Erin Cole Headband \$450
courtesy of Roma Sposa Bridal
Atelier, Birmingham

CZ Rhodium Stud Earrings: \$27.50
Pearl & Crystal Bracelet: \$23.50
Jewelry courtesy of
Lolly Ella Jewelry,
West Bloomfield