

Gorgeous, glamorous & gifted

Where this family goes, glamour leads and music follows... It goes without saying, if Sheree represents the bass, and Giggs the beat, then little Taylor is the rhythm that anchors this family unit together.

BY Loren Stow

Sheree O'Brien, 28-year-old First Lady of SA House and new mother, will modestly admit that she does not consider herself to be that glamorous or stylish, but just one look at this new mom will have everyone begging to differ.

Engaged to one of the most prolific DJ's in SA House, 30-year-old DJ Giggs Superstar, this couple welcomed their first baby, Taylor O'Brien-Mnisi, into the world on the 15th of September 2010.

As the only baby in South Africa to ever be sponsored by Adidas (like father, like son), Taylor certainly is worth his weight in cuteness.

The shock and the excitement

"I wasn't feeling well for a good couple of months. I had terrible backache, migraines and was constantly bloated. I had previously had ovarian cysts and I thought they may have returned. I was also leading a very busy lifestyle, working long hours, being on the road often and eating too much junk food," Sheree describes what prompted her to pay her doctor a visit.

Within a few hours, the couple went from rocking the country to contemplating life with a new baby. And, as if that wasn't big enough news for the couple to deal with, they discovered that Sheree was not only pregnant – she was already just over five months into her pregnancy.

"It was a lot for me to take in," explains Sheree. "because my grandmother had just died and we were in East London for her funeral

at the time. On top of that, I was also afraid that my parents would be disappointed because I wasn't married."

On the other hand, Giggs describes how he was bursting with excitement, wanting to share the news with everyone, "I was already Googling prams and cribs on the way home from the doctor's office."

Once the initial shock wore off, Sheree and Giggs realised they had little over three months to prepare for their baby's arrival. "It was my first baby, so I was clueless. I spent hours on the internet, asked my mom a million questions, bought books and visited as many baby stores as I could to get an idea of what was out there," says Sheree.

The couple had an awesome time planning Taylor's nursery, which they still rearranging and redecorating every now and again. "Most importantly though, we attended baptism classes while I was still pregnant so that we were prepared to baptise Taylor as soon as possible after his birth."

Christianity plays an important role for this family, and Taylor's nursery even has what Sheree calls a little 'faith corner', where his holy water, baptism certificate and baptism shawl is kept.

Carrying Taylor

"Pregnancy is not for me, I must admit," Sheree says. She describes how her pregnancy was fraught with uncomfortable complications, to the point of being forced to work from her bed for three weeks.

"I didn't have 'normal' pregnancy symptoms of nausea and strange



cravings. Instead I had terrible migraines, backache and overwhelming exhaustion, before and after I knew I was pregnant,” describes Sheree.

Strangers who felt the need to caress Sheree’s pregnant belly and way too much unsolicited advice from other moms only served to make her wish that she could run away. “But feeling my angel kicking in my tummy gave me so much joy.”

Remaining stylish throughout her pregnancy, in spite of feeling terrible, came naturally to this career-driven mother. She explains how she carried quite small, but even when she no longer fitted into her everyday clothes, she still didn’t go out and buy maternity clothes.

“I opted for some three-quarter shirt dresses that I could pair with tights. That way I could wear them post-birth and still remain stylish! Those tent-like maternity outfits just don’t do a woman any justice. In fact, the more fitted the clothes, even when you’re pregnant, the sexier and slimmer you’ll look and feel.”

Taylor’s big day

Because she hails from East London, Sheree and Giggs naturally prepared for the birth of their precious baby to take place there. “We stayed at my parents’ house for the last few weeks of the pregnancy and I gave birth at the local Frere Government Hospital,” she explains.

This was the same hospital in which Sheree’s mother gave birth to her and her siblings, and she didn’t see any reason why it wouldn’t be the perfect place to welcome her first baby as well. With Giggs, her mother and her aunt (who is a midwife) by her side, that this mom felt confident in her decision.

In the hours following Gigg’s 30th birthday celebrations, Sheree’s waters broke. Although Giggs was frantic, Sheree remained calm. “I went to my mother’s house, packed my bag, which I hadn’t yet packed for some unknown reason, had a bath and went to the hospital.”

Just over four hours after arriving at the hospital, Sheree succeeded in giving birth to Taylor completely naturally, with Giggs by her side. “My aunt was also there and really helped, she kept me calm throughout the labour and I don’t know what I would’ve done without her.”

For this mom, the choice to go natural was a blessing, even after being terrified of the process by what she had heard from other mothers. “The contractions were much more painful than the actual birth, which wasn’t nearly as bad as I thought it was going to be.”

“Once he arrived I couldn’t stop staring at my little boy, I was so proud to be his father,” beams Giggs, who admits that he even cried when his son was born. Capturing the magical day’s moments using pictures and video, and making phone calls to announce the big news, was part of Gigg’s responsibility of the day.

As for Sheree, she admits that her first emotions on meeting her newborn son were of relief. “I hadn’t known I was pregnant for the first five months and in that time I had been taking pain medication for migraines and backache, you know, stuff that pregnant women are not meant to be taking.”

Life will never be the same

As with any new parents, Sheree and Giggs explain how their lives have changed since Taylor’s arrival. “We used to go out every weekend, either for work or to attend an event, but that has all changed.”

Now, mom is home with baby and dad goes off to perform, and then races straight home to be with his family. Since Taylor’s arrival, Sheree has only ventured out twice without her baby and each time she admits she misses him so much. “Now we prefer to stay at home and bond with our son.”

As for living a life of a celebrity, Sheree modestly describes how the couple do not feel like celebrities at all. “We feel like we have careers that put us in the spotlight, and may make other people a little more interested in us, but we will not raise our child any differently than any other mom and dad because of this.”

Like any other parents, these two have their strengths and weaknesses, with teamwork being key to their success in career, and now, parenting. “I am more of a disciplinarian and teacher, while Giggs is indulgent and easy-going,” explains Sheree, before she adds, “we are both playful though!”

Just like any other mom, Sheree has her fair share of sleepless nights and dark circles under her eyes, “Looking stylish is one thing, but actually feeling stylish is something else. I find that the small things help me to feel better when I’ve had a rough night, like a short nap, getting my hair or face done, or just reading my favourite magazine.”

And she has to search for and grab these luxuries with both hands whenever she can, because she is unfortunately not blessed with a big support network. “We are still looking for a nanny for Taylor and my family are all in East London, so it’s really just Giggs and I.”

“Family comes first, always. I am everything I am today because of the love and support of my family. My background was not privileged, but it was filled to the brim with love, support, kindness and discipline,” Sheree describes.

Balancing career and home

Sheree describes how she is even more fearless and determined now to make a success of her business, especially since she now has a little life dependent on her.

“We do work long hours because behind the glamour is real hard work, and so we are looking for a nanny so that Taylor is cared for while we are growing our careers and his future.”

This why Sundays with family is one of the true-north principles that this couple believe in, as well as dinner at home every night, seated around the table.

What makes their long working hours easier, Sheree explains, is the fact that she and Giggs work together. Because of this, they spend much of their time together, travelling and going to gigs, creating memories as they go along.

“The only downside is that sometimes the lines between work and home get blurred, but we’ll just remind each other that it’s ‘us time’ and not ‘work time’, we’ll have a giggle and carry on,” she says.

Inspiration and determination

When Giggs thinks back to a pivotal person in his life, his mind and heart immediately settles on his late father. “He was the biggest influence in my life. He taught me the value of hard work and providing for your family, no matter what the sacrifice.”

Sheree, on the other hand, naturally gravitates towards both her



your beauty

working moms and dads



parents' profound influence on her life. "They are completely unselfish and do so much for others, even if it means that they have to give away their last cent, or their last slice of bread, to help someone else."

What is clear is that this new mom and dad both come from backgrounds where hard work, dedication, sacrifice, morals and honesty played a role in their understanding of what was required to make their lives a success.

Giggs describes himself as dedicated and patient, a perfect combination when it comes to reaping the rewards later. "I also get so much of my drive from Sheree. And I also have a real respect for the industry I'm in, my job and my colleagues. If you ask me, the most important thing is to believe in yourself and be fearless."

What many of his fans don't know is that Giggs started his career behind the counter at Soul Candi's legendary Rosebank store, so when he refers to dedication and believing in himself, he's talking from experience.

With two platinum-selling compilations and another two solo albums under his belt, Giggs is currently working on a new compilation and is extending his own unique brand and style to a new clothing and accessory line, simply called GSS Gear.

Sheree's modesty extends to her career as well, which she describes as a work in progress, "I feel like I'm still climbing the ladder of success."

For this working mom, a successful career is heavily dependent on maintaining her morals, not compromising on good business ethics and understanding that it's about good old fashioned hard work and sacrifice.

She started her own company at the age of only 18, with no capital and no former training. This became the only musical management company in the Eastern Cape headed by a female, while successfully managing major Johannesburg-based artists such as DJ Mbuso.

Today Sheree's company, Splakavellis Management, is inundated with artists wanting to be associated with the success that she is so

incredibly good at creating. She also works as marketing manager for Soul Candi Records, the country's top independent dance label. A move into television and radio is the next natural step as Sheree grows her career with drive and ambition.

Gimme a little glamour

When in doubt, a day at the spa works wonders for Sheree. "Although it only happens about once a year," she laughs. This is one of her ultimate indulgences. For Giggs it's simple, "Sneakers, sneakers and more sneakers," admitting that his collection actually need their own room.

On a serious note, even though they may not consciously make the effort, this couple exudes style and glamour. However, it is not from blindly following the latest trends, but rather comes from being true to their own tastes.

"I believe the style is unique to each person. I wear what I like and what I feel comfortable in, something that compliments me personally. And while outer appearance may be important to others, I prefer a stylish personality to a stylish outfit any day!" Sheree laughs.

"But don't get me wrong, I am not about to let myself go just because I'm a mother now. I still need to look and feel sexy. That's why my nieces call me 'sexy momma' when I see them," she smiles.

Working hard, supporting each other and giving their son the best they can is what this mom and dad care most about. "We're taking it step-by-step when it comes to our new job as parents. We never want to force Taylor to do or be anything that isn't his own dream. We will help him to find opportunities and support him in achieving his wishes."

Combining glamour with family commitment, a superstar jetset lifestyle with dinner around the table at night, and comfort with style... Sheree, Giggs and little Taylor are certainly set to forget about 'rocking the boat', and aim for rocking the world instead. ●

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