

The Birthday Babe

Every once in a while, my job permits me to have some time away from my everyday life, as I'm moving between locations or I finish up early on a task. Recently, one of these opportunities came up, and as I had just celebrated my 40th birthday, I thought it was appropriate that Sarah should also celebrate. Luckily for both of us, Ophelia was free and so almost a year to the day that Sarah first ventured out into the world, I was heading back to Coogee for a quiet night out with my closest girlfriend.

My timings had me free until the following afternoon, so Ophelia took me straight to her guest apartment, the 'Seahorse Suite'. With a comfortable bed, plenty of clothes and a great area to relax in, the apartment is perfect for an overnight stay or as a base for a trip into Sydney. However, we were looking at a nice meal out and a bit of a catch-up, so after dropping off some of my belongings, we headed upstairs to get Sarah ready. Ophelia had prepared a pink angora top and pin stripe business skirt, which was quickly teamed with my favourite black boots. I sat down in the makeup chair with a glass of red wine and had a quick master class on makeup – I've never quite been happy with my eye-shadow skills, so Ophelia concentrated on this. Another glass of wine, some pink nail polish and with a red jacket, Sarah stepped out and headed into Coogee with her closest girlfriend.

Walking around the streets, most of the restaurants were starting to close for the night, but our favourite little Italian restaurant welcomed us in. Over a beautiful meal, we caught up on each other's lives and shared small talk, and despite being the only two customers I didn't feel as if anyone was staring or 'reading' me – as far as the staff were concerned we were just two women enjoying a nice meal out.

After dinner, we headed down to the beach. Coogee beach is very beautiful, and although it was cold there were still people watching the waves come in. Whilst walking in heels on sand is not the easiest thing I have done, it was worth the effort to get down to the firmer sand for some photos in front of the waves, and a shot of my boot prints in the sand. As it was getting late, we retired back to Ophelia's where I listened over some glasses of wine about the fun of the 'Transformal' that had just been held. After a great night of catching up, it was time for Sarah to call it a night, so retiring to the 'Seahorse Suite' and slipping into something more comfortable, I headed off to bed.

I was awoken early the next morning - damn alarm, why didn't I turn that off last night? It is not that often that I get to enjoy lying in bed wearing my black satin nightie, so I was happy to just watch the sun start to creep into the room and chase the shadows away. Eventually, I got up and checked out how my makeup had fared, which was still very good. A quick shave, a touch up here and there, some more lipstick and Sarah was still very much the Sophisticate (especially with the use of my adhesive silicon bra to help emphasise the girls)!

Whilst I am a bit of a morning person, Ophelia is more of a night owl so I spent my time examining the multitude of dresses, tops and skirts in the 'Seahorse Suite'. When Ophelia came down to see what I wanted for breakfast, I had selected a number of dresses in which I wanted to have some photos taken. As Ophelia stated to me that the black David

Lawrence dress was probably a bit too much for a Friday morning (but damn, I looked good in it), I decided to wait in the apartment whilst Ophelia grabbed a coffee, a hot chocolate and fruit.

After breakfast, the camera came out and we had a good chance to review my fashion selections. Ophelia had the perfect little retro belt that really set off the classic little black dress. Then after trying on a sheer animal print dress and an interesting striped number, I got to try on another of the beautiful wedding dresses. This one fitted like a dream, and with some cleavage showing and my brunette hair draped over my shoulders, the photos looked amazing. There was even a glimpse of a black bra strap in a few of the shots – hinting that this bride wasn't all that innocent...

Whilst almost finished, Ophelia brought out a special little treat – the Jessica Rabbit dress. If you remember the film 'Who framed Roger Rabbit?' you'll know what I mean! With black heels on, the dress hugged my figure from my shoulders to my ankles, showing both some cleavage and my right leg, thanks to a cut up the side finishing on my upper thigh. I was absolutely captivated by the woman in the mirror looking back at me. Ophelia didn't even need to comment about how much I looked like a Barbie doll – this dress made me want to go out on the town with Ophelia, Imogen and some of the other girls I know. I felt empowered, stunning, sexy and could see myself as the centre of attention – this is the way every woman should feel when she turns 40 and I'm so glad I had the chance to experience it.

It is always such a treat for me to catch up with Ophelia. With work and family commitments, Sarah often has to take a back seat in life and it seems unfair that she has missed out on so many things. But I know that with Ophelia, Sarah has one of the closest girlfriends a woman can have; someone who is supportive, uplifting and my most trusted confidant. I can easily understand why she is so busy so many other girls as well – she is definitely an exceptional friend.

Sarah C.